

## THE TREATMENT OF SPIES.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHRISTMAS is the feast of general rejoicing, and so a year ago even in the grim old citadel of the Silesian fortress of Glatz the Prussian officers and sentinels were dreaming of the family circles at home where children were eagerly awaiting their father's return from duty, while one of the prisoners, M. Lux, a French spy, the gallant captain of a French artillery regiment, proposed to elude the watchfulness of his jailers, and with the cleverness of an adroit burglar actually succeeded in making his escape. He had prepared his flight by filing his bars during unobserved hours in previous days and in the darkness of night leapt down into the court, slipped quietly along the gloomy walks of the citadel, climbed the outer wall and jumped into the moat from which he could easily find his way into the open field. Before his absence could be detected, he had taken a night train from the nearest suburban station and reached unhindered the Austrian frontier, which is not very far from Glatz. On Austrian ground he was safe. He left the train and telegraphed for money. His friends responded promptly, and he continued his trip without molestation *via* Italy to France, where he joined his family and was jubilantly greeted by his comrades and friends.

The world outside of Germany naturally sympathized with the daring French officer. He had shown his ability in espionage by reporting observations especially of the German balloon service, and perhaps also in other fields. His enterprises might have been taken as a tribute to the superiority of German intelligence, for he confessed by his very deeds that the French could learn from the Germans; but the German authorities did not see his labors in this light, and when he escaped from Glatz they were greatly chagrined and decided to prevent the recurrence of such events.

Thus it came about that results of his gallant deeds proved

sad for one of his fellow prisoners, an English officer, also a spy, who had shared his room in the fortress of Glatz. This son of Albion had apparently known nothing of the plans of his friend, in fact he had been absent at the time of the Frenchman's escape, nevertheless he had to pay the penalty.

The German system of supervision is commonly, and perhaps rightly, supposed to be the most careful in the world. The reliability of German sentinels and the sense of duty of German soldiers is well known. Their discipline is unexcelled, and yet here a prisoner deemed extraordinarily dangerous found no difficulty in making his escape. Feeling that they had become the laughing-stock of the world just as a short time previously in the case of the famous Captain of Köpenick, they at once resorted to drastic measures in venting their wrath on other prisoners, and first of all on the poor British officer who like Captain Lux had been condemned to pass several years as a captive in a fortress.

So far it has been customary to consider espionage as a political offense which does not involve any dishonesty. On the contrary it has always been considered as a patriotic service in the interest of the spy's own country. It is true the spy takes his chances, and in times of war he may be shot, but such is the case with every soldier in battle, and there is no disgrace in sacrificing one's life for one's country.

This view prevails commonly among all civilized nations and corresponds to the natural feelings of mankind, but the Prussian government changed it at once in the moment of its chagrin. The British officer was degraded, clothed in the suit of a convict, and treated as a common criminal. This fate, hard though it was, was sharpened however by the attitude which the comrades of the British officer took. Seeing him degraded they expelled him from their ranks, for in their opinion a convict could no longer be treated as a brother officer. As soon as he had been clothed in the convict's dress, he was thereby deemed to be disgraced and could no longer be tolerated in the British army. This incredible attitude of British officers towards the shame put on a man by way of punishment, and not by any criminal act, made the British officer in prison so despondent that he attempted suicide. His life had become worthless to him since he was deemed to have lost his honor, and he had to be constantly watched by his jailers to prevent him from ending his own life.

Soon afterwards a German spy was caught in England, and it would have been quite natural if the English judges had retaliated,

and though they did not in that case, the result might have been—and possibly it will still come about—that all over the world spies will henceforth be treated as common criminals.

Some optimists who do not know human nature believe that this will stop espionage all over the world, and they think that it would be better if spies would discontinue their nefarious work, but this is not probable. The information concerning the progress of foreign armies will always be valuable to the ministry of war, and as in war time the death penalty does not frighten spies from risking their lives for their country, so this change of view will make no difference. The result will be that even if the comrades of the spy who has been caught will disown him, the people as a whole will glory in him as a hero who suffers for his country the infamy of degradation. After all the judges and jailers of these unfortunate people will be burdened in their consciences with the shame of having treated a gallant patriot, a man of extraordinary courage, as if he were a villainous wretch, and the old story will be repeated that the Saviour is crucified between thieves.

Now the question arises, How will governments protect themselves against spies? Since the military authorities of every country are naturally anxious to keep posted on the progress of their brothers in other countries they will be equally obliged to protect themselves against those errant knights whose services may become very dangerous. What would be the best to be done? Can they sufficiently protect themselves without becoming brutal and inhuman towards brave soldiers whose skill and bravery ought to be met but whose honor ought not to be touched, because their sense of honor may be, and commonly is, as high or even higher than that of their captors?

Germany's procedure in dealing with spies finds many sympathizers in military circles of different countries. A near and dear friend of the writer, a very able man and a good patriot who has become through his unusual talent a captain of industry, had served his country in his younger years by successfully extracting an important secret from a foreign expert in the manufacture of firearms, and yet he expressed himself in favor of shooting all spies, even if their espionage be committed in time of peace. He did not, however, look upon his own venture as the work of a spy. He did not use his eyes, he used his mind. He duped the enemy by appealing to the vanity of an inventor, and we do not doubt that if the story at the time had become known before this daring youth had passed the border to reach his own country again, he would have been con-

demned as a spy by court martial, and considering the work he did afterwards in the line of manufacture and invention, not only his own people but the whole world would have lost thereby.

It would be a pity to employ drastic measures to frighten spies to discontinue their work. On the other hand we can not tolerate espionage, though we may employ it ourselves. What shall we do? What would be fair and right?

Perhaps the best way to deal with spies would be that if they are caught in espionage they should be condemned by their judges to be tattooed on the face or forehead with the letter "S," which would do no harm to their person but would render them harmless wherever they made their appearance for the purpose of collecting military information. A man bearing the espionage tattoo would not be disgraced in the eyes of his compatriots; on the contrary the tattoo would serve as a distinction and a mark of honor, while to the sentinels of a foreign power it would indicate that they should keep an eye on him and not admit him where he can discover secrets of consequence.