

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE

The great ocean liner *Berengaria* plowed swiftly through the heavy waves of the Northern Atlantic. She was one day out from New York bound for Cherbourg. It was a dark, foggy night, and a light drizzling rain fell incessantly, covering everything on the liner which was exposed with beady moisture—a typical Northern Atlantic night.

A man stood at the rail of the first-class deck, staring thoughtfully into the gloom. His tall, slim-waisted, smooth form suggested good-breeding; his countenance was regular but hardly handsome; the features of a man hopeful of victory but well-able to cope with defeat. He appeared to be about thirty-five years of age. Over his faultless evening attire he had loosely thrown a light overcoat. He was Stephen Ewell, envoy extraordinary to the Russian Soviet Government. A few days before he had been sent from Washington with dispatches which he had been commanded to deliver to another secret agent in Moscow. Although he had taken every possible precaution, he had just received a radiogram stating that Count Aleksander Radetzky, the noted Russian Imperial agent, was on his trail, was even now on the *Berengaria*.

Ewell had never met Radetzky, but it was imperative that he recognize him immediately, for this wily Russian had outwitted every man ever pitted against him. Now he was to come to grips with Ewell who was also undefeated in every enterprise, but this time the American was not so certain of himself as he was accustomed to be.

He turned from the rail and went to his rooms, and there having removed his top-coat, he descended to the dining-room. This large, luxurious room was glowing with the soft light from many ingeniously hidden blue lamps. Ewell took his place at a corner table, gave his order to the waiter, and leaning back, watched the large entrance.

Nearly every nationality was represented by those who entered—the prosperous American magnate with his faded, small town wife, plainly newly rich, the quick Italian, the solicitous Jew, the rough featured Gael, the haughty Englishman, the accurate Frenchman and so on; one for every country in the civilized world. Finally a

man who at once struck one as being a Russian entered, accompanied by an elegant lady, manifestly his wife.

The Russian was about forty-five years of age, dark, tall, slim, and exceedingly muscular. He wore a close-clipped, black moustache. His wife was about thirty, very beautiful, dark, and reported to be an Austrian. They sat at a table adjacent to Ewell's. He had noticed them before but had not taken much interest in them until receiving the radiogram. Resolving on a bold move he rose from his seat and crossed to the Russian's table. Bowing he said, "Count Radetzky, I believe. Pardon my intrusion, but if you are he, I have instructions for you."

"I am," replied Radetzky, speaking with a slight accent, "but you have the advantage."

"Stephen Ewell," responded the American, presenting his card and at the same time smiling at the Count's innocence.

Radetzky bowed in reply, and after introducing his wife, invited Ewell to dine with them. He willingly accepted.

"You said that you had instructions for me," went on the Russian, "I must ask your forgiveness, but I am intensely interested."

Ewell answered suavely, "I am a secret messenger from Washington to Moscow, rather to the Soviet Government. As I saw that you recognized me as you entered, I thought that we might as well become better acquainted."

"But, yes," intervened Madame Radetzky, who seemed rather taciturn, "my husband does wish to get acquainted with you—much better acquainted."

The American laughed easily. "Perhaps you know, Count, why I am going to Moscow."

"Surely. You have dispatches which I intend to have presently."

Ewell's eyes glinted. "Supposing that I have two or more copies to deliver, you cannot find all of them, and I will then deliver one."

Radetzky answered calmly. "You shall not reach Moscow until a week after I am there. I shall have a copy of your dispatches; I do not care whether you have others or not as it will be too late when you arrive."

"I have the greatest respect for your ability," remarked Ewell disdainfully, "but, really, I did not think

you were so clever. It's the deuce to meet one's superior. Here I sit, having entered upon this mission with the greatest confidence in myself. My government needed a man to carry important letters and also a man who could argue and explain with the Soviet Government. Hence I am here, and now to be told I must fail!" The American shook his head in mock despondency.

Radetzky remained perfectly serious. "It is so ordained," he said. "I have never been foiled, and I do not intend to be foiled now."

For the next two days Ewell and the Radetzky's lunched, dined, danced, and performed other amusements in one another's company. Politics were not mentioned. But on the second evening Ewell retired rather early to his rooms. He was lounging in a large arm-chair; puffing out a long stream of cigarette smoke, he let the book he had been reading fall from his indolent fingers. Radetzky was a deuced queer man, he thought to himself. Although Ewell had been to the Russian's suite three or four times not once had he or his wife alluded to the secret dispatches.

A soft rap at the door interrupted his thoughts.

"Come in," he commanded.

Count Radetzky entered quietly. "It is a fine night," he remarked. "The moon and sky are wonderful. You are a sluggard to be inside. Does not dancing amuse you more? No?"

"I've got the blues, I guess," answered Ewell good-naturedly. "Take off your coat and sit down. Have a cigarette?"

"Many thanks, but I shall smoke one of my own. I have interrupted you?"

"Yes," declared Ewell. "You did in a way, but you have a great deal to do with my thoughts. When do you intend getting my dispatches?"

Radetzky reached slowly into his pocket, manifestly for a match. His hand emerged holding, instead of a match, a short, bull-dog automatic. "My friend," he drawled with a hint of triumph in his voice, "You are clever but not quite clever enough. You have the dispatches in this room. How do I know that? Very simple. You did not put them in the ship's safety vault for you did not trust the manager. Your suspicion was correct. He is one of our men, a former baron, and he

has informed me that you did not put the letters there. You considered that I would think that you had the dispatches in the vault; therefore I would not trouble you until disembarking. Then, of course, you would pass them to someone else, and I would be, as you Americans say, left in the lurch. You never expected this move. I will find the dispatches now, tie you up, go out on deck, and jump overboard. One of our launches is a quarter of a mile from this ship with instructions to pick me up. You can see it from the deck. My men shall see me go overboard through their night-glasses, and as I am a strong swimmer I shall be with them within the hour. You shall be detained at Cherbourg."

Ewell leaned back still farther, and before answering lit another cigarette. "Count," he said calmly, "I had the greatest opinion of your ability, but it has lowered appreciably in the last few moments. When I saw how you were acting, I went at once to the captain and told him I was a Government agent. Then I sent my dispatches through by wireless in code. My Government did not dare do this at first for fear that your watchful wireless stations would pick up the messages. Your expert decoders would solve the meaning of the message in a few hours. The American Government does not wish to be on bad terms with the Imperial Party in case they regain power as a Republic like our own. I run no risk in telling you this as I can deny it later. But, now, your wireless stations are not vigilant for is not Count Radetzky, their most trusted spy, hot on my trail? My dispatches are even now speeding by airplane from Paris to Moscow."

An exclamation escaped the Russian, but quickly covering his anger he observed, "My friend, you are the master. I beg your pardon for daring to match wits with you. I am a child. I was too sure of myself. It is a case of the hare and the tortoise." Radetzky left the room.

He went on deck and let the cool breeze blow on his flushed face; he turned over in his mind his encounter with Ewell. His anger burned fiercely at first preventing all logical reasoning, but as he walked around the deck he began to see light. "The fox has fooled me! Ten million rubles to one he has sent no such message, but invented his story when cornered! Am I getting into my dotage? But he was so calm!"

Turning swiftly, Radetzky strode along the deck to the stairs or Jacob's Ladder which led to the bridge and to the wireless room. He would force either the captain or the operator to tell whether the dispatches had been sent through. On the way up he saw two persons descending. It was Ewell accompanied by the captain; the Russian's hopes fell.

The captain was speaking. "It is not according to rules to send code messages, Mr. Ewell, but as you are an accredited Government agent I have made exception."

"Thank you very much," answered the American diplomat cheerfully. "Hello Radetzky. Are you going to send a code message also?"

The Russian reddened with anger. "So you lied to me the first time, when you said that you had sent the dispatches by wireless, and when my back was turned you really did send them!"

"All's fair in love and war," responded the American.

Radetzky regained his composure, and bowing politely to the captain he accompanied Ewell back to the deck.

Radetzky puffed dismally on a cigar as he and Ewell stood at the rail watching the swells of the sea rising and falling.

"They are like fortune," said the Russian. "Now they are high, now low. At present fortune is low to me. She clogged my brain with success until I have become a fool. You have gained your ascendancy through a trick." He finished his speech contemptuously.

Ewell turned to the Russian with a face void of expression. "Tricks have helped a great deal in my successes. I still have many up my sleeve. You expected to win. You lost."

Radetzky bowed politely and spoke in a quiet voice. "I am very sorry, Mr. Ewell, that I spoke so hastily concerning tricks. I understand that the diplomat must use the kind of diplomacy which suits him best. You are the shrewdest man I have ever met, and I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you at the Naval Conference at Paris in a fortnight."

Two weeks later an American gentleman accompanied a distinguished-looking Russian into the grill-room of the Hotel de Paris. After ordering champagne the American, who was our friend Ewell, offered a cigar to the Russian, none other than Radetzky. When they had

their cigars lit and drawing well, Radetzky broke the silence.

"Ewell," he said, "That was a master stroke of yours to figure that our party would not be vigilant for wireless messages when I was on the same ship with you. They did not know what a blunderer I was." The Russian smiled ruefully.

Ewell took the cigar from his mouth and looked at Radetzky with surprise. "Haven't you heard from your party since then?" he demanded.

"No, they were kind enough to remember my past successes, and they have not spoken to me of my failure yet, but have ordered me to take a complete rest for my nerves."

Ewell smiled. "I did not send my dispatches by wireless. Your superiors sent you a radiogram instructing you not to worry about wireless messages as they were watchful for them. The captain knowing who I was gave the radiogram to me. I got the captain to speak to me as if I had sent the message so as to lead you astray, but I carried the dispatches in my breast pocket as I had intended at first."

Radetzky stared at Ewell ludicrously. "And I came here to rest my nerves! This is enough to make me a maniac. It certainly was the Hare and the Tortoise!"

—J. D. MacD., '33



SERENITY

Here's a sigh to those who love me
And a smile to those who hate;
And whatever sky's above me,
Here's a heart for every fate.

—Lord Byron

Let us love so well
Our work shall be sweeter for our love,
And still our love be sweeter for our work.

—Elizabeth Barret Browning