

ON SECRET SERVICE

True Stories of Experiences in the State, War, Treasury and Postoffice Departments by Col. Jasper Ewing Brady, Late Censor of Telegrams and Chief Signal Officer, U. S. A., Santiago de Cuba.

Written for the Deseret News.

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No. 14.—Mrs. Dodge, U. S. Secret Service.

CHENEY returned to the United States from his round the world trip for the government in December, 1897. He landed in San Francisco and lost no time making his way across the continent to Washington, where he made his report to the government. The president, secretaries of state, war and navy were all interested in this report and a conference was held at the White House the evening Cheney arrived. Briefly, but concisely, Cheney recited the results of his year's trip. Just as he was about to sail from Hongkong for home he had received a message directing him to make a trip to Manila and report on fleet and fortifications there. He knew that meant war with Spain. In making his report, he emphasized the weakness of the Spaniards in the far east. The morale of their army was poor, their navy was little better than a wreck. Cheney was mildly taken

was blown in the air, and as there were plenty of vessels in the harbor, some of it must have alighted on their decks. Sailors of the ship had probably swept it overboard, but there was a chance that Cheney would find out. The Ward line steamer City of Washington was there on the night of the explosion, and was still in the harbor. Cheney boarded this ship and found not one piece of this cement but a dozen, some of them as large as a man's head. One place he took with him. In his own mind he was satisfied; but he wanted proof beyond peradventure. If the Maine had been torpedoed her keel would be bent up; if, however, the explosion of one of her own magazines caused the harvest of death and destruction the keel would be bent outwards. Cheney secured a crew and, putting on a diving suit, went down to see. It was a new experience to him, but he was equal to it. Sigsbee had carefully explained to him the location of magazines, etc. of the vessel, and with him to the ship. The waters of Havana harbor are black as night and the bottom is soft mud. All one afternoon Cheney worked around this

ish army be ready for such a movement? This was the information Cheney wanted to get. He had numerous civilian employees and officers of the army under his command, but just the right person did not appear. He was not hampered for funds and could pay any price for this information. He offered a thousand dollars or more to several men. Three of them tried it, but the Spaniards were very alert around Havana and naught came of the attempts. The first man got to Batabano all right, and then his feet became cold and he came back. The second tried to get in from the sea side, but failed. The third man, a night watchman named Murphy, landed at Matanzas and approached Havana from the east. He got in the city, but nothing more was ever heard of him. Presumably he was captured, tried as a spy and shot. Spain treated spies differently than America—she shot them. We kept them prisoners, fed them on the fat of the land and after three months let them go. One morning, about the 10th of May, Cheney sat in his office in the Tampa Bay hotel, when a card was brought to him.

"Miss Frances Dodge," he read. "Wonder what a woman wants with me?" Show her in. "You are Col. Cheney?" The colonel looked up and found himself gazing into a pair of very pretty black eyes. The face and figure that went with them, too, were beautiful. The woman looked like a Spaniard. "Yes, I am Col. Cheney. What can I do for you, Miss Dodge?" The young lady she wasn't over 25 quickly handed him a letter. "Sit down, won't you, please?" he said, as he broke the seal. Miss Dodge seated herself demurely and waited for the colonel to finish the letter. He read it through once, and then again. The letter was from the secretary of war, introducing Miss Frances Dodge, who was desirous of entering the secret service, and who the secretary thought could be of great use to Col. Cheney. Cheney had used women in his detective service company many times, and they had done good work, but in war he failed to see where they could be used. And this one, this pretty little dark-haired and black-eyed bit of femininity—what could she do in this conflict of men?

"So you want to enter the secret service, Miss Dodge?" said Cheney, with an almost patronizing smile. "Yes, colonel, I do." The answer was tense and earnest and the voice soft and low. "And what do you want to do, pray?" "I want to go to Havana." Her red lips parted, showing even white teeth, and she leaned forward slightly. "You want to go where?" almost gasped Cheney. "Havana, señor."

"And what do you want to do there?" said the colonel, noting the Spanish used. "Señor el colonel," answered Miss Dodge, rising and leaning over his desk, "you want information about Havana; you have sent men and they have failed; now send a woman, she won't fail. Wait, please, colonel," seeing Cheney was about to interrupt. "My mother was a full-blooded Spaniard, and I speak the language like a Castilian. From my looks I could be taken for a native; that is in my favor. Now, Col. Cheney, please excuse me, I can't do less than fall, and that costs you nothing. If I succeed, pay me as my services deserve. You see, colonel, need the money." "But, my dear Miss Dodge," expostulated the colonel, "think of the danger attendant upon such an undertaking! Men have failed as you say—"

"A woman hasn't," interrupted the lady, "and besides, colonel, I am alone in the world. I'm a newspaper woman and am used to taking care of myself." "Have you talked this over with the secretary of war, Miss Dodge?" "Yes, I have, and that letter to you is the result. He wouldn't have written the letter if he hadn't believed in me, would he?" "That's logic. How do you propose getting into Havana in case you go?"

"All I ask is to be put ashore 10 miles west of Havana, and I'll do the rest. By May 30 I'll be back here, Col. Cheney, with the information you want." "Miss Dodge," he said, after thinking hard over the proposition, "I'll give you the chance. You may leave tonight for Key West. A vessel will be there to land you where you desire. You know the risk you are willing to take it. If you get the information we want I'll pay you \$2,500."

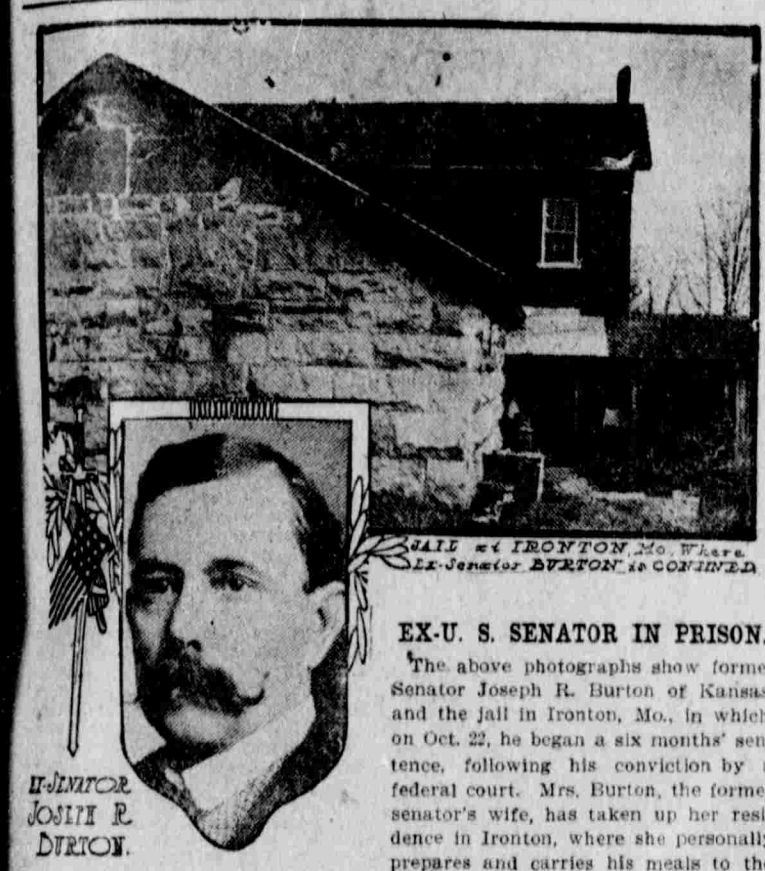
"Then you may have the warrant drawn, Col. Cheney, because I'll be back here to claim it 20 days from now." "I hope you will," Yarahah, Russia—and your name was Bradley. "Yes, count, that's all true. But I was then busily engaged trying to keep out of the way of your Third Section." "You succeeded, I see," replied the count. "Yes, but it was a close shave." Cheney and Yarmoleff thus resumed their former plan of friendship.

Information was wanted by Spain as to just what the American army was going to do, and numbers of spies were turned loose in Tampa and other points of concentration. It was Cheney's duty to prevent this, and he and his men were kept busy. His organization was perfect, and not a man or woman arrived at Tampa that Cheney did not know about. Many arrests were made and the prisoners sent to Fort McPherson, Atlanta, for safe keeping. Tomas Estrada Palma, afterwards president of Cuba, reported to Cheney and assisted him in his work. Many other Cuban patriots, but they were generally all title and no work.

One night, Cheney heard of the existence of a Spanish club at Yon City, and, taking one man with him, went over and broke it up. There were about 40 Spaniards in the club when Cheney and his man broke in the door. Quite as a dash Cheney covered them with his six-shooter. His man did likewise and they drove the Spaniards into a corner and held them there. With one hand holding a revolver pointed at the crowd, Cheney "phoned to Gen. Eppinger for troops. In 15 minutes a company of regular infantry arrived and arrested the prisoners off to jail. Some of Tampa's most prominent citizens were caught in that raid.

The war board in Washington was playing battledore and shuttlecock with the army. One day it was going to Havana, the next to Porto Rico, Santiago or Cienfuegos, or where-not. Cervera was at large on the high seas, and until he was corralled the army couldn't go any place. And this war board wanted information about all these places, and Cheney was told to get it. With these multitudinous details piling on his shoulders his time was occupied for about 20 hours out of each 24.

In his own mind he was convinced that the army movement would be either against Havana or Santiago. Of the latter place the government had a good deal of information, but of Havana they were a bit shy. In a general way they knew, of course, of the Morro and Cabanas forts, but of the movement of troops, etc., since the war broke out they were ignorant. Havana could be attacked by the navy from the sea, and an army could come in from the rear of the city from Bata-



EX-U. S. SENATOR IN PRISON.

The above photographs show former Senator Joseph R. Burton of Kansas, and the jail in Ironton, Mo., in which, on Oct. 22, he began a six months' sentence, following his conviction by a federal court. Mrs. Burton, the former senator's wife, has taken up her residence in Ironton, where she personally prepares and carries his meals to the incarcerated statesman.

task by the secretaries of war and navy for his conclusions, but subsequent events proved he was right. To Cheney destruction of Montevideo's fleet by Dewey was not such a great event, because Cheney had been aboard every one of the Spanish ships; he had seen and decay, lack of discipline and ammunition. One real good American bulletproof could blow the whole Spanish fleet out of the water. But the Spanish fleet, plenty of them, most of which had been down for years and were worthless. And the forts were in exactly the same condition as the fleet. As has been remarked, the secretaries were a little inclined to be skeptical, but the calm, deep-thinking, brown-eyed president knew Col. Cheney was telling the truth. The president did not say much at the conference; he smoked and listened, but the next day, by special appointment, Col. Cheney landed at the White House and again went over the most salient points of his report. The president knew and said there would be war, and when it did come, Col. Cheney was to be in charge of the army secret service.

"I am at your command, Mr. President," quietly said Cheney. "I know it, colonel, and I thank you," replied the president, shaking his hand at Cheney.

Cheney returned to his office in Chicago and Guthrie and Loneragan were employed to see him. A quiet dinner was discussed at the colonel's apartment, after which Cheney listened to their report. Everything was in ship-shape as he knew it would be. The Spanish was being transacted as he could have it done, and he said: "Now that you fellows have your hands in so well, you can just keep them there. I'm not going to resume active charge of the work. I'll have my office here and will be glad to consult with you. But my active days in this concern are over."

Guthrie looked solemn, but Loneragan just grinned and said: "You make me smile, Cheney. You'll live up to this work when you're dead, and not before. It's in your blood." Loneragan had a pretty good faculty of intuition and knew where Cheney was going. Guthrie said nothing, but was doing a heap of thinking.

All right, boys, think as you like, but wait and see. Public events moved apace: Spain was getting more and more arrogant. Cuba, people were clamoring for the president to act; but the great man of the White House was not ready. He was getting ready, however, as rapidly as he could. He knew more than the people, and the people must wait. Then came that memorable day in February, when some Spanish dispatch went 200-odd American sailors to their doom. That was the deciding straw: when there was a faint hope that diplomacy might avert the crisis, but with the blowing up of the Maine all hope of peace fled. The country was at war from end to the other.

Cheney heard of the blowing up of the Maine in his apartment. He knew that that meant and packed his suitcase. "What you going now, kennel?" said just before the preparations for Washington, Jeff, and then some more. I'll get a telegram in the morning." And he did.

A day later he again stood in the presence of the president, and that afternoon he started for Havana. The court of inquiry would meet and render a decision, but the president wanted quicker information than would be allowed by red tape. Cheney reached Havana four days later. The Maine was blown up and Cheney went to work. Only two men, Gen. Lee, consul-general, and Capt. Sigsbee, of the Maine, knew his identity, or what purpose he was there. Cheney's mind after he had his talk with Sigsbee, and that was that the under her hull. She had been an armed or Cuban had touched off the mine, he wanted proof.

Theoretically he knew something of ship construction as applied to modern warships. There were two hulls, an inner and an outer shell, and the space between was filled with some substance. The Maine was a ship of this type. If the explosion came from the bow, it would all be on the bottom of the hull. If the explosion came from



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policy," said Miss Dodge. "To make a faint from Matanzas, to occupy the Spaniards who expected them that way, and have good-sized forces approach from the west and south." Cheney was astonished at the military knowledge of this young lady. She was even planning the campaign. "Yes, but, Miss Dodge, how did you get away after securing all this information?" "That was where the fun came in, colonel. The day after I reached Havana I began to look for Cuban sympathizers. There were plenty of them there, but they were keeping mighty dark. Every day or so a number of them were apprehended and shot down by Spanish troops. It was awful, colonel." Miss Dodge shuddered and paused for a minute. "One of the waiters in the hotel was a sympathizer. I found it out and cautiously let him know who I was. He was game to the core, and was good assistance to me. After I had all the information I thought necessary I began to plan my 'get away' as I believe it is called. There was one young Spanish officer named Eduardo Beltran who fairly haunted my footsteps. He was very insistent and made the most violent love I ever saw. The American fleet was outside the harbor mouth blockading the city, and I knew I must reach the ships in

son I arranged with Jose, my waiter friend, to be on the wharf about 9 o'clock that night. He was to have another man with him. I would walk down there with Beltran and when the time was ripe they were to bind and gag Beltran and then row me out to the fleet. It worked beautifully. Beltran came, as usual, and was as sweet as could be. I proposed the walk and he accepted. The town was very gay, and, laughing and chatting, we passed through the crowds to the dock. At just the right moment Jose and his friend appeared. In an instant El Teniente Beltran was bound and gagged and a helpless prisoner. The boat was there and we climbed in. Jose brought Beltran along, too, because he saw if he didn't, and they returned to Havana; their lives would pay the forfeit. It was a good idea to capture a prisoner of war." Cheney was absorbed in the narrative, and Miss Dodge's bright eyes were dancing with excitement as she resumed her story. "The harbor was pretty well lighted up by the constant play of the searchlights on the Morro and Cabanas. Several ships in the harbor also threw their lights around the shore line. About three miles out was the United States fleet, and that was our objective. Carefully we rowed along the shore with muffled oars, and almost

to sea. All was well so far. When we were out about three-quarters of a mile the light from Cabanas picked us up. They turned loose two big guns on us and for a moment my heart stood still. I was afraid, colonel, awfully afraid. But those two men rowed all the harder, and as Spanish marksmanship is proverbially bad we escaped. Mr. Beltran was in the bottom of the boat, bound but not gagged, and how he did swear! The Eagle was on the blockading line nearest to us, and she was working her searchlight. She had heard the firing and knew some one or something was coming out. Finally she picked us up. I was sitting in the prow of the boat waving a small American flag, and presently I heard, 'Aby, there!' Jose answered the hail and soon we were alongside. The first thing the officer of the deck said, when he saw me, was, 'My God, it's a woman!' Strange, colonel, how men say that when a woman suddenly appears in unexpected places. "Well," continued Miss Dodge, smiling, "there's not much more to tell. The Eagle signaled the flagship and she was directed to take us to Key West. Beltran was as sour as a lemon when he was kept on board a prisoner. Jose and his friends returned to Havana. The next day we were in Key West. Beltran was transferred

there more becoming clothes, I came here. That's all, colonel; have I earned the \$2,500?" "You surely have, Miss Dodge, and tomorrow morning you shall have your draft. You are wonderful—wonderful!" "No, colonel, I'm not wonderful. I'm—just a woman." At 9 o'clock the next morning Col. Cheney gave Miss Dodge a sub-treasury warrant for \$2,500. Her eyes sparkled as she took the warrant and she said: "Col. Cheney, before I left for Havana I told you the truth in every particular but one. I said my mother and father were dead. My father is, but mother is alive and lives with me in a little place up on the Hudson. I bought the place myself and still owe \$1,200 on it. It was such slow work on the newspaper that I determined to try for something big. My managing editor wrote me a letter to the secretary of war and then I came here. Now, just see what this \$2,500 means to me." "But if you had failed, Miss Dodge?" "The great Richelieu said, 'In thy bright lexicon of youth, there is no such word as fail,' and I'm still a youth, Col. Cheney." The look, stark laces were yet with tears of joy; the woman was