

GERMAN SPY SYSTEM

IN ENGLAND COMPLETELY BROKEN UP MONTHS AGO.

The British Government Had Been Cognizant of Every Move of German Spies For the Past Three Years.

Even Mrs. Salrey Gamp seems to have had an objection to spies. For in 'Martin Chuzzlewit' we read this exclamation:

'And I can feel for them as has their feelings tried; but I am not a Hooshan or a Proochan, and consequently cannot suffer spies to be set over me.'

If it be not unseemly for a nation to chuckle during one of the greatest crises of its life, a vast chuckle will certainly go up from the British nation when it reads the Press Bureau's report on the government's way of dealing with the German spies in England.

It is a really exhilarating story of long continued, laborious, and expensive trickery completely seen through by its intended victims and then quietly allowed to go on according to its will with the illusion of its own success until the proper moment came for sweeping it all away at one stroke as a housemaid sweeps away a year's handiwork of a whole colony of spiders.

Since 1911, at any rate, the German government has taken extraordinary trouble to find out everything about the defenses of Great Britain that ought to be kept from any possible invader. Perhaps, however, we should not say extraordinary, for ever since the time of Frederick the Great the importance of spying has been a special article of faith with Prussian commanders and governments.

Howbeit, while the German government's employees went about their spying here, our home office, working with the war office and the admiralty, stood over them and watched their plans as an unseen adult watches children playing under a window. They were mostly left at large, but care was taken that they should do little harm, if any. 'In spite of enormous efforts,' says the Press Bureau's report, 'and lavish expenditure of money by the enemy, little valuable information passed.'

Then the war came, and the work of the home office was simple. It had already as it came to see the needs of the case, armed itself with one new act necessary for effectual action. In a couple of days it asked for and obtained a record. Then it instantly arrested a score of those against whom it knew most. It took care that among the interned prisoners of war there should be included the 200 others whom it distinctly suspected, and also the far larger number whom it did not absolutely know to be safe. The whole staff of German spies, which for three years had been utilized by the success of our detectives, was broken up — so utterly broken up that even on August 21st the German general staff did not know that our expeditionary force had left England. So much about everybody in England had been talking of, it under his breath, and though one English newspaper, at any rate, had been guilty of letting out the fact in print.

There is, naturally, a touch of glee about the official report of this triumph of good gamekeeping. To have succeeded in keeping the poachers at bay for three years, letting them bag and bring, and then clapping them under lock and key, is enough to give a certain measure of honest professional pride. But the report itself adds a warning that, though the conspiracy as a whole has been stamped out, it is possible that an untrusting spy may remain here and there, and also possible that new spies may make their way in by way of neutral countries.

On this account we must all keep I

our eyes open, which, as the Press Bureau reminds us, does not mean keeping our mouths open. From the people who have talked most on public platforms about the ubiquity of German spies in general the home office has, on experiment, failed to get the slightest help in catching a single German spy in the field.