

# CURRENT TOPICS

**C**HRISTIAN RUDOWITZ was recently arrested at Chicago and taken before a United States commissioner on charges preferred by representatives of the Russian government. Rudowitz was charged with murder, arson and various other crimes. An Associated Press dispatch says: "Rudowitz was an acknowledged member of the social democratic labor party, a Russian revolutionary organization with branches in all parts of the world whose avowed purpose is the improvement of political conditions in the Russian empire. He is charged with having murdered or participated in the murder of a man, his wife and a married daughter in one of the Baltic provinces in 1906. The next year he came to the United States and from the west went to work in a large manufacturing establishment. At the hearing in Chicago testimony was offered both by Rudowitz and his witnesses that the order for killing these persons was issued on the ground that they were spies; not that they traveled around the country in this capacity, but that they gave the names of persons taking part in revolutionary movements directed against the government."

**U**NITED STATES Commissioner Foote upheld the Russian government's demand and ordered that Rudowitz be extradited. An appeal was taken, however, to Secretary of State Root. Secretary Root refused the extradition because the offense charged comes under the general prohibition against extradition in the treaty with Russia which declares that if it be made to appear that extradition is sought with the view to try to punish for an offense of a political character surrender shall not take place.

**A**PARTICULARLY interesting story is told of the manner in which the good news was broken to the fugitive from Russian "justice." The Associated Press says: "The good news from Washington was slow in reaching Christian Rudowitz. There was no one at the jail where the prisoner had been confined who could speak Russian, and attempts to reach his lawyers with the Associated Press bulletin found them absent. Meanwhile the bailiffs and guards already in possession of the news bulletin, were fairly aching to impart the good tidings to the man most affected. Rudowitz gazed stolidly at them. Presently one of them had an inspiration. He resorted to pantomime. He imitated the click of a telegraph instrument by tapping on the bars of the cell; then he pointed out doors, seized the Russian's hands, grinned broadly, jumped up and down and patted the prisoner on the back. Slowly the latter broke into a smile and pointing interrogatively to the east—Washington—grunting, 'Huh?' Whereat the guards nodded their heads vigorously and the indications were that Rudowitz at least comprehended that something fortunate had happened to him."

**T**HE WHITE STAR liner, Republic, was rammed by the ship Florida and sank. The passengers were taken from the Republic on board the Florida and later transferred to another vessel. Captain Sealby of the Republic and other officers displayed great courage. The captain was the last one to leave the sinking vessel. The collision occurred in a dense fog. Mrs. E. Lynch of Boston, and W. J. Mooney of Langdon, N. D., were killed. Several passengers were injured. Many striking stories are told of the bravery showed by officers and passengers, marked courage being displayed by the women.

**W**IRELESS TELEGRAPHY played an important part in this collision and next to Captain Sealby, Jack Binn, the wireless telegraph operator on the Republic, is the hero of the day. The New York World says: "Over and above every other feature of the disaster stood the marvelous arm of the wireless telegraph, with its message of new hope to those who shall hereafter go down to the sea, the treacherous

and dreaded sea, in ships. Scarcely had the shock of collision died away on the Republic ere her heroic Marconi wireless operator, J. H. Binns, whose nerves had been steeled by his experiences in the earthquakes in Jamaica and in Italy, had taken his post to click out the magic letters 'C. Q. D.,' which sent out through the air for hundreds of miles in every direction the warning of a disaster. For 'C. Q. D.' in the wireless code is the urgent notification to all ships in the wireless zone that some ship is in danger. All business is suspended in every wireless telegraph office as soon as that signal comes flashing its thrilling message down from the upper air. The operators, in suspense, wait until their answering signal is responded to. Then the location of the vessel and the cause of the distress are sent out. And so it was yesterday. At 6:40 a. m. the Marconi operator at the wireless station at Siasconset, Mass., was startled by the faint calling of some steamer using the Marconi signal of distress. With bated breath he dropped the key and listened. A moment later came the sign which indicated it was the Republic, of the White Star line, which had sailed from here Friday afternoon, with a full cabin list, for the Mediterranean. The operator on the Republic reported the ship was in dire distress, having been rammed by a steamer the identity of which had not at that time been ascertained. The collision, the operator on the Republic said, had occurred while the vessel was proceeding slowly in a dense fog about twenty-six miles south of Nantucket lightship, in latitude 40.17, longitude 70. The extent of the damage, the operator said, had not been fully determined, but it was known that the engine room was full of water. But by means of the water-tight compartments the boat could remain afloat some time. The Republic's broadcast call by wireless for help was dispersed all over the eastern part of the Atlantic. It was heard by the Baltic, her sister White Star ship, hurrying here from Europe. It was heard by the operator on board the French liner, La Lorraine, also bound to New York on her westward trip from Gaul."

**I**N THE HOUSE of representatives Jack Binns was honored. Representative Boutell of Illinois, addressing the house said: "Mr. Speaker, I rise to a question of personal privilege. During the last two days we have been reminded once more of the perils that beset those 'that go down to the sea in ships, and do business in greater waters.' The accident that befell the steamers Republic and Florida last Saturday found heroes ready for the heroic work demanded of officers, men and passengers. I believe that every one who read the accounts of the collision and the jeopardy in which occupants of the two ships were placed, and the way in which news reached the rescuers, felt that there was one silent actor in the tragedy whose name should be immortalized. I refer to the Marconi operator of the Republic, who had the cool head and steady hand to send forth on the willing wings of the air the message of disaster that saved hundreds of lives and the message of deliverance that relieved thousands of anxious hearts. His name is John R. Binns. He is known to several members of this house. Jack Binns has given the world a splendid illustration of the heroism that dwells on seas in many who are doing quiet, unnoticed work in life."

**C**APTAIN JOHNSON of the ship Seneca, one of the vessels that went to the relief of the Republic, tells the story of Captain Sealby's heroism in this way: "As each stateroom would fill with water the boat would go a little lower into the sea. Finally it became apparent that the Republic could stay on the surface only a few minutes longer. It was then decided to transfer the crew, and while we stood with our searchlight the work of removing the men was accomplished. Only two men, the captain and Third Officer R. Williams hung on. Captain Sealby took a blue light, the signal of distress from a box and placed it beside him on the bridge. He smashed it as a signal that the water had reached him. Then he climbed up

the rigging forward and placed another one there. He climbed up on the shrouds above it. He told Williams to leave the ship and the mate then jumped into the sea. A life boat, swinging on the davits of the Gresham was lowered and took him in. It was one of the prettiest and most picturesque rescues that I have ever seen. We had scarcely pulled him aboard when the second blue light came in contact with the water and lighted up. Captain Sealby hung on until the ship went down under him, easily and smoothly. The Gresham then lowered a lifeboat and brought him in. We were nine miles south by east of the Nantucket Shoals Light when the water finally swept over the Republic. We started off again at a record clip, and at daybreak this morning, when off Vinyard Haven, Captain Sealby and his crew were brought over to the Seneca."

**H**ENRY SAVAGE LANDOR, the famous English explorer, who was on the vessel, paid this tribute to the courage and helpfulness of the women passengers: "The American women were magnificent in their courage. It was a spectacle ennobling to humanity. I had a view over the side of the Baltic when gray haired women and beautiful girls were lifted from the lifeboats after being tossed on the waves. I did not see a tear. They came aboard with hope shining in their faces. Many had lost all, but they were cheery. There was one woman, the Countess Pasolini, the American-born wife of an Italian nobleman. I saw her stagger up the gangway, her night garments drenched by the waves. Without changing her clothing she hastened to the immigrants' quarters and nursed the children and women until she was exhausted. Thus she spent the night."

**T**HE "MARVELOUS tale of the wreck" is told by a writer in the New York World in this way: "An imperilled great vessel's sharp cry for help breaking in, two hours before sunrise, on a stream of commercial 'wireless.' To any part of the world outside the stricken steamship Republic that was the beginning. In the hours that followed, such a story of sea fact was unfolded through the wonderful service of the Marconi system as sea fiction has yet to equal. There are technical questions of interest involved in this tale of ocean collision and of miraculously averted wholesale tragedy. Did the submarine signal apparatus in the pilot-room of the Republic fail to give warning of the Florida's approach? And since the piercing of the Republic's engine room by the Florida's steel prow seems to have been comparable to the driving of a knife into a man's heart, what is to be done to relieve henceforth any modern ship from vulnerability like that here revealed? But matters of construction will be discussed in order in steamship offices and builders' yards. At this moment and everywhere the story is the thing. That which is absolutely new in the narrative is the working of the wireless. The shock of collision—passengers have been awakened by it many times before. The first rush of the panic-stricken—it was inevitable and is always theatrical. The quick command of the situation by a competent captain and disciplined crew—fortunately for the annals of sea-going this is but an item in which expectation was fulfilled. But the voices out of the air and the fog. From the thick mists, suddenly, the Florida emerged to deal its destructive blow. The thrust delivered, the sharp prow disappeared behind a gray veil as mysteriously as it had appeared. Then, while the Republic still reeled from the blow, began the succession of those wireless messages in which hardly less of mystery remains because we know that men send and control them at will. These were the voices: First, of appeal from the wounded ship; then, of response from comrades of the deep; after a brief time, to the world at large, blessed assurance of everybody's safety on board; at length, in continuous installments, the description of passengers transferred and the toll of men and boats standing by. A 'romance of the sea' was this? The phrase is tame. It was a unique