

THE PIGEON MADE A BANKER

MORE THAN A CENTURY AGO, when news traveled slowly, by mail or courier, and there was no wireless, telephone or airplane service, a young German banker was astonishing the London financial community by transactions apparently based on an uncanny foreknowledge of coming events. He never was caught off guard. At that time Napoleon Bonaparte was trying to conquer all of Europe, and his military activities were reflected in the market, sometimes disastrously. But when a Napoleonic victory caused a crash, always this one young banker had liquidated in time, often only hours before. Then, just before the market took an upward swing, he would buy at rock-bottom prices. For eighteen years the financial world marveled at him.

When the news of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo reached London, every stockbroker was taken unawares except the smiling young German. He had cornered the

market several hours before the news came in! In the belief that he must have supernatural powers, an angry crowd stormed his office, threatening to lynch him.

To save his life, the young man had to reveal the source of his uncanny information. He explained that his family long ago had established a daily pigeon air-mail service between all the branches of its banking business. Daily each office dispatched one hundred birds carrying letters, stock quotations, news bulletins, and various reports in code. By this means he had the news of Waterloo twenty-four hours before the rest of London.

Thus Nathan Rothschild, wizard of finance, cornered the market, pocketing \$100,000,000, and firmly entrenching the House of Rothschild as the world's most powerful banking institution, thanks to the first daily air-mail service!—*Adapted from the "Don't You Believe It" Program Mutual Broadcasting System.*

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