

ADVENTURES of the WORLD'S GREAT DETECTIVES

By George Barton

The Great Bullion Robbery

An Episode in the Life of Inspector Sweeney of Scotland Yard.

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(This is one of a new series of stories concerning adventures that have occurred in the lives of the world's greatest detectives. Mr. Barton has gathered his material from many sources, but in some cases imaginary names have been substituted for real ones, simply as a matter of justice to the innocent descendants of cut-throats mentioned in the narrative. Permissible liberties have been taken in the construction and arrangement of these fact-stories, but in all that is essential they may be regarded as human documents of unusual interest and value.—The Editor.)

One September morning several decades ago, when the express officials lifted out the bullion which had been brought to Boulogne by way of the Southeastern railway, they noticed that the bags were not quite as heavy as usual. They were opened and found to contain nothing but shot. Thus, hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of gold had mysteriously disappeared in the journey between London and Boulogne.

The amazing part of it was that almost superhuman means had been taken to protect the precious dust. The gold was sent in the guards' van, packed in iron boxes, each of which was deposited in a safe with a Chubb lock. The safes each had two locks, and naturally there was a separate key for each one. These keys were in triplicate and were in the possession of the trusted officers of the company. One set was kept by the traffic superintendent in London, another by the head of the Folkestone railway office, and the third by the captain of the Folkestone-Boulogne boat.

Each of these men was beyond suspicion. They were all willing to swear that the bags had been sealed in the usual form, duly fastened and locked. How had the shot been substituted for the gold? And where? No one could answer these questions. It seemed like black magic.

James Sweeney of Scotland Yard was put on the case, and associated with him were a number of the best detectives in England. The investigators first visited the railway office at Folkestone and made a careful examination of the premises. That brought no results. After that there was a second and more careful scrutiny of the railway car. One of the finds here was an old carpet bag.

That was a beginning. The Scotland Yard men took the bag and began one of those systematic searches in which they are excelled only by the secret police of Paris. Many shopkeepers had sold many bags within the period of time under investigation. Some were sold to citizens with whom they were acquainted, while others were disposed of to strangers whose features they could describe only with difficulty. However, the work of "rapping out" these vague clues was started and carried to a conclusion. It involved weeks of patient labor.

In the meantime it became increasingly evident that the robbery was the work of skilled professionals. Little items of information picked up here and there proved that the scheme had been carried out by a gang of thieves. Finally, enough was learned to convince the detectives that the thieves had secured a wax impression of a set of the real keys, which enabled them to manufacture a set of false ones. But even with this, it

was necessary to secure the assistance of someone employed by the railway company.

At this stage of the game one of the carpet bags was traced to a man named Peter Agar. That, in itself, sounds commonplace. But the importance of it becomes evident when it is stated that the portrait of Mr. Agar occupied a place of honor in the Rogues' gallery at Scotland Yard. Copies of the picture were made and sent all along the line. The guards and ticket collectors immediately recognized it as that of one of the men who had traveled in the train on the day the gold had disappeared. Two things could be done. One was to arrest Agar at once and depend upon getting his assistance in bringing his pals to justice. The other was to shadow him in the hope of securing additional evidence that would result in recovering some of the gold and rounding up the gang. The second course was agreed upon. So a close espionage was kept upon the skilful and gentlemanly Mr. Agar with the intention of ultimately taking him into custody.

Just as the police were ready to pounce down upon the fellow, he upset all of their plans. He committed a fresh crime. And it was of a character that could not be ignored. He was caught uttering forged checks, and in wholesale quantities. An army of shopkeepers went after him and he was arrested, tried, convicted and sentenced to transportation for life. The detectives who had been after him for the great bullion robbery tried to get him to make a confession of that affair, but he only smiled and remarked that he had nothing to say for publication. They even tried, in a mild sort of way, the kind of persuasion that we call the third degree, but it was of no use. Agar shut up like a clam, merely saying that he was ready to take his punishment for the forged checks. He was sent away, and with him the only clue relating to the theft of the gold dust.

The affair was about to be cast into the limbo of unsolved mysteries when a note was received at the office of Captain Fraser, from a woman, who gave the name of Mrs. Kay. She said that if the police would call at her home she would give them some information that would interest them exceedingly.

It was the old story of revenge—and a woman's revenge at that. The officer who called on Mrs. Kay expected to hear of some petty offense, but instead of that she poured into his amazed ears the complete story of the great bullion robbery.

"Why do you tell this?" asked the officer.
"Because John Pierce has tried to cheat me out of my just dues."
"Your just dues?"
"Yes, the money that belonged to me—the money that was intended for the support of myself and my child."
"Perhaps," suggested the plainclothes man, "if you begin at the beginning we may come to a better understanding."
"Very well," was the response, "I can start by saying that the plan for the robbery was conceived by John Pierce."

It seems that Agar and Mrs. Kay lived together as husband and wife and that he had given her all of the details of the robbery. Pierce, at the time, was a clerk in a bucket shop. He had been concerned in several shady transactions and the possibility of the gold train appealed to him very strongly. But it was too big a job for him to undertake alone. So he sought the professional advice and assistance of Agar. That gentleman seized the suggestion with avidity.

The first step necessary was to win over one of the employees of the company. So they approached one of the guards named Burgess, who was usually in charge of the train carrying the gold. He fell in with the scheme and explained the methods of transportation.

As the gold was carried in the guard's van it was plain that the robbery would be easy when Burgess was on guard. The question was how to open the safes. The answer to that was plain enough—in get false keys in place of the real ones. Agar told



AT REDHILL TESTER WAS HANDED A PORTION OF THE GOLD.

his pals that he would have to get a wax impression of the real keys in order to make the duplicates.
"That's too bad," was the response, "the keys are kept in the office of the company."
"Then we'll have to get an accomplice in the office," was the cool remark.
And so the conspiracy, which had been deep enough, now became deeper. Another employee of the company succumbed to temptation. His name was Tester and he was in a position to lay his hands on the keys of the safes.

This fellow was employed in the Traffic department at London Bridge.



AGAR OPENED THE SAFE AND SECURED THE BULLION BAGS.



AT REDHILL TESTER WAS HANDED A PORTION OF THE GOLD.

He entered into the scheme with avidity. He reported to his pals that there were times when the safes were sent to Chubb's for repairs, and that, on these occasions, one of the keys was sent with the safes. Such an occasion arose very soon, and then Tester cleverly managed to abstract one of the keys; but there was still an impediment to the complete success of the conspiracy. As each of the safes had two locks, and the key to but one was sent to Chubb's, it was the second key that baffled Tester's best and worst efforts.

But what they failed to get by shrewdness came singularly enough by chance. One of the second keys was

always kept in the Folkestone office hanging in a little closet. Pierce ascertained this fact, and he hung about the office in the hope of getting his clutch on it. His opportunity came one morning the cupboard was empty, and Pierce, stepping into the office, which was vacant, grabbed the key and passed it to Agar, who had a handful of warm wax. He immediately took the impression of the key, returned it to Pierce, who put it back in its place, and the two of them left the office together without being detected.

The next thing to learn was when the large consignment of bullion would be dispatched. Tester obtained this

information. In the meantime the conspirators arranged their part of the scheme. Carpet bags were purchased and filled with shot which was intended to replace exactly the amount of gold taken from the bags. Agar more than once traveled up and down the line for the purpose of testing the false keys that he had manufactured with Pierce's assistance. Burgess admitted them to the guard's van, where they fitted and filed the keys until both worked easily in the lock of the safe.

Finally the great night of the enterprise arrived. The conspirators purchased tickets on the Southeastern train, boarded it and handed their bags, filled with shot, to the porters, who placed them in the guard's van. As the train was starting, Agar managed to get into the van with Burgess, while Pierce secured a seat in the first-class carriage. The industrious Agar began work at once. He opened the safe, secured the bullion bags, removed the gold, substituted the shot from the carpet bag, refastened and resealed the bullion bags and replaced them in the safe. The trick was partially turned. At Redhill Tester met the train and was handed a portion of the gold. The two other safes were robbed in the same manner as the first. When the train reached Folkestone the unsuspecting officials removed the safes, which were filled with shot, and not gold. The rascals went on to Dover, having previously obtained tickets to Overt. Later on they returned to London unob-

served, and little by little disposed of the stolen gold.

The burglary, as already stated, was first discovered at Boulogne. Mrs. Kay said that when Agar was sentenced to transportation for life and knew that he could not escape, he handed to Pierce forty-five thousand dollars, which he requested to be settled on Mrs. Kay for the support of herself and her child. Pierce paid her a few small sums and then calmly confiscated the remainder of this fortune. She came to the police in great rage and disclosed the story of the robbery as it has been here related.

Agar, who was in Newgate, heard how Pierce had mistreated Mrs. Kay and he eagerly turned state's evidence, as a consequence of this, Pierce, Burgess, Tester and several others were arrested, convicted and sentenced to life terms in prison. The company only recovered a very small portion of the stolen money.

This true story points a moral that will not be overlooked by the discriminating reader. It is that crime, even viewed from a sordid, worldly standpoint, does not pay. Pierce and Agar had already spent many years in jail and their final crime meant that the remainder of their existence should be lived out behind prison bars. Every one associated with the robbery of the Southeastern railway suffered life-long scars—scars that might have healed, but that nevertheless left their mark on the victim.

Students of criminology are unanimous in the belief that crime is the least profitable of all human undertakings. "Easy money" seems to carry its own punishment. Even though the crook makes what he calls a "get away," he suffers constantly from the fear of detection. That comes sooner or later and then comes the misery of arrest and the haunting fear that either he or his wife may be in what is called a "strait." Attempts to care for them with tainted money usually end as did the Pierce-Agar compact. Honesty, therefore, is not only the best, but the most comfortable policy.

Dr. J. H. McDonald, of the Brunswick street church, Fredericton, is having his vacation. He thinks St. John is as good a place as he can find for rest, and will make this city headquarters of the Convention. Mrs. McDonald is with him.

Rev. S. W. Cummings, first Baptist church, Lowell, Mass., is to have Miss Margaret West, of Moncton, N. B., as assistant. Miss West, who is a graduate of the Gordon School, Boston, has taken a prominent part in U. B. M. U. work in the Maritime Provinces, and will doubtless be a valuable helper of the Lowell pastor.

Rev. J. H. MacDonald, D. D., of Fredericton, has received notice that he is elected a member of the Knox Club, of Edinburgh, Scotland. This honor comes to him in recognition of the service he rendered the cause of Protestantism in the discussion which he recently conducted on the St. Temere device and kindred topics. He has also received notice that his name is included in the list of Vice-Presidents of the Associated Councils in the British and German Empires for Fostering Friendly International Relations. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the President of the organization, and Dr. Clifford one of the members of its executive. He deserves it all.

To have the crust of tart or pumpkin pie is the party on the pie and put it in a cool, morning. Then fill an crust will be a rich and

A fruit ice is easily quart of fruit through a cupful of water. Mix with this three fresh eggs, and stant.

If brine in which is used copiously in walls, there will be fo

PRIZE WRECKER OF FARMERS' BANK

Conservatives' Effort to Make Minister of Finance Responsible for the Failure Amusing in Face of Fullsome Laudation of the Plunderer.

(Toronto Globe). The men who wrecked the Farmers Bank were its first president, Dr. Beattie Nesbitt, the Conservative boss of Toronto, a member of the legislature, and afterwards, on Sir James Whitney's appointment, registrar of West Toronto, and his general manager, Mr. Travers, who claims that Nesbitt tempted him into the speculations that destroyed the bank. Nesbitt and Travers were neither political nor personal friends of Mr. Fielding, and it was with reluctance that the minister gave the Farmers Bank the right to do business after Nesbitt became its president. He caused special inquiries to be made as to the bona fides of the promoters. Among the directors were Col. R. B. Madenham, of Cornwall; Col. Munro, of Embury; John Gilchrist, of Toronto; Mr. Neely, M. P.

and other substantial and entirely reputable men.

The one doubtful man was the president, who is now a fugitive from justice. Mr. Oiler, M. P., says he told Mr. Fielding that the persons in control of the bank were not "worthy." In the light of later events this was no doubt meant to be a warning against Nesbitt and Travers, but neither Mr. Oiler nor any other person has stated that he warned Mr. Fielding against these two men. As a matter of fact, no Toronto Conservative member in 1908 would have cared to arouse the hostility of Dr. Beattie Nesbitt, M. P. As recently as 1908, when Travers and he were preparing to loot the bank, the Mail and Empire gave him the following certificate of character on the occasion of his candidature for the mayoralty of Toronto:

"Vote for Nesbitt. He is the man that Toronto needs at the head of its affairs in 1908. The finest, most vigorous character that has appeared in Toronto's municipal politics for years is Dr. Beattie Nesbitt. We need a man of Dr. Nesbitt's forceful personality not only to push to realization the great undertakings that have been so long dreamt about, but also to protect the city from deals that are being promoted by interests of which the Globe is the journalistic spokesman." Still later, at a time when Nesbitt and Travers needed money to go into the Keeley Mine speculation, which wrecked the bank beyond recovery, Colonel Matheson, the provincial treasurer, acting on the pressure of party friends, increased the deposit of the province in the bank from \$10,000 to \$35,000. Contemporaneously, the Toronto World got a loan of \$10,000 and

Beattie Nesbitt a loan of \$25,000. It is understood that Travers wrote to Colonel Matheson, telling him of these loans. This would seem to indicate some connection between the pressure applied to the provincial treasurer by officials of the World to increase the Farmers Bank deposit and the loan made by the Farmers Bank to the World.

The political associates of Beattie Nesbitt are now trying to hold Mr. Fielding responsible for the failure of the Farmers Bank because he permitted it to open its doors in 1908, at a time when it had an excellent chance to do business. The grounds of the complaint against Mr. Fielding is that he was told the men in control of the bank were not worthy. Yet, almost two years afterwards, the Mail and Empire, the chief Conservative organ, told the people of Toronto that Dr. Beattie Nesbitt, at that time president of the bank, was worthy to be mayor of Toronto, and Colonel Matheson, provincial treasurer, thought the bank was worthy to be trusted with the funds of the people of Ontario.

If the Mail and Empire, intimately acquainted as it was with Beattie Nesbitt's character, thought him worthy to be mayor, and Col. Matheson believed the bank a safe deposit for the funds of the people of Ontario, what possible warrant could Mr. Fielding have had in 1908 for refusing Nesbitt and associates like Mr. Neely, M. P., Colonel MacLennan, Colonel Munro, Dr. Grover and others the right to do business? Must not a large share of the blame for the destruction of the Farmers Bank rest upon the party friends of Beattie Nesbitt,

and particularly the Mail and Empire, which praised the plunderer and recommended that he be elected mayor? If the Mail and Empire did this innocently in 1908, why does it seek to attack odium to the act of the minister of finance in 1908, when he gave the bank of which Nesbitt was president, and which had apparently complied with the law, the right to do business?

The shareholders of the Farmers Bank are in deep enough trouble through the misdeeds of the former Tory "boss" of Toronto, whose escape from the province has never been satisfactorily explained, without having their misfortunes made a political football.

THE BAPTIST MINISTERS

(Maritime Baptist) Dr. W. L. Archibald preached in Kentville, N. S., last Sunday.
Rev. H. G. Mellick, Lawrenceville, N. S., is away on vacation.
Rev. G. O. Gates, D. D., of Westmount, Montreal, and Mrs. Gates, were in Truro last week.
Rev. C. T. Clark preached in the Charlotte street church, West St. John, last Sunday.
The Tabernacle church, Halifax, has extended a call to Rev. E. E. Daley, of Truro.
Rev. C. R. McNally, New London, Conn., is in Fredericton for a fortnight's vacation.
Rev. Kenneth McLennan has resigned the Plaster Rock, N. B., pastorate.
Rev. Mr. Nelly, of Gloucester, Mass., occupied the pulpit of Zion church, Yarmouth, last Sunday.
Rev. A. S. Lewis, Yarmouth, with Mrs. Lewis, is spending a month's vacation in the Annapolis Valley.
Rev. Dr. Phillipa spent Sunday, July 30th, at Oak Bay. His health is somewhat improved.
Rev. Z. L. Fash, Charlottetown, P. E. I., preached in the Windsor, N. S., church last Sunday.
Rev. Z. L. Fash was in Lawrenceville, a few days ago and occupied the pulpit of the Baptist church.
Rev. J. B. Ganson, Havelock, N. B., has been having a fortnight's vacation.
Rev. George Baker, of Leominster, Mass., is spending a week at his old home, Randolph, N. B.
Rev. Harry W. Jackson, of Kempville, Ont., is now at Nashvaak visiting friends in his former pastorate.
Rev. J. E. Gosline, of Chocoggin, N. S., with Mrs. Gosline, is spending a short vacation at Sussex, N. B.
Rev. S. Bond, of Middleton, N. S., preached in the Temple church, Yarmouth, last Sunday.
Rev. A. J. Vincent occupied the pulpit of the Canning, N. S., church last Sunday.
Rev. D. R. Sharp preached at both services in the Woodstock church last Sunday.
Rev. A. A. Shaw, of Cleveland, Ohio, and Mrs. Shaw, are spending vacation in Nova Scotia.
Dr. DeWolfe occupied the pulpit of the First Baptist church, Halifax, Sunday, 30th ult.
Rev. J. D. Spidle, pastor at Kentville,

WANTED
WANTED—A second clerk for District No. 4, for coming term. Mr. King, Secretary, Fair View St. John county, N. B.

WANTED
WANTED—A second clerk for school district of Bell Settlements, parish of St. John county, N. B. Apply, stating salary, to James Forester, trustees, Southfield, King.

TEACHER WANTED
TEACHER WANTED—Charge of Sisson River school. Apply, stating salary, to Mr. Brock, after holidays. 6485-8-24.

WANTED
WANTED—An experienced general housework. Ref. Apply to Mrs. Brock, Red.

WANTED
WANTED—Second or third School District Lepreux. School to be held at River Mills, Charlotte Co. 6385-8-19-11

WANTED
WANTED—A second clerk for District No. 4, for coming term. Mr. King, Secretary, Fair View St. John county, N. B.

WANTED
WANTED—Second or third teacher for Hastings Albert County. Apply, to W. Kinzie, Alma, N. B.

WANTED
WANTED—A second teacher to commence District school at St. John Settlement, N. B.

WANTED
WANTED—A second male teacher for North parish of Petersville (dist. of) Apply, stating salary, to Mr. Clones, Queens Co.

Woolen Weavers
Experienced weavers steady employment in Good wages. Apply to HEWSON WOOLEN Amherst, N.

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TO LET
TO LET—A residence physician, situated at lot, county, N. B. A. rounding and a good price. Inquire of Mrs. H. P. R. Charlotte county, N. B.

FOR SALE
FOR SALE—In Campbell street brick building Water street, central business or hotel or office. Also a fine lot erected in a most desirable location of Campbell street, for cash. Apply to O. ton, N. B.

No Need of Warm Cool We
Our rooms are so air-lated we do not know till we get outside. Enter at once and before the rush comes.

PERFECT Cures No more
Cures No more... Dr. J. H. McDonald, of the Brunswick street church, Fredericton, is having his vacation. He thinks St. John is as good a place as he can find for rest, and will make this city headquarters of the Convention. Mrs. McDonald is with him.

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