

24 PROFESSIONAL THIEVES AND THE DETECTIVES.

would pay me nothing, I said: "Now, see here, what do I know about counterfeiting?"

"Oh, we *know* you know enough about it!" they both urged, anxiously.

"Why," said I, laughing at the absurdity of the idea of turning detective, "I never saw a ten-dollar bill in my life!"

And neither had I. There I stood, a young, strong, agile, hard-working cooper, not exactly green, perhaps,—for I consider no man verdant who does well whatever he may have in hand,—barefooted, bareheaded, dressed, or rather, almost undressed, in my hickory and denims, daring enough and ready for any reckless emergency which might transpire in the living of an honest life, but decidedly averse to doing something entirely out of my line, and which in all human probability I would make an utter failure of. I had not been but four years in America altogether. I had had a hard time of it for the time I had been here. I had *heard* of all these things I have mentioned concerning banks and money but I had positively never seen a ten-dollar bill!

A great detective I would make under such circumstances, I thought.

"Come now, Allan," urged Mr. Hunt, "no time is to be wasted. The man is down there now at Eaton Walker's harness-shop, getting something done about his saddle."

"But what am I to do?" I asked.

"Do!—Well!—*do* the best you can!"

I suddenly resolved to do just that and no less; although I must confess that, at that time, I had not the remotest idea how to set about the matter.

So I began by strolling leisurely about the street for a few minutes, and then, villager-like, sauntered into the saddlery shop.

Eaton Walker, a jolly, whole-souled, good-hearted fellow, was perched upon his bench, sewing away, and when I entered merely looked up from his waxed-end and nodded, but made no remark, as my being in his place was a very common occurrence.

There was the usual quota of town stragglers loafing about the shop, and looking with sleepy eyes and open-mouthed at the little which was going on about the place.