

True Detective Stories

THE LUCK OF A SEXTET.

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THIS story has to do with certain incidents, amusing and otherwise, that arose from the efforts of six Irishmen to restore prosperity along the New York docks in the summer of 1875. The Irishmen were stevedores, and, times being bad at their trade, they started a mint. Let one of them get a genuine trade dollar, half dollar or quarter to use as a pattern—or as a "daddy," as they called it—and they would turn out "shiners" in abundance. But such were the vicissitudes of fortune that the lack of a "daddy" often plunged them into poverty.

It was during such a period of unfortunate financial depression that I first met James Maher, or "Brock" Maher, as he was called.

Maher was a big, raw boned fellow, perhaps fifty years old, leader of the band. An old counterfeiter had offered to introduce me to him, and we found him one evening sitting on a truck in a dark corner near the Battery. Left to ourselves, he told me his story.

"Me frind," he said, "you come to me at a most unforchinit time. This is the sixt' of July. On the Fort I got droonk, came home in a horrible condition, and while I was a-sleeping it off me old woman went through me clothes. And not a dollar or a cent did she leave me."

"That's bad, 'Brock,'" said I, "but such a thing ought to trouble you less than it would almost anybody else. You can make your own money."

"I can, can I?" he replied with feeling. "How the divil can I make me own money when I haven't a 'daddy' to me name? Tell me that."

I couldn't tell him, and he went on:—

"Now I'll tell ye what to do, me frind. Ye're like meself—ye want money and ye don't want to work too hard fer it. If ye had come to me any time but this I could 'a' said ye all ye could carry. But just now, as I said, I'm on me uppers. I haven't an ounce of lead, and if I had a ton I couldn't make a nickel for the lack of a 'daddy.' Now, I'll tell ye what ye do. Give me eight or nine dollars and come back here in two days and I'll have ye all the nice 'shiners' ye want."

I didn't like the idea of furnishing a man capital with which to commit crime, merely for the purpose of arresting him, so I told him I did not have the money with me and did not know, just then, where I could get it. I told him, however, that I expected to get a little money soon, and we parted good friends.

When I went back to the office I related the conversation to Chief Washburne, and he asked me why I didn't give Maher the money.

"I didn't give it to him," said I, "because if I had done so, and afterward arrested him, his attorney at his trial would have cross-examined me something like this:—

"Where did you first meet this defendant?"

"Down on the docks."

"What was he doing?"

"Sittin' on a truck."

"Did he tell you whether he was out of work?"

"Yes. He said 'he was'."

"Did you give him any money?"

"Yes."

"Was anything said with regard to what use the money you gave him was to be put?"

"Yes."

"What was to be done with it?"

"He was to use it to make counterfeit money."

"Then you found an idle man sitting on the docks and furnished him with money with which to become a criminal. Is that it?"

"And I should have been compelled to say, 'Yes.'"

"Well, I guess you are right," said the chief. "We'll go over to the United States District Attorney's office and see what advice we can get there."

We saw one of the assistant attorneys, and he was most emphatic in his declaration that I should have given Maher the money for which he asked. He finally went so far as to tell me to do it.

"I'll do nothing of the kind," said I, "no matter who may tell me to. If Maher can be caught in no other way than this he will never be caught by me."

The chief stood by me, and this means of getting evidence was definitely abandoned.

A few days later, however, the man who had introduced me to Maher told me that "Brock" wanted to see me—that he had raised a few dollars with which to buy materials and now had some counterfeit trade dollars to sell. A night was set for me to meet him, and I found him sitting on the same old truck, near the Battery.

"How are ye, Tom, me boy," said he (I was known to him as "Tom Moran"). "I wonder if ye are still broke, as ye was the other night? I hope ye have money with ye this evening, as I've got something good."

"Something good, eh?" said I, "let's see it."

"Don't be so fast, me boy," said the old man. "I want to know first have ye any money?"

"Well, Buck," I said, "I'm sorry to say that I am in about the same financial condition that I was when I saw you the other time. But my sister has a gold watch, and I know where there is a pawnshop. I hate to hock the girl's ticker, but I'd rather do it than to miss anything."

"And how long would it take you to go home and get the watch?" asked the old man.

"Oh, I've got it with me. I said, pulling out my wife's watch, a timepiece worth about \$17, that I had pawned in such emergencies. I don't know how many times."

"Well, get to ye, me boy, in a hurry," said Buck. "Raise every dollar ye can and come back. I'll wait for ye, and I can tell ye now, me boy, that I've got something good."

I left him sitting on the truck while I went to the nearest pawnshop, returning in a little while with a pawn ticket, which I showed him, and \$7.

"Now, I'll talk business," he said. Pulling out a shining trade dollar from his pocket, he held it before my eyes. "The Secretary of the Trinity himself," he continued, "couldn't tell this coin from one of his own. His money and mine are like the peas in a pod. The only difference is that he charges ye a hundred cents on the dollar for his, while ye can have mine for a quarter of that. How much do ye want?"

I told him I would invest the whole \$7 with him, and he rummaged around in his pockets until he had counted out and handed over to me twenty-eight trade dollars, each as bright as a new tin can.

"Spind 'em as ye would water," said he, "for



JAMES MAHER, ALIAS BROOK MAHEN.

ON AN OLD TROUGH DOWN NEAR THE BATTERY.

when ye want more, remember that I'm the man who can give them to ye."

I told the old man I should never forget him, and we parted. I went home and marked each of the dollars with my initials, so that I could identify them in court. The next morning I looked up the informer who had introduced me to Buck and told him I wanted him to put me in touch with the rest of the band, one at a time, as quickly as possible. Maher's confederates were Michael Boyle, Bernard Quinn, James McGrath, Michael Tague, and another man whose name I have forgotten. Maher and McGrath were manufacturers of counterfeit. The others were "shovers," or distributors.

Before night I had been introduced to Michael Boyle, and had made an appointment to go out with him the same evening to "shove." The art of "shoving" is to go into as many places as possible, make the smallest purchase consistent with appearances, pass out a piece of counterfeit money and get good coin in change. Saloons and cigar stands are usually selected for this purpose by those who deal in counterfeit silver coins. And the practice is for one man to go inside and turn the trick while another waits outside to watch for the police.

A little after midnight I met Boyle and he gave me a counterfeit half dollar with which to begin my operations. I had already provided myself with perhaps fifty fifty-cent shin plasters that he didn't know about, and while he was outside a cigar store waiting for me I bought a nickel cigar with a shin-plaster and received forty-five cents in change. In the middle of the block he overtook me and I turned over to him, by agreement, forty-five cents. Boyle then gave me another counterfeit half dollar which, as soon as I entered a cigar store I marked, paying for my purchase with another shin-plaster.

Before we quit business that night, I had spent every one of my shin-plasters and had in my possession as many of Boyle's counterfeit dollars. Then we divided up the change that I had turned over to him. I also gave him half of my cigars, and he went home, presumably feeling that the evening had been profitably spent.

At one night intervals I went out with the other members of the band. From McGrath, a manufacturer of counterfeit, I bought some half dollars and quarters, while with each Tague and Quinn I spent an evening "shoving."

Having obtained enough evidence, as I believed, to convict the whole crowd, the next thing was to get them under arrest. More than that, the arrests must all be made within a few hours of each other, otherwise the taking of one into custody might cause the others to flee. So I made an appointment with each one to meet me at a certain hour on a certain day, representing to each one that I was about to make a considerable investment in counterfeit. And I arranged that secret service men should cover each meeting point and arrest the man with whom I might be.

The first meeting came off at eleven o'clock in the morning. I was standing on a corner talking with James McGrath and we were discussing whether we should go into a saloon to conduct our transaction when a man stepped up to McGrath and told him he

was a prisoner. At the first sign of trouble I took to my heels. For the purpose of completely deceiving McGrath, one of the officers gave chase and eventually caught me. McGrath had just been locked in a cell at the Bleeker street station of the secret service when my captor and myself, panting hard, entered the front door. I was led past McGrath's cell, in order that he might see me, and locked up. But in ten minutes I was quietly let out the back way to keep my next appointment.

At two hour intervals during the afternoon I was arrested with Boyle, Tague and Quinn, respectively, in each case sprinting for my liberty and eventually

being captured, locked up—and released. All were then under arrest but old Brock Maher himself, and my appointment with him was for nine o'clock at night. He was a little ahead of time, and I found him waiting for me. I at once broached the customary subject of where we should go to make our deal when a Secret Service man tapped him on the shoulder and told him he was under arrest.

Maher didn't think so. He was a powerful six footer and instantly began to fight. The other five counterfeiters having been arrested, there was no necessity for me to run in this case, and I closed in upon Maher with the others. In the midst of the scuffle I

LATEST IN POPULAR SCIENCE

THE ART OF WINE TASTING.

THE mere evidence of the senses is not rated very high by those accustomed to rely upon exact scientific measurement. Occasionally, however, the senses take their revenge. In the analysis of certain foods, for instance, facts too delicate to reveal themselves to the chemical analyst may be detected by the nose or tongue of an expert. Especially is this true of the analysis of teas or wines.

A recent French writer enumerates some of the precautions that must be observed by a good wine taster. He must, in the first place, have been tasting for some little time, and he must not be a smoker. Certain powerful flavors alter the taste of the wine entirely and must be avoided. Such are the salt relishes used to revive a jaded thirst, and even the nuts and cheese recommended by some to lovers of good wines. The expert taster must approach his task with virgin palate. He must try only one wine at a sitting and must drink water after each taste to prepare himself for the next.

Some tasters even go so far as to rinse the throat first with vichy and then with pure water. The wine is then first inspected, then smelled and finally tasted. The inspection may show various things. New red wines, for instance, are bright, older ones are more yellowish. Old wines are always clear; when good, but slight cloudiness is not necessarily a bad sign in new ones.

The odor test is very important, as the bouquet reveals many secrets to the expert, who can often tell by it the precise region where the wine was made, besides detecting adulteration, if any has been attempted. The tasting proper, which comes last of all, also depends very largely on the sense of smell, as we are told by the physiologists, and also on that of feeling, by which the expert's tongue, for example, distinguishes between a rough and a smooth or velvety taste. The real sense of taste tells the taster whether the wine is sweet or bitter and enables him to make other similar distinctions.

The wine is well spread over the mucous surface of the mouth in tasting and is retained until warmed. If it is swallowed too soon much of the effect is lost. Often, too, a young wine that tastes somewhat thin and rough at first reveals after an instant that it has body and gives promise of delicacy.

SENDING PICTURES BY WIRELESS.

THE latest application of wireless telegraphy is in the transmission of pictures, a feat already accomplished with ease over ordinary telegraph wires. The wireless apparatus, which is the inven-

tion of a Danish electrician named Knudsen, dispenses altogether with the use of a substance electrically sensitive to light, such as selenium, which is commonly employed in such apparatus.

The picture to be transmitted is previously so prepared as to raise the dark portions above the level of the lighter parts, forming a low relief. In the case of a photographic plate, for instance, a metallic powder, which will adhere to the damper opaque parts and not to the transparent places, may be dusted on.

In the sending instrument a style travels rapidly over the picture and closes an electric circuit whenever it is slightly raised by passing over the parts in relief. The current thus caused to flow actuates the wave generator, and the wave ultimately reaches the distant receiving apparatus, where it so acts as to press down a pencil, making a black mark. As this receiving pencil has a motion precisely corresponding to that of the style at the transmitting end, a mark will be made at all places corresponding to the raised or dark portions of the original picture, which will, hence, be exactly reproduced. This apparatus may be adapted to any system of wireless telegraphy. It will send a picture 10x12 inches in size in fifteen to twenty minutes.

THE X-RAY IN THE STUDY OF DIGESTION.

THE processes of digestion have been studied of late by means of the X-ray, the food being made opaque to the ray by mixing bismuth with it, so that its progress may be observed by taking successive radiographs. What may be learned by this method is illustrated by the recent reports of experiments on the action of morphine on the stomach. It has long been known that this drug retards digestion, but the X-ray reveals the fact that this action takes place almost entirely in the stomach. When the food reaches the intestine the morphine has no further effect upon it. It appears, therefore, that the morphine acts by retarding the natural churning motion that plays such an important part in stomach digestion, and therefore causes the process to occupy a longer time than usual.

THE ANCESTOR OF THE POTATO.

FROM which of the known species of wild potato did the cultivated variety arise? This question has long puzzled botanists. A short time ago potatoes equal to those of commerce were said to have been produced from a wild variety in France; but it was finally proved that these came, in fact, from part of a cultivated tuber that had been "acclimatedly mixed with the wild ones. More lately it has been asserted that another wild species, grown in the experimental gardens of A. W. Sutton, of Reading, England, has spontaneously shown properties resembling those of the cultivated potato. It has been thought that this wild variety had perhaps been accidentally crossed with the ordinary tuber, or that, as in the case cited above, it was not really a wild species, but an escape from cultivation. Microscopic examination of the pollen grains, however, shows that these have all the characteristics of the wild vegetable, and it therefore seems probable that we have here the ancestor of the familiar "Irish" potato. Special interest attaches to this discovery because the wild species appears to be immune to the potato disease. It may thus be possible to breed an edible white potato that is much less susceptible to disease than the one that is now grown.

THE USE OF MOTOR TRUCKS.

WHEN motor trucks and delivery wagons were first introduced predictions were heard on all sides that the horse, except for pleasure traction, would disappear from city streets in a few years. This result seems still far off. Many of those who have adopted motor delivery report dissatisfaction with the system, and this deters others from adopting it.

The trouble, according to a recent writer, is sometimes that the wrong type of vehicle has been adopted, sometimes that those in charge of the service are incompetent. In one case, we are told, the adoption of electric trucks by a large brewery has resulted in financial loss simply because the drivers' wages remain the same, and the men are unwilling to handle twice or thrice as many barrels as before. Hence they see to it that the speed of the service is not improved.

In another instance where electric traction failed to satisfy it was found that the motors were improperly wired. Drivers of motor trucks frequently run them too fast over rough pavements to the great injury of the mechanism. The moral of all this is that those who intend to use motor delivery should have competent advice. Different types of vehicle will be required for light deliveries with frequent stops and for heavy loads with long hauls. Change to mechanical traction often enables a merchant to handle a larger volume of trade, and this more than offsets the increased running expense.

saw an opportunity, while the rest were searching for targets for his fists, to grab him by the throat. Harder and harder I shut down upon him, until finally, gasping and almost black in the face, he ceased to struggle, and handcuffs were put on him.

The next morning the six prisoners met at breakfast in the station house.

"Have any av ye seen Tom Moran?" asked McGrath. "Poor Tom! He was with me when I was pinched, but I haven't seen him since he was locked up."

"Tom was with me when I was caught," said Quinn.

"Ye don't say so," said Boyle, in amazement. "He was with me too."

"Well, Tom himself pinched me," said old Brock Maher, and then the other five for the first time realized how they had been trapped.

"I knew ye were a copper the first time I saw ye," said McGrath, when I saw him the next day.

"Of course you did," I laughingly replied; "that's why you sold me those counterfeit halves and quarters."

"Well, ye did me no dirt when ye fooled me," said old Brock, with his customary good humor, "and I bear ye no grudge. Ye did yer jooty, and to show ye I think none the less of ye I'll shake yer hand."

One by one the cases came to trial and convictions followed as rapidly as the juries could go through the forms prescribed by law. I was feeling very good over the outcome, when one day I met Louis F. Post, attorney for the Irish sextet. Post, by the way, is now the editor of the Public, a single tax publication issued in Chicago.

"Drummond," he said, "I am going to free every one of those counterfeiters that you convicted."

I laughed as if I thought he were joking, as indeed I did, and he continued:—

"There is no joke about it. The indictments in those cases are not worth the paper upon which they are written. In every one of them is omitted the phrase required by law, 'then and there, with intent to defraud.' I am going to make a motion before the trial judge to set the convictions aside and discharge the defendants. And, under the law, he can do nothing but grant the motion."

Investigation proved all that Post said to be only too true. He procured the reopening of the case, made his motion, the convictions were set aside and all of the prisoners except McGrath, who had broken from the Ludlow Street Jail and stowed away on a steamship bound for England, were discharged. McGrath, by the way, was captured as his ship was descending the Delaware River, and he received a short term for breaking jail. The others went absolutely free.

I was unspeakably angry. Before the cases against the prisoners were dismissed I mentioned the name of the man who drew the indictments to the trial judge and pleaded for an opportunity to tell of an instance in which I knew the man in question had been corrupt in a small way.

"I once knew this lawyer," said I, "to substitute cheap three-for-a-nickel cigars for five hundred twenty-five-cent smuggled Havanas that had been turned over to him as evidence by the customs authorities. When I went to his office to get the cigars to take them back to the customs office I noticed the substitution and called his attention to it. 'What difference does it make?' he asked. 'It makes this difference,' I replied, 'that I will not return the substitutes.' And I refused to take them. I presume he has them yet, if he has not destroyed them or given them away."

The judge listened to me intently, but the prisoners were, nevertheless, discharged. Post, by the way, was never suspected of being in collusion with the attorney. In the first place, Post is honest. Furthermore, he was not the attorney for the counterfeiters when the indictments were drawn.

Thus it came about, as a grotesque conclusion to these ludicrous cases, that the only counterfeiter who was punished was imprisoned for breaking from a jail in which he was illegally confined. And the last humorous feature was afforded when a German juror, who had voted to convict one of the Irishmen, stepped over to me in the courtroom and said:—

"You fool these Irishmen mit your talk about being a counterfeiter, but you could never fool me. Why? You have gray eyes. I have looked long, but I never yet see a man with gray eyes who gets into trouble and goes to jail. Believe me."

That was thirty-three years ago, and my observation since the German made this remark convinces me there is considerable truth in what he said.

(THE NEXT STORY IN THE SERIES WILL APPEAR NEXT SATURDAY.)