

## Counterfeit!

By James Knelland Shawwen

I thought of early boyhood's days and skating on one foot, as the sole of one shoe struck a flat piece of banana peel, and I went sliding irresistibly toward a wooden crate cover set over a manhole in the sidewalk.

Hang! My feet met it, sending it spinning halfway around on the unfastened pivot and down I shot through the half-moon aperture.

Thump! I landed ten feet down amid utter darkness across an upturned tub, knocking out its bottom, and bringing hoops and staves about me in flying sections.

The shock was brief, my bruises trivial. Then I congratulated myself. If the under-sidewalk space into which I had been precipitated connected with the main cellar of the structure abutting upon it I would hail my misadventure as a stroke of genuine good luck. That grim old time-shattered three-story building had been a center of considerable interest to me during the past week. I had haunted its vicinity persistently. I had hunted its purpose, however. Its rear was a blank brick wall. Its sides were guarded by heavy iron shutters. The front had but one entrance, a double doorway, and beyond it was a store space shallow and narrow, more of a hall entrance than a room, barred closely nights, and in the daytime, seated behind a bench hammering away at various pieces of metal, was a low-browed, keen-eyed man, evidently the guardian of the place.

I was on a still hunt for a missing friend, and had been for over a month. That was how I came to be interested in what had veritably become to me a house of mystery.

Acton Meserve had been a fellow worker and close friend for something like two years. We were both of us expert engravers and earned good wages in the service of a leading bank-note engraving concern. It was just after he had married and was gone on his honeymoon that trouble began.

You must know that the working economy of a confidential and important business such as we were engaged in calls for strict integrity on the part of those employed. It was about a week after my friend Meserve had left on his memorable vacation when a discovery was made that some government paper, some denomination dies and a lot of fine engraving tools were missing from the vault. When a search was made in the office there was found in Meserve's desk some of the paper. The company awaited the return of Meserve to charge him with irregularities, possibly theft. But neither he nor his wife returned to the city at the end of two weeks, nor four, nor six. In fact, although a detective was employed to seek to gain a trace of their whereabouts, Acton Meserve and his wife had disappeared as effectually as though the earth had swallowed them up.

One day I was summoned to the private office of the president of the company. I knew that my close companionship with Meserve had aroused suspicion in the mind of the detective as to a possible knowledge on my part as to what had become of Meserve. The disappearance of the well-guarded property of the company pointed to a probable scheme to do some outside plate work. This surmise was emphasized by the strange absence of Meserve.

"We shall require your services no longer, Mr. Milsley," spoke my superior, definitely and with sternness.

"I am sorry," I said simply. "I will not ask you the reason of this unwarrantable discharge, for I can guess. You are wrong in attributing what you imagine to as good a man as Acton Meserve. I shall make it my business to prove it to you soon."

"I hope so," coldly remarked the official, "and I further hope you will take care of yourself."

There was significance, almost insult, in this last remark, and I did not resent it in words. I had made up my mind that I would find Acton Meserve if it took all I had saved up and a year of my life to accomplish it. There was something wrong, not only at the engraving plant, but as regarded Meserve.

There was a dense mystery surrounding the abstraction of the property of the company and the inexplicable vanishment of Meserve and his wife. I started to solve the enigma, firm in my faith in my tried and true comrade.

I found his relatives and friends anxious and grieved over his absence. None of them had seen or heard from him since the day they had seen him started on his wedding journey. I went over his presumable honeymoon trip, to lose all trace of him utterly. I returned to the city, more in the dark than ever, gloomily disappointed, almost hopeless.

One day I struck a clue, or fancied I had. It was when, for the first time in many months, I saw walking ahead of me on the street a man named Bartley Webb. This person had been a printer at the engraving plant who had left work about a week before Meserve had started on his vacation. We had never liked him and had noticed

that he kept bad company—just now worse than ever, for the two men with him were as villainous-looking fellows as I had ever seen. I followed them, a new suspicion in my mind as they were admitted to the very building I have described. I took up watch and ward over the sombre pile of masonry for several days. Twice I saw Webb visit the place. Always his admission was followed by the closing and locking of the outside door. Always the door was kept carefully relocked until he had departed, after a brief stay. I knew not why, but somehow I associated Webb with the pilferings at the engraving plant and the disappearance of Meserve. I had an irrepressible desire to explore the old rookery, and now fate and circumstance had, I hoped, granted my wish for admission to the apparently impenetrable structure.

I got to my feet and proceeded to explore my surroundings. I came to an opening like a doorway, traversed a corridor which penetrated the cellar of the building and faced a pair of stairs. These I ascended, reached a vacant room, crossed it, opened a door, ascended a second flight of stairs and charily felt my way along a narrow passage way. I accidentally blundered against a swinging door. I landed in a lighted room, tried to draw back as I discovered that it held an inmate, and was rooted to the spot as I recognized in a woman standing staring at me agape—the wife of Acton Meserve!

All the bloom I had last seen was departed from that sweet face, the eyes were sunken and haunted with the horror of confinement and fear.

"Mr. Milsley!" she gasped, and reeled.

"You—you!" I breathed incoherently. "What does this mean? Where is Meserve?"

"He is in there," she whispered, all a tremble, and she pointed to an opposite door. "No—no! You risk your life!"

But I had run at the door and opened it and rushed towards a man at a bench bending over a leather plate pad, a graver in his hand—Acton Meserve.

And then I understood the warning just uttered. Two men, and one of them was Webb, sprang at me. I received a heavy blow on the head and knew no more. I awoke, jolted about in a cab and held up by the best friends I had in the world—Acton Meserve and his wife. They were babbling with the maddest of joyfulness, like two children released from a terrible captivity. Then the vehicle halted in front of the engraving plant.

I was still dazed as I sat back in the chair in the office of the president. As in a dream I caught the echo of the tones of Meserve, telling all the story of his mysterious disappearance.

It was Webb who had abstracted the missing property of the plant. It was Webb and accomplices who had kidnapped husband and wife, who had threatened to kill the latter if Meserve did not engrave a plate they forced him to make. It was just as I appeared that the plate was finished, all except one corner, and this Meserve refused to complete unless immediate liberty was promised. The scoundrels then abandoned the place with the plate, Meserve agreeing to wait an hour later.

"I believe your story, Mr. Meserve," said the staid and dignified president, "but do you not consider it very reprehensible to engage in such work under any circumstances?"

"Not as I worked it out," dissented Meserve. "Sir, when the law runs down these miscreants, as it must, you will find the plate worthless."

"You mean—?"

"That the last rapid work I did was to engrave in hair-line tracery, while they were not looking, one word, a warning to all the world."

"And the word was—?"

"Counterfeit!"

"There's a Time to Fight," Miss Miriam, who will be seven years old soon, knows that little girls should not fight but she is not a "pacifist" for all that. A few days ago she was taken to task by her mother for engaging in a pugilistic encounter with another little girl. "Well, mother," she said, "I don't know whether she hit me first, but I know that if I hit her she deserved it, for that child's mother never has brought her up properly."

On another occasion she complained that a small boy of her acquaintance had kicked her, but admitted on being pressed that she had not done much first, "only pinched and slapped his face a little." She was told to tell the boy's father, so the boy might be punished, but to be sure and tell what she had done, too. The father is still waiting for the report.—Indianapolis News.

Education Not a Prerequisite.

Charles Darwin was a misfit child, a misfit youth, and a misfit in young manhood. He failed miserably in mathematics, the classics, and in theology. He was an indifferent student of medicine, yet when at last he was guided into the paths of his natural capacities he soon became the foremost naturalist of his age and probably of any age before or since.

Emerson was an educational misfit, and so were Froebel and General Grant, and the list of distinguished men in all walks of life who were misfits in childhood might easily be extended almost indefinitely. They prove conclusively that much of what is commonly called education is not a prerequisite for success in life.

An Unfailing Sign.

"My dear, this child is going to have plenty of spirit in his voice."

"How can you tell that now?"

"Because already it shows a tendency to high bawling."

### Outlet

The roads are in good condition as the heavy rain settled the snow, and the farmers are making good use of the time by hauling wood and ice.

Messrs. John Fodey, W. G. Vandenburg, Joshua Humphrey and S. Horton were among the number who went to Ottawa to petition for higher prices for cheese as the farmers find that the present price will not enable them to feed their stock and have their milk made up for market when feed is so high.

Mr. Everett Reid, Athens, Mr. T. Horsefield, Elmdale, Miss N. Slack, Lyndhurst, Mr. Martin Slack and sister Blanche, Sand Bay, and Mrs. R. Leadbeater and Little daughter of Stony Plain, Alberta, were recent guests at Mr. John Reed's.

Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Slack and daughter Vera spent Sunday evening with Mr. and Mrs. E. Vandenburg.

Miss Agie Marshall spent a few days last week with Mrs. Jas. Fodey. Miss May Jameson was the guest of Miss Eva Bradley on Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. M. W. Stacey entertained a number of the young friends of their son, Alex from seven o'clock until nine on Monday evening, Feb. 25. A very pleasant evening was spent, the little ones enjoying themselves thoroughly. Alex was the recipient of a number of pretty gifts.

### Lots of Gasoline

There are hundreds of thousands of people in Canada and the United States who will be glad to know that there is an abundance of gasoline. In fact there is so much of it that it is impossible to find storage. Gasoline is a by-product of the semi-crude oil used by the great navies of Britain and the United States. Motorists need not look forward with gloom to the approaching summer months. The price, however, must come down.

In France, where the government has taken the entire wheat crop, only the poorest persons and those doing the hardest work may have more than seven ounces of war bread—four or five slices—a day. And bread is the main article of food with all classes in France.

### Deanery Meeting

On Friday of last week a special business meeting of the Rural Deanery of Leeds was held here. There were present Revs. Canons Woodcock and Bedford-Jones, Revs. W. H. Smith, T. H. Hall, W. H. Davis, J. Lyons, C. E. Brett and Rural Dean Swayne. At 9.30 there was a celebration of the Holy Communion after which some important business was considered and settled. At the conclusion of the business a hearty vote of thanks and appreciation was given to the ladies of the congregation who entertained them for their kind hospitality.

An Irishman coming out of either in the ward after an operation exclaimed audibly: "Thank God! That is over!" "Don't be so sure," said the man in the next bed, "they left a sponge in me and had to cut me open again." And the patient on the other side said: "Why they had to open me to find one of their instruments." Just then the surgeon who had operated on the Irishman stuck his head in the door and yelled: "Has anybody seen my hat?" Poor Patrick fainted.

### HANDY WITH THEIR FEET.

Many Animals Use Them Cleverly In Taking Their Food.

Kangaroos use their hands very readily to hold food in and to put it into their mouths. As their fore legs are so short that they have to browse in a stooping position, they seem pleased when able to secure a large bunch of cabbage or other vegetable provender and to hold it in their hands to eat. Sometimes the young kangaroo, looking out of its mother's pouch, catches one or two of the leaves which the old one drops, and the pair may be seen each nibbling at the salad held in their hands, one, so to speak, "one floor" above the other.

The slow, deliberate clasping and unclasping of a chameleon's feet look like the movements which the hands of a sleepwalker might make were he trying to creep downstairs. The chameleon's are almost deformed hands, yet they have a superficial resemblance to the feet of parrots, which more than other birds use their feet for many of the purposes of a hand when feeding. To see many of the smaller rodents—ground squirrels, prairie dogs and marmots—hold food, usually in both paws, is to learn a lesson in the dextrous use of hands without thumbs.

Nothing more readily suggests the momentary impression that a pretty little monkey is "a man and a brother" than when he stretches out his neat little palm, fingers and thumb and, with all the movements proper to the civilized mode of greeting, insists on shaking hands.—London Graphic.

### Women's Institute Meets

The February meeting of the Athens Women's Institute was held Saturday afternoon. A good number were in attendance and after the arrangement of many business matters, a program both entertaining and instructive was enjoyed. Miss Nellie Earl gave a piano solo, Miss Birdie Derbyshire a vocal solo, Miss Gladys Johnston a paper full of beautiful thoughts on the "Power and Value of the Ideal in our Lives", and Mrs. Eaton a paper on business transactions drawing attention to many essential points every one should know.

As this terrible war goes on responsibility falls more heavily daily on each one of us. Our women are not lagging. Cheered by the many expressions of thanks that come from the front they know that what they are doing is helping to make the privations of our boys a little less, cheering many a lonely heart on the battlefields of Flanders and bringing a touch of Canada and home to many a hospital cot.

During the month of February, 19 well supplied pails were sent across and the following shipments made: 99 stretcher caps, feather pillow, 29 hdkfs., 45 property bags, 5 wash cloths, 6 pillow slips, 15 towels, roll of old linen, 2 sheets, 15 prs. pajamas, 6 flannel shirts, 17 complete housewife kits, 18 packages of boracic acid.

The Institute is now supplying four prisoners of war.

A canvass of the town for funds which are so necessary will soon be made. Be ready.

Every woman in Athens and vicinity is most earnestly asked to come and help.

Mr. Taylor very kindly placed a room on Main Street at the disposal of the ladies and Thursday afternoon they will meet there to pack more pails.

### Chantry

Miss Mildred Hull is visiting friends in Westport.

Mr. Roy Derbyshire is moving into his new home, which he bought from G. Irwin, to-day.

Miss Pearl Seed has returned home after spending a couple of weeks at Sand Bay with her sister, Mrs. Harry Wood.

Mrs. Isaac Stevens went to Toronto on Saturday to spend a few days with her father.

Our school opened this morning after being closed for the past week on account of our teacher, Miss Leita Gorman losing her mother, Mrs. W. Gorman. The children have the sympathy of the neighborhood.

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## POSTAL REGULATIONS WILL BE ENFORCED

Only One Paper May Be Enclosed in a Wrapper and American Regulations Don't Apply.

When mailing newspapers to the men in France, it should be borne in mind that only one paper in a parcel is allowed. This is a British regulation not a Canadian one only. It has been in force for some time, but has never been enforced until very recently. Now the postoffice authorities are warned to see that the law is observed. Each parcel of papers is weighed and, as the clerks at the postoffice know the correct weight of each paper, they are easily able to tell if one is not as it seems. In such cases it is at once sent to the dead letter office.

Some American magazines have a notice on the inside saying that by placing a stamp on the periodical and dropping it unaddressed in the mail box it would be sent to the troops overseas. Many Canadians have availed themselves of this opportunity of furnishing the boys in the trenches with reading material. However if they had first investigated it would have been found that this was an American regulation, and did not hold good in Canada. Their magazines were only filling up the dead letter office.

### Bryan Invitation to Visit Toronto Bitterly Opposed

Toronto, Feb. 26.—Hon. W. J. Bryan, United States ex-secretary of state, having been invited to attend and address the Ontario Prohibition Convention, which opens here to-day the Daily News, in a big type front page editorial, demands that the invitation be cancelled. His libelous report on British rule in India, his calm insensibility to German outrages in the present war, and his anti-ally attitude regarding munitions, contribute to make his presence unwelcome. "It was an outrage against the susceptibilities of the community," says the News, "to invite him here at this time. Canadians can never forget that but for him and men like him the Allies would have a less difficult task than they face to-day. Mr. Bryan has no message upon prohibition or upon any other topic that can interest the people of Toronto or Canada at the present time."

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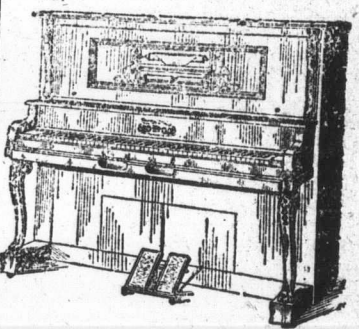
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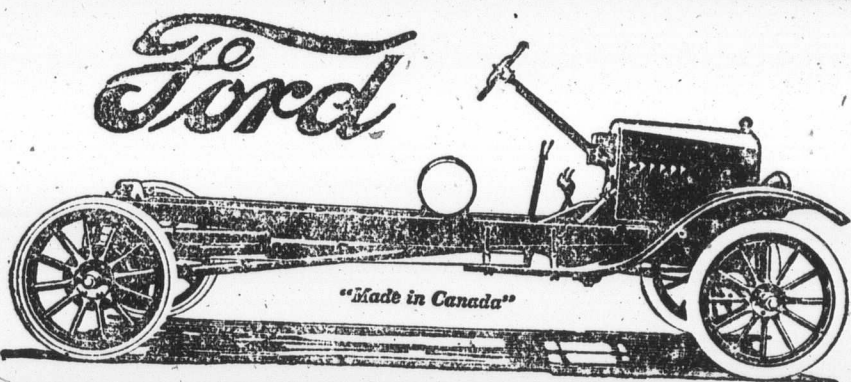
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