

By
EDGAR
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THE WIDOW BARTLETT

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"Perhaps the most baffling job I ever undertook," said the old secret service man, "was running to earth what was known as 'the Hamilton gang.'"

"For several months the states of the middle west had been flooded with counterfeit five, ten and twenty dollar bills of a most ingenious make. So nearly perfect were they that they were considered exceedingly dangerous, and to myself and three assistants was assigned the task of capturing the gang."

"Well, we finally succeeded in tracing the counterfeiters to the village of Hamilton, in one of the states bordering on the Mississippi river. We also learned that the gang consisted of at least three men, and obtained a very accurate description of one, a partial description of another, and an exceedingly vague and unsatisfactory description of the third. However, we felt confident of their capture, having once traced them to Hamilton, but we soon found we had congratulated ourselves too soon."

"We had been in Hamilton but a few hours when we became convinced that the place was what we termed 'a pious town'—that is, that the citizens were law-abiding and honest and that if a 'mint' was operated in their midst it was probably without their knowledge, certainly without their assistance."

"When this fact became clear to us, I called upon the village constable, the only officer of which the town boasted, and questioned him closely relative to any men answering the descriptions in my possession. He was certain he had never seen any such individuals in the town, although he had heard of the counterfeiters which I mentioned—in fact, he had seen several of them. But he felt positive they were not manufactured in or near Hamilton."

"I was, of course, positive they were, and with the constable's assistance, began a most careful and systematic search for the men wanted or any clew that might enable us to locate their 'den.'"

"Three months passed without result, although I was notified that a new batch of the counterfeiters had been 'floated.' I began to fear I had made a mistake and that the 'bogus' did not emanate from Hamilton after all. So I went carefully over my work, only to reach the same conclusion: the counterfeiters must have their headquarters in Hamilton. But who were they?"

"The town was literally flooded with bad money. In fact, it seemed to be the only currency of those demoralized nations in circulation in the village. I was puzzled. Either the entire population of the town was in league with the gang, or else—"

"Then an inspiration struck me. I called upon the several storekeepers in the village."

"Who is your best cash customer?" I asked.

"One and all made the same reply, without hesitation:

"Widow Bartlett."

"Who is the Widow Bartlett?"

"She is the wealthiest woman in the county," they said. "Her husband has been dead twenty years. He left her a big estate. She keeps here money in the bank, and resides in that big brick house on the hill. She is a recluse; no one ever visits her."

"Does she make her purchases in person or through a servant?" I asked.

"In person," they said.

"Pay with currency or checks?"

"In currency, always."

"I went to the bank."

"How much money has the Widow Bartlett on deposit here?" I asked.

"About ten thousand dollars," was the answer.

"Does she draw out much?"

"Hasn't drawn out any for several months—nearly a year."



"I called upon the village constable."

"I called in my assistants and summoned the constable."

"I have a clew," I said. "The party who floats this bad money is the Widow Bartlett."

"The constable was astonished. 'Impossible,' he said."

"Nevertheless," said I, "we will raid her house to-night."

"About 10 o'clock we surrounded the two-story residence of the widow. The house was dark; there was no sound within. I rang the bell vigorously several times, but there was no response."

"She must be away from home," I remarked to the constable.

"She never goes away from home," he answered.

"So I forced in the door and the constable and I entered with dark lanterns. The house was elegantly furnished, but we found no signs of a living occupant. Dust covered everything."

"She is out," I said. "We will conceal ourselves in the bushes and watch."

"So we hid ourselves in the yard and waited. Just at day-break an aged woman walked up the path from the street and entered the dwelling."

"That's her," whispered the constable.

"I waited a few minutes through courtesy. Then I rang the bell, but there was no response. I opened the



"I lifted a gray wig from her head," door and entered, but Widow Bartlett was not in. I searched every room and closet; I visited the cellar and the attic, but I found no living being. The house was carefully guarded and no one could have left the place unobserved. Here was a puzzle. I called the constable."

"'Didn't you see a woman enter this house a few moments ago?' I asked."

"'Yes,' he replied."

"'Well, where is she now?' I demanded."

"'He searched the house from cellar to garret and I followed him. 'I give it up,' he said. 'I would have sworn I saw Widow Bartlett come in just now.'"

"'She is in here, then,' I said, 'and I'm going to find her.'"

"'From my pocket I took a two-foot rule and measured the width of the rooms on the ground floor. It was just fifty feet from one outer wall to the other. Then I measured the second floor in the same manner. It was only forty-two feet."

"'There is a hidden room in this house,' I said, 'eight feet wide.'"

"'On the north side of the house was a large old-fashioned chimney, extending below the ground."

"'Let's take a look at that chimney,' said the constable."

"'Good idea,' said I."

"'So we went to the cellar. Set in the chimney, near its base, was a large ash pan. I pulled it out and found an opening large enough for a man to crawl through. Inside the chimney was a ladder extending upward."

"'It's all over,' said I to the constable. 'Call the boys.'"

"'When the others arrived, I started up the ladder, followed by one of my assistants and the constable. On the second floor I found a door on the south side of the chimney. Drawing my gun I kicked the door open and sprang through it into a small room."

"'I landed in the midst of three persons who were eating breakfast. Two were men who exactly answered the descriptions of those I wanted. The other was the Widow Bartlett, as I believed. Scattered about were plates, paper and paraphernalia."

"'We had the cuffs on them in short order. Then the 'Widow Bartlett' let out a volley of oaths."

"'My dear widow,' said I, 'pardon me.' And I lifted a gray wig from her head, revealing the black hair of a man underneath."

"'Well,' resumed the old secret service man, reflectively, 'I captured the plates and a large quantity of bad money, but the 'Hamilton gang' were never tried for counterfeiting. The villagers found the remains of the real Widow Bartlett buried in the cellar, and they hung my prisoners that night."

"'Preparing for the Coronation. Every one will be relieved to hear that quite extraordinary precautions are to be taken to preserve the fabric of the Abbey from defacement during the coronation. Some idea of the extensive nature of the transformation of the interior into what may perhaps be termed a glorified grandstand, will be gathered from the fact that the contract for the rough timber to be used in the process amounts to no less than £10,000. The stonework must of necessity be pierced here and there with what are called 'put log holes' to give support for the temporary wooden framework. When, however, the Abbey is once more cleared of the temporary stands no trace will be discernible of the havoc made in the meantime.—London Telegraph."

"A little encouragement has made many a man."

"Better ride an ass that carries me than a horse that throws me."

MAP OF THE PHILIPPINES.

Government Has Recently Published Its First One.

Only 400 copies of the new map of the Philippines, recently prepared under the direction of Gen. A. W. Greeley, were printed by the war department, the edition barely supplying the demands of the army posts. The National Geographic society, however, obtained the plates and has printed a large number for public distribution, using this map as a supplement of the National Geographical Magazine.

The size of the map is five feet two inches by three feet, the scale fifteen miles to the inch. Every town or hamlet known by the Jesuits or reported to the war department by its many officers throughout the islands is indicated. In short, it is a compilation of everything now known about the Philippine archipelago.

A glance at the map shows how much exploration is needed in large sections. For instance, on the island of Mindoro only a few names along the coast are given. The interior of the island is a blank.

The tremendous progress made by the American government in the islands is graphically illustrated by the red lines, indicating cables, telegraphs and telephones, which penetrate to nearly all corners of the archipelago. Nearly 7,000 miles of wire are now strung, whereas three years ago there was not one mile in the service.

All the telegraph lines are owned by the government and operated by a government department—the United States signal corps. The stations noted as commercial stations are open to messages of a private and commercial character, while from the stations noted as military only messages of a military nature can be sent.

This map is the first map of the Philippines that has been prepared by American officials. The spelling of the names is that adopted by the United States board on geographic names.

SHE LOST NOTHING.

Omission in the Wedding Service That Didn't Count.

A distinguished naval officer was telling this story on himself the other evening to a gathering of his friends. At the time of his marriage he had been through the civil war and had had many harrowing experiences aboard ship, through all of which he kept his courage and remained as calm as a brave man should. As the time for the ceremony came on, however, his calmness gradually gave way.

At the altar, amid the blaze of brass buttons and gold lace marking the full naval wedding, the officer was all but stampeded, and what went on there seemed very much mixed to him. Fearing the excitement of the moment would temporarily take him off his feet, the officer had learned the marriage ceremony letter perfect, as he thought, and he remembered repeating the words after the minister in a mechanical sort of way.

After the ceremony was all over and all was serene again, including the officer's state of mind, the kindly clergyman came up and touched him on the shoulder.

"Look here, old man," he said, "you didn't endow your wife with any worldly goods."

"What's that?" asked the bridegroom with something of astonishment in his voice.

"Why, I repeated the sentence 'With all my worldly goods I thee endow' several times and, despite my efforts, you would not say it after me."

The bridegroom seemed perturbed for a moment and then a beaming light came into his face.

"Never mind, sir," he said, "she didn't lose a blessed thing by my failure."—Washington Star.

In Praise of Insects as Food.

Admitting that it becomes argumentatively impossible to eat a cutlet, humanity may still be saved from the extremes of a vegetarian diet. A French entomologist, M. Dagnin, has discovered a half-way house, which he cordially recommends in the shape of insect food. He speaks on the subject with authority, "having tasted several hundred species of raw, boiled, fried, broiled, roasted and hashed insects." Regarding spiders as a side dish, he finds two objections—"they are not insects, and they live on animal food." M. Dagnin's recipe for cockroach soup is as follows: "Pound your cockroaches in a mortar; put in a sieve and pour in boiling water or beef stock. Connoisseurs prefer this to real bisque." The perfect insect, he continues, in most appetizing style, may be shelled and eaten like a shrimp. Caterpillars are pronounced a light food, of easy digestion, and may be eaten "out of the hand," raw if preferred. But the most popular insect food of all is locust flour, which the Bedouins take boiled in milk or fried and served with rice. We remember a certain "Garibaldi biscuit," which always suggested an inside layer of squashed flies.

Italy and Abyssinians.

After the Franco-Italian entente cordiale we have an italo-Abyssinian entente perhaps not so cordial. Several Abyssinian chiefs have been created knights of the Italian orders and Menelik has sent the badges of his two orders for the decoration of meritorious Italians. The Ethiopian orders are: The Order of Solomon, remarkable for its heavy badge of gold representing the seal of the wise Hebrew king, with the inscription, "I conquered the lion of Judah," and the Order of the Star of Ethiopia of recent creation, the badge being an emerald on a five-pointed golden star, with the inscription, "Abyssinia stretches her arms to the Lord."

WHERE HE GOT OFF.

Bad Omens Were Too Much for the Philadelphia Darkey.

Detective George Fall of the city hall force was riding up town in a Thirtieth street trolley car last week when a colored man of his acquaintance came in and sat down in the next seat. After a brief chat the detective said: "Are you superstitious, Sam?" "No, sub," said Sam. "Well, it's a good thing you're not," said Fall. "There's a cross-eyed woman sitting opposite." "Ya-as, sub, dat's right," chuckled Sam. "And up in the corner is a hunchback." "Ya, sub, I sees him." "See the number of the car up there? It's 313." "Ya, sub." "And this is Thirtieth street we're on, you know." "You go long, sub." "The cash register, as you may observe, shows the figures 1313." "Ya-as, sub." "And this is Friday." "Ya-as, sub." "Also it is the thirteenth day of the month." "Quit yo foolin', man." "It is now," said the detective, pulling out his watch, "just exactly thirteen minutes past—"

The colored man had risen to his feet. "I ain't superstitious, Mistah Fall," he said, "but heah's where I gets off. You do make a man mighty uncomfortable."—Philadelphia Record.

Too Little for Too Much.

When the late ameer of Afghanistan was troubled with a bad toothache he sent for his European dentist in open court. The dentist examined the tooth, which was nothing more than an old stump, and advised that the ameer should take laughing-gas and have it out. The ameer inquired into the effect of the gas and replied:

"I can not risk being a dead man for five seconds, much less five minutes."

So, while the whole Afghan court surveyed the operation, the dentist struggled with the tooth, and the stout old ameer never moved a muscle.

The quality of common sense which characterized this ruler once averted a war between England and Russia. A representative of the ameer told him that the Russians had taken Afghan territory, but as England had guaranteed him against aggression he could easily depend on England to go to war if he said the word.

The ameer sat quietly for a few minutes, stroking his beard, and then called for a map of Afghanistan. When it was brought he asked the representative to show him the territory that had been seized. Then tracing the little fringe of country, and sweeping with his finger the great space that stood for the rest of his kingdom, he said:

"It is so little that it is not worth making a great war about."—Youth's Companion.

Wanted His Share.

The treasury department runs across many funny things in the course of a day's business," said an official of that department. "The mails are full of curious epistles, but, as a rule most of them receive polite attention and answers are returned. Just before the close of the year that ended with December 31 Secretary Gage gave an interview, showing the splendid condition of the country in a financial way, and the full purse of Uncle Sam. In his statement he showed that four years ago or a little more the per capita circulation throughout the country was only \$23.14, but that although the population has increased the volume of money has more than kept pace, so that the per capita at the first of the year was \$28.73. A man named Schmidt in New York saw the statement, and the day after New Year wrote a letter to the treasurer saying that if the per capita was so much he certainly did not have his portion of it. He inclosed a draft on the treasurer for the amount that he considered he was entitled to. The draft was presented to Treasurer Roberts with great solemnity, but he declined to honor it, and directed that no answer be sent to Mr. Schmidt, whose letter was well written and the handwriting good."

Solving It.

Patrick, a thrifty tradesman in the neighborhood of the Dublin docks, was the story goes in Tit-Bits, a man who never spent a penny more than he needed to spend; but he was, nevertheless, as good a man at the making of an Irish bull as any who lived between Bantry and Ballycastle.

Having one day occasion to send a letter to a place at some distance, Patrick called a messenger and asked him his price for going such a distance.

"It'll be a shillin'," said the man.

"Twice two much!" said Patrick.

"Let it be sixpence."

"Niver," answered the messenger.

"The way list that lonely that I'd niver go it under a shillin'."

"Lonely, is it?" said Patrick, scratching his head. "Faith, an' ye're roight. Now, man, I'll tell ye what we'll do; make it sixpence, and I'll go wid ye to kape ye company!"

Lost in the Discard.

Gov. Tod, the war governor of Ohio, was generally considered to be conscious to the full of his official importance. He was under discussion in the lobby of a Columbus hotel when a stranger to the city remarked:

"'Tod—all the Tods I ever knew wrote their name 'T-o-double d.'"

There was silence. Then an old acquaintance of the chief executive explained:

"Well, to tell the truth, that used to be the governor's way of writing it, but one day, as it happened, a man told him that God spelled his name with only one 'd.' That settled it, 'henceforward the governor's final 'd' was lost in the discard."

Collections of searf or the pins is one of the fads of New York men.

TO REFORM CRIMINALS

Noted Writer Points Out Defects in Our Present System.

There is probably no subject of greater importance to organized society than the problem of how to deal with the criminal classes, so as to reduce their number and thereby prevent crime. Criminals there always will be, and hence some crime. How to minimize both deserves the best thought of the hour.

It is often said that crime is on the increase. It would be truer to say that what constitutes crime is constantly being increased by legislation. Our state legislatures at every session pass one or more statutes making certain acts misdemeanors which were not so before. Real crime and actual criminals are rapidly fading away before the advancing light of civilization and education.

Punishment for crime has much to do with making criminals. This statement seems paradoxical, but it is an indisputable fact. Hundreds may be saved from a life of crime by the proper administration of the criminal laws. It used to be thought that severity of punishment was the wise course, indeed the only method, to prevent crime. Fear, no doubt, deters many; but it is not fear that must be chiefly relied upon to save men from crime. No man was ever made better by being put in the stocks. Severity is useful only in cases in which reform-

mation is hopeless and in which absolute removal from all social intercourse is therefore necessary.

We are rapidly coming to believe that kindness and close supervision are the best preventives of crime. There is no more cruel, inhuman or unwise provision, says J. Franklin Fort in the Forum, than that of the New York constitution which requires the judge to impose for a second offense double the penalty fixed by law for the crime of which the offender is convicted. It simply substitutes brute force for reason and righteousness. Criminals and penalties must both be graded. Time has demonstrated the wisdom of so doing. Until within a few years—say fifteen as the greatest period—all the states confined convicted persons, whatever their age or offense, in the same prison, and the penalty imposed had to be served by all inmates alike for the term imposed. Such is still the case in many states. But gradually there has grown up a first step in criminal reformation a system of reduction of time for good behavior. This was established at first largely as a measure to assist prison discipline. It was found to be successful in its operation and it has led up naturally to two other systems now existing in several states—namely, conditional pardon and parole.

What Dreams Mean

Good and Bad Luck Foretold by Bells, Dogs, a Ring, or Olives.

To dream of bells signifies a speedy marriage or good news.

To dream of ivy means that you have many true-hearted friends.

To dream of dogs has very different significations. If they fawn and fondle upon you, then it is a lucky omen; if you are in love your sweetheart will marry you and render you happy. If they are barking and snarling at you then be sure that enemies are secretly endeavoring to destroy your reputation and happiness; if you are in love, be careful of your sweetheart.

To dream of an elf signifies a happy return of one long absent; presents of value may be expected after this dream, which also signifies marriage, with wealth, position and happiness.

To dream you hear an echo to your own voice denotes that your lover is much attached to you. It also denotes that you will hear good tidings from a distant country.

To dream bees sting you denotes loss of good character; and if you are in love, of your sweetheart. To dream you see them at work is a very lucky dream—it forebodes great success by your own industry. To dream you see them making their honey under your own roof is the best omen in the world. For the rich to dream of bees is rather unlucky; but to the poor they denote comfort, affluence and success.

To dream that it is hailing or snowing, or that the ground is covered,

foretells marriage. To dream of hail or snow before asking a favor augurs that you will obtain your desire.

To dream that you are groaning under some heavy yoke which is almost unbearable signifies that you will be gladdened by receiving tidings that a considerable legacy has been bequeathed to you.

To dream that you are looking through a microscope, denotes that your lover will remove to a great distance, but that, after many years' absence you will meet again, and be married, and you will be very comfortable and happy.

To dream you see olives denotes happiness, and that you will be successful in all your present undertakings; to the lover they foretell a speedy marriage with the object of your affections. If you are gathering them off the trees, they show your sweetheart is unfaithful.

To dream of rings is favorable—if it be on your finger. If you are in love, expect to be speedily united to the person on whom you have placed your affections. To dream that your ring falls off your finger betokens evil, also the death of some dear friend.

To dream of being in the garden of Eden signifies that every happiness will be yours, and you will become selfish and indifferent to the wants of others. If you pluck fruit you will divide your pleasures with one in every way worthy to enjoy them.—Forget-Me-Not.

Patrick on the Witness Stand

Proves Difficult Subject for Cross-Examination.

Pat was on the witness stand sorely against his will. He was more than an unwilling witness; he was sullenly cross and uncommunicative. His "dander wuz riz" when the brutally offensive lawyer on the other side had sought to belittle him as an honest wage-earner.

"What's your business?" was asked with a half-sneer that implied that the answer would reflect on Pat's value as an intelligent witness.

"I'm a hod-carrier," was the straightforward reply.

"It's an elevating business, isn't it?"

"It's as elevatin' as sindin' up the hangman's materials; and ye've carried him some, I believe."

The examination was prosecuted more warily after this retort, the lawyer, however, ever on the alert for an opening through which to retrieve himself. It offered when Pat incautiously or innocently replied to some question that "it would be a miracle" if things were otherwise.

"Ha! You say 't would be a miracle. Can you define a miracle?"

"Not by rule o' thumb. I never practiced 'em."

Merely the Horse Reporter.

The return of Pere Hyacinth to Rome and his preaching to great Protestant congregations recall an unpublished episode of his visit to San Francisco years ago. He then spoke only French, and a local journal sent to interview him Percy Wilson, an eccentric Englishman, who had been bred for the church, but who had made a specialty of the theaters and turf.

After a general talk on his visit and his impressions of California the conversation shifted to religious topics. The intimate familiarity of the reporter with theological questions seemed to amaze Pere Hyacinth, and when the interviewer rose to go, he said, with the puzzled look still on his face:

"Pardon me, but you have shown

such astonishing familiarity with questions that only a theologian usually understands that I should like to know with what special department of your newspaper you are connected?"

"Oh," said old Wilson, with dry humor, "I'm the horse reporter!"

Millions Live on the Ocean.

The population of the ocean is estimated at 3,000,000. That is to say, the number of sailors and others whose business is on the high seas equals the inhabitants of the thirteen original colonies. Last year more than one-sixth of this ocean population, or to be more exact, 550,000, officers and men, of 4,343 vessels, entered the port of New York.