

GREATEST COUNTERFEIT IN THE WORLD'S HISTORY

NATIONAL BANK OF FRANCE
LOSING UNTOLD MILLIONS
THROUGH A COUNTERFEIT
SO PERFECT THAT IT
CANNOT BE DETECTED
BY ANY TEST—
COMPELLED TO
REDEEM BOGUS
BILLS INDEFINITELY
BECAUSE THE
BANK ITSELF
CANNOT
DISTINGUISH
THE BAD ONES



TRYING TO DISCOVER THE SOURCE OF THE GREAT COUNTERFEIT BY THE FLAG SYSTEM.



ON JANUARY 1, 1910, the Bank of France surprised the financial world by hastily issuing a new type of \$20 bill, marvelous in its melting of soft variegated tones from the four colors, blue, yellow, rose and green. It was at once called the "rainbow," being a great work of art, of novelty and of modern process printing. A French collector paid Luc-Olivier Merson \$3,000 for his original large-size water color "maquette" of the labor and fortune side of it; and Mr. Pierpont Morgan, with \$5,000 and a cablegram, secured from Romagnol, the engraver, his first proof "before the letter"; yet its money value is nil, it having neither the signatures nor numbers of its millions of successors now flying through France.

At the same time, in the Golden Gallery of the bank's old palace, gorgeous with historic tapestries and old masters, the greatest detective organizers of Europe continued to pass hours over a vast map. They still continue. Telegrams rain on them. When one has a list of numbers it is compared with long, ever-changing lists by specialists at desks and tables in a far end of the old gilt banquet hall. A technician is ready with his enlarging camera and darkroom closet; but they seldom use him. Unfortunately, the work has become too simple.

Twenty times a day quiet men slip in for conferences, dressed like tourists from Geneva, London or Madrid, or seeming business men, or clerks, or racing touts, or gilded youth, or crooks, or honest artisans. They are all detective operators. When they whisper numbers, when the specialists compare—"194—G. 1237—30906194," or "072—M. 232—05786072"—the organizers stick more little red flags in the vast map.

How Counterfeit Was Discovered.

Here is the greatest counterfeiting story of modern times, told by a Paris correspondent of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. France enjoys clean paper money. They have \$10, \$20, \$100 and \$200 bills, the rest being gold and silver; and for every soiled bill that returns to the bank a brand-new one is issued. Before destroying the old ones with caustic soda their identifying numbers are written off the registers. Each bill has its individual number, its alphabet's letter, its alphabet's number and its comparison number.

No two bills are numbered alike. Yet, a short time ago, the Bank of France began to find bills numbered alike. They had been accepted by its branches at Marseilles, Toulon, Nice and Avignon, over the counter, from runners and from other banks. They had passed perfectly through the various departments of the Bank of France. Only when they were being written off the registers previous to destruction was the ominous fact discovered—there were quantities of duplicates. They were counterfeiters. But which were counterfeiters?

The bill counterfeited was the 100 franc, one of the type of 1889, supposed to be counterfeit proof by reason of the rose-colored backgrounds which Dupuis and Duval had added to Baudry's marvelous blue vignettes.

The paper, though it does not possess the American thread, was also considered inimitable. It was made by the bank at its own works at Bierey, which produces no other kind of paper. True, the Bank of France obligingly sells Bierey bank note paper to French colonial and even foreign banks, but the sheets are always numbered, and it is taken as certain that all can be accounted for.

New counterfeiters continuing to rain on the bank, another formidable detail was noticed. The counterfeiters did not bear a single set of numbers, such as lone counterfeiters are often content to put on their unique galvans. The first duplicates disclosed any quantity of duplicates. But, as the duplicates continued showering on them without a single triplicate, the experts were forced to one of two outrageous conclusions:

Either the counterfeiters possessed the bulky, complicated, exact and expensive numbering machines of the bank itself, or they were in presence of an utterly new type of direct color-photography that merely reproduced each note a single time! To make sure of such an explanation would be equivalent to reinventing the unknown process. Photographic enlargements showed unmistakable photographic exactness of all details, but, on the other hand, traces of printing pressure were said to be found on the paper.

At first they pursued the usual policy of secrecy to catch the counterfeiters. Thus, until hands were laid on them and their plates, the world heard nothing of the aristocratic crooks who successfully emitted \$1,000,000 worth of \$5 Bank of England notes from Moscow last November.

The Bank of England, the German Reichsbank, the Bank of Italy, the Bank of Austria-Hungary and the Bank of Spain sent to Paris an unequalled lot of sleuths and experts, acquainted with the faces, whereabouts and style of work of most of the counterfeiters and honest engravers and photograph-process specialists of Europe.

In the golden gallery of the bank's palace the detective organizers have their seat.

Map System of Tracing.

At once they set up the map system, used with success by the Bank of England. A vast map of Europe, tacked to a vast table, fills one end of the gallery. In whatever town counterfeit 100 franc bills appear they plant a small red flag. It is the system that discovered the Moscow crooks last November. Little by little, without a working theory, merely by planting individual flags where counterfeiters appear, the flags come to form converging lines toward one spot—that of issue. Also, in every town where counterfeiters appeared, sleuths trailed mysteriously. They trailed all right; but as soon as they trailed the counterfeiters ceased to appear. On the great map similar phenomena was noticed. Not twice or thrice, but ten times the flag lines converged to a well indicated center. Here the counterfeiters had been distributing to many agents. But they were here no more. They had skipped, to start up elsewhere.

And the Bank of France continued paying gold for green goods. They would have become panic-stricken and notified the public to cease accepting 100 franc bills but for the promise of Luc-Olivier Merson's new bill, well-called "the rainbow." On Jan. 1, 1910, it was ready for distribution in every one of the 128 branches and sixty-nine auxiliary bureaus of the Bank of France. And on Jan. 3, 1910, the checkmating of the greatest counterfeiters of modern times began.

Meanwhile the mysteriously capable counterfeiters of France have already made many millions, one one knows how much. Will the gang that proved itself so astute have courage to quit business next week, when the 100 franc bills they are imitating begin to be really scarce. The great detective organizers hope not. They still sit over the great map in the golden gallery. And their emissaries are everywhere.

Testing the Run of Golf Balls.

There is a capital way, which we have discovered only lately, of testing the running of a golf ball off the putter. It can only be adopted on a day when the green or lawn is coated over with drops of moisture on the grass blades, either from white frost, dew or the deposit of a sea fog or Scotch mist.

The difference in the way of running of balls of different make, and of some balls of the same make, is very marked and curious. We can assure all the sundry that it is a test worth trying, because the knowledge of the ball that will run true on the putting green is knowledge that will serve us well.—Country Life.

A Different Individual.

"Ah," said the pedestrian leaning over the fence where the old farmer was feeding his turkeys, "raising some birds to satisfy the cravings of the inner man, I see."

"No," replied the farmer, thinking of the 11 cents a pound the turkeys would bring as against the 30 cents a pound the consumer would have to pay for them, "I am raisin' these birds to satisfy the demands of the middleman, by gosh!"—Houston Post

LAW FOR COLD STORAGE

Demand for Regulation of the System in Interest of Honesty and Health.

THE LIMIT FOR PRODUCTS.

Two Desirable Results May Be Attained in Making Period Not More than One Year.

If we are to be thorough in dealing with the food problem we must take up the matter of cold storage, which is not merely an indispensable part of the packing combination, but may be a most formidable weapon of extortion. The consumer has lost some of his appetite for food, thanks to the quality and cost of the food he has been getting. The hideous insipidity of fowls and fish which departed this life in 1908 or earlier is enough to reduce him to plain living and high thinking. He ought to think to some purpose right now.

There is no question that cold storage has become a necessity for supplying our big cities, the Wall Street Journal says. With the conditions which obtained well within the memory of many of us it would be impossible to feed cities like New York or Chicago. We should be alternating between periods of wasteful plenty in such commodities as eggs and poultry and times when they would be unobtainable at any price. But this is no reason for saying that where we can regulate the interstate distributors of produce, the railroads, we cannot take the same means to prevent the instrument of cold storage from being abused.

We have arrived at a stage where, for all but a fortunate few, really fresh eggs do not come on to the market at all. They are bought at their cheapest and when they are most plentiful. They are stored, and even at such times the market is supplied with eggs which may be anything from a year to three years old. The bakers who manufacture the cheapest kind of pastry are supplied with the garbage which is actually five years old—eggs which could not even be used for political purposes outside a South American revolution.

The question of whether beef will keep for longer than one year, or whether one commodity will keep longer than another, is beside the point. All that is required is to provide such cold storage as will distribute the year's product evenly throughout the year. There would be two results from such legislation. One would be an immediate improvement in the quality of food, and the other would be a reduction in its price.

MOTHER AND CHILD GO OVER CLIFF IN BURNING WAGON.



Mrs. S. R. Breck, a widow, and her baby were plunged 100 feet down to the bottom of the Blanco Canyon and then burned to a crisp amid the debris of a wagon that contained all her household goods near the little plains town of Floydada, Tex. Mrs. Breck was moving across country in a heavy wagon. The horses became frightened and backed over the precipice. As the wagon turned over and over in its descent a stove in the outfit set fire to the goods and a can of gasoline exploded. The struggling woman with her baby and the horses, unable to extricate themselves from the wreckage, now a mass of flames, landed in a heap at the bottom. The charred remains of the mother and baby clapsed to her breast were found later by a ranchman who had witnessed the tragedy from the other side of the canyon, but who had to make a detour of many miles to reach the scene.

Beginning Young.

A certain Chicago boy has all the hardihood which polar exploration requires, if a writer in the Chicago News is to be believed.

"Tommy," asked the visitor, "what are you going to be when you grow up to be a man?"

"I'm going to be an arctic explorer," responded the bright little boy. "And now will you give me a quarter?"

"Gracious, Tommy! What do you want with a quarter?"

"I want to get five ice-cream sodas and find out how much cold I can stand."

His Reason.

Circus Manager—Why did the dog-faced boy run away?

Side Show Proprietor—He must have heard me tell the new cook to prepare sausage for breakfast.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Queer Story.

Bill—Did you hear the story about the bottomless kettle?

Jill—No.

Bill—It wouldn't hold water!—Yonkers Statesman.

THE COUNT AND COUNTESS DE BEAUFORT.



Count de Beaufort

Countess de Beaufort

The pictures shown above are those of the Count and Countess de Beaufort, who are known more or less to the sporting and sportsman world of Europe and America. The Count is a Frenchman and the Countess was formerly Miss Kilgallen, daughter of a Chicago millionaire. They are familiar figures at Monte Carlo, in London and in the capitals of Europe. Recently they became involved in a dispute at Hot Springs, Ark., because they would not pay \$500 which the owner of a gaming house alleged they had lost at roulette. They claim to have believed they were playing with 10-cent chips, but the game keeper said they were \$1 chips. When the game was over they offered \$50 in settlement, but \$500 was claimed. Hence the dispute.

Hot Springs for many years has

been the resort of those who delight to woo the goddess of chance. But some time ago gaming was abolished. Then the town found its income was not equal to its expenses and an agreement was reached whereby the gamblers were permitted to conduct their business in return for being arrested and fined certain amounts at stated intervals, the fines to go toward the support of the municipality.

EXTENT OF WOMAN SUFFRAGE.



American women possess suffrage upon equal terms with men in four states—the White states on the map; in twenty-five additional states, marked with Stars, school suffrage for women prevails; in Seventeen states and the territory of New Mexico. Shaded upon the map, women have no vote at all.