

RICH CROOKS GET THEIR DUE

Cash Resources and the Pull Fail to Save Some of Them.

MASTERS OF MILLIONS IN PRISONS

List of Noted Cases in Which Justice Put the Leader Heel on the Right Spot—An Encouraging Record.

The popular opinion that rich keep men out of prison, while the poor have to suffer the full rigor of the law, has had a number of severe jolts recently. The long list of men in high positions and seemingly the possessors of vast wealth who have violated the law, been detected, tried and now are undergoing punishment is a strong indication that the millennium of equal justice has at last dawned.

In the consideration of such instances of this nature as that of most recent cases in Chicago—Peter Van Vliet, William C. W. Morse in New York, a prominent feature is the fact that while reputedly wealthy, when the bubble burst the millions they were supposed to have owned were found never to have existed, or, if they did exist, to have been on paper, the fictitious value of which was demonstrated when the first winds of adversity struck the fragile timent.

In the case of Van Vliet, like that of Paul O. Stensland, whose career as a forger was so nearly parallel to that confessed by the Chicago real estate man, conviction was swift and sure. Stensland started off for a time by becoming a fugitive, but found that the law was inexorable. When he was arrested he pleaded guilty and asked the privilege of beginning his sentence with the least possible delay. Today he wears the prison gray uniform of the good conduct convict at Joliet prison, the same as does the poorest criminal in the penal institution. For him, too, the rule of strictness is enforced as completely as it is in the case of the most obscure thief or cheap thief who is his companion in captivity.

Fate of Van Vlietings.

To the same fate Van Vlietings was sentenced after a trial lasting little longer than an hour. No objecting party man could have had a more speedy conviction than has this man, who, supposedly wealthy, found himself in such a position that he was able to steal the sum of more than \$1,000,000 from people who trusted him as much because they thought him beyond the necessity of peculation as for any other reason. Of course, the cases of Van Vlietings and Stensland are not true examples of the aged condition against which socialists of others who have continually on the faces of the rich and the troubles of the poor complain. When they were finally discovered in their crime neither put up a fight. In reality their fortunes were such bubbles that when the demerment came they vanished into nothingness.

A somewhat similar condition confronted George B. McKeown, the former grain broker and warehouse man convicted for defrauding banks by means of fictitious warehouse receipts. McKeown, however, put up a hard legal fight extending over a number of months. The highest courts were invoked in an effort to save him his liberty, but, despite sufficient money to secure all legal aid possible and the powerful influence of his friends, he had made in his affairs days when he was rated a millionaire, being to go to prison and don the faded gray uniform.

Newton C. Deary, the embourgeoised Peoria banker, had short shrift, although an effort was made to save him the disgrace of going to prison. But it was unavailing, as he had been convicted of five life sentences. The Chicago politician, reported to have amassed a comfortable fortune through his connection with politics for years, fought as hard as any man, usually only ever went to prison. Not only his own means, but millions of dollars of the money of his wealthy associates, were at his disposal, and he bravely but vainly tried to outwit justice. He was sentenced to five years in the Missouri State Penitentiary.

The Morse case in New York is another example of the inexorableness of laws made for the government of rich and poor alike. Dealing in millions, the forger had transgressed the laws at times when in his struggle he believed himself stronger than the law. His hard-fought trial, only recently finished, which resulted in his being sentenced to prison for fifteen years, which in his case amounts practically to life, and the refusal of the court to admit him to bail, have placed him securely behind prison bars, while his lawyers still are seeking legal loopholes through which their client may escape.

The case of former Mayor Eugene A. Schmitt of San Francisco and Abraham Ruef, the wealthy and influential political boss of the western city, are fresh in the public mind by reason of the attempted assassination of President Henry, who has been the nemesis of the grafters of the western coast. Once Schmitt and Ruef were sentenced and actually served several months in prison. Then they were released on a technicality, but the law is pursuing

them more vigilantly now than ever, and Ruef was at liberty when Henry was shot only because of his ability to furnish \$1,000,000 bail.

The case of Harry K. Thaw, who killed Stanford White, is probably the hardest contested, in which the wealth of one individual played an important part in the scale of the country. Not even in the Thaw case it is possible that his wealth has been against him. At any rate, had it not been for the Thaw millions he would either have been acquitted or convicted promptly, without all the harrowing suspense, and the expenditure of \$1,000,000, that has not even resulted in giving him his liberty. His wealth made it possible for him to be branded as insane. It saved him from the electric chair, but had he been very poor the circumstances leading up to the crime probably would have caused a jury to be merciful.

Effect of Sympathy. In this connection the human sympathy which natural feelings tend to foster more correctly the cause of biased verdicts. In the case of men who have occupied high and respected positions in a community, the judge and the jury cannot help remembering the man's former estate, similar to what they themselves are enjoying, his wife and his children, if he has them, and most such criminals have. The "poor yeoman in his place" idea is strong, and street lawyers take pains to develop it.

But sympathy benefits the rich no more than the poor, except as it may be manufactured by money. The case of Johann Koch, the wife murderer, and Billik, whose case has been in all the courts of the country, although he had no money, refutes the charge that it is only the rich who can invoke all the machinery of the law in their aid.

General Charles W. Russell, assistant attorney general of the United States, declares that it is absurd to say that wealth prevents prosecution, or, in general, convictions. He refers to the work of Bank Examiner Maxey, who appeared as the principal witness for the prosecution in the Morse trial and who has reputation of having sent thirty-three wealthy and so-called respectable men to jail. But money helps, General Russell admits.

"The whole thing is analogous to the case of a sick poor man and a sick rich man," he said in a recent interview. "The rich invalid can hire the best doctors; he can take all the time that is necessary to get well; he can avail himself of proper climate and environment, and it is a matter of common sense that he stands a better show of recovery than the other fellow. Just so with poor criminals and rich criminals. The rich one's chances for acquittal are better because he can afford to fight longer. It is simply the law of chance. If you can stay in a poker game long enough you will win, but that doesn't show collusion, does it?"

Money Kings in Prison. Here are some more illustrations—recent ones, mostly of rich men who went to jail, most of them being still there: A. F. Bonnell, formerly a banker of Cleveland, O., arrived in New York on September 11 last from Brazil, a prisoner, in custody of a deputy sheriff and an assistant prosecuting attorney of his home state. He is charged with the theft of \$200,000, which, it is alleged, he received from laborers under the pretext that he would forward it to their relatives in Italy. The two state officers traveled all the way to Santos, Brazil, to get their man—and got him.

Samuel Stetley was a prominent real estate and insurance agent in Brooklyn, N. Y. His position as cashier of the National Shoe and Leather bank of New York gave him prestige in financial circles. He was accused and found guilty of having defrauded with \$250,000 of the bank's funds and served five years and four months in the Kings County penitentiary. Captain Oberlin M. Carter, Captain B. D. Greene and E. H. Gaynor have all felt the iron hand of the law for having attempted to disobey its commands. Captain Carter was one of the leading young officers in the engineering department of the United States army. When he was appointed to make extensive improvements in the harbor at Savannah, Captain Carter was appointed to take charge of the work. Certain revelations made started an investigation and Captain Carter was found guilty of having conspired with Gaynor and Greene to defraud the government. After fruitless appeals Captain Carter was taken to Leavenworth, where he served his sentence of three years and seven months. Gaynor and Greene, after their conviction, fled to Canada. They were brought back to this country, however, and are now serving out their four-year terms.

William H. Behrman was mayor of Paterson. He was an honored member of the bar of the state of New Jersey. He was intrusted with scores of estates, and friends had no hesitancy in placing limitless sums in his hands. While occupying the position of mayor he suddenly fled from the city. His rights disclosed embezzlements of thousands of dollars. Search for him was made, but he finally returned, surrendered to the authorities and pleaded guilty to embezzlement. Judge Scott, one of his closest friends and associates in former days sentenced him to twelve years imprisonment.

John W. Wooten, formerly a New York lawyer and partner of August Belmont in the banking business, was sent to Sing Sing prison in May, 1908, to serve nine years, and six months for looting the \$1,000,000 estate of E. B. Hall.

Bank Wrecker a Convict. David Rothchild, wrecker of the Federal bank, was convicted in 1905 and sent to Sing Sing to serve nine years.

Harry Brunaugh, formerly secretary to Mayor Bookwala of Indianapolis, Ind., and superintendent of the Western Construction company, was sent to the penitentiary last June to serve a term of from two to fourteen years for defrauding the city.

William O. Miles, ex-district attorney of Brooklyn, is now serving a term in the penitentiary for passing fraudulent sewer claims to the city for payment.

R. M. Snyder, the promoter of the Central Traction bill in St. Louis, was convicted and sentenced to five years in the penitentiary for bribery on October 4, 1902. This was the first conviction in the famous hoodie scandal of St. Louis, following a year's investigation. Snyder was accused of bribing Councilman Whitford to vote for the Central Traction bill. Whitford was to receive \$10,000, but failed to collect more than \$3,000. He was one of the state's witnesses in the trial.

Louis Glas of San Francisco, vice president of the Pacific States Telephone and Telegraph company, was convicted and sentenced to five years for bribery, September 4, 1907. Glas, before conviction, was one of San Francisco's leading citizens and possessed considerable wealth.

Horace E. Hand, a prominent lawyer in St. Louis and leader of society in the fashionable suburb, Kirkwood, was arrested on January 11, at his home, on the charge of forgery, while entertaining his mother and a sister of his abroad. He pleaded guilty on the next day to forgery, and by three o'clock in the afternoon was on his way to prison, sentenced to serve five years.

Charles H. Thornton, note teller of the Hamilton National bank of Chicago, a man highly respected in business and social circles, upon the discovery of his dishonesty, pleaded guilty to having embezzled \$200,000 from the bank. He was sentenced to five years in the government prison at Fort Leavenworth, and he is now serving that sentence.

"Fall" of No Avolt. The following interesting roster is also to the point: Edward Stokes shot Jim Flak, served term in prison. Al Adams, the "policy king," served sentence in Sing Sing. William F. Walker, honored banker of New Britain, Conn., stole hundreds of thousands of dollars, followed to Mexico, brought back and sent to jail.

Frank C. Martin, eminent Brooklyn lawyer, caught after a ten-year chase and just sent to prison for forgery. Frank G. Bigelow, former president of the American Bankers' association, looted the First National bank of Milwaukee and was sentenced to the penitentiary.

Leonard Imbruden and James A. Hill, Denver bank wreckers, received ten-year jail sentences. Guy C. Stratton, millionaire lumberman of Seattle, Wash., convicted of murder in the second degree for killing child with automobile. Mrs. Cassie Chadwick, wife of prominent Cleveland physician, sent to jail for forgery. Abe Hummel, for years one of New York's most prominent lawyers, sent to Blackwell's Island for one year.

Charles T. Yerkes, millionaire traction magnate at his death, was once convicted and sentenced to a jail term, which he served. J. A. Deagan, California millionaire, sentenced for bad fraud August 11, 1907, for one year and to pay a \$1,000 fine in San Francisco. Charles B. Cameron, president of the Pittsburgh & Yuba City Railroad company, when called for sentence did not answer and court declared \$1,000 bond forfeited.

Senator Mitchell of Oregon, convicted and sentenced to two years in jail, died while appeal was pending. Besides the above the United States penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kan., has sent to its cell near bankers from all parts of the United States who have been convicted of crimes carrying with them jail sentences. The prison authorities have what they term a bankers' colony. In 1907 there were twenty-one convicts in the bankers' colony—Chicago Record-Herald.

FIGHT WITH A DEVIL FISH How Far the Real Thing Compares With the Fear of Sea Romantics. Science often gives battle to romance, sometimes marrying the picture of fiction and occasionally adding to their interest. No more exciting pages have been penned than those of Victor Hugo descriptive of the fight of Giliat with a devil fish, "Tollers of the Sea," and now comes a cold scientist of the Smithsonian institution with a devil fish story which still leaves to the French novelist the stidility of his description, and adds a chapter of his own. Dr. Theodore Gill, associate in zoology in the United States National museum, has made a study of the "devil fish," one of the most interesting of sea creatures, about which very little is known.

Although the same devil fish often has been applied to different species of cuttle fish, with their eight long, wavy arms, to a kind of shark, and also in California to a gray whale, the giant fish best known as such is technically called the "great ray."

The devil fish, or great ray, is flat, said to be sometimes thirty feet across, with two great suckle arms or head fins shaped somewhat like an elephant's trunk protruding from the front of its head. Although many thrilling tales of adventure with the fish have from time to time found their way into print, there is not yet on record an authoritative report of a devil fish having eaten a human being.

"The food of the devil fish," says Dr. Gill, "so far from being large animals and occasionally a man or so, as has been alleged, appears to be chiefly the small crabs, shrimps and other crustaceans and some small fishes, which swarm in certain places near the surface of the water. Rarely does one stray on large fishes."

The devil fishes are inhabitants of warm water seas, and as a rule do not venture from the shore very far out on the high seas. Once in awhile one is seen as far north as New York, or another in the Mediterranean. In United States waters they have been more frequently reported from South Carolina and the Gulf states and from Lower California. They often swim in schools, or shoals, and have a curious habit of turning somersaults near the surface, sometimes leaping as high as ten feet out of the water and showing the sea into foam. If the devil fish could live and move in the air, in their mode of progression, they would probably be said to fly, for a sort of submarine flight is really what is accomplished. It is by flapping the long wing-like fins that they speed themselves along.

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