

WASHINGTON.

The Smugglers of the Canadian Border. Experiences of Two Detectives.

Goods Sent from Montreal to New York Without Duty or Freight.

MILLIONS LOST TO THE GOVERNMENT. Modus Operandi of the Very Profitable Operations.

FROM OUR REGULAR CORRESPONDENT.

WASHINGTON, April 23, 1877. Smuggling operations along the Canadian border.

Important discoveries have been made recently by the detective agents of the Treasury Department as to the means and methods by which the smugglers on the Canadian border of New York and Vermont have been able to carry on their operations to the great detriment of the government revenue.

The subject of repressing these operations was taken up in the days of Secretary Morrill, and his sanction for the plan proposed for accomplishing the undertaking was among the last acts of his official life.

The special agents or detectives to Canada to visit the Montreal or elsewhere, and bargain for their shipment to New York free of duty charges at the border.

The sum of \$3,000, not a unidirectional one, it is true, but enough it was thought to experiment with, was put at the disposal of the detectives and they went to work.

They proceeded to Montreal and entered one of the largest wholesale stores, where they made a purchase of some leather goods, for which they paid cash.

They ordered the goods sent to New York, and by the display of some mysterious signs intimidated their wish that the goods should go across the border without undergoing the inspection of Uncle Sam's customs officers.

In this case it appears that the "trick" was as good as a good to a blind horse. The goods were sent as requested, went through the lines unmolested, and were received at the other side "right side up with care."

Of course the detectives had set out to learn how it was done. They suspected already that many millions of dollars worth of merchandise had come every year from the United States duty free by the same road.

The robbery of the government of millions of revenue every year by the border smugglers was a fact, only too well known at the Treasury Department. The secret was now revealed, the two detectives put the merchandise they bought under the strictest surveillance.

They saw it leave the store of the Montreal merchants and pass to the charge of a drayman, the same as any other lot of merchandise would do, but they next discovered that the trunk was not what it seemed.

They were suddenly converted into wearing apparel and packed in trunks. Then these trunks were conveyed to the railway station, where brass checks were clandestinely attached to them by the baggage masters.

They did their work as if they had long practiced in it. No passenger tickets were required to be shown. The baggage agents had an evident understanding with the draymen and fastened the checks on without requiring the exhibition of tickets and handed over the brass duplicates all the same as if the transaction were in the regular and ordinary course of things.

The trunks were thus secure of undisturbed passage to the destination specified on the check. No inspection was made from the Customs House inspectors at the United States frontier. That this conspiracy search of one or two honest trunks was made the magic mark was affixed and the cargo of smuggled merchandise went through without molestation or detention.

Thus was the modus operandi revealed to the detectives. They went back to Montreal and pursued their investigations further. The \$3,000 was soon expended, but they so ingratiated themselves into the confidence of one firm that they came near getting one bill of \$40,000 worth of goods consigned to them on credit, a bit of reprisal on the smuggling fraternity which they fancied would have been a source of considerable satisfaction to Uncle Sam if they could have succeeded in effecting it, but for some reason the firm took the alarm and the goods were not shipped.

As a result of this investigation they found that the smuggling business was a regularly arranged enterprise, headed by a man named McClellan, who had a gang of confederates to assist him in conveying the goods to the border and in bribing and corrupting the railway men and Custom House inspectors.

For his compensation he got five per cent of the profits of the work, but it has not transpired in what way the five per cent is secured. It is supposed to be computed upon either the invoice value of the goods or the cost of duty they would have had to pay were they subjected to such duty.

The detectives are in possession of the names of most of the gang and their confederates, all of whom will be arrested when the proofs are clear and they put themselves within the jurisdiction of the United States. The firm in Montreal, privy to the smuggling operation, are among the wealthiest in Canada. One house with which the detectives did business are reputed to be worth a million dollars.

The goods were shipped to New York, over the Hudson River Railroad, and Mr. Vanderbilt's astonishment was very great when he learned from the detectives of the use to which his baggage cars had been put. Of course the smuggled trunks never paid a cent of freight. They were put on the cars as passenger's baggage with through checks, and came through to New York without costing the smugglers a penny for transportation.

The discovery is, therefore, a source of rejoicing to Mr. Vanderbilt and the proprietors of all railway lines with Canadian connections, whose carrying facilities the smugglers have been using without cost to themselves. The detectives have secured fifty checks for trunks which came across the border in this way, having been honestly attached by the baggage agents as if the trunks were accompanying passengers who had paid for and exhibited their tickets in the usual way.

So far as the detectives have investigated this branch of the smuggling business has been confined to the railway lines which offered naturally the best facilities for their dishonest enterprise. Nothing has been done about the whiskey and wine smuggling business which is also carried on upon a grand scale by the water ways connecting the States and Canada. One of the detectives learned casually that a cargo of \$100,000 worth of liquor was shipped from Montreal in the hold of a canal boat and covered with bulk grain. The boat went through the lines and by lake and canal to the Hudson River, and thence to the wharf at New York City unmolested. The cargo was then broken and the liquor carried away to and sold at a broad street store only a block or so in the rear of the Custom House.

In this case, too, the smugglers had to bring the revenue officials on the border. Canal boats are inspected with a long iron rod pole, which is shoved down through the grain, to detect bottles or barrels or other commodities likely to be concealed under the grain; but a "tip" of a few dollars is sufficient, it is charged, to induce the inspector to forego shoving the diving rod too deeply into the cargo.

The above is only an outline of the revelations which it is presumed will be made in a few days by the Treasury Department or as soon as their publications will no longer defeat the ends of justice.

GENERAL WASHINGTON DESPATCHES. WASHINGTON, May 23, 1877. THE CHIEF JUSTICESHIP OF WASHINGTON TERRITORY—A FRAUD DISCOVERED IN TIME.

Several days ago a letter was received by the President purporting to be from J. R. Lewis, Chief Justice of Washington Territory, resigning that position, and concluding with the remark that on returning to private life he was in full accord with the

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The testimony before the coroner showed that while all the usual precautions were taken to prevent accident, the question, "Did all the workmen bear the warning signal of danger?" yet remains unanswered, with a presumption in favor of the boatmen who did not appear at the launch.

The Saratoga lay a hundred workmen were engaged in riveting the iron plates upon another iron ship at the ways, and that the deafening noise they made must certainly have drowned the voice of the foreman, Mr. Fountain, when he called out for the carpenters to come out from the ship, as he gave the word to cut the iron. It is customary at this yard to suspend work during a launch, but yesterday this rule was not observed, unfortunately, the work being behindhand; consequently the order to come out from under the bottom of the Saratoga was not heard by all hands.

There is a reason to fear, owing to the din and confused noise of the various ships in the yard, it also came out in a loud voice from the foreman, Mr. Fountain, the order to cut the iron. He found that the ship had started, otherwise everything would have been cut away and the vessel would have been crushed to death. The interval of time that elapsed between Mr. Fountain's order to "cut under" and the launch was but three-quarters of a second. In that interval some fifty men had to make their escape from under the hull of the Saratoga to avoid being crushed to death.

THE TESTIMONY. The following is the most important testimony thus far taken: John Roach, marine architect, of Philadelphia, said this is an accident liable to occur at any time; I consider Mr. Fountain a reliable man at every time, and had the vessel been held instead of cut out many more lives would have been lost; the vessel was commencing to lean over.

John Farren, ship carpenter, testified that the ways were laid properly; I should not have seen the men near the launch; I jumped out and saved myself, but did not hear the word given; there was seven-eighths of an inch movement; I jumped under the ship when the launch was about to start; I was under the ship when the launch was about to start; I was under the ship when the launch was about to start.

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PORT OF NEW YORK, MAY 23, 1877.

ARRIVALS. REMOVED BY THE HERALD STEAM YACHTS AND HELD WHISTLEBOAT TRAILER LINE.

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