

Sophia Beck "Confidence Queen"

For 25,000 Miles the Law Has Trailed This Unfortunate Former Chicagoan And She Now Bids Fair to End Her Amazing Career as a Swindler Behind the Bars of an Eastern Jail



BEAUTIFUL, Sophie Beck, adventuress, Chicago bred, "queen of confidence women," and the personage hailed over land and ocean as "the woman with money to burn," has ignited her store of ill gained wealth once too often.

In the glittering core of board walk gaiety at Atlantic City the other day she was clamped under arrest by officers from Philadelphia. Thus ended an amazing world wide pursuit lasting four years, and now counsel for her army of victims will seek to recover the tithe of her \$1,000,000 plunder yet remaining.

The charming and sharp witted Sophie, whose official cognomen is Mrs. Graham, scorned to hide her financial light under a bushel as she flitted about the world, always several laps in advance of the pursuing officers. As previous to the unmasking of her daring duplicity, Sophie Beck has at all times upheld her title of "the woman with money to burn." Ever since crooked accomplishment first offered her the hypnotic luster of gold, she has flung about her questionable gains—on Broadway, in London, in Vienna, in Monte Carlo, in Berlin, in Paris.

Four years after her flight across the seas, following the upheaval of the notorious Storey cotton swindle, "Countess" Sophie tired of the spending courtesies of the old world. So, set on edge by tales of luxurious advancement in the pleasure haunts of her own country, she steamed for these shores. In the midst of accustomed relaxations in the region of shaded bulbs and napkins bubbles, the leash grew taut and the hand of the law tapped her bediamonded corsage.

Not Many Remnants of "Estate" Left.

"Sophie Beck is captured" rang the tidings among the victims of the Storey cotton wreck, and imprecations were commingled with faint queries concerning the likelihood of financial restitution.

But wisacres and accountant specialists who have delved into the wreckage of the cotton crash shake their heads and deem that precious little will be regained from the splintered "estate" of "the woman with money to burn."

Now turns a new aspect in the heretofore masterful and whiplash affairs of the adventuress. It is the softening tinge that is everywhere exhaled by the element of motherhood. For Sophie Beck is a mother! With her in the toils is a 2 year old son, the blessing of her sensational alliance with young Richard Graham, the village youth whom she trained to the paces of cupidity. The fact that romance, more than mere "convenience," figured in their pairing, is generally acknowledged. It is one of the strange features of Sophie Beck's career of sensation—her strenuous wooing of young Graham from practical as well as sentimental motives. It was accomplished after first having sought the companionship of another man, whom she found wanting in capabilities as a clever foil.

Story Exceeds Dreams of Novelists

The rise and sweeping descent of Sophie Beck's worldly fortunes is a story surpassing the availing dreams of novelists. Like persons of fame from a better cause, her beginning was humble and obscure. In a little Illinois prairie town she was born and reared. Chicago offered her the "start" of her career as an adventuress. In circles of sharp business practice of this shrewd metropolis she obtained her edu-

cation in the fine points of underground finance. Also, here she acquired those tastes and desires which later distinguished her blazing progress through Broadway and the boulevards of the French capital.

Charlestown, Ill., was her birthplace, and the town where she was schooled and raised in the atmosphere of rustic simplicity. The ubiquitous beckoning of the metropolis summoned her, and in a trice she seemed to shake off the demure manners of the country maiden and to assert herself as a girl with a business head to be respected.

First she became a stenographer, and during her term at this service she is declared to have kept eyes and ears alert for knowledge beyond the realm of carbon paper and potbooks. Next she entered the staff of a press clipping bureau, working for \$10 a week. Constant and required perusal of newspapers from the whole continent is supposed to have been a contributing factor in her breadth of view and knowledge of the ways of the world.

Marrin the Starter of Wild Career.

Then came her meeting with Frank C. Marrin, alias "Judge" Franklin Stone. Marrin had come to Chicago primed with an idea for easy plucking. He organized the Turf Investment company, with offices in La Salle street, and Miss Beck became his confidential secretary. Like a meteor she sprang into the fore of the zigzag course of "investment." Before many months she was the backbone and brains of the company, while Marrin maintained the prosperous "front" necessary to success. During this period Miss Beck gained much of her education in

standards of high living. The best in the city was none to good for the couple as the profits from the Turf Investment company rolled in.

On the day of Feb. 3, 1900, the glazed door of the office of the Turf Investment company was found locked by nervous clients who called to ascertain the progress of the firm. That was the day on which Marrin and Miss Beck fled from Chicago. When the police raided the rooms and scrambled through the paper "assets" the pair were traveling across the continent to San Francisco.

In the coast metropolis Marrin showed himself thoroughly resourceful. A few months later they were arrested on the charge of conducting a gambling house. This turn of affairs placed them in the trail of Chicago detectives. But they solved the double dilemma by making their escape while awaiting trial. New Orleans was their next tarrying place. Here the clutches of the Chicago sleuths again closed and they were arrested. But under the skillful manipulations of Marrin, who well achieved his title of "Judge," they resisted return to Chicago.

Musician Furnishes the Romance.

Now came a temporary parting of the ways between Marrin and Miss Beck, both being well "heeled" from the profits of their Chicago venture. Real romance entered after her break with Marrin. She fell victim to the fascinations of a soft eyed musician, named Miller, and for a time their companionship amid the little Creole world of New Orleans was a fragment of love's sweet dream.