

TRUE DETECTIVE STORIES

THE LUCK OF A SEXTET

BY A. L. DRUMMOND, FORMERLY CHIEF OF THE U. S. SECRET SERVICE

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THIS story has to do with certain incidents, amusing and otherwise, that arose from the efforts of six Irishmen to restore prosperity along the New York docks in the summer of 1875. The Irishmen were stevedores, and, times being bad at their trade, they started a mint. Let one of them get a genuine trade dollar, half dollar or quarter to use as a pattern—or as a "daddy," as they called it—and they would turn out "shiners" in abundance. But such were the vicissitudes of fortune that the lack of a "daddy" often plunged them into poverty.

It was during such a period of unfortunate financial depression that I first met James Maher, or "Brock" Maher, as he was called.

Maher was a big, raw boned fellow, perhaps 50 years old, leader of the band. An old counterfeiter had offered to introduce me to him, and we found him one evening sitting on a truck in a dark corner near the Battery. Left to ourselves, he told me his story. "Me frind," he said, "you come to me at a most unforchinit time. This is the sixt' of July. On the Fort I got droonk, came home in a horrible condition, and while I was a-sleeping it off me old woman went through me clothes. And not a dollar or a cent did she leave me."

"That's bad, Brock," said I, "but such a thing ought to trouble you less than it would almost anybody else. You can make your own money."

"I can, can I?" he replied with feeling. "How the divil can I make me own money when I haven't a 'daddy' to me name? Tell me that."

I couldn't tell him, and he went on:

"Now I'll tell ye what to do, me frind. Ye're like meself—ye want money and ye don't want to worrk too hard fer it. If ye had come to me any time but this I could 'a' sold ye all ye could carry. But just now, as I said, I'm on me uppers. I haven't an ounce iv lead, and if I had a ton I couldn't make a nickel for the lack of a 'daddy.' Now, I'll tell ye what ye do. Give me eight or nine dollars and come back here in two days and I'll have ye all the nice 'shiners' ye want."

I didn't like the idea of furnishing a man capital with which to commit crime, merely for the purpose of arresting him, so I told him I did not have the money with me and did not know, just then, where I could get it. I told him, however, that I expected to get a little money soon, and we parted good friends.

When I went back to the office I related the conversation to Chief Washburne, and he asked me why I didn't give Maher the money.

"I didn't give it to him," said I, "because if I had done so, and afterward arrested him, his attorney at his trial would have cross-examined me something like this:

"Where did you first meet this defendant?"

"Down on the docks."

"What was he doing?"

"Sitting on a truck."

"Did he tell you whether he was out of work?"

"Yes. He said he was."

"Did you give him any money?"

"Yes."

"Was anything said with regard to what use the money you gave him was to be put?"

"Yes."

"What was to be done with it?"

"He was to use it to make counterfeit money."

"Then you found an idle man sitting on the docks and furnished him with money with which to become a criminal. Is that it?"

"And I should have been compelled to say, 'Yes.'"

"Well, I guess you are right," said the chief. "We'll go over to the United States district attorney's office and see what advice we can get there."

We saw one of the assistant attorneys, and he was most emphatic in his declaration that I should have given Maher the money for which he asked. He finally went so far as to tell me to do it.

"I'll do nothing of the kind," said I, "no matter who may tell me to. If Maher can be caught in no other way than this he will never be caught by me."

The chief stood by me, and this means of getting evidence was definitely abandoned.

A few days later, however, the man who had introduced me to Maher told me that "Brock" wanted to see me—that he had raised a few dollars with which to buy materials and now had some counterfeit trade dollars to sell. A night was set for me to meet him, and I found him sitting on the same old truck, near the Battery.

"How are ye, Tom, me boy," said he (I was known to him as "Tom Moran"). "I wonder if ye are still broke, as ye was the other night? I hope ye have money with ye this evening, as I've got something good."

"Something good, eh," said I; "let's see it?"

"Don't be so fast, me boy," said the old man. "I want to know first have ye any money?"

"Well, Brock," I said, "I'm sorry to say that I am in about the same financial condition that I was when I saw you the other time. But my sister has a gold watch, and I know where there is a pawnshop. I hate to hock the girl's ticker, but I'd rather do it than to miss anything."

"And how long would it take ye to go home and get the watch?" asked the old man.

"Oh, I've got it with me," I said, pulling out my wife's watch, a timepiece worth about \$17, that I had pawned in such emergencies, I don't know how many times.

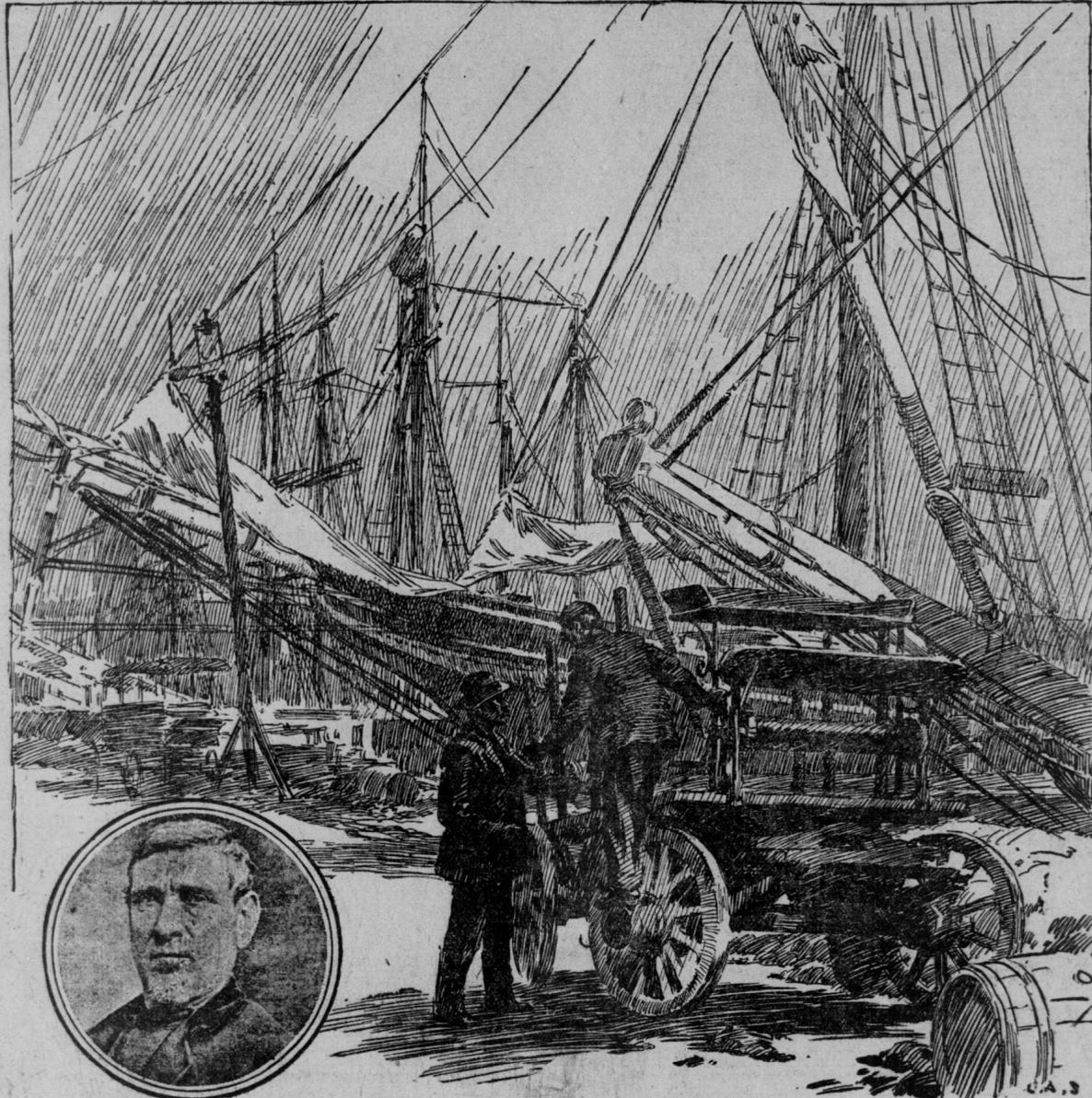
"Well, get to your uncle's in a hurry," said Brock. "Raise every dollar ye can and come back. I'll wait for ye; and I can tell ye now, me boy, that I've got something good."

I left him sitting on the truck while I went to the nearest pawnshop, returning in a little while with a pawn ticket, which I showed him, and \$7.

"Now, I'll talk business," he said. Pulling out a shining trade dollar from his pocket, he held it before my eyes. "The secretary of the trizury himself," he continued, "couldn't tell this coin from one of his own. His money and mine are like the peas in a pod. The only difference is that he charges ye a hundred cents on the dollar for his, while ye can have mine for a quar-ter of that. How much do ye want?"

I told him I would invest the whole \$7 with him, and he rummaged around in his pockets until he had counted out and handed over to me 28 trade dollars, each as bright as a new tin can.

"Spind 'em as you would water," said he, "for



JAMES MAHER

AN OLD TRUCK

there's plenty more where these came from. And when ye want more, remember that I'm the man who can give them to ye."

I told the old man I should never forget him, and we parted. I went home and marked each of the dollars with my initials, so that I could identify them in court. The next morning I looked up the informer who had introduced me to Brock and told him I wanted him to put me in touch with the rest of the band, one at a time, as quickly as possible. Maher's confederates were Michael Boyle, Bernard Quinn, James McGrath, Michael Tague, and another man whose name I have forgotten. Maher and McGrath were manufacturers of counterfeit. The others were "shovers," or distributors.

Before night I had been introduced to Michael Boyle, and had made an appointment to go out with him the same evening to "shove." The art of "shoving" is to go into as many places as possible, make the smallest purchase consistent with appearances, pass out a piece of counterfeit money and get good coin in change. Saloons and cigar stands are usually selected for this purpose by those who deal in counterfeit silver coins. And the practice is for one man to go inside and turn the trick while another waits outside to watch for the police.

A little after nightfall I met Boyle and he gave me a counterfeit half dollar with which to begin my operations. I had already provided myself with perhaps fifty 50 cent shin plasters that he didn't know about, and while he was outside a cigar store waiting for me I bought a nickel cigar with a shin plaster and received 45 cents in change. In the middle of the block he overtook me and I turned over to him, by agreement, 45 cents. Boyle then gave me another counterfeit half dollar, which, as soon as I entered a cigar store I marked, paying for my purchase with another shin plaster.

Before we quit business that night I had spent every one of my shin plasters and had in my possession as many of Boyle's counterfeit dollars. Then we divided up the change that I had turned over to him. I also gave him half of my cigars, and he went home, presumably feeling that the evening had been profitably spent.

At one night intervals I went out with the other members of the band. From McGrath, a manufacturer of counterfeit, I bought some half dollars and quarters, while with each Tague and Quinn I spent an evening "shoving."

Having obtained enough evidence, as I believed, to convict the whole crowd, the next thing was to get them under arrest. More than that, the arrests must all be made within a few hours of each other, otherwise the taking of one into custody might cause the others to flee. So I made an appointment with each one to meet me at a certain hour on a certain day, representing to each one that I was about to make a considerable investment in counterfeit. And I arranged that secret service men should cover each meeting point and arrest the man with whom I might be.

The first meeting came off at 11 o'clock in the morning. I was standing on a corner talking with James McGrath and we were discussing whether we should go into a saloon to conduct our transaction when a man stepped up to McGrath and told him he

was a prisoner. At the first sign of trouble I took to my heels. For the purpose of completely deceiving McGrath, one of the officers gave chase and eventually caught me. McGrath had just been locked in a cell at the Bleeker street station of the secret service when my captor and myself, panting hard, entered the front door. I was led past McGrath's cell, in order that he might see me, and locked up. But in 10 minutes I was quietly let out of the back way to keep my next appointment.

At two hour intervals during the afternoon I was arrested with Boyle, Tague and Quinn, respectively, in each case sprinting for my liberty and eventually being captured, locked up—and released. All were then under arrest but old Brock Maher himself, and my appointment with him was for 9 o'clock at night. He was a little ahead of time, and I found him waiting for me. I at once broached the customary subject of where we should go to make our deal when a secret service man tapped him on the shoulder and told him he was under arrest.

Maher didn't think so. He was a powerful six footer and instantly began to fight. The other five counterfeiters having been arrested, there was no necessity for me to run in this case, and I closed in upon Maher with the others. In the midst of the

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DID TAILED SAVAGES EXIST?

WITH what kind of tails were our English ancestors provided? The fact that the attribution of tails to Englishmen was a common international insult in the middle ages, somewhat like the epithet "frog eating" applied to Frenchmen in more modern times, has been a standing puzzle to historians. The Latin word *candati*—men with tails—was in such common use at one time as almost to be a synonym of "Englishmen."

In a description of the national characteristics of the various students at the University of Paris Jacques de Vitry, a French writer of the thirteenth century, says that the French were noted for their haughty bearing, the English as deep drinkers and as having tails. Some explain these passages as referring to the tails or heels of the English shoes, which were very long; others as due to the wearing of the hair in queues, while still others think that a play upon words is intended, the word "candati" being connected with the Latin word for tail. To say that a medieval Englishman was "tailed" was, therefore, a polite way of charging him with cowardice.

A writer in the British Medical Journal, however, has a newer explanation, which he believes is the correct one. In an early life of St. Augustine of Canterbury it is related that English fishermen ran after the Latin missionaries and attached fishes' tails to their robes as an insult. This story, the writer says, was popular on the continent in the middle ages, and romancers added that heaven avenged the insult by causing the grandchildren of these fishermen to be born with tails. Hence the French characterization of Englishmen in general as "tailed."

Whatever explanation may be right, there is no doubt that the epithet was fixed in the popular mind by the case of a certain race of tailed men who existed in various remote parts of the world.

THE BIGGEST BAROMETER

A HUGE oil barometer has been constructed in the city of Faenza, Italy, as a monument to its distinguished citizen, Torricelli, the inventor of the barometer, the tercentenary of whose birth is celebrated this year. The liquid column in such a barometer stands normally at about 37 feet, and its fluctuations are read in feet, while those of the ordinary mercury barometer are in inches. This is due, of course, to the fact that as oil is much lighter than mercury it requires a much higher column to balance the pressure of the atmosphere.

It was at first intended to use water as the liquid, in which case the column would have stood normally at about 82 feet; but this plan was abandoned, owing to the ease of evaporation. Glycerine was next tried, but the normal height of the column was only 27 feet, and it was desirable to have it much higher. Olive oil was finally chosen, and is quite satisfactory.

The tube, which is of iron, except at the top, where the height of the column must be observed, is supported by a monumental pillar of stone. This is doubtless the largest barometer that ever has been constructed, although it has some famous rivals even during the lifetime of Torricelli.

Pascal, a French philosopher, made barometers of

A Song of San Francisco

MISS ETHEL TALBOT, author of the following poem on San Francisco, is a young English writer whose poems have attracted much attention in several leading magazines of London, where she lives. Miss Talbot has never visited San Francisco, though she has that pleasure in anticipation. The fame of San Francisco is world wide, even to the inspiring of a sweet singer in a foreign land who knows the city only by the tales which are wafted across the continent and across the sea.

CALL OF THE GOLDEN PORT

By Ethel Talbot

Ye that be trodden underfoot and scattered
As smoke wreaths in the rain,
All the white dreams that ye have spent and shattered
I will make whole again.

Ye that be thralls of outworn generations,
And seekers in the night,
Come, out of my proud place among the nations,
Behold, I give you light.

Where the sun's self out of the gates of morning,
New gilded from the sea,
Shines on my city with a great forewarning
Of glorious things to be.

And in the hills beyond the crested city,
Where the dawn splendors break—
Crowned Freedom from her secret eyes like pity
Keeps vigil for my sake.

On the wide wonder of the enchanted valley
Wherein my treasures be,
Green things, great rivers rolling musically
Down to a singing sea.

And in the heavy scented harvest hours,
Bound with their fruitage gold,
All the wide hills shall overspill with flowers
Upon the dreaming world.

Ye, all your toil shall be to you as pleasure,
And all your blood as wine,
The songs you sing shall have a dancing measure,
Such flowered air is mine!

And of your shadowy peril shall be sharers,
And of your undigged gold,
The ghostly galleons of the old seafarers,
That found the Gate of old.

They, sailing through the sunset out of shadow,
Shall watch with you and wait,
And with you lift their songs of Eldorado,
Beyond the Golden Gate.

Several liquids, including one of mixed wine and water, in Paris. Zophar Mills of New York set up a glycerine barometer in his house in 1887, and several water barometers have been built, of which the most notable was probably that set up in the tower of St. Jacques, in Paris, by M. Jaubert in 1890.

The olive oil barometer of Faenza will continue to hold the record of size until some one succeeds in using a still lighter fluid, in which case the height of the barometric column will, of course, be greater.

scuffle I saw an opportunity, while the rest were serving as targets for his fists, to grab him by the throat. Harder and harder I shut down upon him, until finally, gasping and almost black in the face, he ceased to struggle, and handcuffs were put on him.

The next morning the six prisoners met at breakfast in the station house.

"Have funny av ye seen Tom Moran?" asked McGrath. "Poor Tom! He was with me when I was pinched, but I haven't seen him since he was locked up."

"Tom was with me when I was caught," said Quinn.

"Ye don't say so," said Boyle, in amazement. "He was with me too."

"Well, Tom himself pinched me," said old Brock Maher, and then the other five of the first time realized how they had been trapped.

"I knew ye were a copper the first time I saw ye," said McGrath, when I saw him the next day.

"Of course you did," I laughingly replied; "that's why you sold me those counterfeit halves and quarters."

"Well, ye did me no dirt when ye fooled me," said old Brock, with his customary good humor, "and I bear ye no grudge. Ye did yer jooty, and to show ye I think none the less of ye I'll shake yer hand."

One by one the cases came to trial and convictions followed as rapidly as the juries could go through the forms prescribed by law. I was feeling very good over the outcome, when one day I met Louis F. Post, attorney for the Irish sextet. Post, by the way, is now editor of the Public, a single tax publication issued in Chicago.

"Drummond," he said, "I am going to free every one of those counterfeiters that you convicted."

I laughed as if I thought he were joking, as indeed I did, and he continued:

"There is no joke about it. The indictments in those cases are not worth the paper upon which they are written. In every one of them is omitted the phrase required by law, 'then and there, with intent to defraud.' I am going to make a motion before the trial judge to set the convictions aside and discharge the defendants. And, under the law, he can do nothing but grant the motion."

Investigation proved all that Post said to be only too true. He procured the reopening of the case, made his motion, the convictions were set aside and all of the prisoners except McGrath, who had broken from the Ludlow street jail and stowed away on a steamship bound for England, were discharged. McGrath, by the way, was captured as his ship was descending the Delaware river, and he received a short term for breaking jail. The others went absolutely free.

I was unspcakably angry. Before the cases against the prisoners were dismissed I mentioned the name of the man who drew the indictments to the trial judge and pleaded for an opportunity to tell of an instance in which I knew the man in question had been corrupt in a small way.

"I once knew this lawyer," said I, "to substitute cheap three for a nickel cigars for five hundred 25 cent smuggled Havanas that had been turned over to him as evidence by the customs authorities. When I went to his office to get the cigars to take them back to the customs office I noticed the substitution and called his attention to it. 'What difference does it make?' he asked. 'It makes this difference,' I replied, 'that I will not return the substitutes.' And I refused to take them. I presume he has them yet, if he has not destroyed them or given them away."

The judge listened to me intently, but the prisoners were, nevertheless, discharged. Post, by the way, was never suspected of being in collusion with the attorney. In the first place, Post is honest. Furthermore, he was not the attorney for the counterfeiters when the indictments were drawn.

Thus it came about, as a grotesque conclusion to these ludicrous cases, that the only counterfeiter who was punished was imprisoned for breaking from a jail in which he was illegally confined. And the last humorous feature was afforded when a German juror, who had voted to convict one of the Irishmen, stepped over to me in the courtroom and said:

"You fool these Irishmen mit your talk about being a counterfeiter, but you could never fool me. Why? You have gray eyes. I have looked long, but I never yet see a man with gray eyes who gets into trouble and goes to jail. Believe me."

That was 33 years ago, and my observation since the German made this remark convinces me there is considerable truth in what he said.

AN ELECTRIC BAKERY

ELECTRICITY has been used for heating and cooking to a very limited degree hitherto, owing to the high price of the current, although the results are excellent and the advantages manifest. Even the electric heaters in the trolley cars have been abandoned by some companies and are used sparingly by others, owing to their wasteful consumption of energy. As for electric cookery, it has been chiefly limited in actual practice to electric coffee pots, electric chafing dishes, and the like. The largest electrical cooking device ever set up is probably the electric bake oven shown at the recent electrical show in Marseilles, France. This furnace stands about six feet high and has two compartments, one above the other, each of which is heated by a so-called grille, made of elements that rise in temperature as the current passes through them. This furnace has been running for about six months without accident or stoppage for repairs. The cost of baking in it 50 pounds of bread is only about 15 cents. This, it is said by the exhibitors, brings it commercially within the reach of any baker. Some of its advantages are the easy and precise control of the heat, rapidity of action, absence of danger from fire and localization of the heat in the place where it is needed.

ABNORMAL TWILIGHT

TWILIGHT, which is normally due to the refraction of the sun's light by the atmosphere, is occasionally modified by other natural causes. Rosy glows in the west after sunset are reported to be particularly common in the vicinity of Bordeaux, France. These are not the usual sunset glows, but appear in the sky 45 degrees above the sun and are supposed to be due to reflection from high clouds too thin to be seen in ordinary light. The same invisible clouds may also cause abnormal prolongation of twilight, as on the first day of last July in this same region, where a watch could be easily read up to four minutes of 10 p. m., whereas on the following night it could be read only until a quarter past 9, a difference of 41 minutes. Owing to the presence of the thin clouds above described, these long twilights are of use to astronomers as an indication that the night will not be favorable for astronomical observation.

HOW TO BOIL MEAT

A RECENT French writer on the science of cookery advises that in boiling meat the piece be first plunged into boiling water, and that after boiling for a few minutes enough cold water be added to lower the temperature to about 150 degrees Fahrenheit, at which point the meat should be allowed to cook for several hours. This odd method, which the author acknowledges is diametrically opposed to common practice, will result, he says, in making the boiled meat as juicy as a good roast. The reason for adopting it is that the albumen of the meat will coagulate at once on contact with the boiling water, and will protect the fibrin from solution without opposing the passage of heat. The meat will thus cook slowly, after the addition of the cold water, without becoming tasteless, retaining all its natural juices as when roasted.