

TRUE DETECTIVE STORIES

THE MAN WITH A LION'S HEART

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

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A BIG, square jawed, keen eyed man entered the office of Elmer Washburne, chief of the United States secret service, in Washington late in the year 1874 and introduced himself as George Albert Mason. He declined to tell his business to anybody but the chief, and said he would speak to Mr. Washburne only behind closed doors. He was shown into an inner office.

"Chief," said he, "what would you give to get hold of Peter McCartney?"

Mr. Washburne smiled. Peter McCartney was perhaps the most wanted man of his kind in America. A few years later a Missouri sheriff might as well have been asked what he would give to get hold of Jesse James. McCartney, sought as he was on every hand, was not only hard to catch, but when trapped he had a habit of refusing to stay caught. So expert a jail breaker was he that, out of sheer humor, he once stood behind the bars in a St. Louis prison and told a chief of the secret service that he would call upon him at his hotel at 10 o'clock that night. More than that, he kept the engagement, to the great astonishment of the chief.

"I would pay a good big reward to get Peter McCartney," replied Mr. Washburne. "But I would want to see my man first and be sure there was no mistake. Why? Can you get him?"

"Yes, I can. Appoint me a special officer and give me a man to help me and I will bring McCartney in." The appointment was made and an operative named Duckworth was sent out with Mason to make the arrest, which was to take place in St. Louis.

Now, a word or two about McCartney. If ever there was a jack of all trades in crime he was one—and he was master of all. He was a wonderfully expert counterfeiter. He had just put out an imitation of a \$5 note issued by the Traders' national bank of Chicago that baffled everybody but experts. Nor did he, like so many counterfeiters, know only a part of his trade. He was a fine chemist, a good engraver of plates and a good printer.

When business became bad in the counterfeiting line Pete could turn a hand to burglary and do a job of safe blowing or house breaking in a manner that stamped him no amateur. Once he set up shop as a dentist, but at this he failed. The only peaceful pursuit at which he was ever known to prosper was as a public lecturer. There may be still living in the west some persons who will recall a shaggy bearded speaker who gave minute directions with regard to how to detect counterfeit money. Pete was the man, though on such occasions he never went under the name of McCartney. At the conclusion of each lecture it was his custom to go about town and pass counterfeit right and left. Why he did these things, unless from a spirit of daredevilry and humor, I have never been able to figure out. All I know is that he did them. It is true that in this way he distributed a good deal of counterfeit money, but that is no explanation. There are safer and better ways of putting bad bills into circulation.

It was to trap this man that Mason and Duckworth set out from Washington on the long journey to St. Louis. Mason knew McCartney and believed he had his confidence. The plan was for Mason to discover the room in which McCartney did his work, lead

Duckworth to it and make the arrest.

Several days after the pair reached St. Louis Mason reported to Duckworth that he had obtained the desired information and everything was ready to make the capture. Shortly after nightfall they set out. On the way Mason suggested that they stop in a saloon that McCartney was known to frequent. Having entered the place, Mason made an excuse to go into a back room. After waiting for him a little while Duckworth went to look him up. Mason was nowhere to be found. The door through which he passed led to a back yard that opened into an alley. Duckworth went back to the local headquarters of the secret service and reported what he regarded as Mason's breach of faith. While he was talking a report came from police headquarters that three men, one of whom claimed to be a secret service official, were in a hospital, badly slashed up. Duckworth hastened to the hospital and found Mason on an operating table. Surgeons were trying to sew up a gash across his abdomen that extended almost from one side to the other.

The other two patients were Peter McCartney and a well known counterfeiter named Joe Rogers. They had been clubbed and cut until they were weak from their wounds, but the condition of neither was as serious as that of Mason.

When the trio had revived enough to talk they told their stories. McCartney declared that Mason tried to extort money from him by threatening to arrest him. He said he had a large amount of currency in his possession—which was true—and that Mason, claiming to be a secret service official, said he would arrest him if he did not give it up. McCartney said he did not purpose to be blackmailed and therefore drew his knife and used it. Rogers corroborated McCartney's story.

Mason told a simple story of cornered criminals who tried to murder him when he descended upon them, and he turned over \$5,000 in counterfeit money that he found in their room.

There was nothing to be gained by taking the word of McCartney and Rogers, as against that of Mason, so his story was accepted as true. And, as the hospital physicians reported that McCartney and Rogers would be flat on their backs for some time, Duckworth was ordered back to Washington. He had not been home more than 10 days, however, before news was received from St. Louis that McCartney and Rogers had escaped from the hospital. Mason recovered and was given \$1,000 for bringing about McCartney's arrest. He gave a plausible explanation of his disappearance from the saloon the night he left Duckworth, and, of course, the fact that McCartney escaped from the hospital was not to be charged up against him.

That seemed to end the case, but it didn't. The next spring a former chief of the secret service reported that he could obtain a set of rolls used to make counterfeit plates provided he were given a considerable sum of money to buy them from an informer who knew where to put his hands upon them. For reasons that it is not necessary to enlarge upon here I was ordered to shadow him. I did so, and quite by accident saw a transaction that convinced Chief Washburne that the former chief was not acting honestly.

The suspected man was brought before the chief, flatly accused of trying to sell rolls that he himself had captured when he was a government official years before, and told that it was idle to try to deny the charge.

"The question now is," said the chief, "what are you willing to do to buy your liberty? What criminal do you know that you can squeal on?"

"Well," he said, "I know George Albert Mason. He has been handling some of those counterfeit Chicago fives. He will be in New York next week. If you have a man who knows Mason and whom Mason doesn't know I can show him how to make the arrest."

Mr. Washburne had heard other things about Mason since the occurrence of the stabbing affair in St. Louis and was eager to capture him. So I was ordered to accompany the former chief to New York, and David H. Crowley and William W. Kennoch were instructed to accompany me. We found the former chief living at the Park hotel, on lower Broadway—now the Broadway Central. He had a room on the third floor and we took one on the second. Mason upon his arrival in the city was to call at the former chief's room, and we were to capture him.

When the day came to make the catch Chief Washburne came up from Washington and with the rest of us went to the room in the Park hotel. As I was not known to Mason, I wandered around the corridors, occasionally going down to the office, waiting for him to appear. A little after noon he came to the front door, walked up the stairs and went to the former chief's room. I went to our room and told the chief and the two others of his arrival. Mason remained in the room perhaps 10 minutes. When he went down stairs I followed him, with the other three a few steps behind.

After reaching the ground floor Mason started to go down stairs to the barber shop. He had descended perhaps three steps when I reached over the banister, grabbed him by the right arm and threw my weight on him. With his left hand he tried to reach a revolver that was in his right hand coat pocket, but before he could do so Chief Washburne had his own revolver in Mason's face and the other two detectives were swinging on his left arm.

"Surrender or I'll blow your head off!" shouted the chief, as he pressed the muzzle of his gun a little closer to Mason's face.

"You'll not blow anything off! Get out of here!" shouted Mason.

The chief did not shoot nor did he get out, and the fight went on. Mason was a powerful man and it was all the four of us could do to overpower him and put the handcuffs on him. All the while we were fighting he was hurling at us a volume of profanity the like of which I have never heard from that day to this. Nothing that he could lay his tongue to seemed bad enough to call us.

As soon as we had the handcuffs on him we began to search him. One of the first things we found was an envelope. On one side was an address, but before we could read it Mason, manacled as he was, grabbed the piece of paper and bit out that part which bore a name. We had to choke him until he was black in the face before he would give it up.

The half chewed paper bore the name and New York address of Kitty Wells. Kitty is dead now and the present generation does not know her even by reputation, so it may be of interest to give some facts pertaining to her.

Kitty Wells was originally a London barmaid. Charles Bullard, a noted bank burglar, took a fancy to her and married her. She obtained a divorce and was next heard of when she startled the world by marrying Juan Terry, the Cuban sugar king. Terry saw her in London, fell a quick victim to her wiles

and led her to the altar. About a year later he died, leaving in his will \$5,000,000 to their child, born after his death, and \$1,000,000 to her. She died in 1894.

It was after Kitty's divorce from Bullard and prior to her marriage to Terry that we found an envelope bearing her name and New York address in George Albert Mason's pocket. We went to her house and asked what it meant.

"You insult me," she replied, "by asking such a question."

"We are not here to insult you," I said, "but to find out what you know about George Albert Mason."

"I know he is a fine gentleman," said she, "if that will help you any."

"Do you know that he is wanted in Rochester on a charge of counterfeiting?" I asked—which was true.

"I know nothing of the kind," she replied. "So far as I know he is a gentleman. How he makes a living is a question concerning which I have never inquired."

It was evident that if Kitty knew anything to the discredit of Mason she was not ready to tell it, so we took her to the Bleeker street office of the secret service, not as a prisoner, but as a witness, and then went back to search her rooms. In her bedroom was an old fashioned wooden bed with posts perhaps four inches square at the bottom and no casters. Under one of the bedposts was found \$2,000 in big counterfeit bills.

Kitty was told of the discovery and asked for an explanation. She said she knew the money was there, but denied all knowledge of its spurious nature. She said Mason had given it to her to keep for him and she supposed it was genuine money. She adhered rigidly to this story, and after a week she was released.

About this time I received orders from Washington to go to Toronto and look up Mason's record in Canada. I found an amazing array of facts. First of all I learned that Mason was one of the men who forced an entrance into Secretary Seward's house the night President Lincoln was assassinated and tried to murder the secretary of state. I don't know whether Chief Washburne knew this before I went to Canada, but I didn't, and he never told me. A man named Payne was the one who actually did the stabbing in the Seward house, but Mason was with him and for his part in the affair was sentenced to death. President Johnson commuted his sentence to 20 years' imprisonment, and, after serving a few years in the penitentiary at Columbus, O., President Grant pardoned him.

I learned that prior to the assassination of President Lincoln Mason was one of the conspirators who, from their hiding place in Canada, plotted not only the assassination of the chief officers of the federal government but the burning of New York and other northern cities.

Throughout all of these criminal proceedings Mason appeared purely as mercenary. Born in England and reared in Canada, he had neither interest in the south nor a share in the animosity of any of its mistaken citizens. He was simply willing to kill Seward or burn New York for a financial consideration.

I also learned in Toronto that Mason had been arrested in the Dominion of Canada 52 times and convicted 48 times. His offenses included almost all of the misdemeanors and minor crimes, as well as some of a serious nature. He had fought, stolen, assaulted with intent to kill, robbed in the highway, rifled houses by forcing an entrance at night and forged a few pieces of paper. Since his release from

the Ohio penitentiary he had spent most of the time in jail.

Mason was brought to trial before Commissioner Shields in New York city on a charge of having passed counterfeit money on Albert Ensor of Rochester. He was quickly convicted, and when he was asked if he had anything to say why the sentence of the court should not be passed upon him replied by calling the commissioner all the vile names that came to his mind. He was sentenced to serve 12 years in the penitentiary at Albany.

His life in prison surpassed anything of the kind of which I have ever read. Almost the first thing he did was to knock down all the guards within reach. A huge man, with broad, powerful shoulders, even the other prisoners suffered at his hands, and he was chained hand and foot to the stone floor of a dark cell, like an ugly animal. He had suffered this punishment for a week when the warden, a kindly old man, ordered that he be unchained and brought upstairs to his office.

The shackles were taken from Mason's arms and legs. So stiff were his joints that he could hardly walk, but with difficulty he hobbled to the room in which sat the warden.

"Mason, you have had a pretty hard time," began the kindly official. "Aren't you ready to behave like a man and receive the treatment that men get?"

Mason spit in the warden's face without saying a word. He was taken back to the dark cell and chained to the floor.

A month passed by and again the warden sent for him. Asked if he was not ready to be good Mason cursed the warden to the extent of his vocabulary and swore that if he were let loose he would kill everybody about the place.

To make a long story short, Mason spent the entire 12 years in Albany prison chained to the floor. He was given a mattress to lie on, and a number of times was asked if he was not ready to obey the rules and come up into the daylight. But he refused to surrender and left the dark cell permanently only at the expiration of his term.

When he was released from prison the first thing he did was to visit me at my office in the postoffice building.

"Do you remember me?" he asked.

"Yes," said I, "you are George Albert Mason. What do you want?"

"I want to know where Washburne is. I haven't anything against you, but I am going to kill Washburne the first time I see him."

Mr. Washburne at that time had the contract for building a large reservoir in Westchester county, New York, but I told Mason I thought his old enemy was dead.

"Well," he replied, "if he isn't dead I'll kill him." Without saying another word Mason left the office and I never heard of him again. He never molested Mr. Washburne, who is still alive.

I always thought Peter McCartney sized Mason up about right. Old Pete, who as the years crept over him came to look more and more like a German professor or a Russian admiral, finally fell into the hands of the police and served a term in prison. While in jail he heard how the man who betrayed him in St. Louis had chosen to remain chained to the floor of a dark cell rather than to promise to be good and remain in the daylight.

"That's just like Mason," said he. "He's got the courage of a lion, but the judgment of a jackass. He doesn't know enough to eat good food."

Something of a Blow---By John Kendrick Bangs

THE autumn breezes had been playing hob in the vicinity of Cape Mousam, and when the P. O. club gathered to await the coming of the morning mail they became a more or less natural topic of conversation. It was Uncle Si Peterby who opened the discussion with the remark that it—

"Blowed some last night!"

"Yes," said Bill Peavey, who had just come into town with a barrel of vinegar that was suspiciously popular. "Yes, it blowed a heap up our way. They tell me that up to Skate Holler Jim Perkins' Briled Live Lobster sign was took clean off the verandy of his cafe an' landed half way up the front o' the Baptist Church steeple. They had to call out th' hook an' ladder company to git it down."

"Less see, that's what the Rev. MacSwattem preaches, ain't it, Bill?" said Peterby.

"Yeh," replied Bill. "He's the fellar."

"Don't see no cause for takin' down the sign, then," said Uncle Si. "I heard the Rev. MacSwattem holdin' forth over to the Ingleside camp meetin' one night last summer, an' he's a briller all right. Ye could hear the people sizzlin' afore he got half way through his firstly."

"Look out thar, Si!" came the postmaster's voice from behind the counter. "It's azin the rules o' this here club to interjeck religion into these here acrimonies. As a fed'ral office holder I can't have this here office o' mine used fer castin' slurs on no American citizens, whatever their previous condition of spirituous servitudo. This here office is for the people, of the people and by the people, b'gosh!"

"I wa'n't makin' no criticisms o' nobody's religion," retorted Uncle Si. "I didn't say them lobsters didn't need brilin'. All I says is that such things is the facts."

"Wa-al, it's facts as makes trouble in all kinds of arguments," said the postmaster, "an' I'll thank ye kindly to leave 'em out in the future. Speakin' of the wind, though, they was a feller in here this mornin' that says the brass eagle's been blowed off the town hall up to Hikem Corners, an' is now standin' on his head on top o' Hank Wilbur's hayrick."

"Taint the first time the 'Merican eagle's been stood on his head under this administration," muttered Uncle Silas, still smarting under the postmaster's rebuke.

"That'll do, Silas Peterby," said the postmaster. "We don't want no offensive part'sanship here, neither. I keep open house here, an' within these walls all men is born free and equal in the persoot of life, liberty an' politics. If ye want to make injivious remarks about how me an' my friends down to Washin'ton is runnin' this gov'ment ye can go out into the woods an' find a

stump to do it on, but I warn ye right here 'n' now that I ain't agoin' to tolerate no secession in this here grocery."

"All the same, the mail's been 15 minutes late for five days runnin', an' I got a right as a free born citizen o' this here republic to say what I think o' the way your party tends to business," persisted Uncle Silas.

"My party ain't to blame if Jim Yokum's hoss gets a stun in her foot last Friday, be they?" demanded the postmaster. "Taint the fault o' congress that she's been lame ever since—not as I knows on. I don't remember nothin' in the national platform that accepts responsibility for lame animals injured in the persoot o' duty. Besides, Jim Yokum's a pro-byhibitionist; an' if ye think ye can make a party matter out of it, blame them, not me an' mine."

"Ye hadn't ought to give him the contract for carryin' the mails," said Silas.

"He was the lowest bidder," retorted the postmaster.

"Ya-as, an' the slowest driver," said Peterby. "That ain't none o' my business," said the postmaster. "B'sides, we're talkin' about wind, Silas; there's enough o' that blowin' around outside without your addin' none to the general supply."

"It never blows around here quite as hard as it used to out in Arizona," said the retired army officer, who was sitting on the sugar barrel. "I remember some years ago I was stationed out at Phoenix, and one day one of those desert blasts came hikin' across the country, blowing so hard that it lifted an express train bodily off the Santa Fe track and blew it across to the tracks of the Southern Pacific, 35 miles away, and before the engineer knew what had happened the train rolled into Tucson as smooth as you please, and bound east instead of west. Fortunately it happened at night, and all the passengers were asleep, or they'd have been a panic on board that train all right."

The postmaster whistled a few bars of "I'm Afraid to Go Home in the Dark" before venturing upon any comment on the colonel's contribution. Then he threw out the observation that:

"It must ha' been quite a blow to them passengers to wake up an' find themselves goin' back home agin. What was you retired for, colonel? Heart failure?"

"No," replied the colonel, cheerfully. "I was scalped during the Apache campaign."

"Humph!" ejaculated the postmaster. "Don't seem to have left no scars. Top o' your head's as smooth as a hen's egg."

"Yes," said the colonel. "That is easily explained. You see, I wore a wig."

"Wa-al," put in Bill Peavey at this point, "to come back to blowin', did I ever tell ye how one o' these

here October hurricanes saved my life once from a bustin' big black b'ar, back in 1872?"

"Don't know as ye hev," said the postmaster wearily.

"It was the year old Horiss Greeley was runnin' for president," began Bill.

"Walkin', ye mean, don't ye, Bill?" laughed the postmaster.

"Wa-al, walkin' or runnin', he was goin' some; but that haint nothin' to do with the story," said Peavey. "He was a great man, Horiss was, an' he knowed more about farmin' in his little finger than any o' these scientific maggyzine made soil tillers we find yawpin' 'round the country these days teachin' us fellers how to suck eggs. Wa-al, at any rate, it come around election day, an' I hitched up my team an' done my duty by my country by goin' up to the town hall, votin' for Horiss, an' pairin' off with a half a dozen other fellers that was too tired to go to the polls. Then I come home, an' took down that old musedet o' mine that I brought home from the war, an' started for the woods. Seein' as how it was a national holiday I thought I'd go out an' bag a few deer, an' mebbe a brace o' patridges into the bargain."

"You allers does want suthin' throwed in with what ye git," suggested the postmaster.

"That's why I come here for my dry groceries, Jed," laughed Peavey. "I don't git no green tradin' stamps here, but I do git a fine quality o' white beach sand in my sugar, an' them prunes o' yours."

"We ain't discussin' prunes—not as I knows on," retorted the postmaster, "but if we was I would rise to remark that them prunes ye git here at this emporium o' mine is generally a year older 'n they was when ye got 'em afore ye think o' payin' for 'em, even when ye pay with them doorknobs ye bring in here disguised as strictly fresh eggs."

"Waivin' these here pers'nalities an' comin' back to my story," said Bill, "with my gun in hand I started for the woods back on Mousam mountain, an' pretty soon I got on the trail of a big buck, an' a derved good looker he was, too. Tall and graceful, an' smart as a steel trap. It made my mouth water to look at him, an' he wa'n't only good eatin', either. He had a pair o' horns settin' on th' top of his head that I knowed on sight I could sell to some summer boarder in need of a hatrack before the next season was over for \$13, but if I thought I was goin' to land 'em without no trouble I soon found out my mistake. He was a knowin' old bird."

"That's what I thought he'd turn out afore ye got through with him, Bill," grinned the postmaster. "Ain't never no fakin' about you, be there, eh? This here buck o' Bill's, friends and feller citizens, was a bird, an' when he see Bill acomin' I suppose he barked

in a half scairt sort o' way and then flew off an' perched on the top of a pine tree, swain flin' in the branches like th' old bobolink he was."

"No, Jed, he didn't do none o' them things," said Peavey. "This here bein' a prohibition state, ye don't see no such animiles as the one ye describe around here—that is to say, I don't never see nothin' like that, though I don't deny that you see 'em. What a man sees in his own private business, an' I ain't the kind of a feller to go pokin' my nose into that. This here deer o' mine, gentlemen, was reg'lar—nothin' about him to suggest Jed's cider bar'l, but a reg'lar straight-forward buck. He didn't climb no trees, nor disappear down a woodchuck hole chirpin' for his mate to come an' bring him a worm. He just hit it up along his private particular trail the minute his nose told him that I was acomin', an' he kep' movin' along for four mortal hours without my gettin' him anywhere where I could get a line on him. Meanwhile the sky'd got kind o' clouded over, an' if I'd been thinkin' less about landin' that thar buck an' more of home an' mother I'd ha' knowed there'd be suthin' doing in the wind line afore long. But ye know how it is—when your mind's sot on one thing all sorts of other things can be happenin' under your very nose an' ye don't take no p'tic'lar notice o' 'em. So in spite o' the fact that a big hurricane was comin' up from the sea I kep' on after Mr. Buck. Bimeby the wind come, an', gosh-tamitey, the way it whistled through them trees would ha' turned the Portland fire corpse green with envy, but it didn't have no effect on me. No, sir; not even when I see a couple o' big pine trees right ahead o' me pulled up by the roots an' carried pikin' away through the sky like a pair o' airy planes with a sheriff after 'em. I wanted that thar buck, wind or no wind, an' he knowed it as well as I did. As I said afore he was a knowin' old bird, an' he allers managed to keep out o' range of my gun, or if he was in range he'd fix it so's they was allers a big fat tree trunk or a bowlder of some sort atween us."

"Wa-al, sir, it went on that way, as I says, for four hours," continued Bill, "an' then come about sun down the wind began a-scurryin' through them woods like as if it meant to carry 'em away. The buck wa'n't more'n five rods ahead o' me, the wind blowin' in my direction, when all of a sudden he got behind a big rock, stopped movin' altogether, turned around and, stickin' his head up over the top o' the bowlder, began a-starin' at me, like as if he was fass'nated by what he saw."

"Must ha' been afore ye lost your looks," vouchsafed the postmaster.

"Wa-al," said Bill, "good naturedly, 'I ain't never

had to offset my lack o' pers'nal beauty with no fed'ral titles. And I ain't sayin' how it come to come about that thar buck was fass'nated. All I say is that he was fass'nated. I'm tellin' ye the facts. He just stuck his head up over the top o' that rock an' stared—He almost looked like he was laffin'. He turned himself into a reg'lar target for me, an' I tell ye, I was ready for him. I laid flat down on my stummock to steady my aim, and blazed away square between his eyes. Just as I fired there was another gust of hurricane comin' my way, an' by ginger, boys, the echo o' that there shot o' mine hadn't even begun when I heard a terrible crash an' a blood curdin' groan directly behind me. Mr. Buck ran crashin' away through the woods. Wa'n't touched at all; just scampered off as fine as ye please. Naterally I turned around to see what the blood curdin' groan was about, an' 'y' Gorry, there was a big black b'ar, lyin' flat on his back two foot behind me, shot through the forehead, an' dead as a door nail. I could see then what it was as had fass'nated the buck, an' likewise what he was laffin' at, if he was laffin'."

"He'd seen that thar b'ar comin' for me while I was a huntin' him, an' if it amused him, I ain't sayin' that from his p'int of view it wa'n't funny."

"Yes," said the colonel, "but you haven't told us yet who shot the bear."

"'Twasn't that old bird of a buck as done it, was it, Bill?" asked the postmaster.

"That's what I'm comin' to," said Peavey. "The fact is, gentlemen, the hurricane that was blowin' at the minute I shot off my gun stopped the shot I'd fired at the buck and blowed 'em back over my head, plunkin' that thar b'ar plum in the face, just about as he was reachin' out to grab me. I found that out when I come to skin him, because I allers make my own shot, an' them that I found buried in that old bruin's brains had my private mark onto 'em."

Just then the mail arrived and for awhile the club was too busy watching its distribution to indulge in much comment on Bill Peavey's tale. After the adjournment, however, he and the colonel started up the road together.

"I say, Peavey," said the colonel remorsefully, "that story of mine about those railway trains out in Arizona was just a plain, ordinary, common garden lie. How about yours?"

"I know'd that, colonel," said Bill with a laugh. "It didn't sound no truer than a railroad map looks, but that thar tale o' mine was true. I can prove it."

"How?" asked the colonel, dubiously.

"History," returned Bill. "You look up the records, colonel, and if ye don't find that Horiss Greeley run for president in 1872 I'll eat my hat."