

CHIEF WILKIE AND THE GOLD CERTIFICATES

Most Cunning Counterfeit Coup of History Nipped by Great Secret Service Head.

By GEORGE BARTON

Many Thousands of Dollars' Worth of Spurious Bills Are "Killed" by Clever Detective—Culprit Had Every Track Covered by One Ruse or Another.



"CRAHAN," SAID WILKIE, "YOUR CONVICTION IS AS CERTAIN AS THAT THE SUN IS SHINING THIS MORNING."

John E. Wilkie, chief of the secret service division of the United States government, has not only upheld the high traditions of that very responsible post, but has won special laurels by his personal success in several big cases. He was born in Elgin, Ill., 47 years ago, and before accepting the headship of the secret service had made an enviable reputation as a working journalist. While connected with the Chicago newspapers, he made a specialty of criminal investigation which probably accounts in part for his unusual success as a detective. During the Spanish-American war he organized a special emergency force of men to checkmate Spanish spies in this country. As a consequence he succeeded in arresting their best spies and driving most of the others off the soil of the United States.)

ONE Monday morning, not many years ago, a smartly dressed man strolled down lower Broadway and entered one of the Trust company buildings in the heart of the financial district of New York. He was what is known to the patrons of the turf as a bookmaker, and he had called at the bank for the purpose of securing a roll of bank notes that he had left there on the previous Saturday night for safe-keeping. It was promptly handed to him, a roll as big as both of his fists. He counted it over rapidly to see that the amount was correct, and when he got near the end of the roll he paused long and looked earnestly at a \$100 gold certificate that lay there conspicuously among the bills of smaller denominations. He continued his study of the "yellow back" for a considerable period, and finally thrusting the balance of the bills in his pantaloons pocket, walked over to the cashier and handed him the bill. "What's the matter with this note?" he asked.

The bank official looked at it casually and handed it back with a smile. "Nothing," he answered, "except that it's counterfeit." The bookmaker gasped with astonishment. He went over his roll and found three or four more notes of the same kind. That morning he notified his fellow bookmakers, and before 24 hours had passed 30 or 40 of the counterfeit notes had been located in New York city. Samples were immediately secured by the authorities and forwarded to John W. Wilkie, the chief of the secret service division of the United States treasury department.

The chief dropped the business in hand and immediately turned his attention to the new developments in the hundred-dollar counterfeits. Telegrams were sent to the agents of the secret service instructing them to visit the race tracks in their vicinity and look out for bogus bills. These instructions applied particularly to Cincinnati, Louisville, Memphis, New Orleans and St. Louis.

At St. Louis Capt. John Murphy, the secret service agent in charge of that district, went to the Delaware race track and posted the bookmakers to look out for any \$100 bills that might be offered them. Agents of the service were posted in various parts of the track, and it was agreed that if any of these certificates were offered by any of the patrons the bookmakers should at once give the secret service a pre-arranged signal. In less than two hours one of the agents received a signal and hurried to the booth occupied by the bookmaker. He made a careful examination of the bill that had been given to the "bookie" and found that it was one of the counterfeits. The agents were then posted at spots where they could see the patrons of the track in the act of "cashing in" their winnings. The man who had put up the \$100 bill bet on the favorite, and he came out a winner.

The man "cashed in," and as he did so was taken into custody. He was marched over to the club house and searched. A white envelope was found in his pocket, containing 28 of the \$100 counterfeit bills. He said his name was Marcus Crahan, the proprietor of an extensive photo-engraving establishment at Providence, R. I. He was perfectly candid in his explanations. He said that he had been visiting the fair and was a guest at the Southern hotel, and that he would be very glad to refer

the officers to any bank in the city of Providence for the purpose of establishing his moral and financial standing. Nothing, apparently, could be more straightforward. He was placed under arrest, however, and then the secret service men made an examination of his room at the Southern hotel. There they found a suit-case containing \$4,700 in genuine money. He was asked then to explain how he came to be possessed of the counterfeit money. He said that on the previous afternoon he had gone to the Union station for the purpose of having the return half of his railroad ticket validated. As he came out of the ticket agent's office, the electric lights were suddenly turned on in the waiting room, and he saw in the corner on the floor a long white envelope. He picked it up and found that it contained \$3,000 in \$100 bills. He immediately went to the office of one of the local newspapers and inserted an advertisement telling of his discovery, and offering to restore the money to its lawful owner. This part of his story was verified by the little identification check which is given to classified "ad" patrons by the big daily newspapers. In addition to this there was a clipping from the paper containing a copy of the advertisement which read as follows:

"Found: In the Union station late yesterday afternoon a sum of money in bank notes which owner may have after proving property, by applying to X-13, this office."

Then John E. Wilkie, who had been directing the movements of his subordinates by wire, determined to take hold of the case in person.

He immediately took a train for St. Louis, and after a number of interviews with his associates in that city, began to consider how to reach the weakest link in the strong chain of probability with which Mr. Crahan was surrounded. One of the earliest movements made in the investigation was to discover the exact hour at which the electric lights were turned on in the Union station. The engineer of the electric plant was consulted and his records showed that on this particular date the switch which put the lights into operation had been turned on at 5:40. Wilkie next sent to the newspaper office which had printed the found "ad." and re-

quested a report upon the exact time at which the advertisement was accepted. The clerk who received the notice was finally located, and he remembered distinctly that he had stopped work on that afternoon at five o'clock; the ad, which he had received was the fifth or sixth above the last one, and, according to his own calculation, it must have been handed in at half-past four o'clock. This pointed to a discrepancy in Crahan's statement of one hour and ten minutes.

It was important. It was the thin entering wedge which might produce great results.

One of the significant discoveries among Crahan's effects was a number of programmes of races at Gravesend and two or three of the eastern tracks, not to speak of one particular programme which contained the entries of the races where the first bookmaker had received the \$100 bill which he deposited with his roll in the Broadway Trust company. Crahan calmly admitted that he had attended all of these races; that he was a lover of horse flesh and that he occasionally made small wagers on the results; but he denied positively having passed any of the other \$100 bills, and said that he had never had them in his possession until he found the white envelope at the Union station in St. Louis.

Wilkie did some very severe thinking at this stage of the game, and out of it all came the theory that if Crahan was guilty, he might have used similar subterfuges in passing counterfeit money at the eastern tracks. The chief thereupon telegraphed New York and ordered that a careful search be made of the files of all the New York newspapers for the two months covering the racing season. It was like searching for the needle in the proverbial haystack, but it bore fruit, for in the New York Herald of May 24 the searchers discovered this advertisement:

"Found: At the Grand Central station late yesterday afternoon a sum of money in bank notes which owner may have, after proving property, by applying to B-344, Herald office."

It is hardly necessary to say that by this time Mr. Wilkie had several specimens of Crahan's handwriting. After

the "ad." was located in the Herald, the original copy was found in the records of the office and it was in the handwriting of Marcus Crahan.

The government was now in possession of sufficient evidence to convict Crahan, both of passing and having in his possession counterfeit money, but the authorities did not know where the plates were, and how the money had been printed. The big problem was to locate the plant, to pull it up by the roots, and effectually stop the circulation of these spurious notes.

The two men sat down together, and Crahan was given a breakfast that would have delighted the palate, and warmed the heart, of the most confirmed epicure. It was topped off with a fine Havana cigar, and then, this formality having been disposed of, Mr. Wilkie proceeded to give Crahan the "third degree." But this "third degree," so called, differed as widely from the popular conception of the operation as the day differs from the night.

"Crahan," said Wilkie, "your conviction is as certain as that the sun is shining this morning."

Wilkie followed this up by plausible argument along the same line, and always pausing long enough to permit his words to sink into the man's consciousness. The argus-eyed representative of the United States government knew by experience that there is nothing in this world more difficult for a man to do than to admit to another man that he has been guilty of wrong. He realized, therefore, the necessity of giving Crahan an opportunity of confessing gracefully. He did this by suggestion, by innuendo, by appealing to the man's pride, by pleading with his patriotic instinct, and, at last, by laying siege to his sense of justice. He said in substance:

"Crahan, these notes are works of art, and it is a great shame that a man of your unusual talent should have, in a moment of weakness, permitted yourself to commit such a flagrant wrong against the public. I am sure, from what I have seen of you, that while you made the counterfeits, you did not originally intend to do so. I feel that, in view of your recognized ability, and the fact that you are a student and enthusiast in

Wealthy Engraver Inserts "Ad" in Paper and Then "Finds" Bogus Notes in Depot—That Clew Proves His Downfall and Establishes Case Against Him—Wealthy Friends to His Aid.

engraving, you have been seized with a desire to prove how you could reproduce the almost faultless work of the bureau of engraving and printing—a class of work that will always excite the envy and admiration of skilled engravers—that, filled with this desire, you began work in an experimental way, that you put it under the camera, and reproduced it to see if you could bring forth a bit of work that would rival the unrivaled production of the government. Then, when this creation became a fact instead of a vision, you were seized with an overwhelming desire to see if you could actually circulate it as genuine money.

"You certainly brought more than 30 notes to St. Louis," said the detective.

"Oh, yes," responded the counterfeiter.

"Where are they now?"
"At the Union station."
"In what part of the station?"
"In the baggage room."
"Where is the check?"
"I haven't got it. It's downstairs in the post office."

Wilkie looked the astonishment he felt. Before he had time to put his thoughts into words, Crahan said:

"After inserting the advertisement in the paper, I put \$26,000 in a hand bag, together with several bottles of chemicals which I use to artificially age the notes. Then I placed the check which I received for the hand bag in an envelope addressed to myself under an assumed name, and directed to the general delivery office of the post office."

It was evident that Crahan had carefully planned even the minutest detail of his great counterfeiting scheme. By this method of concealing the check for the hand-bag he left the counterfeit notes totally disassociated with himself in any way, and still at the same time within a moment's reach. A secret service agent was sent down to the postmaster, obtained the letter containing the check, took that to the Union station, and received the hand-bag which he brought to Chief Wilkie. Its contents verified the statement made by its owner. The chief took up the question of the plates.

"Where are the plates?" he inquired.
"In a storage warehouse in Providence," was the reply.

He admitted that no one in his business establishment was aware that he knew anything whatever of the mechanical part of the work, but the man, with a cunning almost beyond belief, had perfected himself in the art of etching. After that he purchased a press in New York city and had it delivered in the middle of the night to a private room in his establishment. There he worked and experimented night after night until he was finally able to produce the perfected \$100 bill counterfeits. Then the press was dismantled, and with the plates, placed in a warehouse in Providence. It was stored under an assumed name.

"Where is the receipt?" asked Wilkie.
"It is pasted between two sheets of paper that back up a photograph on my desk in my office in Providence."

The chief immediately called up Providence by telegraph. The local agent was instructed to go to Crahan's office and find the receipt for the press. He did so. It was between the two sheets of paper on the photograph on his desk. Immediate action was taken, and after an incredibly short space of time the plates were in St. Louis in possession of Chief Wilkie. On the following day Marcus Crahan was taken into court. He pleaded guilty to manufacturing counterfeit money and passing it on to the public. He was given 15 years on each of the two indictments, the sentences to run concurrently. This was subsequently reduced to eight years. Thus ended one of the most important counterfeiting schemes ever discovered and thwarted by the marvellously efficient machinery of the secret service division of the United States government.

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FIVE MONTHS IN HOSPITAL. Discharged Because Doctors Could Not Cure.

Levi P. Brockway, S. Second Ave., Anoka, Minn., says: "After lying for five months in a hospital I was discharged as incurable, and given only six months to live. My heart was affected, I had smothering spells and sometimes fell unconscious. I got so I couldn't use my arms, my eyesight was impaired and the kidney secretions were badly disordered. I was completely worn out and discouraged when I began using Doan's Kidney Pills, but they went right to the cause of the trouble and did their work well. I have been feeling well ever since."
Sold by all dealers. 50 cents a box. Foster-Milburn Co., Buffalo, N. Y.



BEGINNING EARLY.



"I have already promised ten cousins to marry them. I can see I shall never get through all my divorces."

He'd Pull Hard.

"Senator Folker, who journeyed to Albany at the risk of his life to cast the vote that doomed racing in New York, had collected a number of instances of race-track trickery," said an Albany legislator.

"Discussing, one day, the way jockeys so often sold races, he said that there was a Gloucester jockey once, the rider of a favorite, who was overheard to say in a saloon, the night before the favorite ran: "I shan't win unless the reins break."

Important to Mothers.

Examine carefully every bottle of CASTORIA a safe and sure remedy for infants and children, and see that it bears the

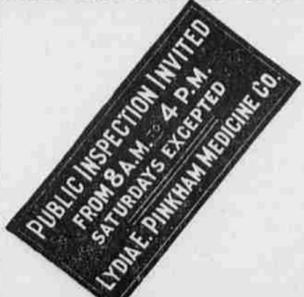
Signature of *Wm. C. Little* In Use For Over 30 Years. The Kind You Have Always Bought.

A Timely Objection.

"I am afraid we must part, Fred, dear. My father gave me strict injunctions not to let you call on me."

"But, Ethel, I am unalterably opposed to submitting to government by injunction."

THE COME AND SEE SIGN



This sign is permanently attached to the front of the main building of the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Company, Lynn, Mass.

What Does This Sign Mean? It means that public inspection of the Laboratory and methods of doing business is honestly desired. It means that there is nothing about the business which is not "open and above-board."

It means that a permanent invitation is extended to anyone to come and verify any and all statements made in the advertisements of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. Is it a purely vegetable compound made from roots and herbs—without drugs? Come and See.

Do the women of America continually use as much of it as we are told? Come and See.

Was there ever such a person as Lydia E. Pinkham, and is there any Mrs. Pinkham now to whom sick women are asked to write? Come and See.

Is the vast private correspondence with sick women conducted by women only, and are the letters kept strictly confidential? Come and See.

Have they really got letters from over one million, one hundred thousand women correspondents? Come and See.

Have they proof that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has cured thousands of these women? Come and See.

This advertisement is only for doubters. The great army of women who know from their own personal experience that no medicine in the world equals Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound for female ills will still go on using and being benefited by it; but the poor doubting, suffering woman must, for her own sake, be taught confidence, for she also might just as well regain her health.