

# The Protector of Finance

Tales of Resilius Marvel, Guardian of Bank Treasure

By WELDON J. COBB

## THE DEAD YEAR'S HARVEST

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There was a quick call at the telephone, and Resilius Marvel seized the receiver as though he had been expecting a message. I knew by the expression of his eyes that the first word imparted over the wire met his anticipations. Then I heard him ask in rapid succession:

"Letters—numbers—series?"

He pencilled rapidly on his shirt cuff as the replies came.

"Verify," were his final words: "E-296,701, Series of 1906." Very well, and hung up the receiver and arose to his feet. "Come with me," he added simply, and I knew that the great head of the United Bankers' Protective association was started on another "case."

"E. 1906," I observed with a sudden shock of memory as we reached the street—"if that applies to a one hundred dollar treasury note—"

"It does," vouchsafed Marvel tersely.

"Then you probably have the man." "If instructions have been followed, yes," replied my friend.

"Who is it?"

"The Central National."

"That makes ten."

"You keep good tab," complimented Marvel—"exactly ten. What an optimist this original shaver of the queer must be!"

Briefly, within a week ten counterfeit \$100 notes had been passed upon the city banks. On a certain Monday morning a spruce, sprightly young man of about twenty-five had come into our institution and had presented himself at the paying teller's window with five \$100 treasury notes. He asked to have them changed into bills of smaller denominations and was readily accommodated. The teller had noted they were comparatively new, that their serial numbers were consecutive. An expert glance satisfied him, however, that they were all right. They were placed with other hundreds to make up a package of twenty, or \$1,000, and nothing more was thought of it.

Four mornings later Resilius Marvel came into the bank with No. 296, 695 of the same series. Across its face was stamped the word "Counterfeit" in broad red letters taking in the full front surface of the note.

"Have you any of those?" he inquired, placing the bill before me.

"I will find out," I replied, and then rather wonderingly scanned the note. It would have passed muster with me, and I counted myself something of a specialist in my line.

It took half an hour to go the rounds of the cages. It is almost second nature for a teller to remember any bill he has handled, especially those of large denomination. The man who had changed the treasury notes for a stranger soon had the five in question in evidence.

Two more of the \$100 notes turned up twenty-four hours later at another institution. Then two other banks each contributed like bills. In each case a smiling, easy-mannered young fellow had passed the notes. Marvel had named progress to me as it culminated. Now a tenth note had turned up. I accompanied him to the Central National.

The floor officer was waiting for Marvel, and knew him. There was a flutter of importance and excitement in his manner at being concerned in a professional transaction with the great head of the United Bankers' Protective association. He took us to the paying teller, saying nothing, but looking the part of an humble instrument of justice who had cooperated in "capturing a crook." The teller, looking wise and keen and in a suppressed way exultant, beckoned to us, and we went beyond the railing and around into an anteroom, where he joined us.

"There is one of the hundred you flagged for us, Mr. Marvel," he said, and handed a \$100 bill to my friend.

Resilius Marvel nodded, gave the bill a close scrutiny, and returned it to the teller with the words: "Cancel it and preserve it for evidence. Where is the man?"

The teller slipped the note into his coat pocket and took out a key.

"This way," he directed, and we followed him down a narrow corridor. As he started to open a steel-studded door Marvel halted him.

"One moment," he said—"tell me the circumstances of the matter."

"Why, your warning had prepared us all, of course," explained the bank man. "When the fellow with his note presented it, I pretended to be called by my assistant in the next cage. I quietly pressed the call button, signaling what I wanted to the chief clerk's desk. He and the floor officer came up quietly. The man at the window looked amazed and indignant as the officer seized his arm. He demanded to know what his arrest meant. When I told him that the bill was counterfeit, it seemed to me as if all of a sudden some frightful suggestion drove his face colorless. He nearly fell to the floor. Now? Yes, Mr. Marvel," and the speaker unlocked the door. He started back as he opened it, and stared blankly at a man standing in the center of the

place before a high desk with a table top.

"Too bad!" spoke Marvel quickly, as he crowded past our guide and his eye swept the room in his rapid, comprehensive way.

I did not make out what Marvel had taken in with that practised eye of his at a glance, until I had got nearly up to the desk, which I found was one used in sealing money envelopes. A strong gas jet was going. Near it were the steel dies, wax sticks and cord used in securing packages. The prisoner had evidently been busy during his brief period of forced retirement. A pair of small scissors and a safety razor lay on the table. Also, under the gas jet was quite a heap of fresh, warm cinders. The eyebrows of the captive were jagged and irregular, and his upper lip was rough and scraped.

"He has tried to disguise himself!" shouted the bank teller, instantly.

"To disguise himself, you mean," interpolated Marvel. "He has done more than that. He has been busy removing all identification marks—papers, clothing tags—hello! what's this?"

From behind the man there suddenly sprang out a small lively dog. He was of the fox terrier breed, and barked at us lustily.

"Oh, the animal was with him when he came into the bank," explained the teller. "Followed him in here. Belongs to him, I suppose."

"I see," nodded my friend, thoughtfully. "Now, then, my man!"

He fixed his eye sharply on the prisoner. The latter did not flinch under the eyecourse. He must have been a handsome appearing young man before he had jabbed those scissors into his eyebrows. He was very pale, but there was nothing of the cringing or alarmed culprit about him.

"I see it is useless to ask you your name," observed Marvel. "We will make a search, but I fancy you have forestalled what you were shrewd enough to suspect awaited you."

My friend was right. The man had cut off even the laundry marks on his linen, had removed every letter and card from his pocketbook, and had burned them on the marble top of the sealing table.

"You won't tell your name, of course," said Marvel. "Will you talk at all?"

"I will make only one statement," came the cool, composed reply.

"I shall be glad to receive it," replied Marvel.

"I did not know until half hour since that I was passing counterfeit money."

"You know it now?"

"Yes," came the response, accompanied with a tremor of the finely chiseled lips. "I had ten \$100 bills, and I have passed them all."

"Where did you get them?"

"I will answer that question and rest my case there," was the singular reply. "After that it is up to you to do what you choose; and after that I shall absolutely refuse to say one word—I found them."

That was all—all at the start, all at the finish. Argument, menaces, cajolery, sympathy—these went for nothing. Marvel studied the prisoner silently. Then he whispered to the teller. The latter retired, to reappear with the floor officer. Marvel gave this man some low-toned instructions. The officer placed a come-along upon the wrist of the prisoner.

"You can leave the dog," spoke Marvel suddenly.

The prisoner turned and his lips parted. He was evidently about to put in a plea for the continued companionship of the little animal, whom he seemed to regard with fondness. With something of a sigh, he repressed utterance, however, pulled his hat down over his eyes and stolidly accompanied the officer from the place.

"Get me a piece of stout cord," Marvel directed the teller, and in another few minutes we were on our way to the offices of the United Bankers' Protective association. The little animal whined and worried, but trotted along, guided by Marvel. The latter turned the dog loose in an empty room and sat down in his own favorite chair in his private office.

"There is some thinking to do," he observed, "but I should like to have you back here about an hour before dusk."

I was curious enough and interested enough to greet the invitation as a favor, and said so.

"And by the way, my friend," he called after me as I reached the door, "that young man we have secured told the truth—he did not know the \$100 bills were counterfeit until the teller at the Central National told him so."

I wondered how Resilius Marvel had found this out. But I knew he was right. He usually treasured up his deductions and discoveries until a case was ended. When he anticipated an announcement, I had found in the past, it was only when he was very sure of his ground.

When I reached his office again it was well on towards evening. Marvel was rosy with the little fox terrier

under his arm. With the animal, he led the way to an auto, and we proceeded back to the Central National.

The city center streets were comparatively deserted, as the business crowds had gone homewards some time since. Marvel carried the dog to the barred front of the bank, set the little animal on the pavement and returned to the machine.

"Just follow that dog," he ordered to the chauffeur, and fixed his eye closely upon the object of his interest.

The fox terrier crowded through the barred gate protecting the entrance to the bank, ran up to the great bronze doors and lifted his head and howled. Then it snifled around in a circle, came out to the pavement, threw its nose up in the air in several directions and trotted down the street on a bee line.

There could be no doubt that the clever animal knew the way home, for it proved never at fault, never hesitated, and buckled down sturdily as if knowing it had a long jaunt ahead. This proved true. It made only square turns at corners, and gradually left the business center for the better residence portion of the city.

"Keep close," directed Marvel to the chauffeur as the animal reached a broad boulevard and increased its pace. "Follow," he ordered additionally, as the dog suddenly diverged from its course and turned down a broad alley. Then, as our forerunner reached an iron fence inclosing a garden and crowded through between two pickets, Marvel spoke one quick, imperative word: "Stop!" leaped out of the machine and ran up to the fence.

I could see beyond him. The dog had burst into a joyful bark, and al-

high business integrity, his name good for the entire reserve of our bank. I wondered, too, how my friend, skilled and all powerful as he was, would proceed in a case where the sure criminal trail led straight from the portals of a common prison to this abode of luxury and wealth. A servant answered a question put by Marvel, and ushered him into a majestic reception room, took his card, and we both arose as a man aged, austere, dignified, came into the apartment with an easy, old-fashioned sense of courtesy that charmed me. He had Marvel's card in his hand, and I fancied the name it bore had aroused him into curiosity or interest as to the personality it represented. Marvel weighed his man in the scales of a mature judgment, and went to the heart of his subject forthwith.

"I have come on an important and serious mission in behalf of the government, Mr. Buckingham," he announced.

"Of the government?"

"Very slowly, as though difficult of utterance, Mr. Buckingham pronounced that last word. I thought he quivered, I was sure his natural ruddy color lessened.

"You have a relative, a nephew, I understand," resumed Marvel; and then followed a rapid description of the young man who had passed the \$100 counterfeits—plus his denuded mustache—building up a portrait that I saw at once was recognizable by our host.

"I am describing my nephew, Alan Dean," said Mr. Buckingham, steeled cold, because he was controlling himself. "What of him, sir?"

"Just this, Mr. Buckingham: He is in my hands after passing ten coun-



terfeit \$100 treasury notes on the city banks.

The old man, his hands grasping the arms of the chair, tried to hold himself together. He directed one look at Marvel—reproachful, pleading, a lost look. His were the eyes of a man who saw a stranger enter his presence and bring a stately fabric into the midst of sudden devastation and ruin.

"Where—where is my nephew?" his lips framed, rather than uttered. "How came he to find the notes?"

It was an admission, and I noted Marvel's lips settle grimly—a point scored, a start made.

"If you had the notes in this house," he ventured audaciously, "what of the plates from which they were printed?"

"You know all! Then it is—ruin!" broke in a despairing cry from the old man's lips.

"Quick, call someone!" directed Marvel, as Buckingham fell to one side. A spasm convulsed his frame and he lay rigid and speechless. My friend had lifted him to an easier position, while I hastened to the hall and advised the servant there of his master's condition.

We waited until after a physician had been called. He shook his head seriously while they placed the millionaire on a couch. Then he went to work on him. His attitude became more reassuring as the patient recovered consciousness and looked about him in a bewildered way. Then as his eye fell on Marvel the old fright or fear, terror or apprehension, or whatever it was, came back into his face.

"Take," he urged, "a blank signed check. Fill in for any amount, only save—save my family from shame."

"And the plates?" gently but firmly persisted Marvel, waving back the proffered check.

"Come—come—" the tortured tones grew more feeble, "when I—send for you."

We saw that he was going into another sinking spell. Marvel hastily summoned the physician, and we passed down the hall and out of the house. Silently my friend led the way to the machine awaiting us at the corner of the next street, reached his office, dismissed the chauffeur and nodded a casual adieu to myself.

I could not resist an impulse of in-

tense curiosity and impatience to drop in upon him on my way to the bank the next morning. I found him with a newspaper folded across his knee and his eyes regarding it with a vexed expression.

"Did you see it?" he inquired.

I guessed what, and told him so, and ran hurriedly over an item announcing that a new \$100 treasury note counterfeit—the particulars concerning which, even to the approximate serial numbers, were given—had appeared on the market.

"Some one has babbled," scolded my friend. "It may make a complication."

I did not see how, just then. I knew better—later. Marvel had nothing to impart to me of progress or importance in the case, but late that afternoon there came a hurry call for me from him. I closed my desk and was soon in his company.

He handed me a card which he took from an envelope. It read simply, in pencil scrawl: "I must see you.—A. B."

"I may need you," observed my friend, and after a half hour's spin we arrived at the home of the millionaire.

The servant who answered the summons at the door seemed to know we were expected. She led us down the hall to a sort of library, saying that Mr. Buckingham was engaged, but that she would announce our presence shortly. Then she left us alone in the room, half darkened by the approaching shadows of eventide.

I caught some rapid words from a room beyond the heavy draperies, evidently a smoking apartment off the library. I noted, however, that Marvel heard them quicker than I, for he moved from his seat to a chair closer to the unopened doorway. The words, not in the tones of Mr. Buckingham, were rapid, insistent, almost menacing:

"The plates—the plates!"

There was an utterance akin to a groan, and it proceeded from the lips of the millionaire. I readily traced. Then the former voice, only clacking, wheedling and menacing at the same time, spoke again:

"Mr. Buckingham, I am here in the interests of a client who has one proposition to make to you. My promise ends with a distinct and final negative or affirmative. It places me in a regrettable and unfortunate position to be the representative of men who are dangerous criminals, but—I am a lawyer. Shall I briefly state the case?"

There was no reply, at least none audible to us. The speaker continued:

"Some years ago, your son Percival Buckingham, chief engraver for the government, was taken ill and removed to a sanitarium while you were absent in Europe. Too close application to delicate expert work had blighted his mind. He escaped from the sanitarium, and three men I will not name, but once known as the most finished shavers of the queer in the world, got hold of him. They saw their opportunity and improved it. They were shrewd, capable men and made no blunders. What they did you will now learn for the first time.

Those men secured the upper floor of a lonely, secluded house. They fitted it up as nearly as possible like one of the work rooms in the treasury department. They took your deluded son there, and made him believe that he was producing new 1906 series \$100 plates for the government. For nearly a year that was his home. His mind did not refuse to act mechanically along the line eye and skill had directed for so many years. In brief, he made two plates, so perfect that they were almost duplicates of the original government plates. Twelve impressions were made, and two of these were tested by being placed in circulation. Today they are somewhere in existence, their validity never doubted. Within that week it must have been, while unguarded and alone, your son had a flash of his old mentality. At all events, when his three captors returned they found him gone, and with him the two treasury plates and the ten printed \$100 bills.

"Now for your end of the story, as I understand it: Your son appeared at this home, suddenly, unexpectedly. He must have brought the plates and the notes. You believed him a counterfeiter, for before he could explain to you, his insane mood returned. At once removed him to a private asylum. Later you sent him with a relative, Alan Dean, to Paris. He regained his reason. Today he occupies a studio in the French capital, patronized by devotees of high art. Happily married, all that year of mental darkness forgotten, restored to his right mind, he is a wonderful producer of art etchings, a man of fame, and marvelously prosperous. You have been content to keep him out of the country. You never sought to enlighten him as to that last year in his life."

"I know all this—why go over it!" came in muffled tones of suffering from the millionaire.

"So that the matter may be clearly understood between us," was the prompt response. "Within a week after your son's escape from the counterfeiter, one of their number came to see you. He caused you to believe that your son had deliberately left the government service, to go into a scheme to secure millions by using his professional skill as a counterfeiter. You told him a lie. You led him to believe that your son had destroyed the ten treasury notes and the two plates. The man, however, threatened to denounce him to the police as a dangerous counterfeiter. To silence this man, you paid \$50,000, and that ended the matter for the time being."

"I know not how," continued the lawyer, "but my client, when today he saw the announcement in the newspapers that certain counterfeit \$100 treasury notes of a certain series were in circulation, at once was forced to an irrefutable conclusion. Those notes came from this house—they could come from nowhere else. Your nephew, only recently arrived from Paris, where your son is living, is missing from your home since yesterday. A man answering his description passed the notes. Putting this and that together, my client reasons that you have also the plates. He must have them."

Again a groan from the lips of the tortured man.

We heard a tottering step cross the floor. Marvel was at my side as the draperies were agitated. He reached me in a swift glide and drew me beside him to a curtained alcove in the library as Arnold Buckingham entered and turned on a light.

The old man's lips were trembling and he was whispering hoarsely to himself. His eyes were those of a man on the verge of losing his senses. He produced a key, opened a strong-box safe, and from some inner recess drew out two oblong pieces of metal. In a flash Marvel was at his side.

"On your life, not a word!" he abjured the shrinking, well-nigh stricken millionaire. "I will deal with the wretches who seek to blackmail you."

I pressed to the side of Buckingham and supported him, or he would have fallen. I saw Marvel hold the plates toward the light. He drew a magnifying glass from his pocket and looked them over.

What was the significance of the quick, momentary smile that crossed his lips, I knew not then. Before I could even conjecture a cause, he had parted the draperies, and I heard the lawyer's metallic voice exclaim:

"Resilius Marvel!"

"You know me," was the stern reply. "And you, Israel Craft, disbarred attorney, fence, go-between and agent of the hunted and lost. You do well to strain the limit of justice to the danger point."

"I am within the law," cracked from the mean, servile lips.

"Admitted. What I wish to know is—have you the affidavits you boasted of to Mr. Arnold Buckingham a minute since?"

"I have."

"Will you add a statement of your knowledge of this unfortunate business?"

"For the plates—yes."

Marvel led the man into the library. He pointed to an open desk, and said simply:

"Write."

It was at the end of ten minutes that I saw Resilius Marvel receive into his hands four documents. He scrutinized them closely. Then he said:

"There are the plates. Now your men and my men are—quits."

I was amazed—more than that, petrified. I saw Marvel accompanying the lawyer to the door. Then, returning, he drew Buckingham aside. He conversed with him in low tones. At the end of ten minutes I saw hope and courage come into the face of the old man. It was the relief and gratitude of a person drawn from the edge of a fearsome precipice.

"The nephew who passed those notes, and who recently came from the son in Paris," explained Marvel as we left the mansion, "was told by Percy Buckingham that he might have what he found in his old home room. He stumbled across those counterfeit notes. The son is in happy ignorance of that blighted year in his life. The father need bear no further anxiety. He will reimburse the banks gladly, the affair must be hushed up, and the man who gets the plates—"

He paused in an impressive way. Then Resilius Marvel laughed—a low, strange laugh of intense satisfaction.

"But they have them! I do not understand," I floundered.

"They have them, yes," assented Marvel, "and so much worthless trumpery they are."

"I do not yet comprehend you."

"They bear a sure record, that in his lucid awakening the night of his escape, Percy Buckingham placed upon them," said Marvel. "They are as useless as old metal."

"You mean—?"

"When these knaves come to print their issue, they will find that, finely but plainly engraved across front and back plate, is one warning word."

"You mean?"

"Counterfeit."

An Educational Garden.

The educational garden of Dr. J. B. Hurry, a horticulturist of Reading, England, is a novelty as a private enterprise. Useful plants of various kinds are grouped in several special plots. Among plants employed in medicine are eucalyptus, belladonna, acornite, stramonium, gentian, liquorice, podophyllin, asafoetida, valerian, benzoin, castor oil, cinchona, and opium poppy; foods include such plants as maize, millet, sugar, rice, bananas, arrowroot, ginger, pepper, chicory, olive, and cefranon; plants supplying clothing and textile materials embrace flax, hemp, cotton, jute, ramie, and nettle; and there are such plants yielding dyes as woad, indigo, madder, dyers weed, turmeric, annatto, and alkanet. Conservatories display tea, coffee, soy beans, monkey-nuts, guava, chick peas, cinnamon, and camphor. In the garden is also a museum, and in this numerous industrial products are shown, with labels referring to the plants from which they are derived. On certain days the public, including the older school children, is given free admission to the garden.

## THINKS IT'S TIME FOR HIM TO SPEAK

Detroit Mason Came Near Giving Up and Quitting, He Says.

### WIFE ALSO TESTIFIES

"Tanlac Has Put Me on My Feet Feeling Strong and Well as I Ever Felt in My Life," Says Edward Young.

"Tanlac has put me on my feet feeling as strong and well as I ever felt in my life, and I think it's time for me to speak out for the benefit of others," said Edward Young, a well known brick mason who lives at 48 Sprout street, Detroit, Michigan, a few days ago.

"Ever since I had a spell of grippe over a year ago," he continued, "I have had no strength and felt bad and run-down all the time. I was very restless and had a tired-out feeling all the time. I lost weight and felt like I would just have to give up entirely. I lost a good deal of time from my work because I was too weak to keep it up."

"Finally a friend of mine recommended Tanlac to me and he couldn't have done me a greater favor, for it has just about made a new man of me. I have just finished one of the hardest week's work of my life and I just feel like I could keep on going, for I can do more hard work than I ever could."

Mrs. Young, who witnessed her husband's statement, said: "I can see the improvement in Mr. Young more than he can himself. I have never seen a medicine do anyone so much good. We are both delighted with Tanlac and can't say enough for it."

There is a Tanlac dealer in your town.—Adv.

### SHE SAW DANGER IN DELAY

Owing to Circumstances, Fair Maid Was Willing to Make Momentous Decision at Once.

"Hary," she began, in sweet, timorous voice, "what's all this talk about gold and silver?"

Henry, who reads the papers, and was about as thoroughly ignorant on the subject as everybody else, plunged in bravely, but she stopped him.

"I don't want to know about that," she faltered, "but is gold getting so awful scarce?"

"Awful scarce!" echoed Henry, dismally.

And is it all being taken away to pay for the war?"

"It is," said Henry.

"And if they continued to take it away, there won't be any left in this country by and by and we'll have to use silver?"

"Yes," sighed Henry.

"Henry," she whispered, "I told you I would give you my decision in the summer—but I repeat. It is 'yes—yes.' Henry, don't—don't you think," she continued, after a moment's silence, "that it would be well to get the ring now, before all the gold is taken away?"—London Answers.

A Bungler.

"The kaiser tries hard to please, but his efforts are very bungling."

The speaker was Seward Prosser, head of the New York Red Cross.

"The kaiser," he went on, "kicked out Bethmann-Hollweg, who only wanted an honorable peace, and took on Doctor Michaelis, who demands a peace of victory. Yet the kaiser tries to please his people—he even tries to please the allies—but he bungles like the bathwater."

"Why, Miss Mamie," said the bachelor, gallantly, at the senesore hop, "your mother positively looks as young as you do."

"That's no compliment," said Miss Mamie, with a toss of the head.

"What I meant," stammered the bachelor, more gallantly than ever, "was that you—er—you look as young as your mother does."

The women want somebody to invent a smokeless cigar for men who ride on street cars.

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