

Lewellyn Payne and the Counterfeiters

An Idle Time—A Call from My Old “Chief”—The Case in Hand Outlined—I Discover an Old Enemy in the List of Counterfeiters, And Lay My Plans—Take Board in Nineteenth Street, and Open a Law Office in Jauncey Court Make the Acquaintance of Mrs. Payne, Lewellyn’s Mother, and Finally Get Acquainted with Him—He Visits My Law Office—I Am Ingratiated in his Favor—I Track Him into my Enemy’s Company, and Feel Sure of Success—Lewellyn Finally Confesses to Me his Terrible Situation—Certain Plans Laid—I Make “Collins” Acquaintance—Visit a Gambling Saloon with Him—A Heavy Wager—Fifteen Thousand Dollars at Hazard, Payne’s All—The Counterfeiting Gamblers Caught Together—A Severe Struggle—Payne Saved at Last, and his Money Too—A Reformed Son and a Happy Mother—Two “Birds” Sent To The Penitentiary.

by George McWatters

THERE had been a lull in business for a time with me soon after I had left an organized force of private detectives, and with the promised assistance of some friends, mercantile and otherwise, whom I had served more or less, under the direction of the chief of the corps to which I belonged, had taken a private office, and was beginning to wish that I was not so much “my own master,” and had more to do.

During those days I tried to divert my mind with much reading, and one day, poring over De Quincey’s “Opinm Eater,” I was half buried in oblivion in all particular things around me, though wonderfully aroused to a sweet sensuousness of all things material, when my old chief entered my office. I was not a little surprised to see him, for it had been weeks since I had met him, and that casual meeting was the first time I had seen him since my resignation from the corps.

“Good day, my boy,” said he, giving me a hearty grasp of the hand. He looked weary and worn. I thought he looked vexed, too, about something, and I asked, “Well, what’s up? What ails you? Are you unwell?” “No,” said he, “not unwell; in fact, never in better health; but business annoys me. I’ve been on a scent for some parties for quite a while, and I can get nobody to do what I want done. Report of failure to find out what I want has just been rendered an hour ago, and I have come down to see if you can’t help me out.”

“Tell me your story,” said I. “But I don’t suppose I can accomplish anything for you if Wilson, Baldwin, or Harry Hunt” (detectives of rare ability on his corps) “have failed.”

“They have,” said he, “signally; but I believe the matter can be worked out readily, though you will have to take your time at it. The case is this: There’s a lot of blacklegs and counterfeiters, some of whom you know, whose den I want to find out. That’s all. They are passing more or less counterfeit money these days. What I want is not to detect any one of these by himself, but to capture the whole of them in their den—gobble them all up at once, and break up their gang; and now I think I have a key to their hiding-place, which, if I can get anybody to work it well, will open in upon them.”

“Well, give me the particulars, and your general instructions, and I’ll try it.”

“You know,” said he, “that some of it may be desperate work, and that’s one reason why I want you—steady hand, and cool head, and time enough, must succeed in this business. Here is a minute description of five of the gang. Look it over,” pulling from his side pocket a paper. “There, you know this first one, Harry Le Beau. We dealt with him, you know, two years ago; and the next I guess you don’t know. In fact, I reckon you don’t know any of the rest.”

I was studying over the personal descriptions; meanwhile the chief went talking on, I paying little heed further to what he was saying. Coming to the last on the list, “Mont Collins!”—“Mont Collins?”—I don’t know the name, but the description just suits another person; rather, just suits the character himself, for I knew, of course, that “Collins” was one of any number of aliases. “This is a particular friend of mine,” said I. “His name used to be Bill Blanchard, and—and—well,” without saying any more, “I’ll undertake the job; and, by Heavens!” said I, “I’ll succeed,” for I had been warming up out of my opium reverie from the instant my eye fell upon the description of “Collins,” with an indignation and a hope of revengeful triumph over this villain, who had now taken a step in counterfeiting, or in passing counterfeit money, where I could, if successful, get him confined within the walls of a prison, and pay him for his vile iniquities.

“You have encountered this scoundrel before, it seems,” said the chief, noticing the glow upon my face.

“No, not I; but a relative of mine. I can’t tell you the story now. I’ll follow him to the death. No stone shall remain unmoved in this business.”

“I am glad you have a peculiar incentive, and I feel that you are sure to succeed; but I have not given you the key yet. May be it will serve you. Perhaps you can get a better one, and won’t need to use it,” said the chief.

“Give it me,” said I, “by all means. A straw, even, might serve to point the way; and if the rest are as desperate and cunning as ‘Collins,’ I shall need all the help and advice possible to work up the job,” said I.

So the chief went on to say, “It is very evident that these fellows have an important victim in a young man, by the name of Lewellyn Payne, from Kentucky, who came to New York some mouths ago, reputed to be very rich, and had always at first about him money enough; but he has become reckless. He’s a fine-looking fellow, of good address, and how he allowed such a vile gang to get hold of him, I don’t see”—

“But I do,” said I, interposing. “Collins is as keen and genteel a villain as the city holds,” said I.

“May be,” said the chief; “but the rest of them are only cutthroats, without a particle of grace to save them.”

“But they cannot be worse at heart than he,” I responded. “He has chosen his crew for his own purposes—fit instruments for his style of villainy.”

“Well, you think you know him. I hope you do, and can manage him; but I’ll tell you about this Payne. They have drained his purse, I think; in fact, I’ve had him watched, and have found out that he is greatly in their debt. They hold his notes, and he is about to sell property in Kentucky to meet them. At least this is my translation of Hunt’s report from him. Hunt “cultivated” him for a while, but we couldn’t find out anything from him in regard to the gang’s rendezvous.”

“Well, what am I to do? Where does he live, this Payne?”

“In West 19th Street, No. —, corner Sixth Avenue. He and his mother board there.”

“O, ho,” said I; “his mother! Does she know anything about her son’s dissipations?”

“Yes; it was she who came to me first about him,—says her heart is broken, and that something must be done to save her son. She can learn but little from him; but says he’s away a great deal all night, and sleeps mostly during the day; that she fears he’s gambled away most of his property, etc.”

“Then she can be approached upon the subject. Well, I see the way clear. I must make his acquaintance without his knowing why. I may make such use of your name as I please?”

“Certainly.”

Before night that day I was fortunate enough to secure board at the house in 19th Street, though I did have to accept a room a little farther up toward the sky than I desired, with the assurance that I should have the first vacant room below. My first business was to effect a meeting with the lady, Mrs. Payne, which I found but little difficulty in doing. The poor woman, who was a model of elegance and matronly character, was greatly moved when she came to tell me of her son’s wanderings from the strict path of morality in which she had tried to rear him. Young Payne’s father had died some twelve years before, and she had taken her son Lewellyn to Europe to finish his education. Being of Scotch origin herself, and most of her relations residing in and about Edinboro’, she had taken him to the university there, whence, after leaving college, she went to the Continent with him. Finally, spending a season at Baden Baden, young Payne caught there the fashionable mania for gambling, which was proving his ruin. She was ready to spend liberally of her means in order to reform him, and wished me to spare no expense necessary in the course which I pointed out to her. I found it necessary to take an office or desk as a lawyer in Jauncey Court, out of Wall Street, and had some cards struck off, announcing myself as an attorney at law. Three or four days passed before I thought best to make the acquaintance of the young man, the mother having stated to me, meanwhile, a legal matter of hers in Kentucky, on which I had taken advice, so as to be able to talk learnedly to the son.

All being arranged, the mother told the son that she found they had a lawyer in the house, and had thought best to consult him regarding the matter in Kentucky, and was pleased with his advice, but would like him (young Payne) to talk with the lawyer also. Through this means I made the acquaintance of young Payne next day, and invited him down to my office. He said he should have occasion to go into Wall Street that very day, and would call about three P. M. Of course I was there, received him, spoke of the library, which was quite large, as mine, and played

the lawyer to the best of my abilities. We went out to a restaurant together, and I allowed myself to accept his treat to a little wine; and, in short, before reaching home that evening, for we went up town together, I felt very certain that I had properly impressed young Payne with my consequence, and with the notion, too, that I was no “blue-skin,” but ready always for a little “fun.”

Mrs. Payne looked a degree or two improved that evening when she saw how swimmingly her son and I were getting on in our acquaintance.

After supper, young Payne said he had an engagement out, and would bid me good evening. But I said, “I am going out too; perhaps our paths may lie along together for a while. I am going down town.”

“So am I,” said he, “and I should be pleased with your company as far as you may go.”

I left the house with him, and we proceeded to Broadway, and turned down, talking over many things, and managing to agree pretty well upon them all. At last, as we neared 8th Street, I thought I saw that young Payne was a little uneasy, as if wishing to shake me off; and I said to him, “Well, good evening, Mr. Payne,” offering him my hand. “My course leads this way,” pointing to the left, and turning in that direction. “I suppose you keep down farther.”

“Yes,” said he, “I am going on farther,” and bowing me an “adieu, for the while,” he passed on, and I kept a good look out for him, for I “scented” that he expected to meet somebody not far from that point. Dropping into a saloon near by, where a friend of mine was engaged, I left my “stove-pipe” hat, and pulled from my pocket a thin “slouched” hat, which I carried for occasion, and taking the opposite side of the street from Payne, kept him in sight till he passed into the New York Hotel, when I crossed over, and entered. I had hardly done so before he, returning from the back portion of the hall in company with another, passed by me. His companion was evidently telling him a funny story, for he laughed quite loudly, and was hitting Payne, as if in glee, upon his shoulder. I knew my man, both by his voice and face, which was partly concealed by the manner in which he, at this moment, had fixed his hat upon his head. He was unmistakably Blanchard, alias “Collins,” and my blood was up. Blanchard, the villain, had ruined the husband of my cousin Elizabeth — “Bettie,” as we familiarly called her, was one of the sweetest women I ever saw,—my most cherished cousin, of whom I was proud in every sense,—and the griefs which bore her down, in the ruin of her husband, pierced my heart, and I resolved to be avenged, if possible, upon this villain Blanchard, who had worked her husband’s downfall, and robbed him of every dollar. The husband had been at one time in the enjoyment of a lucrative trade, as a merchant of woollen goods, and had a fine standing with some of the best manufacturers in Rhode Island and elsewhere, and was on what seemed the sure road to a great fortune, when he unluckily fell into the clutches of Blanchard. Indeed, I too had suffered by Blanchard, to no small extent for me, having been indorser of some of my cousin’s paper, which went to protest, and which I had at last to pay. I do not allow myself to cherish enmity against my fellow-man. The detective soon learns to not be surprised at finding the man of the best reputation frequently involved in crime, and he comes to look with charity upon the faults, and even the crimes, of his fellow-men. Comparatively, men do not, in society, differ at heart so greatly as the uninitiated might imagine. But few men are proof against the wiles of

“circumstances.” No man can really tell what he would have done, or would not have done, had he been placed in these or those circumstances by which some other man has been led on to a career of crime, or to some dark deed. But I could never wholly suppress my longing for vengeance whenever Blanchard came into my mind, and on this occasion my temper was quite as intense as I could well control.

I turned when Payne and his friend had passed a proper distance on, and taking the sidewalk, followed them near to a house in Houston Street, which I saw them enter. I did not know the character of the house then, but was satisfied that it was a “hell” of some sort—a genteel one, for its outward appearances indicated as much; but I made myself acquainted with the probable character of the place before I returned to my boarding-house that night.

The next day Payne was not up till two o’clock in the afternoon, and I feigned illness enough to delay me at home that day, in order to make further study of him. When he came into the general parlor, I saw that there was a peculiar haggardness about his countenance, not such as over-drinking or ordinary mere dissipation gives. To me it was a tell-tale haggardness, and I felt I knew full well that he was on the last plank, and just about to be submerged beneath the waves of irretrievable ruin. So he looked, so he felt, too, of course. I entered into conversation with him, drew out some of his experiences in New York, and gradually led him on to the disclosure of some pretty serious confessions. At last he told me that he had run a wild career, but had made up his mind to reform, and find some useful employment. “But,” said he, “I’ve promised myself to do so a thousand times before, and have failed as often to make a beginning.”

“I know your case,” said I. “I’ve known a great many such. There’s always ground for hope, I assure you, so long as the desire to escape exists. But each case has its peculiarities. One case is never an exact representation of another, of course.”

We carried on the conversation for a while longer, till we came to a point where Mr. Payne, in giving me a description of some friends whom he had made since he came to New York, spoke of his friend “Collins” as a very “brilliant, dashing fellow,” who was a nondescript for him, otherwise, in character. I was, of course, more interested at this point than at any other, which must have been manifest at once to young Payne. He told me of some of his and Collins’ adventures. In all these I could clearly see the workings of the villain Blanchard, and I was several times on the point of uttering my full views to Mr. Payne, but I thought it an hour too early in our acquaintance to do so, and so delayed to do it.

Another day came. I was out all day away from the house, but not idle, for I managed to learn more of “Collins” or Blanchard’s proceedings for the last few months before, of his places of resort, etc.; but when I returned at evening, before Mr. Payne’s usual hour for going abroad, I found him in great dejection; and having opportunity to converse with him, approached him, and was soon invited to his room. It was not long before our conversation took such shape that I was able to breathe to him some of my suspicions. Payne listened with surprise; but I drew Blanchard’s modes of proceeding, his general character, etc., so accurately, that Payne became more than half convinced that “Collins” and Blanchard were one. In short, I got down into Payne’s heart before our conversation concluded that evening. It was necessary for him to go forth again that night, or, I think, he would have held me in his room all night, reciting his

adventures and running over his mistakes. I saw that he was utterly ruined, beyond all hope, unless I could manage to get out of the hands of his captors a large number of collaterals, which he had for the space of three months past left in their hands, as security for promissory notes to a large amount which he had given them, and to pay which he was looking to the sale of some property in Kentucky, and for some dividends on stock in a manufactory in Cincinnati, which, however, was itself pledged. These were debts of honor, as he, up to that moment, had regarded them, and must be paid, no matter if paying them more than bankrupted him. Indeed, he had played and lost far beyond the sum of his actual property, so desperate had he become in the matter; and the gamblers, his elegant friends, were willing to show their gentlemanly confidence in him, and trusted him more,—the well-bred scoundrels. But I pointed out to him the fact that he had (which was evident enough to me) been victimized by villains who never play an honorable game of hazard; indeed, who never play a game of hazard at all, since all is in their hands and under their perfect control. When he came to see this, and reflect upon each step, and saw how the thing had been done, and also that, as his memory, now excited, called all vividly before him, when he had lost heavily with the gang they had, without doubt, in every instance played a false game, the dark shades deepened in his face.

Mr. Payne became at first very serious, but at the close of our conversation I saw that his mind had become quite calm: he was very deliberate. The muscles about his mouth assumed a firmer expression. I could easily see that he was meditating some way of revenge on the scoundrels who would have gladly ruined him in all respects, as they had already done in some. Finally he said to me, “You seem to understand all about these villains. How came you to know them so well? Have you ever been victimized by them?”

“No, not victimized; but I came to learn these characters through my profession. Professional men are compelled to know more or less of them, and it has been my lot to be greatly interested; in fact, somewhat involved in a matter in which Blanchard, or, as you know him, ‘Collins,’ was the principal actor; and I’ll say to you here, that it would give me the keenest pleasure to give you any aid in my power as against that wretch.”

Mr. Payne’s time for going out that evening had come, and I left the house at the same time with him, hoping that he would do something, or that something would occur on my walk with him, to further my projects. But we parted that evening with nothing done. But next day Payne came to me at my office in Wall Street about twelve o’clock. He was uneasy, and did not wish to sit down to talk, and asked me if I would walk with him. We sallied out up to Broadway, and along it; got to Courtland Street, when he said, “Somehow I feel a great inclination to go down to the water. Suppose we go over in the ferry to Jersey City.”

Of course I was ready to humor him, for I well knew the agitated state of his mind; and down to the dock and over the river we went, and arriving in Jersey City, Payne having no special point of destination, we wandered the streets and talked. He told me his whole story over, as of the night before, and added to it many touching incidents. “Help me now, I beg you, if you can.” I asked him if this gang dealt in counterfeit money at all, and found that he knew nothing about it. This was a relief, in one sense, to me, and a surprise in another; and I thought, “Perhaps I may be mistaken after all.” But we planned, as the result of our day’s conversation, that, as a first step, he should take “Collins” that evening into the “Atlantic Beer Garden,” in the Bowery, to take

beer (of which he said Collins was very fond, not drinking anything else intoxicating), to treat him, and I should come in carelessly, but unexpectedly, upon him. And he should present me at once to “Collins” as Mr. “Wilson,” the name I had assumed on my legal card, but which I did not explain the reason for at that time to Mr. Payne.

That night I came upon the twain at the place proposed, where they were sitting at a table over pots of beer, and smoking, when I, darting in, called for a pot of beer; and seeing Payne, pushed up to his table, extending my hand. “Ah, here, eh? Mr. Payne; very glad to meet you?” “Take a seat with us,” said he. “This is my friend, Mr. Collins, Mr. Wilson.”

I looked into “Collins” eyes; gave him a wink, as much as to say, “Mr. Payne thinks my name is Wilson; you know better; keep still.” Of course “Collins” was as anxious that I should not call him Blanchard as I was that he should address me as Wilson. “And,” he said, “Mr. Wilson—I am glad to make your acquaintance, Mr. Wilson. Let’s fill up, Mr. Payne,” for their mugs were dry, “and invite Mr. Wilson to take what he likes with us.” “Thank you, gentlemen, but here comes my beer. I’ll wait for you to fill up again.” I put “Collins” quite at ease, and we drank, and told stories, and sang a song or two. So well did Collins and I disguise the fact that we had ever heard of each other that Payne, as he afterwards told me, made up his mind soon that I had been utterly mistaken in the man.

We had nearly finished our cups at the table, when Payne, spying a southern friend coming into the saloon, with a number of others, asked to be excused for a moment, and left us.

“The devil!” said Blanchard; “how did you come to know Payne?”

“O, he is one of the acquaintances one picks up in the city, he hardly knows how.”

“Yes, yes; but as I happened, by the mistake of a partial acquaintance, to be introduced to him as ‘Collins,’ I have let it go so. I hope you’ll be as careful the rest of the evening to not call me Blanchard, as you have.”

“O, we are in the same boat, ‘Collins,’ you see! He calls me ‘Wilson,’ and I let it go at that.”

“But,” said Blanchard, “I must say, ‘Wilson,’ you are very complaisant, and I hardly thought you would speak to me at all.”

“O, well, Blanchard, we grow wiser as we grow older. We don’t see things, generally, in the same light we used to.”

“True,” said he; “and I am glad to find you not unkindly disposed,”—and I doubt not that he was, for he well knew how I loved my cousin, and that I knew he was the cause of her husband’s downfall, and her greatest griefs.

“What are you doing these days?” asked B.

“I’ve turned lawyer,” said I, “and have an office on Wall Street. Here’s my card. Don’t like my profession over much, and so find time to speculate more or less.” (Blanchard had never known that I had become a detective, fortunately. Though living in the same city we had been, practically, as wide apart as the poles.)

“What are *you* doing?” I asked in turn.

“Well, I am speculating, too, a little,” said he, with a half-inquiring wink in his eyes.

“I see you misinterpret me a little,” said I. “Not so much either,” I continued, “for I speculate in Wall Street some, and elsewhere some.”

“The fact is,” said ‘Collins,’ “I am getting to be very much attracted by sundry speculations, though I lose money as fast as I make it. I was on my way to-night on a little speculation. Perhaps you’d like to go along.” In paying for my beer I had purposely made display of all the money I had,—quite a pile,—and doubtless Collins’ gambling avarice was a little whetted, or he might not have invited me along.

Payne returned to us; and Collins telling him that he had invited me to accompany them “for a little fun tonight,” we sallied forth, and were not long in crossing Broadway, and finding ourselves in a suite of rooms, which, as soon as I set my eyes on them, I understood as one of the worst of the second-class of gambling hells in the city.

Roulette, dice, and the latter loaded, and every other appurtenance of such a place, as well as cards and a faro bank, were there. The whole air of the place, the men at play and about the boards, were assurance to me that I was on the right track of the counterfeiter; but I felt at once that the game I had to play was a desperate one; that these fellows were the worst sort of cutthroats.

We both played a little, Payne and I; but Collins played not at all that night, except the part of a particular “friend” to Payne in various ways. I lost considerable, Payne lost more, and his note was received on demand; but still with the understanding that he was not to be asked to cash it till his Kentucky remittance came on. It was a part of my plan to play and lose a little that night, to furnish occasion to come again; and when we parted to go home, the “gentleman” of the establishment, to whom Collins had introduced me as Wilson, said, “Mr. Wilson, now you’ve learned the way, drop in occasionally. Poor luck don’t run always.”

“Ha, ha!” said I, “gentlemen,” taking the matter good-humoredly. “I’m not feeling very well to-night; but you can expect me around some time to break your bank when I am in good spirits.”

“That’s right, come along any time. We like bold players, if they do clean us out sometimes; nothing like spirit,”—and we bowed ourselves out.

It was arranged by me and Payne, as we betook ourselves home, that he should continue to go there and play a little every night till his money came; that then he should offer to play all his pile against his indebtedness to the concern, his notes of hand, and all the collaterals he had

pledged. I knew the gamblers would catch at that, and count him a bigger fool than ever. I was to be there, and play too. Payne continued to visit the place, played less and less each night, and at last declared to them that he would not be in again till his money came. "And," said he "I'm going to take Wilson in, as my partner—he has a pile." Meanwhile I reported to my old chief, and had all things arranged for a descent upon the place if I should be able to work the matter up to the proper point by the time Payne's money came. The money came. Payne's fifteen thousand dollars, in good money, I knew would be a temptation to the villains, although his indebtedness to them had increased to over twenty-five thousand dollars, and we went to the den; I having my force of policemen in training, and ready for my call. It was a wet night. There was quite a number of visitors in early in the evening; but they straggled home, as the rain increased, some not having umbrellas with them, and for various reasons, and we were left, eventually, almost alone with the regular keepers of the place; and Payne was asked if his money had come? "Yes, gentlemen, fifteen thousand dollars of it; all I shall get for more than a year to come, and I'm going to hazard it all against my notes and the collaterals you hold."

"All right," said the leading genius of the place. "All right," said "Collins," aloud: but he stepped up to Payne, and kindly whispered in his ear, "But would you do it? I wouldn't hazard it now. Play half for half, say; for if you should lose all, you know—well, do as you like."

"Yes, I will do as I like—I'll play all." There was a smile of fiendish triumph then on Collins' face, which Payne did not see, but I did, and I couldn't help feeling a pulse of vengeance beating in my heart as I contemplated how soon the scoundrel's face might change its expression. Payne's money was put up; one game was to decide the whole. His notes were put up on the table, by the other side, to the amount of fifteen thousand dollars.

"But where are the rest?" said he. "No trifling; and where are the collaterals?" and there was bickering about the understanding, and I was appealed to. "I did not wish to interfere," I said; but that "I understood it was to be a clean sweep. But as there was a misunderstanding, perhaps 'twasn't best to play at all to-night; wait for another occasion, and Payne take his money and go."

The gamblers saw it was of no use to pretend further misunderstanding, and that Payne's money was likely to be more readily "gobbled up" than if they were to wait, and consented to put all on the table, though as the collaterals were packed away and locked in the safe, they proposed to put money up instead—ten thousand dollars.

"No, no," said Payne, "I want to see the whole on the table. I want to look at 'em once more. There's my Harry Clay watch" (a very fine five hundred dollar watch); "I want to look her in the face again—play better, I tell you, gentlemen, in her smiles;" and so he went on. I was at the instant disposed to favor him; but on second thought I suspected that that money would be mostly, if not wholly counterfeit, and I saw if it was, how I would trap the scoundrels, and save Payne's fifteen thousand too, as well as get up his notes and all his collaterals; and I interposed. "No need, Mr. Payne, of troubling to get out the collaterals. The money at hand's just as good, and if you win you can buy back the collaterals."

“Yes, yes, that’s it,” said Collins, eager now to see the foolish Payne slaughtered. The money was produced. “Here, count it if you please, Mr. Wilson,” said Payne, as the first bundle of a thousand dollars was thrown upon the table.

I caught it up carelessly, and ran it over rapidly. “One thousand,” said I, all right; and so with the next, and the next, till the fifth had been counted, when I said, “Mr. Payne, there’s no use counting the rest; I guarantee it all right.” It is not easy to deceive me with a counterfeit bill at any time; but that night, alert and watchful, I could have sworn that more than nine tenths of the money I counted was counterfeit. The play came. I declined to join as “partner” of Payne, as he had called me. He played tremblingly. I began to fear that he would not hold out till the proper time for me to expect my men; but he did, and just as the game was about concluding, disastrously to him, there came a ring at the door-bell. The servant hurried down, and the excited gamblers bade Payne “play, play.” Up came a dandy-looking chap, apparently intoxicated. He was my man. He blundered around, took a little wine from the side-board, and said maudlin things; staggered on to the board, made the gamblers angry, one of whom drew a light cane over him. I interposed, took his part, said that they should excuse him; if he was a fool, he was drunk; should be pardoned if he asked pardon; and, taking advantage of the black boy’s absence in the exterior room, said, “I’ll show him down, and get him out of the way.” “Wilson, you are always *so* polite and obliging,” said Blanchard, facetiously, as I led out the stranger, who was very loath to go, and needed some encouragement.

“Just so,” said I. “Don’t you think I’d make an excellent waiter here?”

“Yes, we must employ you. What do you want by the month?”

“Talk about that when I come up,” said I.

We went down the stairs—two flights—but to return. I opened the door, the “stranger” gave the signal he had arranged with the rest of the men, and eight stalwart, well-armed policemen were in the house, and silently on their way up those stairs; the stranger fighting me, and pulling me along up, making some noise, and more drunk than ever. “Our friend won’t go out,” said I; “insists on staying.”

“D—n him! *I’ll put* him out,” said one. “No you won’t,” said the stranger, drawing a pistol, and calling out to our followers, who were just at our heels, “Come on, boys!” and there was a rush into that room which startled every gambler to his feet, only to be throttled by a policeman. There were six of the villains, including Collins, and the policemen had no little trouble to silence them. The drunken stranger immediately seized all the money on the table, notes and all, and ordered the gamblers manacled on the spot, which was done. Payne then told them his story (as I narrated before only in short), asked to have his collaterals delivered up. In short, the gamblers were ready for anything. The counterfeit money was in our hands, and the evidence complete. Payne got all his notes back, which were at once put in the grate and burned, and all his collaterals, his fifteen thousand dollars of money, and was satisfied. But I was not; and a compromise was made that on the delivering up of all the counterfeit money they had about them the gang should give up the rooms and disperse, all but two of them, one of whom was my man Blanchard, and another desperate scamp whom the police wanted to answer to a charge of

burglary in Philadelphia. The safe was searched; all its counterfeit money given up, and all the collaterals, with the names of parties who had pledged them for gambling debts, were delivered into the police's hands. The rest were then allowed to escape; but Blanchard, and Johnson (the Philadelphia burglar), were ironed and taken to the toms.

“Blanchard” was tried before the United States Court in due time, but under another name, which, unfortunately for his respectable relatives, became known as his proper one before the trial came on, and was sent for five years to Sing Sing.

Johnson was, after due process of requisition by the governor of Pennsylvania, on the governor of New York, taken to Philadelphia, tried, and sent up for ten years.

In a short time after the breaking up of this gang proceedings were taken to find the parties to whom the collaterals, other than Payne's, belonged, in order to deliver them up. It took a good while to find and surely identify them; and this delivery led to information regarding various matters which needed the keenest detectives to unravel. I was overrun with business, in consequence, for months after, incidents of which I may think best to relate in other papers.

Mr. Payne was the happiest of men over his good fortune, and insisted on deeding to me some very valuable real estate in Kentucky, besides giving me more money than I had the face to ask. He became my fast friend, as he remains to-day.

But there was a happier mortal than he in those days, in New York, when all came to be disclosed, and that was the beautiful, noble old lady, his mother, Mrs. Payne. She could hardly contain herself in her joy, when Lewellyn made clean confession of all his misdeeds, all his great sins, and pledged her that he would not only never play cards again for a cent, not even for fun—a pledge which he sacredly keeps to this day. His experiences were too great, his sufferings had been too severe, to be forgotten; and Mr. Payne, in due course of time, went into legitimate business, in which he has proven himself a very capable man.

Good old Mrs. Payne lived happily with her reformed son for about four years and a half, and at last died of a fever, which followed a cold contracted one wet day, on Mount Washington, New Hampshire, where she and her son were passing a summer vacation, and her remains were taken back to Kentucky. I had the honor of accompanying Mr. Payne on his mournful journey there.

McWatters, George. *Knots Untied; or, Ways and By-Ways in the Hidden Lives of American Detectives*. Hartford: J. B. Burr, 1871.