

\$1,250,000, Or The Private Mark

Money-Getting As Related To Crime — A Very Strange History — The Most Wondrous Pursuit Of A Man By His Enemy Which Ever (Probably) Was Known In The History Of The World — James William Hubert Rogers And “Ned” Hague, Two Englishmen — “Damon And Pythias” In Early Life — A Change Comes — A Departed And Considerate Uncle Described, Once A Protege Of The Emperor Of Austria — Oliver Cromwell Hague, A Rich India Merchant — A Marvelous Search For A Lost Man — A Man Found And Identified By Numerous Friends As The One In Question — Plotting And Counter-Plotting — A Shrewd Vermont “Lawyer” Makes A Thousand Pounds Sterling—The Indefatigable Rogers Comes To America In His Search — Lost In The Vastness Of The Country—We Meet, And Depart For St. Louis — Troubles, And An Enlightening Dream—A Wicked Lawyer — The Right To Repent— A Spirited Colloquy With The Lawyer —An Enemy Found And Set To Work—The Grasping Lawyer Outwitted— The Lost Found In A Terrible Condition — A Little Private Fun Over The Lawyer’s Discomfiture — A Sharp Examination And Cross-Examination— Lawyer Outwitted, And Loses Five Hundred Dollars — Mr. Rogers Departs With The “ Lost One,” Bound For England — The Sudden Drowning Of The Latter At Sea — The Cherished Victory Of Years Vanishes—Out, With A Laugh.

THE “battle of life” has so many phases, and my own experiences have run in so many channels, and my knowledge of human curiosity is so extensive, and my desire in these papers to gratify the same so great, that I am at a loss, as I turn over my diaries and notes of other histories of the past years to-day, what to select from my notes next; for, whatever disposition my publishers may make of this in the arrangement of these chapters, this is really one of the very last of them all in the order of writing, and one of the very last in point of fact, which I shall ever enlarge from my notes into current narrative. But my notes are so full, that my friends, after I am gone, should they desire to put before the world a supplement of these experiences, will have but little trouble — that, simply, of telling the tales in their own style. But it strikes me that the reader must feel, as he reads, something of the interest I felt as an actor, in part, in the scenes which it narrates.

Of the “battle of life,” then, no phase can well be of so much interest to the great majority as that of money-getting. This absorbs everything, and is, in fact, the great source of nine tenths, at least, of all human crimes. But “money-getting,” as well as wealth itself, has its “different sides,” — its positive and comparative, I might almost say, negative characteristics. Wealth, in one locality, would be comparative poverty in another; that is, the amount of money which constitutes a man “wealthy” in a far off country town, would be sneered at as a very trifle in this great metropolis, New York; would hardly be enough to support the possessor for a year among the moderate liveries of the city, with their luxury and indulgences, which cost so much more than those of the country.

I said that money-getting is comparative also. It is, in this sense. The envious wrestler for the smiles of the “Money God” has not only his positive work to do, but often feels it as

much his duty to defeat others as to win himself; as the driver of the winning horse at the races often succeeds only by defeating his competitor's horse — “breaking him up,” for example, by some more or less honorable mode — any mode which the rules of the race do not absolutely forbid. So in this case I am about to recite — the most wonderful hunt, perhaps, and the most exciting and long-continued, and replete with ludicrous, solemn, dangerous, as well as joyful incidents, which ever characterized any cause, and was carried on literally around the globe, inspired and sustained by the desire of a man, a rich man, not to profit by it himself, but to defeat his enemy and keep him poor, that he might not become a competitor with him, as a man of wealth, for the smiles, adulations, and sycophancies of the peasant, and small farming and mercantile population of a little town in England.

The name of this strange man was James William Hubert Rogers, which he always wrote out in full, with true English pride, even when subscribing the shortest letter, as well as a five thousand pound promissory note. He reminded me in this of sundry gentlemen I have met, of our sister city, Boston, who, proud of the “Athens of America,” take greatest pains in entering their full names — though frequently the initial of the first, and the middle name, if any, in full, in the dandaical style — in hotel registers. “J. Adams Bromfield,” “H. Gray Otis Ticknor,” with BOSTON “displayed” (as the printers would say) over as much space as possible, as if it would surely reflect credit on the person himself.

James William Hubert Rogers was a peculiar man. I have thought that his history, even the comparatively little I know of it, would be one of the most interesting biographies ever published; but I do not intend to give more of it here than will be necessary to make this narrative connected and clear. Mr. Rogers had been brought up in moderate circumstances, educated to mercantile life in a small way, in a country place in Yorkshire. Prior to being apprenticed, at seventeen years of age, to a merchant, he had constantly attended school from about the age of six years; and whether at the “infant school,” or the private classical school of some pretensions, had been as constantly attended by a bosom friend, just “one day and one hour older” than he, as their respective mothers were wont to tell them. This person's name was “Ned” Hague; (whether he, too, had a list of other cumbrous names I never asked, but I presume he had, and I wonder such a burden does not spoil the disposition of children — perhaps it does.) James and Ned played together, romped, studied, and all that together; as children, were inseparable, in short. The one, “Ned,” was described to me as a very handsome fellow, and very athletic. James was equally athletic, but was less handsome in face; in fact, though his features were all well enough formed, and there was a hardy look about his face, yet there was a something in his expression of countenance which was at times very repulsive to me; a dogged, unfeeling look, not simply spiteful, but somehow of unwearying, cool-blooded vengeance; yet he was always kind and generous to me throughout our acquaintance. “Ned” came into the world under a little better auspices than James, that is, his parents were a little “better off,” and lived in a house which they owned, a little more stylish than that which James's parents occupied, but rented. However, James's father was a better business man than Ned's father, and earned a larger salary. So things were balanced; but James confessed to me that he used, on account of the better house, to be a

particle envious of Ned's condition in their childhood, but this was all the ill-feeling he ever had towards him in those days. But James went to mercantile life at seventeen; and a year after, "Ned" having quite an aptitude for writing, connected himself with a small provincial newspaper. The young men continued their intimacy, which was carried into their love affairs as well as into everything else, until they arrived at the age of twenty-three, when there came an "interruption" of their mutual affection, which finally degenerated into mutual dislike, and upon the part of James, whom we will now call Mr. Rogers, into unforgiving, implacable hate. What was the precise cause of this I was never informed in detail, but I learned the general facts from a friend of Mr. Rogers's, whom I met in England some two years after I first made his acquaintance. From all I could gather, there was really no sensible reason for the great enmity which came to exist between these men. But this is not a part of the story, properly, and I must pass it over.

Years went on, and Mr. Rogers and Mr. Hague continued to live near each other. The latter abandoned his steady connection with the newspapers, though he continued to write for the press more or less, and went into business with an old apothecary, and finally succeeded to his whole business at his death. He was more fortunate, for years, than was Mr. Rogers, who, however, managed to live comfortably, and to add considerably to his possessions. During these years, and after their quarrel commenced, the dislike of these men grew into a sort of silent hatred. They had but little to say of each other, but what they did say was crispy with bitterness. Those who remembered their early-life's affection, were astonished that anything could have wrought such an enmity; for both of these men were considered honorable and upright in their dealings with their fellow-men, and were genial citizens, of democratic tastes and associations.

But finally Mr. Rogers became suddenly very rich, through a legacy left him by a quaint old uncle, the brother of his mother, who, in Mr. Rogers's boyhood, had taken a fancy to him. The uncle was a deformed man, — a little in the order of Richard Third, — and this might be said of him, mentally as well as physically. He was competent to have filled the British throne with more credit than many a monarch who has sitten upon it. But Henry De Noyelles (for that was the uncle's name — sprung from an old Norman stock) had curious deformities of face, which excited great ridicule among the heartless. His eyes could not be said to be "crossed" exactly, but something worse, and his nose was oddly shaped, besides being very flexible, and it flapped about as if there was "no bone in it," as the people used to say of it.

Mr. De Noyelles was naturally a proud-spirited man, who felt that, intellectually, he was no man's inferior by nature, and his deformities stung him to the quick. He was a great mechanic naturally, very ingenious and executive; had a rare force for acquiring languages and the sciences; and, driven from society by his deformity and his wounded pride, he occupied his hours out of business with constant reading, and his requirements in literature became large. He devoted himself considerably in his youth to mathematical studies, and had a great proclivity to civil engineering. He inherited a moderate fortune from his father, and after becoming of age, and feeling that he was ridiculed among his fellow-townsmen, became morose, and learned to hate all English people, and finally betook himself to the Continent, and soon, in some way, attracted the attention of the

Emperor of Austria, who gave him place at last as a Superintendent of Engineers, in which capacity his inventive genius served him, and in the course of a few years he became one of the most able operators in Europe, and, enjoying an interest in many valuable contracts, acquired, at last, a vast fortune. Ill-looking that he was, there were elegant women enough ready to marry him for his position and money. But he remained a bachelor, partly through fear of women, whom he looked upon as lacking in conscience, and none of whom, he felt, could really love such a looking creature as he. But he had another reason, which would have decided him, if nothing else had done so. It was this — and when I was told of it, I confess that I felt more respect for the good in humanity than I had ever done before. He said he was unfit for marriage, since he was unfit to be a father; that it were very possible that a child of his would inherit his deformities, especially that of the nose, and that the wealth of all Europe would not induce him to be instrumental in inflicting life upon a being who might suffer as he had done. Indeed, he held peculiar notions upon this subject in general; and taking Malthus's notions in regard to a possible over-peopling of the globe, and the direful consequences thereof, as a basis to write upon, he dilated his views into a small book, which, however, both the Catholic and Protestant doctors of Austria so seriously condemned as heretical, that he came near losing his official position under the government.

But I digress again. Mr. De Noyelles, or as he was called in Austria, for his great learning, Dr. De Noyelles, fell in love with young Rogers, because the boy exhibited an affection for him, and never seemed to be conscious of his uncle's deformities, but treated him as affectionately and obediently as he did his own handsome mother, and noble-looking, symmetrical father, or anybody else. Mr. Rogers had paid his uncle, at the latter's invitation and expense, a short annual visit, for some years, and when Dr. De Noyelles came to die, it was found that he had privately visited England, where the great bulk of his funds was invested, the year before, and had made his will largely in favor of Mr. Rogers, after contributing to sundry charities in a large and generous way, and providing moderately for his sister's (Mr. Rogers's mother) other children.

So Mr. Rogers got to be extremely wealthy; and though it was said of him, by his old neighbors in general, that his great fortune did not seem to make him vain as a man, or render him less approachable than before, it was evident that he prized his good luck most of all for the contrast which it established between him — now the man of abundant leisure and great wealth — and Mr. Hague, still the plodding, though well-to-do, apothecary. In various ways he made, or tried to make, Mr. Hague feel this, but it would seem that the latter gentleman was very imperturbable, and took things quite coolly.

Mr. Rogers set up another apothecary in business, at a point near Mr. Hague's shop, and provided him with a large shop, with brilliant appointments and a large stock, and he caused him to sell cheaper than Mr. Hague could afford to. Indeed, it was said that Mr. Rogers lost some two thousand pounds the first year, in thus going into competition with Mr. Hague; but he persevered. In England it is not an easy thing to draw away customers from an old house where the people can rely upon honest dealings; but Mr. Rogers was bent on doing Mr. Hague all the harm he could. Of course he did not let the public know that he was at the bottom of the matter.

The apothecary, whom he provided with means, came from Liverpool, and Mr. Rogers was at first supposed to have given him only his custom and countenance in trade. But Mr. Hague suspected him from the first; and as things developed, and he became sure of Mr. Rogers's financial support of his rival, Mr. Hague whispered the matter to his own friends, who came, to some extent, to his aid. So the competition became spirited at last, and Mr. Hague found it difficult to contend with his competitor.

Little by little big business frittered away, and he was barely able to meet his current expenses. Mr. Rogers evidently gloated over the downfall of his once bosom friend, now hated enemy; but he *said* never a word against him, seldom spoke of him at all. Meanwhile Mr. Rogers surrounded himself with all luxuries; bought a splendid old mansion and its magnificent grounds, which he greatly improved, and though not a gaudy man, was vain enough to consult a herald office, and look up a coat of arms for his coach panels and the trappings of his horses' harnesses. He took a great delight in riding after his splendid horses along by the comfortable, but comparatively humble, house of Mr. Hague, and in arraying his wife and children in an attire too costly, not only for Mr. Hague, but any of his neighbors to attempt to imitate. Mr. Rogers enjoyed this kind of mean spite and low pride for considerable time, but there came a turn in affairs.

Thirty years before these days of which I was last speaking, Oliver Hague, or rather Oliver Cromwell Hague, — for he was named after the great Pretender, by his mother, the staunchest of all Protestants, and who was very proud of her ancestors' service under the great Oliver,— a then quite thriving London merchant, went out to India to extend his business there, with the purpose of returning in a year or so; but he remained there. His brother Edward, after whom *our* Mr. Hague was named, conducted the London end of the business, and the house grew rich very fast.

Mr. Edward was older than Oliver, and was at the time of Oliver's departure a married man, and the father of some five or six children. Meanwhile all these children but two died, and one of the others had proved a wild, graceless fellow, and at the early age of sixteen, after sundry dissipations, had fled to America. But little had been heard from him by his family for years, and when Mr. Oliver made his will, he had provided for this boy, — now man, if he could be found, — otherwise, what would come to him (his name was Frederic), was to go to Edward,— the "Ned" of our story, — mostly to himself, and one part in trust for his younger brother and his sisters, for he was the eldest child of the family. Mr. Oliver Hague set aside a certain sum, which was to be used in the search for Frederic, if necessary. All reasonable means of finding him were to be exhausted, and then, upon satisfactory report to the court, — for the search was directed to be made by persons "of good and faithful disposition," as the will read, — that its directions had been followed unavailingly, then the property was to be decreed to be Edward's, whether Frederic were really living or not, Edward to provide him an expressed and generous annuity in case he should thereafter come to light. The will provided, too, that Frederic, if found, should give Edward a like annuity.

Great search was made for Frederic. I should say here that the senior Edward and his son William had gone out to India to visit Oliver, and had died there before Oliver's death,

and that all the business of the house of Oliver C. Hague & Brother had been really that of Oliver alone, his brother having been contented with a simple commission, in their private contract, expecting to succeed, at some time, to the whole business when Oliver should die, as he expected, years before him, as he was many years older than he. Numerous advertisements were inserted in the papers of the United States and Canada, and every possible means taken to find Frederic, even to sending a man to Australia, where, by one account, it was said that Frederic had gone years before.

A messenger was sent to the United States, too, with instruction to visit the various cities, and to advertise as largely as possible, engage detective policemen when practical, etc. And the messenger did his work thoroughly as he went on. Months rolled away, and the weekly communications of the messenger added no light to the whereabouts, or the existence even, of Frederic Hague — they only gave assurance of where he was *not*.

Meanwhile Mr. Edward Hague kept on in the even tenor of his way, doubtless hoping that Frederic would not be found, or, perhaps, wishing that he had “gone to heaven long before.” But every day Mr. Edward’s neighbors grew more and more gratulatory of him on the probable fortune coming to him, and his good luck of the annuity at least, but of which he would obtain nothing till it was sure that Frederic was found, or could not be discovered. Mr. Edward, I was told, showed excellent sense during those days, and did not allow himself to be moved to vanity in his hopes. As time went on he became, of course, more certain in his opinion that Frederic would not be found.

But there was one man who took a fierce interest in this business. He became nervous over it. His enmity towards many increased; in fact, he began to hate the whole world, that it did not deliver up Frederic Hague to life and light; and that man was James Williams Hubert Rogers. He could not bear the thought that his old enemy, “Ned” Hague, should come into the possession of a fortune reputed, at that time, to be vastly larger than his own, and which proved, on the settlement of the estate, more than twice as large as his, being, in minimum, two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. There were certain contingent interests which swelled it a good deal. A million and a quarter of dollars constituted no mean estate, and Mr. Rogers could not bear to be thrown into the shade by it, in the hands of one he hated, too. So he interested himself in the matter, opening private correspondence with sundry persons he knew in the United States, and well he got come up with for his pains.

There was residing, somewhere in Vermont, a lawyer, who had interested himself on behalf of persons residing in America, and entitled to property in chancery, etc., in England. To his knowledge came the fact of this search for Frederic Hague, and Mr. Rogers’s interest in it, and he managed, through some London friend of his, to have himself named to Mr. Rogers as just the man to hunt up Frederic. “If anybody *can* find him *he* can,” so said the London friend. Mr. Rogers opened correspondence with the Vermont lawyer, and the result was that, in the course of a few months, the lawyer succeeded in finding Mr. Frederic Hague,— “a sickly man,” as he described him,— who, having been through all sorts of vicissitudes in life, had settled down in an obscure town

in upper New York State. This man, the lawyer found, answered to all the descriptions of Mr. Hague which had been elicited from the correspondence of Mr. Rogers.

It was agreed that the greatest efforts should be made to restore this man to health, and send him over to England to claim his property. Mr. Rogers was more than delighted. He sent to the lawyer to have a detailed statement made by Mr. Frederic Hague, and sworn to, as to what he remembered of his life in England, and what experiences he had undergone since, down to the hour; all of which was duly made out, and forwarded to Mr. Rogers, who was perfectly satisfied with the same, and indulged himself with secretly gloating over the terrible defeat which was to come to Mr. Edward Hague, who, by this time, was confident that Frederic would never be found; and he enjoined secrecy on the Vermont lawyer; he wanted all the glory himself; and he wished to have Frederic there in England, and present him to the commissioners who had the matter in hand, before it was known that he had been found.

In his statement, Frederic had disclosed that he had married rather late in life, and had a small family dependent upon him; and as he got better, and was about ready to depart for England, the lawyer wrote to Mr. Rogers, representing the dependent circumstances of Mr. Hague's family, and asking a loan for him of two thousand pounds, and asking also for a hundred pounds for his own services. Mr. Rogers thought this moderate enough, and forwarded to the lawyer, through the British consulate in New York, a check for two thousand one hundred pounds, with the form of a note for Frederic to sign to cover the two thousand pounds; and the lawyer and Mr. Hague appeared duly at the consulate, and received the money.

It afterwards appeared that this Mr. Frederic received only one thousand dollars of the sum, besides his expenses to and from England. The lawyer made sure of the rest. The man went over, and played his part as Frederic Hague for a time, quite successfully, and it is possible that he might have succeeded, for he found several old people who identified him as the Frederic, and were ready to swear to their memory of him. But an old American friend and former schoolmate of the man chanced to come across him when in company with some persons interested in the estate he was after,—one of whom chanced to be Edward Hague, who was himself deceived, — and the American gentleman rushed up to him, overjoyed to meet him on foreign soil, exclaiming, "Why, Dick Clapp, how *do* you do? What on earth can have brought you over here?"

Clapp was for an instant taken aback, but rallied, denied his name, and declared that the American gentleman was mistaken, etc.; and this he did, unhappily for him, in such an ungracious way, as made his old friend angry.

"Dick Clapp!" said he, "I hope you are not over here on business you are ashamed of. I swear you *are* Dick Clapp, and I went to school with you and your brother James, and your sisters Mary, Adeline, and Isabella, in the good old town of Putney. Now, if you are here up to anything you ought to be ashamed of, you should have given me the wink when you denied yourself, and not acted so like a d — d hog."

There was no mistaking the American's conviction that he knew Mr. Clapp, and Mr. Edward Hague called the man aside, and told him what this Mr. Frederic Hague had come over for. The American was indignant, and offered to prove Clapp's identity at his own expense; said he would send over to America for witnesses to come out, and identify him, and then went and told Clapp he had better get out of the country as soon as he could, or he would expose him through the press of the United States. Clapp defied him; but it was too evident to all present that he was an impostor, and it is supposed that when Mr. Rogers came to hear of the fact, he felt as if the Yankee lawyer had been too shrewd for him.

It afterwards appeared that Rogers had not been carrying on the correspondence with *the* lawyer he supposed to be his correspondent. Some other lawyer had assumed the real lawyer's name, and given it an initial letter of a middle name. The London friend had not discovered or thought of this, and was himself imposed upon (he who commended the Yankee lawyer to Mr. Rogers). So when Mr. Rogers afterwards instituted proceedings against a certain Vermont lawyer to recover the amount of the swindle, he found he had been dealing with some other man — an “unknown” and unknowable.

Clapp got out of England at his early convenience, and the search of Frederic was about being given up; but during the excitement in regard to Clapp, an account of what was going on reached an old playmate of Frederic's, living some twenty miles away from where Mr. Edward Hague lived, and this man remembered that one time, when he and Edward, as boys of about eight years of age, were playing in the loft of an old carriage-house, Edward, jumping from a beam, had got his foot entangled in something, and fell slantingly upon the teeth of a kind of hatchel, — and terribly lacerated the flesh on the back portion of his left shoulder, tearing the flesh, in fact, nearly off from the scapular bone. This wound, he said, left great scars. He had, in after years, frequently been bathing with Frederic, and knew that he must bear these scars for life. He therefore wrote to Mr. Edward Hague that Frederic could be identified by that “private mark,” and Mr. Edward gave publicity to the fact, and quite a number of people then called the facts to mind.

It so happened that in the correspondence Mr. Rogers had heard of a man in Missouri who said he was the Frederic Hague, and gave a pretty good account of matters before he left England, and had told Mr. Rogers's correspondent, a lawyer, of this very incident of the injury in the carriage-house, and stated that he had borne the scars of it all his life since. This had been communicated to Rogers, but the lawyer had added, in his letter, that, on the whole, he did not believe the man's story; that he had, as near as he could learn, been a gambler: had lived much, too, among the Indians; was a drunkard, and much broken down, and quite incoherent in his memory. Still he sometimes thought that he was, after all, the Frederic Hague so much wanted, but he could not conscientiously advise Mr. Rogers to spend any money on him.

When the fact of Frederic's “private mark” was called to mind, Rogers again took heart, and searched his papers for the lawyer's letters, but they could not be found. He fancied to himself that perhaps some secret emissary of Edward Hague had been rifling his papers, and he got into torrents of anger over it, till at last he swore he would trust no

man, and would go out to America himself to find Frederic Hague, “and restore him to his lawful rights.” His friends remonstrated, pointed him to the perils of the sea, the sickly character of a great portion of our Western States, etc.; but the hardy old man, for he was getting beyond middle age now, would hear to none of them. He made his will, left his affairs in good hands, and out to America he came, and it was three days after his arrival that I made his acquaintance. He could remember neither the Missouri lawyer’s name nor that of his post office, and it was suggested to Mr. Rogers by an English friend, whom he found residing in New York, and who had been here long enough to learn that there is a difference between the vast extent of the United States and the confined area of England, that he had better employ a man to “pilot” him about the country, especially in the great West: and it chanced that, through an acquaintance of mine, to whom Mr. Rogers’s want was made known, I was hit upon as the proper individual to consult and Mr. Rogers and his friend called on me, and made known his business, giving me a good part of this story as I have detailed it. Other parts I, of course, obtained from others, for he did not, at first, let me into the secret of his present hatred of, and his former love for, Edward Hague. He was here as a sort of messenger of justice, as he would have me believe,— and as I did for a long time believe,—making pure self-sacrifices in the cause of right, to restore a man to his rightful possessions, and “see justice triumph.”

We soon got ready, and started off for St. Louis, I having concluded that the best thing to be done was to hunt up that lawyer, — Mr. Rogers’s correspondent, — and to go on to the ground, and find out the names of as many lawyers as I could, trusting to Mr. Rogers’s memory to recollect the name if he should hear it; and we were in due time the guests of the Planter’s Hotel, and went at once to prosecuting our inquiries. I proceeded to find the assistant clerk of the Supreme Court, — an old man, who had, since the territorial days of Missouri, done service as a court clerk, and knew almost everybody of any note in the State.

He gave us the names of all the lawyers in St. Louis, and in the adjoining counties, — Jefferson, St. Charles, Pike, Crawford, Franklin, Warren, etc., lists of which he chanced to have; and then named to us all the lawyers in other parts of the State whom he had chanced to know; but Mr. Rogers recognized none of them as his correspondent, and after a day spent in this sort of search, we returned to our hotel, and eventually sought our beds.

Finally, I was aroused out of a two hours’ slumber by a servant, who told me that Mr. Rogers wanted me to get up, and come at once to his room.

“Has he a fit?” I asked, fearful that the old fellow had got desponding over our ill success, and worked himself into a fever, or something else.

“No; I reckon he hain’t, massa,” responded the darkey, opening the largest mouth I ever saw, and displaying a set of teeth formidable enough to frighten a man just awakened from sleep, “for he’s up poundin’ ‘roun’; but I do say, massa, his face is juf as red as if he’d had a fit, or two uv ‘em to th’ same time, massa, — ugh! ugh!”

I pulled on my pants and coat, and proceeded to Mr. Rogers's room.

"My good fellow," said he, "I couldn't let you sleep any longer. That infernal name has come to my mind. My correspondent lived in Warren County somewhere, — Pinckney, I think is the name of his place, and I am sure the old clerk read his name to us to-day, but I could not recall it then."

I asked him why "in the name of St. George," he didn't take his pencil and make a note of this, and let me sleep till morning, reminding him that we could not do anything till daylight. With English stupidity, he said he didn't think so far as that, and didn't suppose I was asleep, as he was not! And back to bed I went, without even thanking him for thus disturbing me. In the morning we again repaired to the old clerk, and found at last the name of Mr. Rogers's correspondent. He was a very shrewd lawyer, so said the old clerk, and I "wormed out" of him that the fellow was rather "tricky." At this time I knew nothing of Mr. Rogers's affair with the Vermont lawyer. He was rather ashamed of that, and I never heard a word about it till my visit to England subsequently. It was arranged that I go alone out to Pinckney, about twenty-five miles west, or north-west of St. Louis, and I departed — found the lawyer; and I would like to give his full name, for reasons which will suggest themselves to the reader as he goes on, but the man is still living, I hear; has since been a member of Congress (from another State than Missouri, however), and is believed to be a very honest, upright man in his present neighborhood; and, perhaps, he has properly won the esteem he enjoys. I believe in the right and privilege of scoundrels to repent, if they are so inclined (and here let me interpolate, that, in my opinion, if society at large would recognize and *respect* such right and privilege, many a villain, who now preys upon communities, would lead a respectable life; and nine tenths of the poor fallen women, now "hedged in" (as that piquant and humanitarian author, Miss Elizabeth Phelps, would express it), by the unforgiving spirit of the times, and confined to the low estate into which they are fallen, would abandon their unhappy mode of life, and become true and pure women again; and many of them, too, become the very best, noblest, and greatest women of the age).

Well, I found the lawyer; and such a man I never encountered before. Affable, "good-looking" in the general, but with a something so devilish about him — something indefinable — I have never met another like him, save within the last year from this writing, when I was closeted at the gubernatorial rooms with the governor of a certain Southern State, — the keenest mere politician, perhaps, now on the stage. I made my errand known at once to the lawyer, that is, I told him that I came as the emissary of his English correspondent, Mr. Rogers, and at the same time handed him a short note of introduction, which Mr. Rogers had prepared just before I started. This was a mistake; but I never suspected that I should find such a man to deal with. As he opened the note, he turned his back upon me, but a little too late, evidently, to hide an expression of triumph on his face. I instantly suspected foul play, and as instantly put myself into the mood to receive it.

"Ah," my friend Rogers has got as far as St. Louis, on his scent?" said he, turning about to me. "What does he expect?"

“The note of introduction tells you — does it not?”

“No, not exactly; Mr. Campbell “ (the name I had assumed, for the reader knows, who has followed these pages, that I had been in St. Louis before, and there was a good reason now why I should not appear upon the register of the hotel by any of my old’ names); but tell me what sort of a man is this Mr. Rogers. I have never seen him. I can only judge by his writing.”

“Well, what do you judge by his writing?” I asked, resolved to tell him as little as need be.

“I hardly know, in fact. Is he a pretty resolute man — man of sanguinary temperament?”

“I am not technically acquainted with temperaments — couldn’t tell what you would call his.”

“Well, describe him; is he large or small, red or black-haired; old or young; hearty or ill?”

“You’ve seen a good many Englishmen in your life, I suppose,” I replied.

“O, yes, sir; a great many.”

“Well, to my eye, he’s pretty much like all the rest.”

“That’s not very definite, sir; but I suppose you don’t study these matters of temperament, etc., as much as we lawyers do. It is a part of our business. We must know our clients in order to serve them well.”

“But, in this case, I don’t see why it is necessary to know your client at all. No matter who he is; all he wants is to find Mr. Frederic Hague, and I have come to you to learn where he is, with instructions from Mr. Rogers to pay you for the trouble you have been at, and for whatever further assistance you may render him,” I replied.

“Yes, yes; well—I should — should rather like to see Mr. Rogers first,” drawlingly responded he; and I felt that I was in the hands of a practiced scoundrel, as well as a practicing lawyer, and I resolved to bring matters to a focus at once; and so I inquired, “Well, sir, what is your bill for past services, and what will you demand for pointing out Mr. Hague? Is he here with you?”

“No, he’s not in this quarter now. I mean he lives in another State,” returned he, hurriedly; for that word “now” had escaped his lips undesignedly.

“Well, I reckon I shall have to charge Mr. Rogers five hundred dollars for the trouble I’ve been at. It has cost a great deal of anxiety.”

“Why, sir, if I understand Mr. Rogers aright, your correspondence with him was to the extent of only a half dozen letters at most; and you are not sure at that, it would seem, from what he says you wrote him, that you have found the veritable Frederic Hague. Suppose you divide up your bill — charge some reasonable sum for the services you have rendered, and let the rest of the five hundred remain contingent on your presenting to Mr. Rogers the real Mr. Hague?” said I. This seemed to open up to him a new vision of things.

“Well, I will,” said he; “give me two hundred and fifty dollars down, and I will wait for the rest till I produce Mr. Hague.”

“Are these your best terms?”

“Yes; I must be paid for my services, and Mr. Rogers can afford to pay, for he’ll make Hague pay the bill finally, of course.”

“I will report to Mr. Rogers,” said I, “and will let you hear from me in a few days at most,” I said. “Good day, sir.”

He bade me a very pleasant day, hoped I’d have a pleasant ride back to St. Louis, and that our acquaintance, “so pleasantly inaugurated” (to use his own words), would continue, etc., in a most fascinating way, as if he felt that his little scheme for putting five hundred new dollars in his pocket was already a confirmed success.

But I had no notion at all that Mr. Rogers would suffer himself to be bled to the tune of two hundred and fifty dollars on a decided uncertainty, and two hundred and fifty more, too, on another uncertainty; and as that little word “now” had not escaped my notice, I thought best to institute some inquiries in the village about this Mr. Hague before I left. So, returning to the little hotel, where I stopped, I inquired about the lawyer in the place and vicinity, and soon found out who among them was this lawyer’s greatest foe, — the thing I wished to learn; and finding that he lived in an adjoining town, about five miles away, I procured a horse and rode over there to consult him. He was quite the opposite of the other in personal appearance. Mr. John Howe (now dead, I hear with regret, for he was one of those men who ought to live always) was a frank, open-hearted, sturdy man, of fine intellect, scorning to do mean things, and was, by nature, the uncompromising foe of such men as the one I had just left. So I found him, and the more I talked with him the less homely he grew to my eye; for I confess he *was* called in the vernacular of that quarter, “the homeliest man, by a heap, around these yere diggins.” But he was good, and that’s “better than riches.”

I told him my story. He wasn’t at all surprised at the lawyer’s exactions, and told me that he doubted anybody’s being about there by the name of Hague. Said that he had seen a man in the lawyer’s office some three months before that would answer the description I gave of Hague, as to age, etc., but said I would find he was known by some other name; that the lawyer had doubtless picked him up on speculation, having probably seen one of the advertisements, and that Hague himself was in his power, and had probably been

induced to change his name. He said the lawyer had a plantation in Arkansas, and occasionally went down to New Orleans. So that it would not be strange if he had encountered "Hague" somewhere, and brought him home, and made a sort of servant of him, while he was carrying on the correspondence. The man he had in his office was a wreck, and in his poverty easily controllable.

Mr. Howe agreed to make all inquiry possible into the matter at once, and I went back to the village; and making sundry acquaintances, I inquired after new comers, and eventually found that there was occasionally in the village, and sometimes with the lawyer, a fellow called John Dinsmore, who, on a drunken occasion, two months or so before, had boasted that he was the ward of an English lord, and had large estates in England, and that he was going back, by and by, with Squire (the lawyer) to get his property. This was considered a drunken man's idle boast, and would have been forgotten but for my inquiry. I found out what persons had been most seen with this John, — for I was sure he was the man I wanted to find — and left some money in my informant's hands to encourage him in "the field of research," and instructed him to find out in as adroit a way as he could, where John could be found; and back I went to St. Louis, to see Mr. Rogers. I told him of my visit to the lawyer, and its results, without stating at first what I had subsequently done.

As I expected, Mr. Rogers was very wroth; but finally said, he supposed he would have to pay the five hundred dollars; he had come too far to lose his game now, he said. Whereupon I told him I hoped we should be able to avoid the exaction, and "take in" the lawyer — play a sharp game on him; and told him what further I had learned. The old man brightened up, and said he'd rather spend two hundred pounds, in his own way, than be swindled out of a hundred: and told me to "go ahead," and take my own time for a while. I went back to Warren County, and got scent of my man. A boon companion of his had told my "spy" that John had gone off to the lawyer's plantation in Arkansas, where he was a sort of supernumerary overseer; but where the plantation lay, nobody knew within nearer than fifty miles; at least my man could get no definite information. So I instructed my friend how to act, and sent him over to the lawyer's with a statement that a cousin of his (my friend) had got it into his head to buy out a plantation somewhere in Arkansas; that he had a plenty of money, and wanted a good plantation, and would stock it well; that he was coming down from Lewis County in a few days, and wanted him to go on "prospecting" with him. Could the lawyer give him any idea of where such a plantation could be found?

The bait took. The lawyer was not only ready to have good neighbors to his plantation, but was ready to sell his own for "a fair price." Of course this led to the naming of the place, and the time it would take to go there. The plantation was in the vicinity of Gascony, Jefferson County, on the Arkansas River, as my friend reported, on his return from the lawyer's, and I felt easy. I rode over to see Squire Howe, and told him of the situation of things. Meanwhile he had been active, and had learned that John Dinsmore was the name of the man he had seen in the lawyer's, and that he had gone, to the plantation in Arkansas. So I felt quite assured that we were on the right track. That night I went back to the village — called next day on the lawyer, and told him that Mr. Rogers

would not pay him over, a hundred dollars to produce Mr. Hague; to which he replied, in a very gruff and decided way,—

“He can’t have him short of my first figures; no, he shall not have him now for less than a thousand dollars.”

“Well,” said I, “that ends the matter. Mr. Rogers will return to England. I think, without his man, rather than pay you over a hundred dollars. It won’t be any loss to him, except what he has already been at, if he don’t find him; but,” said I, “I guess we’ll leave it this way. You may hear from him again or you may not. He will not remain in this country over a month longer, at most.”

“O, he won’t go away without his man,” said he, with a soft, oily voice; “he’ll think better of it, and pay the money, before he returns.”

“Perhaps so,” said I; and I bade him a pleasant good day. We shook hands quite cordially, and I got off to St. Louis as soon as possible, and the next day in the afternoon found us on board the steamer “Pike, No. 9,”—a Cincinnati and New Orleans boat, which had been run out of line up to St. Louis, on an extra occasion, — on our way to Napoleon, Arkansas, where we arrived duly, with no noticeable incidents on board (save one, and that is the key to another narrative I may write out for this work), “always excepting,” of course, “as worthy of note,” the gambling, tipping, bowie-knife exercises, and so forth, by which steamboating on the Mississippi used, more than in later years, to be rendered “interesting and fascinating;” and the next day the shaky steamboat “Little Rock” bore us on our way up the Arkansas.

We arrived safely at Gascony, and were not many hours in finding our way to the plantation, and in the presence of Frederic Hague, alias John Dinsmore. Mr. Rogers was a most delighted man, when, by sundry questions, he assured himself of the identity of the man; but he could not be satisfied till Hague pulled off his flannel wrapper (for he wore no shirt, poor fellow, and everybody who can wears flannels, in that region, in summer as well as winter). The dirty old wrapper tore into pieces in the operation; and I dare say that Hague had not removed it before in two months. But there was the “private mark.” There was no disputing that; and Mr. Rogers ordered, on the evening of that day, the richest dinner ever cooked, I presume, at a country hotel in that State. He did not forswear wines, such as they were, and both he and Hague put me quite to shame with the amount of liquor they drank. But I must hasten with my story.

We learned from Hague that the Missouri lawyer had picked him up at Napoleon one day, learned something of his history, called to mind an advertisement he had seen, took him on to Missouri, as he was at that time on his way home, and had a written contract with him for one half of his estate, if he should recover it. He had kept him there and on the plantation in Arkansas, and sometimes wrote him, always encouragingly, about the matter of the estate. Hague had got it into his head that that lawyer was the only authorized person to treat with, and he was jubilant when he found himself out of his clutches.

We were to return to St. Louis, in any event, to see after some manufacturing matters in which Mr. Rogers had taken some interest, and I felt, and so did Hague, that it would be well enough to have a little fun with the lawyer. So, after we arrived at St. Louis, I went out to Warren County to see him again, and told him I was ready to give him the two hundred and fifty dollars down, and two hundred and fifty more on his producing the identical Frederic Hague, if he would put himself under bonds of five hundred dollars, or put the money in the hands of the village landlord, to be paid over to me in case his Frederic Hague should, under my cross-examination, fail to assert himself to be the true Frederic Hague. He assented, being positively sure of his five hundred dollars, as he thought, and I drew up to his table and scratched off a short agreement, taking care to word it as indicated above. He was to produce Hague within a week and a half or two weeks, and I was to wait there or in St. Louis.

The next day Hague came straggling along, playing drunk, and told the lawyer a proper story; and he told Hague his time was come — that an Englishman would be there to see him, and take him home, to restore to him his estate, and he wanted Hague to make some alteration in their contract. Hague consented, but when he got the paper in his hands he feigned crazy, had a fit, a proper one, and tore and in part ate up the contract, and felt “relieved,” as he said afterwards.

The lawyer caused me to be sent for. Luckily, as he thought, I had not left the village. When I reached his office he took me aside very privately, and told me the “bird” had dropped down upon him, all of a sudden, in a very providential way, and that now he would show me Mr. Hague, when I was ready to deposit, and he would do the same. The landlord was sent for, preliminaries arranged, and Frederic Hague called in. The lawyer questioned him before me, and he answered all clearly, even to having a “private mark on his shoulder,” etc.

“He’s your witness now,” said the lawyer, triumphantly, probably feeling the five hundred dollars itching in his palms. And I commenced, with confidence of success, for Hague and I had practiced “our parts,” and “rehearsed “ to my satisfaction.

“You say your name is ‘Frederic Hague’?”

“Yes, sir.”

“How do you know?”

“That’s what they call me.”

“Ah! well, do they call you anything else?”

“Yes, sir.”

“What?”

“John Dinsmore.”

“Then John Dinsmore is as much your name as Frederic Hague?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Who calls you John Dinsmore?”

“Everybody here and in Arkansas.”

“Who first called you John Dinsmore?”

“Mr. —” (the lawyer); “he gave ‘me the name — said that was my proper name; and I’ve used it ever since.”

“Who gave you the name Frederic Hague?”

“I don’t know.”

“Were you ever in England, sir? Come, now, sir, tell the truth, and no lying.”

“Seems as though I was.”

“Seems so? What makes it seem so?”

“Why, I suppose it is because Mr. —” (the lawyer), “has told me so so often.”

“Has he told you about one Frederic Hague, a man by the same name you sometimes have borne?”

“Yes, sir.”

“A great deal?”

“Yes, sir.”

“And you have come to think that you are that Frederic Hague? Now, sir, tell me if you dare assert that you are the veritable Frederic Hague, the heir to the estate of one Oliver Hague, about which he has told you? Don’t let us have anything but the truth now, sir.”

“No, sir; I don’t say that I dare assert it.”

“Did you ever have any notice that you were entitled to any property at all in England, till Mr. told you so?”

“No, sir.”

“Well, do you now think you are entitled?”

“I don’t know anything about it — “

“O, the fool,” here broke in the lawyer; “he’s stultified, or he’s lied to me. Here, ‘John,’ show this man the scars on your shoulder, and tell him the story you told me about it.”

“What story?”

“Why the story about the fall in the carriage house.”

“Why, I never told you any such story — did I? I told you I had a dream once; I suppose that is what you mean,” said John, stripping himself meanwhile.

“There!” exclaimed the lawyer, “there are unmistakable marks; and they tell, of themselves, how they got there — cut with hatchel teeth.”

And John, alias Frederic, roared out, with a well-feigned laugh, “ Yes, hatchel teeth, in Bill Currier’s coach-dog’s mouth, down to Mobile I”

The lawyer looked confounded — and he put “John” through a severe re-examination; all to no avail, except to force John into some rather bold species of story-telling.

The landlord decided the case in my favor, according to the contract between the lawyer and me, and gave me the five hundred dollars on our return to his hotel. I got Frederic Hague to St. Louis as soon as I could, and we proceeded to New York. I let my friend there into the joke by letter, and told him to make the most of the story for a month, when I would return the lawyer all his money, except what it had cost me — the matter of forty-five dollars — to play the joke on him, saying that he ought to be willing to pay for his fun; and at the end of a month, after the story had gone far and near, how the lawyer had set his bait to fish out an estate for a client, and had lost five hundred dollars himself, the money was duly returned to him through draft on a St. Louis bank; .and that was not the last I heard of him. But I cannot stop to tell the full story here.

Mr. Frederic Hague, neatly dressed, and apparently in excellent health, though by no means strong,— his nervous system having been shattered by his rough western life, — and Mr. Rogers, after a trip to Montreal and Boston, took steamer from New York for Liverpool.

Mr. Rogers was one of the most victorious, haughty-looking men I ever saw, as he stepped on to the steamer’s deck, with Frederic Hague by his side. Up to within one or two of my last interviews with him, he always vaunted himself as struggling in the cause of justice only; but at last he allowed some remarks to escape him about Mr. Edward Hague, and how chopfallen he would feel when Frederic should appear on the tapis. And my curiosity being awakened, I sounded him considerably, the rest I learned in England afterwards.

Mr. Rogers was very liberal with me, paid me very handsomely, and treated me most hospitably when I visited him at home. But the poor man was destined to lose his almost won, but foolish, triumph. Four days out, Frederic, meeting on board a couple of men whom he had known, the one in New Orleans, and the other at Louisville, Kentucky, he had served in the care of horses, — these men were cousins, it appeared, — must needs tell them of his vast estates in prospect, which he was just going over to claim. These men were high livers, and took along their own wines and liquors, and of these, with them, Mr. Hague partook very liberally, got ravingly intoxicated, and howling about the deck one night, while something of a breeze was blowing; and the ship ploughing a little, he was toppled over the rail, as she suddenly lurched, into the unquiet waters. Every effort was made to save him. The steam was shut off, the life-boats lowered, and search made for a whole hour, without avail. The darkness was too great to permit him to be easily found, if he had not drowned at once.

Of course, Mr. Rogers went home a wiser, and perhaps better man. He had, unfortunately for his pride, written a triumphant letter home, stating that he had found the veritable Frederic, and that he should bring him by the next, or the second steamer thereafter, and would then teach Edward Hague good manners. But it was difficult to learn anything from him, I was told, after he arrived at home.

The terms of the will were such, that the property went to Mr. Edward Hague; and when I met him, he was living in most comfortable style, but without any attempt at vain show. He was satisfied with his possessions, and was not a little amused when I told him of Mr. Rogers's personal exertions in America "in the cause of justice and truth;" but said he was sorry Frederic had not lived to enjoy something of life, and that he had no doubt Frederic would have been kind to him. In fact, I found Mr. Edward Hague one of the most lovable of men, and I confess that I think the property in his hands was made more useful to a larger number than it probably would have been in Frederic's hands, for he had learned some bad habits in America, among which was the inveterate one of gambling. I never think of Mr. Rogers without laughing; and so, with a laugh, I leave him now, and the fortune, and the "private mark."

George S. McWaters, *Detectives Of Europe And America, Or Life In The Secret Service: A Selection Of Celebrated Cases*. Hartford: Burr, 1877 (848 pages).