

A Detective's Stories

Told On The Quarter-Deck Of A Cat-Boat

Two Kinds Of Law—A Smart Forger And A Young Lawyer—A Little Experience With Tramps—A Recorder's Client

NEW-LONDON, Oct. 20.—One of the best-known detectives in this country was sitting on the port side of a cat-boat, in a down-East bay, the other day, and I was sitting on the starboard. We had nothing to do but smoke cigars and tell stories, for a bronzed old Yankee fisherman was at the helm. It is hard to get a detective started at telling stories, but start him once and he runs on like a town pump. These are some of his stories:

I.

“You know Charley De Young, of San Francisco, who lately fired Kalloch into the Mayoralty? He was in New-York not long ago and he wanted to see the sights. We had met in San Francisco, so he came to me and asked me to show him around. He was particularly anxious to see some of the curiosities of the Twenty-ninth Precinct, so I took him up to that station-house and introduced him to Capt. Williams. There was a copy of “Coke on Evidence” on the desk in the Captain's private room, and the Captain's distinguished club lay alongside of it. Capt. Williams received us kindly, and at once offered to show us anything in his precinct that we wanted to see.

“You have all the law here, Captain,” said De Young, pointing to the law-book and the club.

“Yes,” replied Capt. Williams, “that's ‘Coke on Evidence,’ and that's my club, and there's more law in six inches of that club than there is in the whole book.”

II.

“One of the most expert forgers that ever appeared in this country,” the detective continued, “was caught in Massachusetts lately, convicted, and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment. He had not been in prison more than three months, when, to the astonishment of the jailer, a pardon came for him, in due form, all signed by the Governor, and properly countersigned. There was nothing to be done but liberate the prisoner, and he walked out. But he had not been gone long before the jailer discovered that the prisoner had managed, through his friends to get an blank pardon from the Governor's office, had filled it out himself, and cleverly forged the signatures, and had then passed it out to his friends again, to be mailed to the jailer in proper shape. The clever forger had not got far enough away to escape, and he was arrested and sent back to prison. He employed a young New-York lawyer, whose name is familiar through the fame of his father, and told him the story. “They have no right to lock you up again,” said the lawyer, “having once liberated you, without legally proving that the pardon is a forgery. I can get you out, but it will cost you \$1,500.” “Go ahead,” said the forger. The lawyer went ahead, gained his case, and liberated the prisoner. “I am going out West immediately,” said the forger, as soon as he was free. “My father, who is a wealthy man, owns a thirty thousand-dollar farm in Kansas, and he has just sent me this letter, begging me to come home and lead an honest life, and telling me to draw on him for \$2,000 to pay my bills. I am his only son, and I have almost broken his heart; but this life is coming to an end; I shall settle down on my father's farm and be an honest man,” and he showed the

letter, a pathetic production from an afflicted parent. "I shall need \$1,000 of the money to pay some little bills," continued the forger, "and here is a draft I have made on my father for the \$2,000. If you can give me a check for \$1,000, I will give you the draft, and will send you the other \$500 as soon as I get home."

The lawyer read the letter carefully, drew a check for \$1,000 and handed it to his client, and received the draft for \$2,000. About 10 days after the draft was deposited in a bank for collection, it came back with the message that the man on whom it was drawn had been dead for eight years, and wasn't worth a cent when he was alive.

III.

"My father is a Scotchman," the detective went on, as he lit another cigar, "and you know the Scotch are very clannish. One day when he was away, and I was sitting alone in his private office, I heard some one in the outer office inquiring for Mr.——. 'Do you want to see the old gentleman or the young gentleman?' I heard one of the clerks ask the visitor. He said it did not make any difference which, and they showed him in to me. He was a little red-whiskered and red-haired Scotchman, and looked as if he hadn't brushed his clothes or had a good meal for two week, at least.

"'Oh! Mr.——,' he began in good Scotch, 'I'm glad to see you. I knew your father well—knew him in Glasgow.' As my father came from Glasgow, I thought maybe he was telling the truth; so I asked him some questions, and he got everything straight. He said he had been at work in Patterson, but the strikes had nearly driven him to starvation, and he had come to his old friend, my father, to ask for help. I gave him \$10 out of the old gentleman's money and he went off thankful.' The next time I wrote to my father I told him about this man and he wrote back that he didn't remember the name, but that if he was a Scotchman he guessed it was all right. It wasn't more than a week after this when another Scotchman came in and inquired for me. He was shown in, and he had no more than got into the room than he began to show as much joy as if he had found his long-lost brother.

"'I'm delighted to see you again,' said he, with as good a Scotch accent as the other, 'I used to know you in Glasgow, and I'm really glad to meet you again.'"

"As I was born in this country, and never was in Glasgow in my life," the detective continued, "I began to take a little drop, as the boys say, so I said that I must have been very young, then."

"'Oh, that you were,' said he, smiling, 'a wee bit of a lad, not more than so high,' (measuring with his hands.) 'Many's the time I've carried you about in my arms.'

"I handed him a dollar," said the detective, "and told him I had sent all the money to the bank, but that if he would drop in next day, I would do something for my old Scottish comrade. As soon as he was out of the door, I sent one of the detectives to follow him. The detective came back and reported that he had followed the man around several corners, and that at last he was joined by a short Scotchman, with red hair and whiskers, who asked him, 'How much did you get?' And was greatly disappointed when he learned that it was only \$1. I immediately recognized my first visitor by the description, and when the other man called again the next morning, I helped him gently down the office steps."

IV.

“There was a family of burglars in New-York, who were always getting into trouble, and always got Recorder—to help them out. The Recorder, who is an able lawyer, must have made thousands of dollars out of them, for he always charged very able fees. But he hasn't defended any of that family for some years, and very few people know the reason; but I'll tell you why. The family were getting pretty short of funds, and one of the brothers was caught in a burglary. They went to the Recorder to get him out, but he said he would not touch the case for less than \$2,000, to be paid as soon as the brother was out. They tried to beat down the price, but the Recorder was immovable. ‘Then we'll pay him the money,’ said one of the other brothers, ‘and much good may it do him.’ The Recorder argued the case, got the prisoner off scot free, and was paid the \$2,000 in United States bonds, which he put in a little satchel, and started for home into the cars, for the case was tried in a little town not far from New-York. One of the other brothers followed him into the cars and took the bonds out of the satchel very neatly, and before dark they were back in the hands of their old owners. The Recorder hasn't done anything for this family since. He and the burglars are out.

“There was a case—” the detective was beginning, but just then the cat-boat ran aground, and the detective and I had to get out into the mud and push her off.

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