

*The Frenchman:
Or, The Bills of Exchange*

INTRODUCTION

IN laying before the reading public the career of the most skillful and dangerous forger that ever operated in this, or, I may truthfully say, any other country, it will be necessary to say a few words, by way of preface.

During the years 1855 and 1856, the commercial communities of both the United States and the Canadas were startled by a series of forgeries on foreign bills of exchange, drawn on English bankers, so well executed, and so skillfully manipulated, as to leave not the slightest clue by which to trace the forgers. At this time, the Atlantic Cable was not in existence, and it took at least a month to send for advice and receive instructions from England.

Foreign bills of exchange, I will here state, for the information of those who do not know their nature, are bills drawn by one merchant or banker upon another, with whom he has an account. They are similar to drafts, with the exception that they are generally made out in two or three parts; so that, in case one part be lost, the others can be used. A "two-part" bill consists of an "original" and a "duplicate." A "three-part" bill consists of an original and two duplicates, which are called, respectively, "first," "second," and "third."

For example: suppose Henry Brown, of New York, wishes to send fifty pounds sterling to John Smith, of London. In order to do so, Brown goes to his banker, and buys a three-part bill of exchange for fifty pounds, payable to his own order. The bill is issued to him in three parts, nearly exactly alike. He cuts off the first part, endorses it payable to Smith, and sends it by the first steamer. By the next steamer, he sends the second part, similarly endorsed; but he retains the third part until he shall hear from Smith. If Smith receives the first part, he gets it cashed; if, by any accident, however, the first part should be lost, Smith receives the second part in due time, and gets *that* cashed. The bank, on which the bill is drawn, invariably cashes *whichever part is first presented*.

If Brown, after buying the bill, decides not to send it to Smith, he can sell it to almost any banker in this country, who deals in foreign exchange. Brown, then, endorses *all three parts*, and gives them to the purchaser of the bill. If any part be missing, he must satisfactorily account for its absence.

The illustrations opposite page 253 of this book, will show the ordinary form of foreign bills of exchange.

CHAPTER I.

JULES IMBERT was born on the Island of Martinique, one of the French West Indies, in the year 1801. His father was a Frenchman of liberal education and polished manners, who, when quite a young man, was offered a clerkship in one of the leading business houses of Martinique. He accepted the offer, immediately proceeded to the island, and entered upon his duties. After

serving his employers faithfully for several years, he was given a partnership; and, soon afterward, he married a beautiful Creole, a daughter of one of the partners. They had several children, but all of them, with the exception of Jules, the youngest, were drowned, while making a pleasure trip on Babycom Bay.

Jules, like most only sons, was petted by his mother, and humored by his father. By the time he was five or six years old, he displayed remarkable precocity, and his fond mother was never tired of telling anecdotes of his smart doings and witty sayings. Up to the age of sixteen, he remained at home, receiving his education from tutors; but his father now determined to send him to Paris for a few years, not alone to complete his studies, but to see whether a knowledge of the world would not cure him of the insufferable self-conceit which he had acquired; for he displayed this fault in so offensive a manner, as to make him disliked by all with whom he came in contact.

He really had qualifications which placed him far above the average youth of his age; and any studies which his teachers might set before him, he mastered, seemingly, with little difficulty. He was a beautiful penman, and a good composer; was well posted in mathematics, and was a superior linguist. He was able to converse in German, English, and Italian, with as much fluency as in French, and with scarcely any foreign accent. But the great draw back to all his accomplishments was the fact, that he knew too well his possession of them. He had been so idolized at home, that he had come to consider himself a genius, and his attempts to carry out the character, made him simply ridiculous.

At the age of sixteen, Jules was sent to Paris. For a time, his self-conceit was completely forgotten in the presence of the splendors of that luxurious capital; but, it being made known that young Imbert had a large allowance at his disposal, he was soon surrounded by a crowd of sycophants and flatterers; then, as the wonders around him began to lose their charm, by familiarity, his old malady returned with redoubled force. He remained in Paris — devoting very little time to study, but squandering large sums of money — about ten years, when he was recalled to Martinique, by the sudden death of his father and mother. Jules really loved his parents, and the blow was a severe one, rendered more so by the fact, that the news reached him while in the midst of his dissipations. He immediately started for Martinique; but, as he was obliged to go in a sailing vessel — steamships not being in general use at that time — he did not arrive at the island until nearly six months after his parents' death.

An examination into the affairs of his father disclosed the fact, that he had died insolvent; hence, Jules was forced to seek employment, to maintain himself. An old friend of his father gave him a minor clerkship; and, although he was a total stranger to any kind of labor, he was soon hard at work. Three years of steady application to business, took every particle of conceit out of him, and left him an agreeable, self-reliant gentleman. He rose from place to place, until he became cashier of the house. This was a position of great trust, since the house he was with — there being no banks on the island — performed all the duties usually left to those institutions. It was, doubtless, while here, that Imbert made his thorough acquaintance with bills of exchange.

After being with the house for five years, he threw up his position, purchased a few small coasting vessels with the money he had saved, and established a paying traffic with the neighboring islands. His business increased rapidly; and, by the time he had reached his fiftieth

year, he was a wealthy man. At this period of his life, Imbert was an example of the highest type of a successful West India merchant. He had purchased, for his home, a "Pen," situated a few miles from town. This is the name which the inhabitants of Martinique so modestly give to their beautiful country-seats, in the interior of the island. It was beautifully located, on a fertile ridge overlooking the sea, and was surrounded by orange groves, banana plantations, and gardens, filled with the choicest tropical fruits and plants. Sparkling fountains made soft murmurs to lull the ear, and works of art everywhere met the eye. The cooling "trade-wind," as it swept through the long, rambling house, came laden with delicious perfume; and every luxury, which taste could suggest and wealth procure, was there. It was well worthy of being called a little earthly paradise.

Imbert was married, but had no children. His wife did not exactly love him, nor he, her; yet they got along very comfortably together. He devoted the greater part of the day to managing his business, and spent his evenings in pleasant social reunions with his neighbors. Yet, with all his luxuries, Imbert was not happy.

Among his friends, was an Italian merchant, who, though very wealthy, was still troubled with an insatiable craving for gold. As Imbert had no financial dealings with him, they always were on the best of terms. This Italian had a very beautiful daughter, and it seemed as if the only person who could draw him away from his avaricious habits was his child, Beatrice, whose mother had died at her birth. Imbert, being childless, had prevailed on the Italian to let his wife take charge of Beatrice; and so she had grown up, partly in Imbert's care, partly in her father's, until she was now eighteen years old.

Beatrice, though she had arrived at an age when, according to custom, she should have been calm, sedate, and reserved, was just the opposite; in reality, she was one of the noisiest little romps to be found. She was so light and airy in her movements that her father called her his "dancing fairy." She was not the cold, powerful, commanding beauty, who breaks down the door to one's heart, but the lovely little sprite, who smuggles herself in through the key-hole, and has possession before one knows it. Her head was small and elegant in shape, and her features were all perfectly regular. Her eyes were dark blue, almost black, and their expression varied with every emotion of her mind; though the laughing expression predominated. Her hair was literally a "crowning beauty," and, when loosened from its fastenings, it fell almost to her feet, covering her with a golden shower. Her complexion was a pale olive, with an almost imperceptible tinge of red in her cheeks. A plump, graceful figure, small hands and feet, and a sweet Italian voice, complete an imperfect out line sketch of this beautiful girl.

From her earliest childhood, Beatrice had dearly loved "Uncle Jules," as she used to call Imbert. His vivacity, the charm of his manner, and his seemingly inexhaustible fund of knowledge, had charmed her as a child, and caused her to look up to him as something superior, when she became a woman. Imbert, of course, loved Beatrice: at first, it was with the love of a parent for a darling child; but, as she grew to be a beautiful woman, he found his love had turned into a passion. Hence, he could not endure the thought of her marriage, and the separation from him that would ensue; and this it was, that interfered with his happiness.

At this time, he was doing a very prosperous business, the secret of his success being, that, for many years, he had been engaged in smuggling to a large extent; this, of course, made his profits enormous. His plans were so well-laid and so quietly carried out, that he had not the slightest fear of detection. But crime will show itself. The old Italian merchant had, by means of his intimacy with Imbert, obtained a clue to the latter's operations; and, with a baseness only to be found in sordid natures, he informed on his friend, for the sake of the informer's reward. Imbert was arrested, and thrown into prison; there he remained a week, and was then brought to trial. He was found guilty of smuggling; and, as his operations had been enormous, extending over many years, it was adjudged that his estate should be confiscated to cover the amount of the penalty. On being discharged from custody, he found himself once more a free man, but almost a beggar. To Beatrice, the blow was a cruel one, and she was almost heart-broken at the thought that her father had been the cause of all Imbert's troubles.

While in prison, Imbert had formed a plan to revenge himself on the Italian, and, also, to gratify his greatest passion — his love for Beatrice. Proceeding to his "Pen," which he found in possession of the government police, he passed into the drawing-room, where he discovered Beatrice consoling his wife. Without being seen by the latter, he managed to attract Beatrice's attention, and beckoned her to follow him. Imbert conducted her to a secluded part of the grounds, where, taking her in his arms, he poured out his tale of love, and begged her to fly with him; great as was his pecuniary loss, he said, if she would only become his companion in flight, he would be more than repaid. The influence he had acquired over her was irresistible, and she finally consented. He directed her to go home, seize what money she could, and meet him, at four o'clock the next morning, just outside her father's grounds.

At the appointed time, she was there, and Imbert, in again clasping her to his heart, had the pleasure of gratifying, at the same moment, two opposite passions — love and revenge. Without an instant's delay, they proceeded to the harbor and embarked on a vessel, which was ready to sail. The sailors were weighing anchor as they stepped on board; the sails were soon set; and, assisted by the gentle land-breeze, the ship rapidly left the harbor. Imbert and Beatrice seated themselves on deck, to take a last look at their native island, which was slowly sinking out of sight, never to be seen by them again. Beatrice, at first, shed a few tears, as she remembered that she had parted forever from her father; but she soon checked them, for fear they would annoy Imbert. Her reverence for the latter, who had complete control over her, took away any feeling of wrong-doing, and her girlish, romantic nature was buoyed up by the thought, that she was to share his exile, and suffer equally with him.

Imbert gave himself up to pleasing reflections. He was now fifty-one years old, but did not look to be forty. He had arrived at an age when most men have settled themselves for life; yet he had been just stripped of his fortune. To offset this, he had perfect health, a thorough knowledge of business, nearly ten thousand dollars in cash — including what Beatrice had taken from her father — and, best of all, the beautiful Beatrice, whom he would now call his wife.

After a short voyage, the vessel reached Havana; there Imbert and Beatrice remained for a year, giving themselves up to a life of gaiety and enjoyment. At length, however, the large sums necessary to keep up their establishment nearly drained Imbert's purse, and compelled him to go to New Orleans, to seek some kind of business. He took with him letters of introduction, which

admitted him to the best society of the city, but which did not get him employment. Finding that he could do nothing at New Orleans, he went to Mobile. There, he remained out of employment for nearly a year, during part of which time they suffered for want of the common necessities of life; in fact, all of Beatrice's trinkets and finery were pledged in different pawnshops.

At length, Imbert obtained the position of supercargo on a vessel about to sail for Barbadoes, with a cargo of pitch-pine. He received permission to take his wife with him, and the vessel sailed, with them on board, November 2, 1854. The poverty of the past year had so worked upon Imbert's too sensual nature, as to make him ready for almost any kind of scheme which would restore him to wealth and luxury. Henceforward, his career was one of continuous crime.

CHAPTER II.

WHILE at sea, Imbert matured plans for a series of forgeries, which he had had in contemplation for some time; and he was unexpectedly aided by an incident of the voyage. The captain of the vessel was taken ill; and, although Imbert nursed him with great assiduity, his disease proved fatal. On the arrival of the ship at Barbadoes, December 4, 1854, Imbert proclaimed himself the owner of the cargo, and proceeded to sell it. The American consul suspected that there was something wrong about the transaction; but he had no means of verifying his suspicions. All that he could do, therefore, was to send the vessel home in charge of the mate.

The purchaser of the cargo was a well-to-do merchant, named Samuel P. Mussen. While transacting business with this gentleman, Imbert learned that his New York correspondent was the firm of Middleton & Co. On learning this fact, Imbert wrote a forged letter to Middleton & Co., dated December 18, 1854, and signed it "Samuel P. Mussen." The letter purported to introduce Mr. Fred. Jourdan, from whom Mussen had bought a cargo of pitch pine, which Jourdan had brought from Mobile. Imbert then wrote another letter to Middleton & Co., dated January 17, 1855, enclosing *two parts* of a bill of exchange for £100 sterling, which he had purchased from Mussen. He instructed Middleton & Co. to negotiate the bill and send the proceeds to George Daristi, City Hotel, Savannah. He signed this letter "Fred. Jourdan;" he enclosed also the forged letter, introducing Jourdan to Middleton & Co., and sent the documents by the first vessel. He then enclosed the *third* part of the same bill, (of which he had sent Middleton & Co. the first and second parts,) in a letter to a London bank for collection, with instructions to send the amount to Spafford & Co., of New York, there to be placed to the credit of George Daristi. Having laid his trap to ensnare Middleton & Co., Imbert remained a short time on the island, and then sailed for Savannah.

He now had plenty of money, and was able to give Beatrice every luxury that wealth could procure. On the voyage, he disclosed his plans to her and instructed her as to the different characters they were to assume. She, as usual, acquiesced wholly in his schemes, having no desire to oppose his wishes in the slightest particular. On their arrival in Savannah, they went to the City Hotel, where Imbert signed the register, "George Daristi and wife," at the same time informing the clerk that he wished the best suite of rooms in the house. As he expected, he found a letter awaiting him from Middleton & Co., enclosing their check on the Merchants Bank of New York, payable to the order of George Daristi. The amount was the proceeds of the sale of the bill of exchange, being nearly five hundred dollars. Highly gratified by the promptness of

Middleton & Co., Imbert wrote them a letter, dated Bay State, Florida, January 31, 1855, and signed "F. Jourdan," acknowledging the receipt of the heck by Daristi. After a few days, leaving Beatrice in Savannah, Imbert made a flying visit to New York, and called on Middleton & Co., to whom he introduced himself as George Daristi; producing their check, he asked them to identify him at the bank. This they did, and he drew the money. He then had the bank identify him to Spafford & Co.; finding that the proceeds of the bill sent to England had just arrived and had been placed to his credit, he drew the amount. Thus, his first speculation in bills of exchange had netted him the snug profit of one hundred per cent.

It will be interesting, here, to notice the great simplicity of Imbert's plans, and the readiness with which his victims fell into his trap. He did not attempt to forge *new* bills, knowing the extreme risk of such an operation; but he simply paid cash for genuine bills, and then obtained double payment on them. The irregularity did not affect the English bankers on whom the bills were drawn. They cashed the "third" part of the bills sent for collection, as they were required to do: it was none of their affair to discover the whereabouts of the "first" and "second" parts. But the bankers in the United States, who bought the "first" and "second" parts without knowing the whereabouts of the "third" part, violated the rules of commercial dealing, and paid the penalty by the loss of the money advanced. If they had demanded *all three parts*, before negotiating the bills, Imbert never would have been able to fleece them so extensively.

Now, why did not these merchants and bankers act with more prudence? Why did they buy only two parts of a bill, knowing that it was possible that the missing "third" had been forwarded to England for collection, making the first two parts valueless? The answer to these questions will serve for an explanation of the method by which nearly every similar swindle is success fully carried out. The men who undertake to pass forged drafts and checks for any large amounts are thoroughly conversant with every feature of commercial routine and business customs. Their preliminary steps are generally taken in strict accordance with the rules of legitimate trade. Having laid a foundation of credit by an adherence to genuine business principles, the forger proceeds to erect a fabric of fraud. The confidence of his victim being once obtained, the latter never considers it necessary to demand a rigid compliance with all the precautions usually taken in dealing with strangers; or, if he should be one of the habitually cautious kind, requiring full information, the gentlemanly and agreeable customer explains everything so frankly and plausibly, that all suspicions are at once removed. The minor points are as carefully attended to as the important ones; even the effect of dress and general appearance is fully considered. Moreover, the forger is a keen observer and a shrewd judge of human nature. The details of his story will often depend upon the character of the person whom he intends to swindle. He can tell very soon whether his scheme will succeed; and, when he finds suspicion has been excited, he draws off gracefully, to make the attempt elsewhere. This readiness to detect even the faintest gleam of distrust will be illustrated later in these pages.

Imbert remained only a day or two in New York, and then returned to Savannah, whence he proceeded, with Beatrice, to Charleston. Here, Mr. "George Corner" and his beautiful wife were, for a time, the lions of society. Imbert understood the advantage of having a reputation for wealth and position. Hence, he spent money lavishly and moved in the best society of the city. At the same time, he continued his operations so very successfully as to realize more than eleven thousand dollars in about two weeks. He invested this money in cotton, and shipped the latter to

New York; there it was sold by Schmidt & Co., at a large profit, the proceeds being sent to him at Baltimore, where he then was. Leaving Baltimore, Imbert made a tour of all the principal Southern cities, operating extensively in the same way wherever he went, almost always with success. In fact, the effect of his trip was almost as disastrous to the commercial communities of the South, as Sherman's march to the sea was to the armies of the Confederacy, during the late war. At least, he managed to "beat" all he came in contact with.

In Charleston, he made one negotiation which eventually led to his arrest. He purchased, (under his alias of George Gomer,) from the Bank of Charleston, a three-part bill of exchange on the Bank of Liverpool. He mailed the "third" part to Baring Bros. & Co., requesting them to place the amount to the credit of Blanchard, Sherman & Co., of Boston, subject to the order of Henri Best. He kept the first two parts until he reached Baltimore; he then sold them to the Baltimore branch of Brown Bros. & Co., giving them good evidence — as they thought — where the third part was. When sufficient time had elapsed, he went to Boston, accompanied by the ever-faithful Beatrice; calling at the office of Blanchard, Sherman & Co., he demanded payment of the amount which they held to the credit of Henri Best. The bankers, thinking there was something a little unusual in the transaction, refused to pay him for a week; but, at the end of that time, being unable to give any reason for further delay, they paid him the amount. In the meantime, Brown Bros. & Co. had presented the first two parts of the bill in Liverpool, for payment; then it was discovered that the third part had already been paid to Baring Bros. & Co. When the Baltimore branch of the house received this information, instructions were sent to the Boston branch to obtain all the facts possible from Blanchard, Sherman & Co. On conferring with that firm, the Boston agent began to suspect that "Gomer" and "Best" were names assumed by one and the same person; and search was immediately commenced for him. After Imbert had drawn his money, he returned to his hotel, intending to start for New York the next day; but an unforeseen event detained him. Beatrice had become completely worn out with excitement and travel. There were no Pullman palace cars in those days, nor were the other comforts of travel by any means equal to those of the present time; so that a series of long journeys, without sufficient rest between them, had quite broken down the strength of the fair Beatrice. A severe cold, caught on the way to Boston, grew gradually worse, until, by the day that they were to start for New York, she was too sick to be moved. Inflammation of the lungs set in, and although everything was done that medical skill could devise and money procure, nothing could save her. She was not naturally of strong vitality, and the fatigues of the last few weeks had undermined her strength; within a week she died.

As Imbert was called to take a last look at Beatrice — the beautiful "Lily of the South," as she was called — whom he had trampled underfoot to gratify his passions, who would have envied him his feelings?

The day after the funeral, as Imbert was pacing up and down the long hall of the hotel, trying vainly to dispel his sense of loneliness and remorse, a stranger asked him whether he was Henri Best. On replying affirmatively, he was taken into custody by the Chief of Police, on a charge of forgery. He was sent to Baltimore, on the demand of the Governor of Maryland, and was there identified as the man who had sold the first two parts of the bill, under the name of George Gomer. He was remanded to jail to await trial, but was released, in less than six months, on "straw bail."

He immediately resumed his favorite plan of making money. In June, 1856, he sent to one of the principal shipping-houses of Baltimore, a forged letter, purporting to be from Indoes & Co., of St. Thomas. This letter bore the private marks of the firm, and endorsed the credit and character of one, Louis Ricard. He next presented, in person, a letter from Indoes & Co., introducing himself as Louis Ricard to the Baltimore house. On the strength of his introduction, he purchased flour to the value of four thousand three hundred dollars, and paid for it with a forged bill of exchange, drawn on Rothschilds & Cohen, London. He then sent the flour to New York, where it was sold, and the proceeds were remitted to him, under his assumed name.

At this time, he was fifty-five years old. He was five feet, nine and one-half inches in height, and was sparsely built, but of good figure; head, large and intellectual, covered with black hair, slightly curly; complexion, sallow; face, clean-shaven, except a long, heavy moustache, waxed at the ends; eyes, black, and very magnetic, always in motion, taking in everything at a glance. His mouth was his weakest feature, being large and sensual. He always dressed neatly, and his general appearance was that of a man of large abilities and ample fortune. He was very affable in his manners, and his conversation was peculiarly attractive. He felt that he was growing old, and that he must endeavor to lay up a fortune for his support in his declining years. Flushed with his previous success, he determined to operate upon a larger scale. The plan adopted was, in general, the same as that hitherto employed; there were some important additions, however, which were wholly original, and which showed remarkable ingenuity.

And now, before giving the details of the forgeries which put me on Imbert's track, I would like to enter my protest against the way in which the "detective" is generally represented, in the modern novel and on the stage. The detective of the novel is a very thrilling character, the personification of silence, and the soul of mystery. When called in to work up a case, he answers all questions in monosyllables if he deign to answer at all taps his employer mysteriously on the shoulder, draws him into a dark closet, and says:

"Do you see that?"

If the employer answers "yes," he replies:

"No, you don't; but *I* do. Leave it to me!"

In fact, he may be described as a man with conundrum on the brain.

On the stage, he is still more amusing, and the moment he appears, everyone recognizes him; no matter what disguise he may assume, the small boys chaff him unmercifully, knowing at once that it is the detective. I would not give much for his chances among genuine, desperate criminals.

The detective of real life is a very different character. An actor sometimes tries to play the part of a detective on the stage; the detective must *always* be an actor, and nine-tenths of the actors on the stage today, would do well to take lessons in their own profession, from him. He must be able to be, today, the associate of gentlemen; — tomorrow, the boon companion of the lowest

classes of society. At an instant's warning, he must be ready to go wherever he may be ordered. Sometimes, for weeks, he may have little or no rest; and he may be called upon to endure hardships and dangers which few men have the courage to face. A detective on my force must remember the motto, "Crime never sleeps."

The individual detective of former days has passed away, or, if he exists, has become corrupt. In order to capture the perpetrators of crime in this immense country, peopled by every nationality on the globe, it has become necessary to establish large agencies, conducted with the most perfect system. In tracing criminals, the manager of an agency, like the general of an army, lays out the plans and selects the men to carry them out; sometimes, in important matters, going to the field of operations to direct in person, but generally giving his instructions from the main office, where he has hundreds of cases to look after at a time.

With this trifling digression, I will return to the history of Jules Imbert's crimes.

CHAPTER III.

ONE morning in June, 1856, Jules Imbert stepped into the office of A. Belmont, in New York, introduced himself as Alexander Gay, and stated that he would like a bill of exchange made out for £2, 800 sterling, pay able to his own order. The clerk, a German, was just making out a regular three-part bill, when Gay stepped up to him, and said:

"If it is not too much trouble, be so good as to make the bill out in *four* parts; as who knows but that the other parts may be lost. If I have a failing, I must say, it is in being over-cautious."

The clerk, not thinking it likely that a man who could buy a bill of exchange for such a large amount, (nearly fourteen thousand dollars) would be apt to commit a fraud, regarded the request as merely a whim, and made out the bill as desired. Imbert paid cash for the bill, went to his hotel, and started on a tour through the West, intending to stop at Saratoga and Niagara Falls, to recruit his health.

I have sketched the operations of Imbert, up to this period of his life, from information gained after his final capture; and it must be remembered that, up to this time, I had had no personal knowledge of him. I will now relate the manner in which he first came under my notice, and the means by which I was enabled to bring him to justice.

In the month of August, 1856, I left Chicago for the purpose of making the circuit of the large Western cities, in search of stolen property. The numerous routes which to-day, make communication so rapid, were not then in existence; and, in consequence, very circuitous routes were traveled, in passing from city to city. Therefore, a journey then was a much more arduous affair than now. From Chicago, I went to Pittsburgh; thence to Crestline; from Crestline to Cincinnati; and from there to Cleveland (the only route at that time from Cincinnati to Chicago), and back to Chicago by the Toledo & Cleveland and the Michigan Southern Railways.

I entered my office in the early part of the afternoon, tired and sleepy, from my journey; but I was immediately summoned to the office of R. K. Swift, Bro. & Johnston, prominent bankers of

the city. I took with me two of my best men, George H. Bangs and Timothy Webster. Bangs is now my General Superintendent in New York. Webster, who, afterwards, met a martyr's death at Richmond, Va., while serving his country as one of her truest patriots, was equally a hero with Cooper's "Harvey Birch."

On approaching the bank, I saw the portly form of R. K. Swift in the doorway. Catching sight of me, he exclaimed:

"Run! Pinkerton! Run!"

Tired though I was, this put me immediately on the alert; and I asked what he meant by saying "run!" and whom did he wish me to capture. He pointed to a man just getting into a Clark street omnibus, and said:

"That's the man! I want you to 'spot' him."

In less time than it takes to tell it, I had pointed out the man to Bangs and Webster, giving them instructions to follow him; one, was to keep always on his track, the other, to bring reports, and get orders from me. They were off instantly, and I followed Mr. Swift into his private office. I found that he knew nothing positively wrong about the man, but that he had had his suspicions aroused by circumstances, which he proceeded to relate, as follows:

On the morning of the seventh of August, a well-dressed, gentlemanly-appearing man called at the office of R. K. Swift, Bro. & Johnston, introduced himself as Alexander Gay, and asked whether they had received any notice from Detroit, relative to a small draft. He was told that they had not, and he went away, stating that he would call again. The noon mail brought them a letter from the Peninsula Bank, of Detroit, containing the signature of Alexander Gay. That gentleman called again in the afternoon, and presented a draft on them for fifty dollars, drawn by the Peninsula Bank, of Detroit, and payable to his order. His signature was found to be identical with the one forwarded from Detroit, and the money was paid to him. Afterward, in conversation, Gay created a very favorable impression on the bankers by the suavity of his manners and the fund of knowledge he possessed. In the course of his remarks on commercial matters, with which he was thoroughly acquainted, he showed great familiarity with all kinds of banking and mercantile business; and finally, he produced a bill of exchange for £2,800 sterling, first, second, and third, drawn by A. Belmont, of New York, on N. M. Rothschild & Sons, of London, No. 5,437, payable to the order of Alexander Gay at three days sight, and dated June 7, 1856. This bill, Gay was anxious to sell at a low rate, stating that he had made a good bargain in real estate, and he needed a considerable sum in cash to consummate it. Mr. Swift declined purchasing the bill, for the reason that the firm was not used to dealing in exchange so extensively. Gay then went away, saying that he intended to settle in the West to do business.

On the thirteenth of August, he called again. This time he had nearly fourteen thousand dollars, in one hundred dollar bills of the Bank of the State of Missouri, which were then as good as gold. He now wished to *purchase* exchange on England; and, as he had wished to *sell*, only a few days before, they thought the circumstances rather singular, and made some inquiries of him. Gay stated that, failing to sell the Belmont bill for £2,800 sterling, in Chicago, he had gone to St.

Louis, where he had sold it to E. W. Clark & Bro., receiving the one hundred dollar bills in payment. Mr. Swift, accordingly, telegraphed to Clark & Bro., who replied that they had paid the bills to Gay. While waiting an answer to the telegram, Mr. Swift made a number of inquiries of Gay, particularly with regard to his reasons for wishing to *purchase* exchange so soon after *selling*. During this interview, Gay gave such frank, plausible answers, and explained his objects and intentions so freely and reasonably, that the suspicions of Mr. Swift and his partners were almost wholly overcome. Finally, they agreed to sell him the bills he wished, but proposed to issue time bills, payable at sixty days. Gay refused to take anything but sight paper, however, and the terms were, at length, agreed to. While making the arrangements, he inquired very minutely as to the form of bill used by the firm, and learned everything possible, relative to their mode of dealing in exchange. Gay then gave them a memorandum of the way in which he wanted the bills made out, and they were drawn accordingly.

They consisted of six bills, drawn by R. K. Swift, Bro. & Johnston, on the London and Westminster Bank, of London, payable to the order of Mouline Button, all dated August 13, 1856. Their numbers and amounts were as follows:

No.	£	s	d
19,930	498	7	0
19,931	498	7	0
19,932	497	9	6
19,933	497	9	6
19,934	349	1	6
19,935	349	1	6

Just before Gay left the bank, Mr. Swift sent for me, as his suspicions were not wholly allayed; as Gay started off, the banker became nervous, lest I should fail to arrive in time, and, losing his presence of mind, he greeted me in the excited manner before related.

CHAPTER IV.

WITH Mr. Swift's story in my mind, I returned to my office, to think the matter over. There were some suspicious circumstances, but nothing tangible enough to act upon. It was evident that no profit could be made by buying and selling exchange, as Gay was doing; and, the more I reflected upon the matter, the more I became convinced that something was wrong. In the evening, Bangs brought me a report which confirmed my suspicions, and I determined to solve the mystery. Webster had followed out my instructions with his habitual secrecy and skill; so that, from the moment Gay seated himself in the omnibus, he was under the observation of a man who would watch his every action with the care of a guardian angel, entirely unknown to the object of his attention. Gay proceeded to the St. Nicholas, then a leading hotel, on Clark street, near Polk; as he went up the steps, he brushed by his guardian angel, who had arrived at the foot of the front stairway a second before him. Gay made some slight changes in his dress, and remained at the hotel until supper-time, holding no communication with any one, but sitting in the reading-room, apparently lost in thought. Bangs and Webster took supper at the same table with him, but he remained silent during the whole meal. After supper, he walked leisurely to his own room, made some further changes in his clothing, and came down to the office. While

conversing with the clerk, he made some inquiries about the trains; this being overheard by Webster, led the latter to send Bangs, to me for instructions, as it was evident that Gay was about to depart. Accordingly, I sent Bangs back to Webster with some money, and instructions to follow Gay as long as the funds would hold out.

Gay smoked and chatted with the clerk until nearly train-time; he then paid his bill and departed, satchel in hand. Reaching an unfrequented spot, he changed his coat for an old, well-worn blouse, and put on a pair of very green spectacles and a slouch hat. His appearance was, thus, so greatly changed, that few persons would have been able to recognize him as the tastefully-dressed Alexander Gay, who had visited Mr. Swift. His movements had been carefully noted by the discreet Webster, however, and when Gay took the Michigan Central train, Webster seated himself where he could watch every movement of the suspicious character whom he had been detailed to follow. All the way to Detroit, Gay sat motionless; but, when within a short distance of the depot, he passed out to the platform and sprang off, while the cars were still in rapid motion. As he jumped on one side, the detective passed to the other end of the car and stepped off on the opposite side; so that, when Gay dodged around to the Canada boat, his "shadow" was close behind him. At Windsor, they both took the train for Hamilton, whence Webster telegraphed to me for further instructions. As I had been unable to interest anyone in the case, I was reluctantly obliged to recall him; though I felt convinced that some fraud was in contemplation, or had been already committed, by the so-called Alexander Gay. The day after my interview with Mr. Swift, I sent a telegram to Clark & Bro., of St. Louis, asking whether the bill they had bought of Gay was all right, and stating my suspicions with regard to him. They replied that Gay had brought a letter of introduction from I. H. Burch & Co., of Chicago, to Lucas & Simmonds, of St. Louis, and that, to all appearances, the transaction was perfectly regular. I then made inquiries of I. H. Burch & Co., and learned that Gay had bought a draft from them on Lucas & Simmonds, payable to his order, for two hundred dollars. He had requested I. H. Burch & Co., to forward his signature to Lucas & Simmonds, as he had no acquaintances in St. Louis. This, they had done, but had given him no letter of introduction. I, therefore, advised Clark & Bro. of this circumstance, which, at last, put them on the alert, and led to further developments.

It was discovered that Gay had written to Lucas & Simmonds, August 9, 1856, offering for sale a bill of exchange for £2,800 sterling, on the Rothschilds, which he had been unable to sell in Chicago without heavy loss; if their offer suited, he would send it to them. On the twelfth, he called upon them in person, drew the two hundred dollars on the Burch draft, and proposed to negotiate the bill of exchange which he had previously mentioned. As they did not wish to purchase, he called on Clark & Bro., to whom he offered the draft, referring them to Lucas & Simmonds. On making inquiries of the latter, Clark & Bro. were satisfied that Gay was all right; they, therefore, purchased the bill, paying for it in one hundred dollar bills, and immediately sending it forward, for collection, to their New York house, Clarke, Dodge & Co. By this time, I had convinced Clark & Bro. that something was wrong, and had obtained authority to carry on the investigation for them.

I had decided upon a plan to save them from loss, in case the Belmont bill should prove to be a forgery. In pursuance of this plan, I called upon Messrs. R. K. Swift, Bro. & Johnston, laid the facts before them, and asked them to stop the payment of the bills which they had sold to Gay.

At my earnest solicitation, for the protection of Messrs. Clark & Bro., they consented (though at the risk of endangering their own commercial credit) to stop the payment of their bills. No time was to be lost. It was now the fifteenth of the month, and late in the day. The drafts would leave New York on the steamer of the sixteenth. If the letter of advice, stopping the payment of the bills, failed to go by that steamer also, Clark & Bro.'s chances of saving anything would be very small. Swift, Bro. & Johnston immediately telegraphed to their New York branch, Swift, Ransom & Co., who wrote to the London and Westminster Bank to refuse payment of the bills drawn in favor of Mouline Button. This letter was put on board the steamer *only seven minutes* prior to her time of sailing.

CHAPTER V.

HAVING stopped the payment of the Swift bills, I proceeded to find out the facts in regard to the Belmont bill for £2,800 sterling. I advised my New York agent of the occurrences at St. Louis and Chicago, and directed him to call at Belmont's to make inquiries about the bill. He, accordingly, asked Belmont's cashier whether they knew anything about a bill of exchange for £2,800 sterling, drawn in favor of Alexander Gay.

"Yes," said the cashier; "that bill was presented to us today for negotiation by Clarke, Dodge & Co., but we refused to buy."

"Why; was it a forgery?"

"Oh! no, indeed; we knew it to be a genuine three-part bill, drawn by us in June; but we feared that the signature of Alexander Gay, endorsing it, was a forgery."

The cashier then explained the reasons for so thinking, as follows: The clerk who made out the bill was a German, and, not being sure as to the way of spelling "Gay," he requested the purchaser to write the name, himself. The gentleman did so, and in forming the letter "y," in Gay, he brought up the hair-line, or tail of the letter, as in the letter "g;" while, in the endorsement, the hair-line was brought up as in the letter "q."

As the reader already knows, the bill was a *four-part* one, made so at the particular request of Gay; and how the clerk could have forgotten the fourth part, while he so distinctly recalled the exact way in which Gay formed the letter "y" is a mystery beyond comprehension. At the time, however, the circumstance gave him a great deal of notoriety; and the skill he displayed in detecting the forgery made him the envy of all the New York bank clerks. When the whole truth became known, the firm were so thankful to him for preventing them from negotiating the bill, that they were willing to take no notice of his carelessness in making it out.

Notwithstanding Belmont's refusal to negotiate the bill, Clarke, Dodge & Co. sent forward one of the parts to London for collection. The bill having been recognized by Belmont as genuine, it became necessary to find the original Alexander Gay but, although search was made in every direction, no trace of him could be found, nor could anything be discovered relative to Mouline Button. No news could be obtained from England, until the arrival of the steamer of September

16th; hence, some time passed without any developments, and the mystery seemed to grow deeper and darker.

On the 8th of September, Swift Bro. & Johnston received a telegram from Chapman & Co., of Montreal, dated September 6th, inquiring whether the Chicago bankers had sold Mouline Button a bill of exchange for over £200 sterling, on London. Mr. Swift immediately sent the telegram to me, and answered that such a draft had been sold; but that there were suspicious circumstances connected with the purchaser, which would make it inadvisable for them to negotiate it.

Having now obtained a clue to the whereabouts of Button, I laid my plans, and Bangs started the same evening for Montreal. The next morning, I received intelligence from Chapman & Co., with whom I had opened communication by telegraph, that the bill had been sent to them from Port Hope.

I always make it a rule to time my men, while traveling, and to have them inquire at specified places for dispatches. In this way, I was able to stop Bangs at Toronto, and turn his course to Port Hope.

On arriving there, he went to the North American Hotel, where he found the gentleman who had created such an excitement in Chicago and St. Louis, as Alexander Gay; he had now resumed his own name, Jules Imbert. He had shaved off his moustache, and made other alterations in his personal appearance; but Bangs soon detected his disguise. Having satisfied himself that Imbert was identical with Gay, Bangs called upon Thomas Turner, Esq., the agent of Chapman & Co., and sent for the chief constable of the town. He then showed them a strong chain of suspicious circumstances concerning Imbert, *alias* Gay; but, being unable to prefer any positive charges against the latter, he could not induce the constable to interfere with Imbert's movements. Bangs was too old a hand to be foiled by the imbecility of a subordinate; he, therefore, applied to the Mayor for authority to arrest the supposed forger. The Mayor, having heard all the circumstances of the case, took a different view of his duty from that of the constable, and gave orders that Imbert be detained for the night.

Bangs then returned to the hotel, with a constable in reserve, to come in when wanted, and asked Imbert to favor him with a private interview. Imbert consented, and they entered a private room. Bangs opened the conversation by inquiring after Monsieur Imbert's health.

"I am in excellent health," replied Imbert; "but you have the advantage of me. May I inquire your name?"

"I am not at liberty to disclose my name just at present," said Bangs; "but I am an agent of E. W. Clarke & Bro., of St. Louis, and have come to make inquiries about that bill for two thousand eight hundred pounds sterling, that you sold them."

At this, Imbert raised his hands, as if in utter astonishment, and said:

“The bill for two thousand eight hundred pounds sterling that I sold to Clarke & Bro.! Why, my dear sir, I have not the pleasure of knowing the gentlemen. You have probably made a mistake in the person. It is quite one good joke, I assure you.”

“Mr. Imbert,” said Bangs, “there is no use in trying to beat round the bush. I know you and your operations thoroughly. The best thing you can do is to make a clean breast of it, and compromise the matter with Clarke & Bro.”

“You have made one great mistake, sir,” Imbert retorted, sharply. “I know nothing of what you say.”

“Then, sir,” replied Bangs, “I will give you an opportunity to refresh your memory. There is a constable outside, ready to arrest you. I will see you in the morning, and I trust, by that time, that you will have come to your senses.”

“You shall pay dear for this,” said Imbert, excitedly. “I will show you that a gentleman cannot be insulted with impunity.”

Bangs, finding that nothing could be done for the time being, called in the constable, and Imbert was taken to jail. An inventory of his effects was made, and they were found to consist of fifteen dollars in money, a small memorandum book, and a letter, dated September 4, 1855. This letter was signed M. Button, and was enclosed in an envelope addressed to J. Imbert, Esq., North American Hotel. In the morning, Bangs visited Imbert in jail. Bangs pretended to know much more of Imbert's operations than he really did know, and Imbert finally agreed to go to New York quietly, in order to compromise with Clark & Bro.

I had instructed Bangs that the case was being investigated in the interests of Clark & Bro., and that his first duty was to save them from loss. Imbert's operations in Canada had been very suspicious, and it was possible that he might be arrested at any moment by the Canadian authorities; in which case, Clark & Bro. probably would not recover anything. Hence, Bangs was desirous of taking Imbert to New York quietly, without having recourse to the extradition treaty.

Imbert, on his part, was induced to accept Bangs' proposition by the fact, that he found himself in a tight place; and, of the two evils, he preferred the one which offered the best chance of escape. He knew, from what Bangs had told him, that his operations in Canada had been discovered, and that he was liable to be arrested and brought to trial in Canada, where a long term of imprisonment would follow his conviction. Whereas, Clark & Bro., having a large amount at stake, would be willing to let the matter drop, on receiving back the amount of the bill and their expenses. He was, of course, unaware of the action taken to stop the payment of the Swift bills, and it was upon the proceeds of those bills that he relied, to enable him to satisfy Clark & Bro.

In the course of the conversation, Imbert stated that he had turned over the six bills bought of Swift, to Mouline Button; that the latter had forwarded three of them to London for collection; that he had sent one to Chapman & Co.; and that he still retained two in his possession. He added

that Dutton, who was at Coburg, only seven miles from Port Hope, would willingly give up the bills and proceeds, to assist him — Imbert — in making reparation.

CHAPTER VI.

IN this long interview, Bangs showed great skill in drawing out all the particulars of the swindle, and the manner of manipulating the Belmont bill. The bill having been made out in *four parts*, Imbert had retained the first three parts, and had sent the fourth to London for collection. The three parts had been made out on the printed form of a regular three-part bill, on one sheet, the fourth part being an odd one. There being no printed forms for a four-part bill, (such bills being rarely, if ever, needed,) the clerk had used a three-part blank, writing the words, “and fourth,” between the lines, and forgetting to erase the word “and,” in the phrase, “second and third.” By drawing a heavy black line over the words, “and fourth,” the bill was changed into an ordinary three-part one; as the black line, being drawn between the printed lines, did not mar the appearance of the bill.

Imbert gave, also, a very full description of Mouline Dutton, whose mother’s name was DeLorge. The proceeds of the bills sent to England were to be forwarded by mail to Adrian DeLorge, a name assumed by Dutton for the occasion, at Quebec. As Imbert expressed a desire to find Dutton, Bangs induced the authorities to put Imbert in his charge, and went with him to Coburg. Still, no trace of the mythical Mouline Dutton could be found, nor any evidence that he had ever been in the town. Bangs, therefore, decided to start at once for New York; and that day the detective and his voluntary prisoner took passage on a steamer, to cross Lake Ontario.

He was not a moment too soon. I had warned Chapman & Co. of the suspicious character of the man, Gay, who had purchased the Swift bills, and on examining the one sent them for negotiation, they thought they discovered evidences of forgery. They, therefore, advised all their correspondents in Canada to be on their guard against buying any of those bills. The movements of Bangs at Port Hope and Coburg, had become known, and that very afternoon, a dispatch had been sent to Coburg, to arrest Button. A consultation was, therefore, held by some of the Coburgers, as to the propriety of arresting Imbert, on the suspicion that he was Button; while the consultation was still in progress, the steamer came in, and Bangs hurried his prisoner aboard. As the steamer cast off from the dock, it was decided to arrest Imbert, and the party rushed on board for that purpose; but it was too late. The steamer was an American craft, and she had just pushed off from Canadian soil; hence, she was not amenable to Canadian laws, and the disappointed party of amateur detectives were forced to jump ashore, in great haste.

I need scarcely add that this escape was one of the luckiest things that could have happened, since, had Imbert been arrested and tried in Canada, the Crown would have confiscated all his money. I was, therefore, particularly pleased at Bangs discreet management, in getting Imbert into the United States quietly.

On Bangs arrival in New York, he went to the office of Clarke, Dodge & Co., and informed them of the disclosures of Imbert, relative to the Belmont bill; also, of Imbert’s offer, to give them an order for the proceeds of the three Swift bills, which he had forwarded to Claude Scott & Co., of London, for collection. To insure themselves against loss, Clarke, Dodge & Co. commenced a

civil suit against Imbert, for the amount paid to him for the Belmont bill by the St. Louis branch of the house. Pending negotiations for the desired object, Imbert was confined in the Eldridge street jail, and a requisition was obtained from the Governor of Missouri, on which to take him to St. Louis, for trial on a criminal charge. Of this latter fact, however, he was kept in ignorance.

CHAPTER VII.

HAVING Imbert safely caged, I now turned my attention to the task of discovering his operations with the Swift bills; and my efforts in this direction led to the disclosure of one of the best-laid schemes of fraud that I have ever known. It will be remembered that Imbert, before purchasing the bills of exchange from R. K. Swift, Bro. & Johnston, had made inquiries as to the form in which they issued their bills. These were made out in two parts, which were *exactly similar*, except that the word, "Original," was printed in large, red letters upon one, and the word, "Duplicate," on the other. The manner in which Imbert altered these bills, was as ingenious as his operation with the Belmont bill. He bought six separate bills, paired off into series for equal amounts. Bill No. 19,930 consisted of two parts, original and duplicate, for £498 7s; bill No. 19,931, original and duplicate, was for a like amount. He then sent the original of No. 19,930, and the duplicate of No. 19,931, to England, for collection, retaining the duplicate of No. 19,930, and the original of No. 19,931. By simply changing the figure 1, at the end of the latter number, to a 0, he had a forged two-part bill that would defy detection. By changing the other series in the same manner, he had three full bills left to negotiate in this country; while he intended to collect, also, the total of the six bills, in England. But Imbert was destined to learn that "the best-laid schemes of mice and men gang aft alee."

It will be remembered that Mr. Swift could see no valid reason why he should not sell the bills asked for by Gay; yet he had an undefined suspicion that all was not right, which induced him to send for me. Though he endeavored not to show any sign of such a feeling to Imbert, the latter was aware, when he left the bank, that Mr. Swift was distrustful of something wrong. This accounted for the disguise assumed in traveling, and the secrecy of his movements. He did not imagine that Mr. Swift had suspected him to the extent of putting a detective upon his track; but he preferred to be on the safe side, and to hide his traces, in case of any future attempt to follow him. His instinct, as to the thoughts in the minds of other men, was so sensitive and accurate as to warn him against Swift; but his judgment, in acting upon the warning, was at fault. Had he proceeded, after leaving Swift's office, like an ordinary business man, engaged in honorable and legitimate enterprises, there would have been little or no reason to follow him up, or to investigate his previous actions; but the fact, that his movements were so suspicious, brought on the inquiries which exposed his schemes. It will thus be seen how rarely it is possible for Criminals, no matter how able and experienced they may be, to act so as to escape detection; and, sometimes, as in this case, their most careful efforts to cover their tracks, are the very means of their discovery.

After receiving his bills from Swift, Imbert, as already stated, went to Canada, Webster following him as far as Hamilton. Thence, as was afterward learned, he went to Port Hope, where he made his arrangements to personate Mouline Dutton, as well as Jules Imbert; and so successful was he, that it was not until a long time after his arrest, that his double identity was discovered.

On the second of September, he wrote to Chapman & Co., Montreal, enclosing apparently, the original and duplicate of the Swift bill, No. 19,935, for £349 1s 6d; he requested them to negotiate it, and to forward the proceeds to him by a certificate of deposit on the Bank of Montreal. This letter he signed "M. Dutton." The request was unusual to Chapman & Co.; and, not knowing the endorser, they telegraphed to M. Dutton, at Port Hope, making an offer, and also to R. K. Swift, Bro. & Johnston, asking information about the bill. The operator at Port Hope replied that M. Dutton could not be found. This appeared suspicious to Chapman & Co.; and, on a close examination of the bill, they discovered the alteration in the number. My dispatches to them confirmed their suspicions, and they had the satisfaction of knowing that their prompt action had, not only saved themselves from loss, but had, doubtless, been the means of saving others.

On the second of September, also, Imbert wrote, under the name of Dutton, to W. R. McDonald, of Hamilton, and enclosed both parts of the altered Swift bill, No. 19,933, for £497 9s 6d. He requested McDonald to negotiate it, and to forward the proceeds to M. Dutton, by a certificate of deposit on the Bank of Montreal. McDonald, being over-anxious to do business, endorsed it himself and sold it to the Bank of British North America. The bank issued a certificate of deposit for the amount, payable to M. Button, and sent it in a registered letter to him at Port Hope. Imbert took the letter from the post-office, signing the register M. Button, but he had not drawn the money at the time of his capture by Bangs. The bill was sent to England for collection, and, on the eighth of October, was returned unpaid, having been thrown out as an altered bill. On telegraphing to Port Hope for information, McDonald was informed that Button was a swindler, and that his accomplice was a prisoner in New York. Before this, however, Imbert had effected a sale of the certificate of deposit, through his attorney in New York, receiving for it about two thousand four hundred dollars and McDonald was, therefore, the loser of that amount. That gentleman had the altered bill framed and hung in his private office, to serve as a perpetual warning to him; much in the same way that many citizens of Chicago preserved their worthless insurance policies, after the great fire, as expensive relics of that event.

On the sixth of September, Imbert wrote a letter, signed M. Button, to Thomas Clarkson, of Toronto, enclosing the altered Swift bill, No. 19,930, for £498 7s; he asked them to negotiate the bill immediately, and forward the proceeds, by a certificate of deposit on one of the Toronto banks. Clarkson sold the bill the same day to the bank of Toronto, and remitted the amount to Button by a draft at three days sight, drawn on I. E. Welsh, of Port Hope, advising Button of the remittance by telegraph. Imbert took the letter containing the draft from the post-office on the tenth, but had not drawn the money at the time of his departure. On the eleventh, Clarkson received warning from Chapman & Co. against buying exchange from Button. The advice was received too late to prevent the purchase, but in time to stop payment of the draft. Clarkson was thus barely saved from as great a loss as that of McDonald.

CHAPTER VIII.

I WILL now return to the account of the steps taken to save Clark & Bro., of St. Louis, from loss, and to bring Imbert to punishment.

Imbert made himself perfectly at home in the New York jail; he expressed his great readiness and ability to reimburse the St. Louis bankers for the amount paid them for the Belmont bill, and, also, their expenses; in all about fourteen thousand dollars. All he wished was to communicate with his *cher ami*, Mouline Button, when the amount would be forthcoming. He had brought himself to this frame of mind by the following reasoning:

He supposed that the six Swift bills, which he had for warded to London for collection, had been cashed, and that the amount, about thirteen thousand dollars, was in Montreal, so tied up as to be available only to him. He had received about two thousand four hundred dollars cash on the bill sold to McDonald, and he held the draft obtained by Clarkson from the Bank of Toronto, for an equal amount. He expected to be able to compromise with Clarkson and McDonald for about two thousand dollars each, thus making the total amount necessary to compromise, about eighteen thousand dollars. His assets he figured as follows:

Cash.....	\$2,400
Draft of Bank of Toronto on I. E. Welsh.....	2,400
Six bills of R. K. Swift Bro. & Johnston.....	13,000
Belmont bill, the fourth part of which he had forwarded for collection.....	13,600
	\$31,400
Total.....	\$31,400

Unfortunately for him, several circumstances of which he was unaware, had occurred, which quite overthrew his calculations. I had set the extensive resources of my establishment in operation, and I was determined not only to bring him to justice, but to save his victims from loss.

Accordingly, I arranged for the stoppage of all letters directed to any of his known aliases; and, on the twenty-fifth of September, I received a dispatch from Montreal, stating that a letter was in that post-office, addressed to Mouline Button, which apparently contained bills of exchange. The Canadian postal authorities, on representation of the facts, sent the letter to Clarke, Dodge & Co., who took possession of its contents. These proved to be the six genuine bills of R. K. Swift Bro. & Johnston, which Imbert had forwarded for collection to Claude Scott & Co., London. The latter-named firm, had presented the bills for payment; but, finding that payment on them had been stopped by Swift, Ransom & Co., they had sent the bill to Mouline Dutton, at Montreal. Clarke, Dodge & Co., having obtained possession of the six Swift bills and the cash found on Imbert's person, when searched in New York, were now ready to send him to St. Louis for trial. As before stated, he had sold, immediately on reaching New York, the certificate of deposit in the Bank of British North America, sent him by McDonald, for about two thousand four hundred dollars, which amount was found in large notes carefully pasted between the leaves of an old novel. This sum, with the thirteen thousand dollars in the six Swift bills, made quite an ample offset for the thirteen thousand six hundred dollars paid by Clark & Bro., of St. Louis, for the Belmont bill.

Bangs now presented the requisition of the Governor of Missouri, and Imbert was delivered into his custody, to be taken to St. Louis. Just previous to receiving the order, Bangs had been called to the bedside of his dying father, in New York, and had become thoroughly tired out, through anxiety and watching. Nevertheless, he immediately started for Chicago with his prisoner, via the Hudson River and the New York Central Railroads. After leaving Albany, the cars rapidly filled with passengers and became quite crowded. Bangs and Imbert occupied a seat near the middle of the car, the former sitting next the aisle, with a handcuff on his right wrist and on Imbert's left. As night came on, Imbert, who had been very talkative during the first part of the journey, began to show signs of fatigue, and, at length, he fell sound asleep. Bangs, also, began to feel the effect of his long series of night-watches, and several times caught himself nodding; but he resolutely shook off the feeling of drowsiness, remembering my strict orders against sleeping, while traveling with a prisoner. Gradually, however, he allowed pleasing fancies to slip into his mind, of the credit he would gain from the public for his skill in detecting Imbert's extensive schemes; of the reception "the boys" would give him on arriving in Chicago with his famous prisoner; and of the approbation of his chief, who would say: "Well done, my man; the fidelity with which you have executed my orders shall not go unrewarded." A feeling of honest pride came over him — his head drooped lower, and, in a few moments, for the first and only time, the detective was asleep on duty.

A quick jerk of the train awakened him. Springing to his feet, he saw at a glance that his prisoner was gone. He knew that only a few minutes could have elapsed since he lost consciousness, and he rushed through the train, scanning every face, until he found the conductor. He had satisfied himself that Imbert was no longer on the train, and the conductor informed him that they had made no stop, since leaving a station where Bangs knew he had been awake, with Imbert safe beside him. There were a number of switch-tracks at the little town of Fonda, however, where the train was obliged to run slowly, in order to pass in safety, and it was possible that Imbert had jumped off at that point. On returning to the car where he had been sitting, Bangs was told by one of the passengers, that his companion — Imbert — had climbed out over the seat in front, in a very considerate manner, as if anxious not to disturb Bangs' nap, and had jumped off at Fonda. Bangs was now in a state of such mental distress, at the thought of having allowed a prisoner to escape, by his carelessness, that he forgot all his bodily fatigue; and he determined not to return to Chicago until he had recaptured Imbert.

Accordingly, at the next station, he took a freight train back to Fonda, and arrived there at about ten o'clock at night. He routed out two constables, and made as thorough a search as was possible, all over the town, wherever it was likely that a person could conceal himself; but no trace of Imbert could be found, nor had any one seen him jump from the train. At two o'clock in the morning, being completely exhausted, Bangs gave up the search, for a time, and went to the principal hotel to await daylight, when he proposed to get horses and scour the country. At the hotel, he was told that all the rooms were taken, but that if he did not object to sleeping with a stranger, he could occupy a bed with a gentleman who had arrived that evening. Bangs was too tired to mind sleeping with any one, and he was shown immediately to his room. On entering the room, he threw himself upon a sofa, and gave himself up to bitter reflections. As he did so, he noticed the handcuffs hanging to his wrist. In his excitement, he had forgotten to remove them. Ah! what a source of sorrow that vacant cuff had been to him! The more he thought about it, the

more angry he became. His nature rebelled at the thought of having been outwitted so easily by a foreigner; he now saw that Imbert's vivacity at first, and his assumed slumber, subsequently, were parts of a cunning plan of escape. But regrets were useless, and he prepared to retire, hoping to capture his man in the morning. His principal fear was, that Imbert had concealed himself on the same freight train by which Bangs had returned to Fonda; in which case, Imbert would be safe in the crowd at Albany before morning. Just before blowing out his candle, which only feebly lighted up the room, Bangs turned down the clothes which partly covered his bed-fellow's face; he then discovered, to his intense delight, that the person before him was Imbert, the picture of sleeping innocence, without a shade of care on his amiable face. Bangs locked the door, hid the key, secured the window, and slipped softly into bed to await Imbert's awakening. Shortly after day break, Imbert stretched, yawned a few times, and sitting bolt upright, gazed down at Bangs, who lay beside him with his eyes wide open. It would be impossible to describe the expression on Imbert's face as he looked at Bangs. He had gone to the most public place in town, on jumping from the train, rightly judging that no one would think of looking for him there; and now, to find himself still under Bangs' charge, made him actually speechless for a moment. At length, he broke out:

"My gar, Mr. Bangs, where in h—l you come from?"

Bangs said that he had come to escort his prisoner to the place last-mentioned; and he then proceeded to deliver a short lecture on the uselessness of any French man trying to outwit a Yankee.

"Now," said he, "Mr. Imbert, when I saw you trying to loosen your hand from the hand-cuff, I determined to feign sleep, just to see what you would do. You slipped off the hand-cuff, climbed over the seat in front, and went out upon the platform. As you jumped off on one side, I jumped off on the other; I then followed you to the hotel and requested the landlord to give me the same room as yourself. I hope this little frolic will teach you that *it is impossible to escape from a Pinkerton detective.*"

As Bangs finished his remarks, Imbert threw himself back in the bed, saying:

"I give it up. I won't try it again."

The journey to Chicago was made without further incident. On arriving here, Imbert called to see me; and, having learned that all his schemes had been discovered, he complimented me very highly upon my skill and fore thought as a detective. He expressed great admiration for the plans laid to circumvent him, quite as unconcernedly as if he were an entirely disinterested party. He was also taken to visit Mr. Swift, to whom he politely renewed the assurance of his distinguished consideration. In reply to the question, whether he did not feel ashamed of himself, after having been detected in such enormous swindles, he said:

"Oh! no; I did not cheat on the bills — I only furnished the bankers the means to cheat each other."

He was taken to St. Louis the next day. He had a hearing upon the charge of forgery, on the twenty-sixth of October, when he was held for trial in default of ten thousand dollars bail. At his final trial, he was found guilty, and was sentenced to imprisonment in the State's prison, at hard labor, for ten years. He wrote me several letters while in prison, and made strenuous efforts to obtain his release; but they all proved unavailing, and he died at the end of the eighth year of his confinement.

Thus ended, in disgrace, the career of a man of large abilities and more than ordinary advantages. He commenced his downward career as a smuggler, in order to increase his gains, and the detection of this violation of law drove him to even lower depths of crime. It is a universal law, that crime breeds crime; and no man, on taking the first step, can possibly know where his future paths will lead him.

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