

Making Money With Money

He was a sharp-featured, shrewd-eyed old gentleman, and he sat in one of the Boston police stations recently, listening attentively to a select assortment of yarns about counterfeiters, suggested by the newspaper mention of the numerous petty cases of this nature pending before the United States District Court. "Well, well," he remarked finally, with a half sigh for the degeneracy of these times, "roguery isn't what it used to be. I can remember when it took some brains to make a good rascal. To work off the bogus half-dollars, one dollars, fives and so on for the genuine thing is all very well in its way, but what do you think of a fellow who gave away square money as counterfeit and made a little fortune out of the business? Impossible? Oh, no. When I was a detective, and that not so many years ago, I came in contact with just such a chap. You'll find the facts of the case in the court records. And the way he did it was this: He first sent out to country postmasters and others, an ingeniously gotten up circular, in which he offered to supply them with a remarkably accurate counterfeit \$1 bill, merely as a curiosity. This would be sent to be paid for when received by a good \$1 bill, in case the receiver cared to keep it; otherwise it was to be returned. There were a good many responses to this circular, but the young man, instead of sending out bad bills, inclosed genuine ones in his letters, and also a notice that he would be pleased to supply the same at \$30 per hundred. Now the susceptible postmaster carefully examined the bill he had received, showed it to his friends, and perhaps the cashier of the town bank, and every one, of course, pronounced it genuine. So not a few rural parties thought that 100 of them would be very handy in hard times, and the requisite \$30 was forwarded. And that was always the last heard of the \$30. To be sure, some of the bait money was lost, but not much. The victims could not bring a complaint against the swindler without criminating themselves, and so he flourished for some time. But at length the United States authorities got hold of the matter and arrested the promising young scoundrel on an indictment for counterfeiting. What was his defense? Why, he merely called attention to the fact that he had not counterfeited at all; he had dealt only in genuine bills. The court could not hold him. Subsequently, however, I believe that he was arrested and convicted, but on an entirely different indictment."

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