

ADVENTURES of the WORLD'S GREAT DETECTIVES

By George Barton

The Story of The Mutilated Bank Check—An Episode in the Life of Thomas Furlong one time Chief of the Secret Service of the Allegheny Valley Railroad.

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IN THE year 1877 the city of Pittsburg and, indeed, the entire country, was startled by the announcement that the safe of the Union Express Company had been opened and robbed of diamonds, jewelry and money, valued roughly in the neighborhood of one hundred thousand dollars.

The Pennsylvania railroad train from the east reached Pittsburg at the usual hour; the safe used by the express company was delivered to the agent in the customary manner and he gave a receipt for the same. It was locked and gave no evidence of having been tampered with. After being loaded on a wagon, guarded by a watchman and detective, armed to the teeth, it was finally placed in the office of the company on one of the main streets of the Pennsylvania city. The only unusual thing about the whole business was the fact that the messenger had strangely disappeared. It was thought that he had stopped on the way to the office and would report in due time. However, when he did not appear at 11 o'clock, Superintendent Bingham became suspicious. He sent for two mechanics, forced the safe open and found it absolutely empty. The officials were almost dumb with amazement. Nothing like this had ever occurred in the history of the company. Safes had been burglarized and trains had been held up at lonely places, but never before had a safe been delivered locked and unopened at the office of the company, only to be found empty.

The news of the robbery was flashed to all the offices of the company in the United States. The local police were notified and the special officers of the corporation were also instructed to investigate. Before the close of the day it was learned that the messenger who had arrived at the station with the safe was a new man. He climbed into the delivery

Parkersburg, who will give you further orders.

(Signed) "GEORGE BINGHAM, Superintendent."

Needless to say, this telegram was a forgery, but Messenger Bingham accepted it as a genuine order. He obeyed the instructions it contained literally. He first wired to his brother, acknowledging receipt of the telegram, but Superintendent Bingham, for reasons that will be explained later on, never received this message. The bogus official appeared at the time and place stated and received the keys to the safe containing the diamonds, jewelry and money. What happened after that, of course, was unknown to the real messenger. He could throw no further light on the subject, and for many days after that nothing new was learned. The most rigid investigation failed to produce even the slightest clue to the robber or robbers.

At this stage of the case it was determined to seek the expert assistance of Mr. Thomas Furlong, at that time the chief of the Missouri Pacific railroad secret service. Chief Furlong had distinguished himself in the west by the facility and thoroughness with which he had cleared up several railway robbery mysteries. He was a clear-headed, persistent, courageous man, who combined cleverness and common sense in his every-day work. On reaching Pittsburg, he examined all of the evidence in hand and interviewed all of those who were supposed to know anything about the mysterious disappearance of the contents of the safe.

Mr. Furlong determined to take up the scent at Templeton, Penn. He started for that place, accompanied by John Cupples, who ably seconded him in the investigation. Furlong found that Templeton had once been a very busy place. It had teemed with workshops and blast furnaces, but one of these periods of business depression which we call "hard

"He looked as if he didn't have much money," was the childish answer.

"Did he do anything strange?"

"Yes. He sat on a log there near the railroad tracks tearing up a piece of paper. He tore it into very little bits."

"Oh," said the detective, a strange hope surging in his heart, "I don't think a grown man would do that."

"You don't? Then I'll show you," and leading the way, the little one pointed out a log where the stranger had seated himself.

The little bits of paper were there. The detective did not hesitate to get down on his hands and knees and pick up the very last fragment. That evening, with his assistant, he took the train for Pittsburg. He went to his hotel at once, and the two men spent the whole night in putting the pieces of paper together. No enthusiast, working on a jig-saw puzzle, ever put more heart in his work than Furlong did in trying to make something out of those disconnected fragments. It was almost daylight when something finally came out of nothing. He gave a shout of joy. His work was completed and the finished product proved to be a blank check on a bank in Carlisle, Penn.

That was a starting point. It meant that the stranger had either lived or was known in Carlisle. In the meantime, Furlong made a second discovery. It was a small telegraph instrument that had been picked up near the tracks at Templeton. He hurried to Carlisle at once, and as soon as he alighted from the train, engaged in conversation with the telegraph operator at the station. He told the man he was looking for a person who was interested in telegraphy, and then he gave him a description of the stranger the little boy had seen sitting on the log at Templeton.

"Why," said the operator, "you must mean Will McCalla."

"That sounds like the name," ventured Furlong. "Does he live here?"

"Yes, he used to live over in that house yonder with his brother George. He has gone down to Texas, though, where he is doing well now as a telegraph operator and express agent."

"I'm mighty glad to hear that," said Furlong, "because I've got a telegraph instrument I'd like to give him as a gift."

"Well, that's quite a coincidence. I know he would like to have it right well. Not long ago he asked me to give him the address of a good manufacturer where he could get an instrument at a reasonable price, and I gave him the name of a good house in Pittsburg."

This proved to be the same address that was on the instrument Furlong had picked up at Templeton. In a week from that time the detective had completed his case. It proved to be one of the most audacious crimes that had ever been perpetrated within his knowledge. It started at a lonely place on the Allegheny railroad somewhere between Kittanning and Cowanshannock. Enormous rocks towered on both sides of the railroad at this point, and it was no uncommon thing for these monster boulders to fall from the mountain side and completely block railroad traffic. For this reason watchmen were constantly stationed along that part of the route in order to give warning of danger to approaching trains. McCalla had gone there and, addressing one of these watchmen, said that he was an inspector sent by the telegraph company to examine the wires. He exhibited a badge as evidence of his authority. In this manner he was enabled to work in peace and safety. He climbed a telegraph pole and deliberately cutting the wire he wanted, dropped the end of it to the ground and then connected it with his pocket instrument.

He now had control of the line and proceeded to go about his work in a business-like manner. First, he wired to Brady's Point and asked the name of the messenger who was to arrive with the safe and valuables on what was known as the "up train." To this he "signed" the name of Superintendent George Bingham of Pittsburg. The reply soon came stating that John Bingham, the brother of the superintendent, would be the messenger in charge. McCalla then sent a second telegram instructing Messenger Bingham to hand over the keys to the safe to the new messenger, who would report to him at Templeton and whose name was J. C. Brooks. As already mentioned, Bingham was to turn over the cash and valuables to Brooks and take a receipt for them. Messenger Bingham acknowledged the instructions to his brother, but the clever McCalla intercepted the message and it never reached its destination.

At the appointed time the rogue, in the guise of Brooks, the new messenger, met Bingham, secured the keys and, then, at his leisure, rifled the safe of its contents. It is believed that he must have had accomplices. At any rate his brother was



HE CONNECTED THE WIRE WITH HIS POCKET INSTRUMENT.



THE DETECTIVE HUNTED UNTIL HE HAD FOUND THE VERY LAST FRAGMENT.

wagon with the safe and proceeded as far as the city hall. At that point he said that he had an errand to go and would follow the other men in a few minutes. He jumped off the wagon and disappeared in the crowd.

Naturally, the first move in obtaining this information was to locate the regular messenger who should have been in charge of the safe. It was found that Mr. J. J. Bingham, a brother of the Pittsburg superintendent, was the man who had occupied that position for quite a while. He was an entirely trustworthy man. He was personally known to many of the officers of the express company, and his integrity had never been questioned. But where was he? Had he been murdered or was he kidnaped? That was the question that agitated the officials and alarmed the friends and relatives of the missing messenger.

In the midst of this fog of perplexity and doubt, Bingham suddenly cleared the atmosphere by appearing in person. No one was more amazed than he over the news of the robbery. When asked why he had left his charge, he exhibited the following telegram. It said:

"Look out for new messenger, named J. C. Brooks. Meet him at Templeton en route. Turn over cash and valuables to him and take receipts for same. Then report to the superintendent at

times had struck Templeton, and now most of the shops were closed and all of the blast furnaces were shut down. Hence the place presented the appearance of a deserted village. Furlong and his assistant were the only passengers that alighted from the train that day. The detective entered into conversation with the station agent and even passed the time of day with the railroader's wife, but neither of them could give him any information concerning the pilfered safe. Furlong, however, was not the man to be easily discouraged. He made up his mind not to leave Templeton until he had received some clue, no matter how trifling. In an interval of the conversation he began to chat with the station master's child, asking the boy how he was able to amuse himself in such a dull place.

"Oh," said the youngster, "people come here sometimes. I ain glad you came today."

"I'm glad, too," said the detective, gently. "I suppose it has been a long while since any other stranger stopped at this place."

"Oh, no," retorted the child, "there was a man here a few days ago." Furlong was interested at once.

"You don't mean it?"

"I do," was the quick retort; "I think I know when a stranger comes here."

"What did he look like?

suspected of being in the scheme with him.

Furlong, with all of these proofs in his possession, started after the culprit. The chase led the detective half way round the world. First Furlong went to Palmer, Texas, but found that the ingenious telegraph operator had left that place. He followed him to Atlanta, to Savannah, to Salt Lake City, to Key West, to Havana, Cuba, and finally McCalla was discovered just as he had set sail for Rio Janeiro. For aught anyone knows to the contrary, he may be today a Brazilian nobleman or the proprietor of a great coffee plantation. The fact that Furlong was recalled to Pittsburg by the great railroad riots of 1877 alone saved McCalla from arrest and conviction. His brother George was arrested, but died before his trial.

PRETTY POLLY PAPERS

Girls, girls, girls! I wonder how many there are in the world, and aren't they, every one, almost alike—not alike as two peas, for that would be dreadful, but liking the same good things of life, the pretty, dainty fancies, the delicious goodies, the solemn moments sandwiched in between the jolly times, the capacity for looking out on the big, great world as yet unknown—yes, girls, we are all alike; yet sometimes a girl is cleverer than others and has a good idea and passes it along. As it happens, I know ever so many girls, and we have had such nice, comfortable chats, and I couldn't begin to tell you the things they tell me about. "Couldn't begin to tell you," I say? Oh, but that is just what I want to do. In these papers of ours I want to pour in all the ingredients I can think of to make "Girdom Happiness," and we'll put it in a big jar of Life and leave the cover open once a week—just exactly like one of the potpourri jars in our grandmother's old-fashioned houses. Girdom happiness—doesn't that sound spicy and sweet and like a whiff of old-time gardens?

Potpourri jars make me think of roses, and surely that thought is appropriate in June.

Sachets—to be sure, bless your heart. Go out early in the morning and gather the rose petals from the garden and spread them out on papers in some spot in the house where the wind won't steal your treasure. To make them even more fragrant sprinkle them over with a few drops of alcohol and some rose sachet powder and let them dry again. Spread the dried rose leaves between layers of pretty rose-colored lawn, or some flowered material, running a few rose-colored silk threads across in quilting style to divide the petals. Lay these in your bureau drawers—and how "whiffy" of the garden your possessions will be, when winter comes without any posies! Another idea is to make fat little bags of rose petals and hang them by ribbons in your closet with your dresses. Still another fancy is to make some spiced rose leaf bags in simple cheese cloth. Put them away in a tin box, and when a horrid headache happens along sprinkle one with alcohol and use it for a wee comfort bag on the aching spot.

Do you know how to make rose jam

to bewitch your guests who drop in for a cup of tea next autumn? If not, you must surely learn now. Gather more rose petals for this confection, taking care they are thoroughly washed and dried and clean. To each cup of petals add one cup of sugar. Cook in the sun by placing in saucers with glass jelly jars over them until the sugar is melted. Then cook in an earthenware skillet on the stove until done—about half an hour. Seal in little jars. Served on water-thin slices of angel cake—oh, but it's good!

Some of you are going to be married this month; I'm sure of it. Here are some more "rose ideas" for brides and those who love them. First—now the rich girls needn't listen at all, but my dear girls who have to look at the pennies through a magnifying glass to see if they can't make them do big things—can grasp this idea. You're not going to be foolish enough to waste a little fortune on a satin wedding dress when you could use the money for so much nicer things? I was sure you weren't; then here's an idea. A soft, pretty white dress—the fabric doesn't matter so much, and it must have a lining it can be made of one of the imitation silk materials, trimming the dress itself with a few lace insertions just where they will be most picturesque, these to be edged with white roses.

You never saw such a dress? So much the better. Set the roses close together as an edging to the skirt, have them edge the bottom of the princess waist, and even the veil could be touched to daintiness with their floral burden. What could be more bride-like, what could be more bewitching? But the roses? Make them yourselves, of course. Take apart a white rose bought at a millinery store and use it for a pattern, making just as many as you like from stiff white lawn; buy the wee yellow centers which come for making paper or silk roses, and can't you just see how fat the tulle-purse you will remain?

Are you going to give the bride you know a rose shower? If you are, cover the table with rose-colored silkolene, and on top one of mosquito netting—yes, really. For a center piece have a big bowl of "really truly" roses and wind smilax in and out of the mosquito netting, or any other dainty delicate vine will do. How can you wind it in and out? Please let me go up head for this idea—take long strips of tissue paper, twist it spirally around a spray of smilax until it is like a long thread, then run it in and out of the meshes and, when where you want it, snip the paper and pull it out and the little leaves won't be broken off and will stay put.

Serve the goodies in "rose cases" and have pink and white ice cream and cakes, each with a pink paper rose "growing" from its top. And the gifts for the dear little bride? That's the best idea of all. Have a rose-covered table and on it a number of flower pots painted green. In each can be some mysterious package wrapped in brown paper, and rising from its top can blossom a tall paper rose tree. Won't any June bride love her rose garden?

Have you any old wicker chairs about your house that are too battered and worn for anything? Spirit one of them off to your room. Give

its worn-off varnish a new coat of gray-green paint and make a cozy cushion of rose figured chintz.

Dear me, the rose ideas keep growing up in my fancy—I must tell you about a girl's roseroom I know about. Some of you would have thought you were abused if you owned such a room, really a little attic chamber with a dormer window. This dear girl put on her thinking cap. She painted the walls white—by the way, did you know that the most ultra, smart, smarty, smartest people nowadays are having white walls in their beautiful houses?—then she took all the rose pictures she could find, some from seed catalogues, and some cheap rose prints she bought, and she cut out the roses and their leaves and put them on her wall, anywhere they looked best, within a foot and a half of the low ceiling. Then with a little brush she outlined each rose with a thin green line. After all was dry a thin coat of varnish went over the roses, and below them all ran a white picture molding. There was an ugly wooden bed in storage to be had for the asking. This she painted white and she used a bed spread of the softest gray-green silkolene caught here and there with rose sachets. You can make them, anyone can. Just a wee sachet bag hid in the heart of a silk or cloth rose. Now wasn't that a pretty idea to use them to "tut" with?

Make some individual strawberry short cake for luncheon, and see if your family don't suggest that you "do it aden," as one sweet baby I used to know always clamored if she liked anything over much. Make some flaky tea biscuit, split and butter them while hot, have some crushed and sweetened berries to put between the layers, and on top put a spoonful of whipped cream and one whole perfect berry. Such little, little goodnesses!

One more dainty to have at your next piazza party: Big macaroons, hollowed out a wee bit, and whipped cream piled high and a "rose" stuck in the top of each. Make this rose with about six candied rose leaves, and for the center a round gold candy. Good enough for a caterer? Surely, but a clever girl can do anything!

There are still lots of roses, but I've got to be blown away with some of my petals, for "time's up."

Yours till next week,
PRETTY POLLY.
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Happiness Precious.

Ex-Governor Pennypacker, in an address that was both kind and witty, said in Philadelphia of the divorce evil:

"There would be less divorce if there were more forgiveness. We forgive our enemies—would it be so dreadful to forgive our husbands and our wives?"

"I have been reading a play by a Frenchman—Hervieu's 'Connaistoi.' I wish we turned out such plays in this country—and in the last act of this play an old soldier says a profoundly beautiful thing about those husbands and wives who forgive.

"Happiness," he says, "is so precious to some of us that, when it is broken, we stoop and gather up the pieces."

Few men can distinguish between billiousness and true love.

