

# True Detective Stories

## THE MAN WITH A LION'S HEART.

BY A. L. DRUMMOND,

Formerly Chief U. S. Secret Service.

A BIG, square jawed, keen eyed man entered the office of Elmer Washburne, chief of the United States Secret Service, in Washington late in the year 1874 and introduced himself as George Albert Mason. He declined to tell his business to anybody but the chief, and said he would speak to Mr. Washburne only behind closed doors. He was shown into an inner office.

"Chief," said he, "what would you give to get hold of Peter McCartney?"

Mr. Washburne smiled. Peter McCartney was perhaps the most wanted man of his kind in America. A few years later a Missouri sheriff might as well have been asked what he would give to get hold of Jesse James. McCartney, sought as he was on every hand, was not only hard to catch, but when trapped he had a habit of refusing to stay caught. So expert a jail breaker was he that, out of sheer humor, he once stood behind the bars in a St. Louis prison and told a chief of the Secret Service that he would call upon him at his hotel at ten o'clock that night. More than that, he kept the engagement, to the great astonishment of the chief.

"I would pay a good big reward to get Peter McCartney," replied Mr. Washburne. "But I would want to see my man first and be sure there was no mistake. Why? Can you get him?"

"Yes, I can. Appoint me a special officer and give me a man to help me and I will bring McCartney in."

The appointment was made and an operative named Duckworth was sent out with Mason to make the arrest, which was to take place in St. Louis.

Now, a word or two about McCartney. If ever there was a jack-of-all-trades in crime he was one—and he was master of all. He was a wonderfully expert counterfeiter. He had just put out an imitation of a \$5 note issued by the Traders' National Bank of Chicago that baffled everybody but experts. Nor did he, like so many counterfeiters, know only part of his trade. He was a fine chemist, a good engraver of plates and a good printer.

When business became bad in the counterfeiting line Pete could turn a hand to burglary and do a job of safe blowing or house breaking in a manner that stamped him no amateur. Once he set up shop as a dentist, but at this he failed. The only peaceful pursuit at which he was ever known to prosper was as a public lecturer. There may be still living in the West some persons who will recall a shaggy bearded speaker who gave minute directions with regard to how to detect counterfeit money. Pete was the man, though on such occasions he never went under the name of McCartney. At the conclusion of each lecture it was his custom to go about town and pass counterfeit right and left. Why he did these things, unless from a spirit of dare-devilry and humor, I have never been able to figure out. All I know is that he did them. It is true that in this way he distributed a good deal of counterfeit money, but that is no explanation. There are safer and better ways of putting bad bills into circulation.

It was to trap this man that Mason and Duckworth set out from Washington on the long journey to St. Louis. Mason knew McCartney and believed he had his confidence. The plan was for Mason to discover the room in which McCartney did his work, lead Duckworth to it and make the arrest.

Several days after the pair reached St. Louis Mason reported to Duckworth that he had obtained the desired information and everything was ready to make the capture. Shortly after nightfall they set out. On the way Mason suggested that they stop in a saloon that McCartney was known to frequent. Having entered the place, Mason made an excuse to go into a back room. After waiting for him a little while Duckworth went to look him up. Mason was nowhere to be found. The door through which he passed led to a back yard that opened into an alley.

Duckworth went back to the local headquarters of the Secret Service and reported what he regarded as Mason's breach of faith. While he was talking a report came from Police Headquarters that three men, one of whom claimed to be a Secret Service official, were in a hospital, badly slashed up. Duckworth hastened to the hospital and found Mason on an operating table. Surgeons were trying to sew up a gash across his abdomen that extended almost from one side to the other.

The other two patients were Peter McCartney and a well known counterfeiter named Joe Rogers. They had been clubbed and cut until they were weak from their wounds, but the condition of neither was as serious as that of Mason.

When the trio had revived enough to talk they told their stories. McCartney declared that Mason tried to extort money from him by threatening to arrest him. He said he had a large amount of currency in his possession—which was true—and that Mason, claiming to be a Secret Service official, said he would arrest him if he did not give it up. McCartney said he did not purpose to be blackmailed and therefore drew his knife and used it. Rogers corroborated McCartney's story.

Mason told a simple story of cornered criminals who tried to murder him when he descended upon them, and he turned over \$5,000 in counterfeit money that he found in their room.

There was nothing to be gained by taking the word of McCartney and Rogers, as against that of Mason, so his story was accepted as true. And, as the hospital physicians reported that McCartney and Rogers would be at their backs for some time, Duckworth was ordered back to Washington. He had not been home more than ten days, however, before news was received from St. Louis that McCartney and Rogers had escaped from the hospital. Mason recovered and was given \$1,000 for bringing about McCartney's arrest. He gave a plausible explanation of his disappearance from the saloon the night he left Duckworth, and, of course, the fact that McCartney escaped from the hospital was not to be charged up against him.

That seemed to end the case, but it didn't. The next spring a former chief of the Secret Service reported that he could obtain a set of rolls used to make counterfeit plates provided he were given a considerable sum of money to buy them from an informer who knew where to put his hands upon them. For reasons that it is not necessary to enlarge upon here I was ordered to shadow him. I did so, and quite by accident saw a transaction that convinced Chief Washburne that the former chief was not acting honestly.

The suspected man was brought before the chief, duly accused of trying to sell rolls that he himself



Peter McCartney  
Photo by Fowler



George Albert Mason  
Photo by Lewis

"YOU'LL NOT BLOW ANYTHING OFF! GET OUT OF HERE!"

had captured when he was a government official years before, and told that it was idle to try to deny the charge.

"The question now is," said the chief, "what are you willing to do to buy your liberty? What criminal do you know that you can squeal on?"

"Well," he said, "I know George Albert Mason. He has been handling some of those counterfeit Chicago fives. He will be in New York next week. If you have a man who knows Mason and whom Mason doesn't know I can show him how to make the arrest."

Mr. Washburne had heard other things about Mason since the occurrence of the stabbing affray in St. Louis and was eager to capture him. So I was ordered to accompany the former chief to New York, and David H. Crowley and William W. Kennoch were instructed to accompany me. We found the former chief living at the Park Hotel, on lower Broadway—now the Broadway Central. He had a room on the third floor and we took one on the second. Mason upon his arrival in the city was to call at the former chief's room, and we were to capture him.

When the day came to make the catch Chief Washburne came up from Washington and with the rest of us went to the room in the Park Hotel. As I was not known to Mason, I wandered around the corridors, occasionally going down to the office, waiting for him to appear. A little after noon he came to the front door, walked up the stairs and went to the former chief's room. I went to our room and told the chief and the two others of his arrival. Mason remained in the room perhaps ten minutes. When he went down stairs I followed him, with the other three a few steps behind.

After reaching the ground floor Mason started to go down stairs to the barber shop. He had descended perhaps three steps when I reached over the banister, grabbed him by the right arm and threw my weight on him. With his left hand he tried to reach a revolver that was in his right hand coat pocket, but before he could do so Chief Washburne had his own revolver in Mason's face and the other two detectives were swinging on his left arm.

"Surrender or I'll blow your head off!" shouted the chief, as he pressed the muzzle of his gun a little closer to Mason's face.

"You'll not blow anything off! Get out of here!" shouted Mason.

The chief did not shoot nor did he get out, and the fight went on. Mason was a powerful man and it was all the four of us could do to overpower him and put the handcuffs on him. All the while we were fighting he was hurling at us a volume of profanity the like of which I have never heard from that day to this. Nothing that he could lay his tongue to seemed bad enough to call us.

As soon as we had the handcuffs on him we began to search him. One of the first things we found was an envelope. On one side was an address, but before we could read it Mason, maneuvered as he was, grabbed the piece of paper and bit out that part which bore a name. We had to choke him until he was black in the face before he would give it up.

The half chewed paper bore the name and New York address of Kitty Wells. Kitty is dead now and the present generation does not know her even by reputation, so it may be of interest to give some facts pertaining to her.

Kitty Wells was originally a London burglar, look a fancy to her and married her. She obtained a divorce and was next heard of when she startled the world by marrying Juan Terry, the Cuban sugar king. Terry saw her in London, fell a quick victim to her wiles and led her to the altar. About a year later he died, leaving in his will \$5,000,000 to their child, born after his death, and \$1,000,000 to her. She died in 1894.

It was after Kitty's divorce from Ballard and prior to her marriage to Terry that we found an envelope bearing her name and New York address in George Albert Mason's pocket. We went to her house and asked what it meant.

"You insult me," she replied, "by asking such a question."

"We are not here to insult you," I said, "but to find out what you know about George Albert Mason."



Mrs. Kate Wells,  
Alias Mrs. Charles Bullard,  
Alias Mrs. Juan Terry  
Photo by Hannay

"I know he is a fine gentleman," said she, "if that will help you any."

"Do you know that he is wanted in Rochester on a charge of counterfeiting?" I asked—which was true.

"I know nothing of the kind," she replied. "So far as I know he is a gentleman. How he makes a living is a question concerning which I have never inquired."

It was evident that if Kitty knew anything to the discredit of Mason she was not ready to tell it, so we took her to the Bleeker street office of the Secret Service, not as a prisoner, but as a witness, and then went back to search her rooms. In her bedroom was an old fashioned wooden bed with posts perhaps four inches square at the bottom and no castors. Under one of the bedposts was found \$2,000 in big counterfeit bills.

Kitty was told of the discovery and asked for an explanation. She said she knew the money was there, but denied all knowledge of its spurious nature. She said Mason had given it to her to keep for him and she supposed it was genuine money. She adhered rigidly to this story, and after a week she was released.

About this time I received orders from Washington to go to Toronto and look up Mason's record in Canada. I found an amazing array of facts. First of all I learned that Mason was one of the men who forced an entrance into Secretary Seward's house the night President Lincoln was assassinated and tried to murder the Secretary of State. I don't know whether Chief Washburne knew this before I went to Canada, but I didn't, and he never told me. A man named Payne was the one who actually did the stabbing in the Seward house, but Mason was with him and for his part in the affair was sentenced to death. President Johnson commuted his sentence to twenty years' imprisonment, and, after serving a few years in the penitentiary at Columbus, Ohio, President Grant pardoned him.

I learned that prior to the assassination of President Lincoln Mason was one of the conspirators who, from their hiding place in Canada, plotted not only the assassination of the chief officers of the federal government but the burning of New York and other Northern cities.

Throughout all of these criminal proceedings Mason appeared purely as a mercenary. Born in England and reared in Canada, he had neither interest in the South nor a share in the animosity of any of its mistaken citizens. He was simply willing to kill Seward or burn New York for a financial consideration.

I also learned in Toronto that Mason had been arrested in the Dominion of Canada fifty-two times and convicted forty-eight times. His offenses included almost all of the misdemeanors and minor crimes as well as some of a serious nature. He had fought, stolen, assaulted with intent to kill, robbed in the highway, rifled houses by forcing an entrance at night and forged a few pieces of paper. Since his release from the Ohio Penitentiary he had spent most of the time in jail.

Mason was brought to trial before Commissioner Shields in New York city on a charge of having passed counterfeit money on Albert Enzor, of Rochester. He was quickly convicted, and when he was asked if he had anything to say why the sentence of the court should not be passed upon him replied by calling the Commissioner all the vile names that came to his mind. He was sentenced to serve twelve years

in the penitentiary at Albany.

His life in prison surpassed anything of the kind of which I have ever read. Almost the first thing he did was to knock down all the guards within reach. A huge man, with broad, powerful shoulders, even the other prisoners suffered at his hands, and he was chained hand and foot to the stone floor of a dark cell, like an ugly animal. He had suffered this punishment for a week when the Warden, a kindly old man, ordered that he be unchained and brought upstairs to his office.

The shackles were taken from Mason's arms and legs. So stiff were his joints that he could hardly walk, but with difficulty he hobbled to the room in which sat the Warden.

"Mason, you have had a pretty hard time," began the kindly official. "Aren't you ready to behave like a man and receive the treatment that men get?"

Mason spit in the Warden's face without saying a word. He was taken back to the dark cell and chained to the floor.

A month passed by and again the Warden sent for him. Asked if he was not ready to be good Mason cursed the Warden to the extent of his vocabulary and swore that if he were let loose he would kill everybody about the place.

To make a long story short, Mason spent the entire twelve years in Albany Prison chained to the floor. He was given a mattress to lie on, and a number of times was asked if he was not ready to obey the rules and come up into the daylight. But he refused to surrender and left the dark cell permanently only at the expiration of his term.

When he was released from prison the first thing he did was to visit me at my office in the Post Office building.

"Do you remember me?" he asked.

"Yes," said I, "you are George Albert Mason. What do you want?"

"I want to know where Washburne is. I haven't anything against you, but I am going to kill Washburne the first time I see him."

Mr. Washburne at that time had the contract for building a large reservoir in Westchester county, New York, but I told Mason I thought his old enemy was dead.

"Well," he replied, "if he isn't dead I'll kill him."

Without saying another word Mason left the office and I never heard of him again. He never molested Mr. Washburne, who is still alive.

I always thought Peter McCartney sized Miles up about right. Old Pete, who as the years crept over him came to look more and more like a German professor or a Russian admiral, finally fell into the hands of the police and served a term in prison. While in jail he heard how the man who betrayed him in St. Louis had chosen to remain chained to the floor of a dark cell rather than to promise to be good and remain in the daylight.

"That's just like Mason," said he. "He's got the courage of a lion, but the judgment of a jackass. He doesn't know enough to eat good food."

### THE WEAR OF RAILROAD IRON.

MORE than one hundred thousand tons of steel is actually worn away from the surface of rails in the United States yearly. The tonnage of rails discarded as "worn out" every year is about one million, and at least ten per cent of the metal has disappeared in each case, while there has also been a change in the shape of the head, due to displacement of the steel by "flow." This loss is due to the rolling friction of the wheel on the rail. As to the wheels themselves, these lose from 17,000 to 18,000 tons of metal annually, of which the great bulk is rubbed off by the friction of the brake. The old cast iron wheels are being rapidly replaced by steel, and this will doubtless affect the wear on both wheel and rail, although the result is somewhat uncertain. It may be expected that the loss from steel wheels will be greater than that from the harder, though more brittle, cast iron. In spite of this loss, however, they may last longer, as the steel wheels will wear more than the iron ones before becoming unfit for use. Tests made by one of the largest railroads in the country indicate that the "life" of a steel wheel is likely to be three times as long as that of an iron one. The importance of a careful study of the conditions of wear appears from the fact that the thousands of tons of valuable metal thus dissipated by wear are not recoverable, and might as well be annihilated so far as their future use to the world is concerned.

### "Ask Your Father"

Jack and Janet Go to a Restaurant for Luncheon.

BY TUDOR JENKS.

"NOW," asked Mrs. Townsend, when they were settled in their places at the restaurant table, "what shall I order for luncheon?"

"Let me see the bill of fare," Janet said, reaching for it.

"In a minute," Jack answered; "I just want to see what kinds of soup there are."

"I don't want soup," said Janet.

"Neither do I," her mother said.

"But I'd like some," Jack insisted. "Now, here's some of the mulligatawny. What's that like?"

"If you take soup we'll have to sit doing nothing while you eat yours," Janet objected. "And, besides, one portion is more than you can eat, and it will be wasted."

"It won't save it to eat it, any more than to leave it after it is paid for," was Jack's answer.

"You don't have soup usually at home," his mother remarked.

"That's why I want it. What's the use of going to a restaurant if you just eat what you get at home?"

"You're not here for amusement, but to get some food," Janet observed.

"All right," Jack agreed; "then you can just eat oatmeal with bread and butter. That'll be cheap and filling."

Janet began to look cross.

"Here," Mrs. Townsend said, "let me take the bill of fare. I will order the luncheon." After a moment she looked up. "Suppose, Janet, you and I have some tea and fancy cakes, and for Jack I will order—some baked chicken pie."

"I don't like chicken pie. I'd rather have mock-turtle soup and chicken salad and ice cream."

"That's too much," his mother replied, "and it's too expensive."

"Well, then," Jack grumbled, "if I can't have what I want I won't take anything!"

"That's just like you!" Janet exclaimed. "You just go and spoil everything!"

"Well," Jack muttered, "I'm not going to guzzle tea and crumble dried up cake. I'd sooner take chewing gum!"

Mrs. Townsend put down the bill of fare in despair. "I do wish you wouldn't be so troublesome! I'm sure I can't suit you all without ordering a lot of things we don't want. And it is wasting money, too. All we need is a light luncheon so that you will not get too hungry before your dinner." She picked up the bill once more. "Let me see. What do you say to a nice salad with French dressing, and some rolls?"

"Don't like leaves," Jack muttered, while Janet looked equally unhappy, and asked, "Can't we have some dessert?"

"Dessert!" echoed Mrs. Townsend. "Yes, we could. Suppose we say rice pudding?"

This was the last straw. Jack went down to the depths of despair, and Janet's lower lip began to tremble.

"Well, children," their mother said, "shall I give the order?"

"I'd rather go without anything," was Jack's reply, and he turned indifferently from the table.

"So would I," Janet agreed.

"Have you ordered?" inquired a waiter, approaching briskly.

"Not yet," said Mrs. Townsend. "I'll let you know in just a moment. Come, children, what will you have?"

"You won't let us have what we want," Jack answered, coldly.

"I'm sure I don't know what to do. You suggest ridiculous things and won't say yes to anything else."

"Women don't know what men like for lunch," Jack observed grandly.

"Oh, very well," Mrs. Townsend replied. "We can't wait much longer. Your father wished us to be prompt so as to be in time for the matinee. Now he will be—Here he comes. I'm glad. If you don't like me to order, you can just ask your father."

Mr. Townsend came in briskly, smiling and gay. He made his way to the table, and greeted them affectionately. Then he noted the frost in the air.

"What's the matter?" he inquired. "Luncheon not served? Where's your waiter?"

"We couldn't decide what to have," said Mrs. Townsend. "Janet wanted some ice cream!"

"I didn't say so," Janet interrupted.

"And Jack choose mulligatawny soup!"

"Mock turtle," Jack corrected. "I only asked what mulligatawny!"

"That's neither here nor there," his father remarked, hastily consulting his watch. "And what did you want, my dear?"

"Only a cup of tea," Mrs. Townsend answered, "and some cake."

"That'll never do," her husband said, frowning and shaking his head. Then, rapping sharply on the table, he brought the waiter on the run. "Here, waiter," he said, "bring two portions roast beef, rare, with gravy, mashed potatoes, and have them served quick as you can. We're in a hurry!"

"Yes, sah," replied the waiter, and disappeared with a napkin trailing in the breeze.

"The longer you wait the less you can tell what you want. Roast beef is always in season, makes good red blood, everybody likes it, and, after all, there's nothing better. We're not just twenty minutes. Let's talk of something else."

And so they did.

### SOME RUSSIAN MEDICINES.

NEWS comes from Russia of a remarkable series of frauds in the drug trade that has just been exposed in that country. The swindlers had a large factory in Odessa, with offices and a completely organized system of distribution, and probably others, as yet undiscovered, are in existence. The bottles used had labels in imitation of those employed by an eminent German firm. Bottles labelled "Xeroderm" (a disinfecting compound) contained a mixture made chiefly of bricks; "Salpina" was sweetened and colored water, and other drugs were imitated with soap, lime and dyes. Quinine, phenacetine and numerous similar medicaments were all represented by common table salt. Inquiry showed that 28 per cent of all Russian drug stores that were examined sold more or less of these falsified products, although in many cases the adulterations were not so gross as those described above. The business of the Odessa factory alone is said to amount to a million dollars, and the end is not yet.