

The Boodler and the Voodoo

True Story of the Secret Service

By COL. H. C. WHITLEY
Former Chief United States Secret Service



HAVE found in my experience that men of massive mentalities and lofty ideas are frequently lacking in intuitive faculties. In their efforts to reach something at the top they fail to see the underlining hand at the base.

The little secluded town of Groton, Mass., was the home of Hon. Geo. S. Boutwell, President of the United States, an educated man of sentiment and elegance and Puritanical in his ways. He was possessed of a fair knowledge of public affairs and was a systematic and successful in the management of the treasury department. While in Washington he mixed little with the politicians. He was a man of few words and his favorite diet was bread and milk. He used neither tobacco nor intoxicants. Like other great men with whom I came in contact he was a man of almost wholly unerring judgment. He favored reform rather than punishment for rogues. As an evidence of his obliquity of vision and lack of penetration when called upon to discuss matters involving about the national capital, I will relate a couple of incidents.

On a day when I was busily engaged in my office in the treasury department a messenger brought and informed me that the secretary wanted to see me at once. Entering a side room next to Mr. Boutwell's study, I was by him introduced to two men dressed in civilian clothes who had come all the way from Philadelphia to see the secretary and inform him of an astounding counterfeiting conspiracy that might shake the nation to its foundation. The gentlemen were city detectives and rather sporty appearing characters. In their bearing there was an air of self-sufficiency and a know-all aboutness that was impressive in the mind of a "green one."

Their story in substance was that while engaged in exploiting the dastardly deeds of criminals they had discovered a chance discovery that was of tremendous importance to the United States government. For a price they were anxious to assist in capturing and sending to several mysterious cases at home, but had turned themselves away from their duty long enough to slip away over to the nation's capital for the purpose of acquainting the secretary with a dangerous counterfeiting scheme.

The startling story told by the men before the appearance of truth. The secretary was deeply interested and appeared worried and greatly disturbed as he handed me the face and back of a five-dollar treasury note printed on separate pieces of paper. He instructed me to investigate at once. My crystal ball at this time was remarkably good. I could easily trace the fine eccentric lines upon a note without the use of a magnifying glass. After carefully examining the same I handed me and comparing them with a good note of the same denomination, I was unable to discover the slightest difference, and I told the "secretary" that I thought they were genuine. If this was so, in what manner could they have been obtained? It would require collusion on the part of a number of persons in the printing bureau, to secure them, as the face and back of these notes were printed at different times by different persons, and besides the work was being done under the watchful eyes of the chief clerks. If the face and back of these notes were counterfeit they were very dangerous, as they seemed a perfect facsimile of the genuine. The two detectives carried with them as much of great mystery that they were unable to explain anything, but they were of the opinion that the counterfeiters had somehow obtained duplicates of the government plates upon which the notes were printed.

Mr. Boutwell was deeply interested. To him it was an affair of great mystery. To more fully impress the secretary with the importance of the case Philadelphia sleuths came on and boldly declared that any amount of that kind of money could be bought at fifty cents on the dollar. This was a clincher. I now saw that I was up against a puzzling case. I was at a loss, although not fully convinced, in regard to the character of the prints. It made little difference to me. I was sure it was a trick. I was back an investigation was necessary.

It would not do to allow the impressions to be examined by the chief of the printing bureau, as it was possible there was some one who was among his employees. It was decided that I should go to Philadelphia on the following day. There I was to be met by the two detectives and introduced to a broker who was to be known to me. I was to dress in the proper dress and play the part of a "cattle man from Texas. I chose to wear a suit of brown cloth, a white shirt and a white necktie. I was not particular where they came from. They might

have been smuggled in across the Rio Grande. I was familiar with that part of the country and could easily pass myself off as a resident of that section. Mr. Boutwell wrote me an order on Treasurer Spiller for the sum of five thousand dollars. This was done in the presence of the two detectives. It was understood that the counterfeiters would not make a deal of less than ten thousand dollars of their money. For this they were to be paid five thousand dollars in good money. While the detectives insisted that the counterfeiters would pass just as readily as the genuine, they could not explain why it was being offered at fifty cents on the dollar. The two detectives returned to Philadelphia and I agreed to meet them there on the following day.

That afternoon I chanced to step into the office of Mr. William A. Richardson, at that time assistant secretary of the treasury. He was a lawyer of marked ability. I told him confidentially about the suspected counterfeiters and the five thousand dollar order given me by Mr. Boutwell.

"This won't do," said he. "The secretary has no authority to draw on General Spiller. You had better take the order back and explain to Mr. Boutwell that his action in this matter is unlawful."

Acting upon the advice of the assistant secretary, I returned the order to Mr. Boutwell, and he was greatly pleased when I told him that I had concluded to take a bundle of counterfeit money and put it in the hotel safe. The young man's eyes fairly danced with delight at the prospect. He did not for a moment doubt my sincerity, and of course he believed I did not suspect him. It was agreed that I should think the matter over. He was to call the next day after I had been offered an opportunity to inquire in regard to the bills I had purchased of him. The next time he came to the hotel I, although still a little suspicious, had made up my mind to chance the deal. He wrote out the directions. I was to meet him at the lower door of an upstairs office on a certain street. We were then to step into an open stairway near the place of meeting and make the exchange. I was to take his package of bogus stuff and he to receive my good money. He urged me for some time to go out into the suburbs to make the deal, but this I flatly refused. Everything was to be done on the dead square. The young man swore he was perfectly reliable, but he had to be cautious in his movements in order to prevent the possibility of detection.

I went to the place agreed upon and stood on a step facing the street. When the pretended counterfeiter put in an appearance he carried under his coat a sizable bundle easily done up. My package was smaller than his and just as valuable. I questioned his good intentions for a moment and said I had come there to make a square deal and I wanted to see what he had in his package, which was so arranged

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Mr. Boutwell was greatly disturbed. It was a serious affair to his mind, and he might have been induced to pay a large reward had the scheme not been exploded.

The following is another illustration of the secretary's simplicity.

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I saw that some sort of an investigation was necessary to put the mind at ease. Hence I telegraphed several detectives to meet me in Washington. Mr. Boutwell sent a messenger to bring the man who had furnished the information. He was to go to the room in the Owen house. After a lapse of time he came. As he entered he took off his hat. I saw at once that the man was looking in self-confidence and the other either of an ex-cop or a mental "fix" some kind. I shook hands with him.

Assuming a look of benevolence I looked him over carefully. He was a tall, thin man, slightly stooped, with a dull white skin. His protruding eyes were very high, and expressionless. I gently turned his face to the window and sized him up. I was quite sure his spirit had been broken and that he was a fraud, yet I was uncertain as to the best manner of handling him.

"I have met you somewhere before," I said to you somewhere before. He raised his eyes timidly. My remark seemed to rattle him.

"Where were you born?" I inquired.

In a faltering voice he answered, "In Columbia, South Carolina."

It flashed across my mind at once that the fellow was of negro blood. Looking him straight in the eye, I quickly placed my finger on the tip of his nose. He shrank back a little but did not appear to be offended. I then said:

"What was your master's name down there?"

I thought to impress him with the idea that I was familiar with the locality from which he came. He gave me the name of his former master in a hesitating way. I told him to take a seat and tell his story. It was fiction, but I thought the result of a dream. His version of the manner in which he discovered the contemplated robbery was so improbable that it is not worth relating in detail. I questioned and cornered him until I was sure that his story was a transparent concoction of a weak but criminal mind. It would do in a dime novel or to deceive some of the persons who were a dreamer, a sort of voodoo I had had some experience with this class of negroes in the south. As many persons may not be aware of the fact, I will tell you that the end of the end of the end of a dream. The gristle on the tip of the nose of the negro is soft and yielding, while that of a white man is firm, giving the feeling of a bony substance. When all other tests failed in discovering African blood, the trader would place his finger on the end of the nose of the person on trial for his liberty. If the pad was yielding the witness would turn to the recorder and say: "This fellow, sah, is a nigger."

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While at my New York office I one day received a telegram from Mr. Boutwell summoning me hastily to Washington. When I arrived at the secretary's office in the treasury department, he took me into a private room where he informed me of a contemplated robbery. He said he had learned through a reliable source that plans had been made by a gang of burglars to rob General Spiller's cash division, and that the watchman on duty at night were in the conspiracy. He had telegraphed for me for the purpose of forwarding the thieves. To my mind the story told by the secretary was a fallacy. It sounded like a romance. I knew that a robbery of this kind was quite impossible, but the secretary was so much in earnest that I was almost afraid to give him my real opinion in regard to the affair.

I saw that some sort of an investigation was necessary to put the mind at ease. Hence I telegraphed several detectives to meet me in Washington. Mr. Boutwell sent a messenger to bring the man who had furnished the information. He was to go to the room in the Owen house. After a lapse of time he came. As he entered he took off his hat. I saw at once that the man was looking in self-confidence and the other either of an ex-cop or a mental "fix" some kind. I shook hands with him.

Assuming a look of benevolence I looked him over carefully. He was a tall, thin man, slightly stooped, with a dull white skin. His protruding eyes were very high, and expressionless. I gently turned his face to the window and sized him up. I was quite sure his spirit had been broken and that he was a fraud, yet I was uncertain as to the best manner of handling him.

"I have met you somewhere before," I said to you somewhere before. He raised his eyes timidly. My remark seemed to rattle him.

"Where were you born?" I inquired.

In a faltering voice he answered, "In Columbia, South Carolina."

It flashed across my mind at once that the fellow was of negro blood. Looking him straight in the eye, I quickly placed my finger on the tip of his nose. He shrank back a little but did not appear to be offended. I then said:

"What was your master's name down there?"

I thought to impress him with the idea that I was familiar with the locality from which he came. He gave me the name of his former master in a hesitating way. I told him to take a seat and tell his story. It was fiction, but I thought the result of a dream. His version of the manner in which he discovered the contemplated robbery was so improbable that it is not worth relating in detail. I questioned and cornered him until I was sure that his story was a transparent concoction of a weak but criminal mind. It would do in a dime novel or to deceive some of the persons who were a dreamer, a sort of voodoo I had had some experience with this class of negroes in the south. As many persons may not be aware of the fact, I will tell you that the end of the end of the end of a dream. The gristle on the tip of the nose of the negro is soft and yielding, while that of a white man is firm, giving the feeling of a bony substance. When all other tests failed in discovering African blood, the trader would place his finger on the end of the nose of the person on trial for his liberty. If the pad was yielding the witness would turn to the recorder and say: "This fellow, sah, is a nigger."

The voodoo negro pretends to be endowed with supernatural power. As evoked agent of the devil he conjures up strange tales for those who put their faith in amulets, rabbits' feet, etc.

The negro that I met at the Owen house had, I suppose, been inspired by his evil genius to concoct the plausible story he told Mr. Boutwell. It was now after hours and I went to Mr. Boutwell's residence and told him my experience with the negro.

He was greatly astonished when he learned the character of the man. He said he thought he was a white man and a very fair and candid one at that. When I pointed out the utter impossibility of burglarizing General Spiller's cash division, the secretary was satisfied and quite willing to drop the subject. It is unnecessary to say that the burglar did not take place.

to the government than to cope with the situation themselves.

For the purpose of convincing the secretary of the treasury that there was a dangerous counterfeit about, they had secured from Wightman the back and face of a five-dollar greenback. These had been split from one note and pasted upon paper of the same about the same thickness as the genuine money. It was a skilful piece of work and difficult to detect, but it was easily done by experts. The paper upon which the treasury notes were printed at that time did not contain the localized and distributive fibre which would prevent it from being split. Before the paper was invented the paper upon which the government notes were printed could easily be soaked apart and nicely pasted over other fine sheets of paper. It was very deceptive and difficult to detect.

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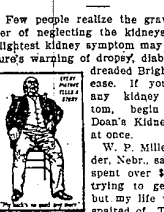
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CHECK IT IN TIME.



Few people realize the grave danger of neglecting the kidneys. The slightest kidney symptom may be Nature's warning of dropsy, diabetes or dreaded Bright's disease. If you have any kidney symptoms, begin using Doan's Kidney Pills at once.

W. B. Miller, Pender, Neb., says: "I spent over \$1,000.00 trying to get well, but my life was despaired of. The doctor said I had torn the ligaments of the kidneys apart. I began using Doan's Kidney Pills and they were the first remedy that helped me. Were it not for them, I would have had to give up work."

Remember the name—Doan's. For sale by all dealers. 50 cents a box. Foster-Milburn Co., Buffalo, N. Y.

The Oldest Kilkittat. Jake Hunt, the oldest living Kilkittat Indian known, lies at death's door at his home adjoining this town east of here. The old Indian is reputed to be more than 100 years of age.

Years ago an Indian village stood where the Hunt family now carries on a general farming business. All that is left of the old settlement is a little church, a totem pole and numerous mounds where the Kilkittats who could not reach the century mark Old Jake says that this was the Indians' graveyard before the advent of early white settlers.

Jake Hunt is destined not to die a poor Indian. His lands are as rich and productive as any in the valley and command a high price. He is said to have married seven times during his long career, but there will be only a widow and a few children to fall heir to his valuable property—situated on the coast of the Oregon coast.

IT IS A MISTAKE. Many have the idea that anything will sell if advertised strong enough. This is a great mistake. True, a few sales might be made by advertising an absolutely worthless article but it is only the article that is bought again and again that pays. An example of the big success of a worthy