

CAPTAIN LINDEN'S MOUNTAIN MYSTERY

By GEORGE BARTON

How Famous Detective Unearthed Great Quantity of Loot Guided by the Crook He Outwitted—All Guilty Ones Receive the Penalty, Through Work of Clever Sleuth—Overcomes All Obstacles.

On the night of October 19, 1875, Paymaster McClure and his bodyguard, Jim Flanagan, employees of Charles McFadden, a railroad contractor, were waylaid in the Luzerne mountains, just outside of Wilkesbarre, Pa., robbed, and foully murdered.

The two men left Wilkesbarre in a one-horse buggy and arranged their journey so that they might reach Miner's Mills in time to pay off the Italian laborers who were working on the railroad near that place. They had \$13,000 in a leather satchel which was fastened to the bottom of the carriage by a couple of straps. The thought of personal danger never entered the minds of either of the men. They knew every foot of the ground, and, moreover, were acquainted with nearly every man, woman and child within a radius of five miles.

The always the occasion of much joy among the Italian laborers and their wives and children. Both McClure and Flanagan were looked on as minstrels in editions of Santa Claus, except that instead of coming once a year, they made their welcome visits twice a month. They were as punctual as the clock itself, and the workmen knew to the minute when to expect the paymaster and his assistant. As a consequence, when they failed to appear at the usual time on October 19, the people were very much surprised. A telegram was sent to Wilkesbarre stating that they left that city 12 hours before.

A general alarm was sent out and a delegation of men started for the mountains. Some of the most prominent citizens of Luzerne county headed the searching party. They knew that the paymaster and his assistant carried a large sum of money and they were also aware that certain parts of the mountains were as lawless as the most lawless section of the United States. Little wonder that they were filled with grim forebodings. They had not gone far before their worst fears were realized. The horse belonging to McClure and Flanagan lay dead in the road. The animal had been wounded and evidently suffered great agony before it died, for it lay there writhing in its own blood. Some yards further up the road they came to the broken shafts of a carriage.

The carriage had been shattered, never having been able to withstand the shock that was still to come. It came only too soon. The dead body of Paymaster McClure was found dangling from the bar of the buggy, where it had been caught and hung suspended for hours. An examination proved that the dead man had been shot in the back in four distinct places. It was as if a volley had been fired from ambush. The noise of the affray increased directly when Flanagan was found face down, prostrate in the road. Lifeless. He evidently had been shot and fallen from the wagon.

The inquest demonstrated nothing of value. The funeral of the murdered men, which took place from Miner's Mills, was largely attended. All of the Italians who worked on the railroad were present. One of them was Michael Rizzolo. He came to very much affected, and, pulling out his handkerchief, wept bitterly. He cried out:

"My goodness, who could have done this awful crime? I will have to help to run down the murderers, when we get them we will string them up without mercy!"

Within 24 hours Rizzolo was arrested, charged with the murder of McClure and Flanagan.

"But, unfortunately, the arrest was made only on suspicion. There was not a shred of evidence on which to hold the man in custody. The fact that he lived in a shanty on the mountainside. The expected happened. He was discharged from custody.

In the meantime Charles McFadden, the employer of the murdered men, determined that the assassin should not go free, if a plentiful expenditure and the employment of the best detective skill in America could prevent it.

Accordingly, he sent for Capt. Robert J. Linden.

Within 24 hours Linden was in Wilkesbarre, with a full payroll and unlimited money. His first step was to see Mike Rizzolo under surveillance. After that he made an exhaustive investigation of the scene of the murder. At its conclusion he was convinced of the guilt of Rizzolo. But he lacked the proof that would satisfy a jury—in fact, was without a speck of evidence of any kind. A man cannot be convicted merely because some

other man believes him guilty of a crime. No one knew this better than Robert J. Linden.

His assistant, Capt. E. J. Dougherty, said:

"Shall we arrest Rizzolo?"

"No; we must get either a confession or sufficient evidence for a conviction."

At this critical stage of the game the local authorities who had heard of the movements of Linden and his assistants, re-arrested Rizzolo. Linden was not given to profanity, but some of the things he said on this occasion were unprintable. He foresaw a trial and an acquittal, a fiasco, a miscarriage of justice. He went to Thomas Quigley of Miner's Mills.

"Mr. Quigley, you want the mountaineers solved?"

"Surely."

"Then go back for Mike Rizzolo."

Quigley went Rizzolo's bail in the sum of \$2,000, and the Italian was released from custody. He was delighted. To his mind he had been tried and virtually acquitted of the crime.

A few weeks after the crime Riz-

zolo had been tried and eventually drifted to Wilkesbarre, where he secured employment with the railroad contractors.

Two days after Rizzolo was dis-

charged from custody, he went to

Pomona, N. J., where he started

in a commissionership department for

the benefit of his fellow Italians who were

employed by Mr. McFadden, who was

employed by Mr. McFadden, who was