

STORIES OF THE SECRET SERVICE

BY
Capt. Patrick D. Tyrrell

STORY No. 4 The Biebush Band

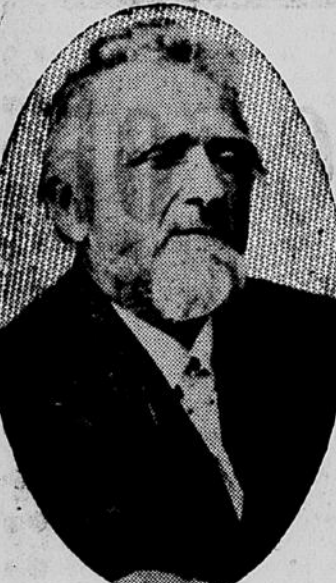
Being an Account of the Capture and Conviction of That Notorious Band of Counterfeiters of Which Fred Biebush Was the Leader.

By CAPTAIN PATRICK D. TYRRELL

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Rev. Andrew Jackson Thomas had delivered a strong sermon at the Morgan street Methodist church in St. Louis, and at its close extended an earnest invitation for sinners to come to the "mourners' bench," seek Divine forgiveness and forsake the errors of their past lives. In the good old-fashioned Methodist way Rev. Mr. Thomas left the pulpit at the close of the sermon and, in a fine baritone voice, took the lead in the ringing song of invitation to the unrepentant. The lines of the hymn as he sang them were frequently punctuated with short impassioned appeals to those who were not known as church members. Then, to render his appeals more direct and personal, the minister started down the aisle, shaking hands with the "un-professed," speaking an earnest word to this one and that one as he went.

Rev. Mr. Thomas was the type of minister familiarly known as the revivalist. He was about 45 years old, almost six feet tall, of robust physique. His hair and beard were brown, and his eyes open and fearless. He was a vigorous and magnetic, if not polished speaker, a fine singer, a good "mixer" among all classes and apparently imbued with a sincere desire to bring sinners to repentance. He had not been in St. Louis long at the time of which I am writing, 26 years ago, but during his residence there, by his devotion to his ministerial labors, had endeared himself to the little flock of



FREDERICK BIEBUSH.

at another time of notes for an aggressive Christian men and women worshipping in the church at Morgan and Twenty-fourth streets.

While he was passing among the sinners in his congregation the night on which I introduce Rev. Mr. Thomas to my readers he stopped at a pew well toward the rear of the church. The visitor was a plainly dressed man of middle age, evidently a workman. The minister spoke a few words to him, still grasping his hand, and there was some response by the visitor. The singing was in progress and the conversation held in undertones, so that the words passed between the two were not distinguishable by those near. The incident was no different to all appearances from a score of others in the church that night when the minister impromptu the wayward to repent.

The church services ended, Rev. Mr. Thomas left the building with several members of the congregation, chatting of religious matters, until their homeward paths diverged.

No attention had been paid the visitor at the church after the minister apparently had failed in inducing him to come to the "mourners' bench," but he had left before the services closed and had taken a rapid westerly course. As soon as the pastor separated from the members of his flock he walked out of their sight and hearing in a leisurely way and then suddenly adopted a quick, business-like gait. Walking rapidly west to Grand avenue,

he turned north. His home was in Finney avenue, west of Grand avenue, and near the intersection of these thoroughfares the "back" church, an imposing Catholic edifice, loomed blackly in the night, casting deep shadows in the street on the east side of Grand avenue. As he approached this point Rev. Mr. Thomas slackened his pace and became alert, peering ahead into the shadows as though looking for some one. He was not disappointed. From the opposite direction, timing his pace so that he would meet the minister in the deepest shadows of the church, emerged the man who had occupied the rear pew at the evening church service. There were no other pedestrians in sight.

"Hello, Harry," said the minister in a low tone, halting.

"Hello, Andy," responded the other, swinging about and falling into the preacher's stride.

Glancing furtively around him, Rev. Mr. Thomas thrust his hand under the skirt of his ministerial coat and drew forth a small, heavy package, passed it quickly to his companion. "Harry" pocketed it as quickly as it had been passed to him.

"When'll I see you again?" asked the receiver of the package.

"I can't say now; be at the church in a few nights," replied the minister. All this had transpired in less time than it took to cross Grand avenue. On the other side there was a low-spoken good night, the minister turned into Finney avenue and his companion continued in the main thoroughfare. An hour later he was in his small room in North Sixth street. The minister went direct to his home and let himself in with a latch key.

No band of dealers in "coney" or counterfeit money ever gave the United States secret service more trouble than



PASSED IT QUICKLY TO HIS COMPANION.

did the "Biebush gang," that operated in and from St. Louis for more than 25 years. In fact, long before there was such a government institution as the secret service division of the treasury department the name of Biebush was a proud one in criminal circles. It had been carried to distinction in the annals of crime by Frederick Biebush, who was born in Prussia in 1823 and emigrated to this country when he was 21 years old. Prior to his arrival in America nothing is known of him, but his history since is a romance of crime. His whole life was devoted to crime as a chosen profession, and his principal pursuit had been the exacting one of a wholesale dealer in counterfeit money. In this business he had gained the sobriquet of the "great southwest knocker."

The readers of this narrative who read my recent account of the events leading up to the attempt to steal the body of Abraham Lincoln will recall that I then made clear the different bands through which counterfeit money passes before it reaches the public. The engraver, printer, dealer, shover and bootlegger each has his distinct function to perform in the process of robbing the people. The dealer is the circulator, and, if he has suitable plates or dies, can flood the country with counterfeit money long after every engraver or die cutter in the business is behind prison bars.

To the business of dealing in "coney" Biebush had devoted his time and genius, yet he found leisure to act as a receiver of stolen goods, and was the patron and financial backer of thieves and burglars. He furnished the engravers of counterfeit plates with cap-ital, helped produce the plates, bought plates, bought presses, ink and paper, and then found trustworthy men to act as his agents in the circulation of the spurious currency. For 30 years he had followed his chosen calling with unequalled success, his bold and profitable operations extending from Illinois to Texas.

Within a year of his arrival in the United States Fred Biebush began his criminal career. He was then a broad-shouldered man of fine physical appearance. The year 1850 found him keeping a saloon called the War Eagle, after a famous steamboat of antebellum days, in Third street, St. Louis. His place was frequented by river men of the better class, for he was a jovial chap and a good business man as well. I am not familiar with the way in which suspicion first attached to him, but one day the St. Louis police raided his saloon, and, buried in the walls,

they found an immense lot of stolen silverware, plate and jewelry. There is said to have been found a great deal of cash of various denominations, but escaped punishment. At this time his permanent headquarters were established in St. Louis, but his agents worked throughout the entire Mississippi valley. Especially he dealt at wholesale only, negotiating with extreme caution and kindness of discernment for the sale of very large quantities of his wares.

In Missouri at that time there was a state law which provided that the testimony of no man who had served a penitentiary term was admissible in the courts of the state. Fred Biebush was familiar with this provision and followed one rule—as immutable in his business as the laws of the Medes and Persians—never to deal directly with any man who could not prove he had been a convict. And he went even further toward the extreme of caution, for while he would negotiate in person for the sale of counterfeit money with an ex-convict and would receive from such a one the honest money in payment for the bogus currency, he would invariably deliver the "coney" through the hands of a third party. So far as I know there is no man who can say he ever received "coney" from Fred Biebush except his time-tested personal agents. His rule against doing business with any except ex-convicts was the thing that rendered it practically impossible to convict him. Besides observing the precautions mentioned, he usually succeeded in bringing his subordinates under his power so that his safety was theirs. For 25 years he pursued his criminal career unpunished.

Before the present system of national banks was established Biebush flourished wonderfully in his operations in the counterfeit of the bills of the old

secret service operatives were put on his trail. A close watch was kept on the movements of Mrs. Biebush, who, in a day or so was traced to Cabaret Island, opposite the town of Venice, in the Mississippi river. There she met her husband in a corn field. Biebush retiring to a hut in which he had taken shelter. The hut was surrounded and several shots fired to frighten the fugitive out. The shots were returned by the counterfeiter. Then the hut was fired. Biebush rushed out and made a mad dash for liberty, but was caught at a high fence, and, after being manacled, taken back to St. Louis. Once more he was tried, and in December, 1870, he was sentenced to 15 years in the Missouri penitentiary.

He served five years and was again pardoned, returning to St. Louis to resume not only his old calling, but to set up as a dealer in high-class burglars' tools. John Egan had retired from the secret service to private life and I was transferred to the St. Louis district from Chicago to manage the pursuit of Biebush.

One day as the sage was sitting under a blue-gum tree and eating his dinner of thistle and burdock roots, a young man approached him and said: "O, sage, I have traveled many a weary mile to ask thy advice."

"Why didn't you send a postal card?" was asked. "It has got so you can send most anything on a postal card nowadays and no one will read it except the party addressed."

"What I craved for, O, sage, was a heart-to-heart talk."

"Well, out with it. I suppose the girl saved all your letters, and that in at least 200 of them you asked her to marry you? That's always the way with a fool of a man."

"It is not a breach of promise suit, O, man of wisdom. I should be glad if it were only that. The fact is I have been the confidential man of a great firm."

"As usual."

"Having figured out a scheme to beat the races, I found that I hadn't money enough of my own."

"As usual some more."

"I therefore dipped into each cash box, meaning of course to replace the amount."

"Just so."

"But as my favorites constantly came in last, instead of first, I steadily lost. In time I found myself in the hole to the tune of 5,000 plunks, and there was nothing for me but flight."

"But you stole at least 5,000 more before you flew, didn't you?"

"Of course. That is, I thought 5,000 wouldn't be much of a steal, so I took 20,000. I have the boodle here. Advise me, O, sage."

"If you had flown without making a grab I should have had no advice to offer," replied the wise man, "but being you have brought most of the boodle along I shall give you a straight tip. I take 5,000 for settling the case, you retain the same amount for not stealing all the firm had, and they accept of 10,000 because they can get no more. You will help along the country, and the firm counts up its cash every Saturday night after this. Hand over my share before the corners of the bills get worn off."

Moral: It was later on discovered that the sage was a lawyer in disguise.

Cause and Effect.

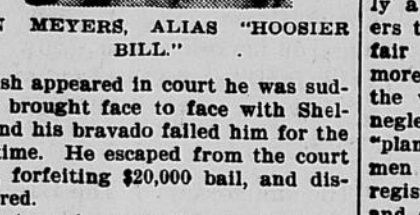
"Excuse me, madam," said the polite hobo, "but I crave your assistance. The iron has entered my soul."

"That," replied the icy-hearted lady, "is doubtless why you look so rusty."

"And she slammed the door.—Chicago Daily News.

IN THE METROPOLIS
FOR ONCE TAMMANY WAS NOT FULLY PREPARED.

SO THE COUNTING OUT
Spectacle of Hearst's Pluralities Dwindling and Jerome's Flourishing—Manner of Manipulation—McClellan a Snuffed Candle.



JOHN MEYERS, ALIAS "HOOSIER BILL."

Biebush appeared in court he was suddenly brought face to face with Shelley, and his bravado faltered him for the first time. He escaped from the court room, forfeiting \$20,000 bail, and disappeared.

Secret service operatives were put on his trail. A close watch was kept on the movements of Mrs. Biebush, who, in a day or so was traced to Cabaret Island, opposite the town of Venice, in the Mississippi river. There she met her husband in a corn field. Biebush retiring to a hut in which he had taken shelter. The hut was surrounded and several shots fired to frighten the fugitive out. The shots were returned by the counterfeiter. Then the hut was fired. Biebush rushed out and made a mad dash for liberty, but was caught at a high fence, and, after being manacled, taken back to St. Louis. Once more he was tried, and in December, 1870, he was sentenced to 15 years in the Missouri penitentiary.

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FABLES OF AMERICANS.
Advice of a Sage Who Has a Word for Every One Who Approaches Him.

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What Was the Vote?
HAT really would the vote have been if honestly cast? For Jerome not less than 25,000 to spare in a vote of 400,000, when he was not on a single party ticket. For Hearst, perhaps 10,000—nothing like the figures he has been claiming, but enough for the other men on his ticket by a small margin.

THE GREAT DEMOCRATS.
LIKE a snuffed candle McClellan goes out in the political darkness. Two years ago he was one of the most promising young democrats in the state. He got over 50 per cent of the count of the vote. This year he gets 33 per cent of it if defective Hearst votes are added. Upon an honest vote he was beaten, as his own supporters will admit. He has really done his best with a difficult problem and with the kind of men he had to work with; he will probably do better still in the future, but that makes no difference. A man who cannot carry New York is of no use to the up-state democrats where the heavy republican vote lies.

McClellan is as able a man as Jerome; a more tactful one, as clean, as high-minded, as anxious to do his duty. He is richer, more dignified, possibly more ambitious, and was more widely known. The two have traveled different paths, Jerome honestly fighting bossism, McClellan as honestly thinking bossism inevitable and that he must make the best of it. Jerome is now the foremost democrat of his state, and the "Little Major" is nowhere. Even Hearst is a more possible candidate for governor—always supposing that he doesn't win the majority in a recount. If he becomes mayor that will be the political end of him in turn.

Are there any other democrats, for future candidates for governor and president? One of the highest rank, Edward M. Shepard, the beaten candidate for mayor in 1901. Mr. Shepard is a man of national size, a magnificent campaigner, a lifelong foe of bosses. He was nominated by Croker because Croker was desperate, but Shepard made no promises. It was his intention, if elected, to clean out Tammany Hall from the inside. Success might have been an unfortunate for him as it has been for honest, but buried, George B. McClellan.

Art and Thirty Boxes.
THE new "National theater"—treat it seriously if you like, but have a sleeve handy to chuckle in.

The opera is the great show place of wealth and fashion. Boxes are in demand by the newly rich, but there are not enough to go round, and the directors, as such men of fashion as of wealth, rule strictly upon applicants. Money alone cannot procure a place in the Golden Circle.

Very well. Money will buy boxes at the horse show, where they are auctioned off, more than \$400 being paid for the best. The opera is not the only golden circle. Wasn't there something said about the need of a National theater, an—palace of art, where—good plays by native authors, and all that sort of thing, don't you know? Let's have one!

So it is to be done. A beautiful building is to be erected, a company hired and good plays given. They will undoubtedly be good, for Herr Direktor Conreid will not stand for bad work. And there will be seats at low prices for the truly earnest—all of which is like the royal theaters and operas on the continent. The little joker is in the innocent statement that there are to be 30 boxes. Practically the 30 box owners are to finance the show, build the theater, guarantee the expenses and sit in the boxes. Their names will be printed in the program; and I always think that feature of opera is funnier even than a fat tenor. But the names will not be the same names.

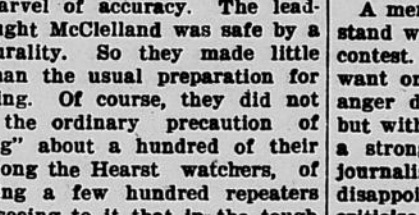
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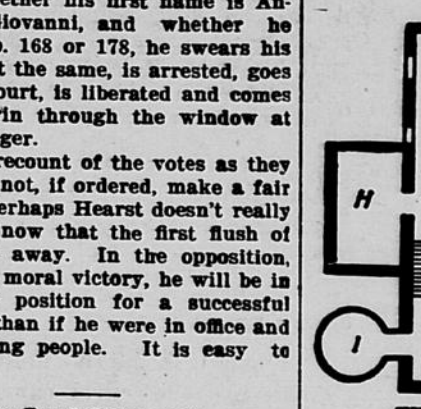
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PLAN OF A STOCK BARN.
Building for the Stock Should Be Arranged with View to Greatest Convenience.

One thing a farmer should work hard for is to have his farm buildings arranged as conveniently as possible. Not long ago I was in a barn and was impressed by the great loss of energy the owner of the barn sustained every time he fed his horses and cattle. Every pound of hay had to be carried from the mow quite a distance to a pitch-hole down which it was thrown, thence to be carried along alleys until the mangers were reached. The straw shed in that barn was just as unhandy. All the straw used had to be conveyed 50 or 60 feet before reaching the stables.

Now a little foresight would have rendered all this extra labor unnecessary. When the barn is being built is the time



THE BARN DIAGRAM.

for the man who feeds the stock to arrange things. In our barn, explains an Illinois correspondent of Prairie Farm, we have the feed as handy as possible. I give herewith the plan of a barn that has many advantages. A is the mixing room; B, horse stable; C, feed alleys; D, cow stalls; E, box stall; F, passage behind cattle; G, manger; H, roof house under driveway; I, silo. This plan is for a barn 36x50 feet, with silo, and is suitable for three horses and 15 cows.

The framework above the basement provides for an 18-foot bay above the horse stable, then a 12-foot driveway and then a 20-foot bay. In order to have a loaded wagon, there should be an over-lay of six feet in the mow over the cattle. This will give plenty of room on the thrashing floor. The stairway to the basement is from the mixing room and the hay or feed from above is let down through a swinging door beside the stairway.

The basement consists of 16 single cow stalls, box stalls and four horse stalls with feed rooms. Provision is made for a concrete roof house arched over with concrete under the driveway. The silo is on the outside of the barn beside the driveway and it can be made any size desired, one 15 feet in diameter and 30 feet high would be required for the stock the basement will house.

A MAP OF FARM DRAINS.
One Should Be Carefully Made and Preserved When the Tiles Are Put In.

During my experience as a farmer I have seen a great deal of trouble on account of the owners of land not knowing where the drains were, says an Iowa farmer in writing to the Farmers' Review. One man that bought a farm found one field so wet that he determined to drain it. He purchased a large amount of tile and hired an engineer to make levels and plans for draining. Then he signed the contracts with his diggers, and they went to work. After the digging had progressed for a day or two, the man drove his pick into a length of tile. An investigation followed and the discovery was made that the whole field had been previously tiled. It had become wet because in certain places the tile had got out of line or had been pulverized by the frost. He had to get out of his contracts by compromising, at a disadvantage to himself. In the repair of the old drains he had a great deal of trouble, as he could only tell where a drain lay by uncovering it.

This shows the necessity there is for the keeping of maps of all kinds of underground structures such as drains and catch basins. A copy of the map should be nailed up in the barn or somewhere else.

Life of a Dairy Cow.
A dairy cow should not show any marked falling off until after ten years of age; many excellent records have been made by cows older than this. The quality of milk produced by heifers is somewhat better than that of older cows, for we find a decrease of one to two-tenths of one per cent in the average fat contents for each year till the cows have reached full age. It is caused by the increase in the weight of the cows with advancing age; at any rate there appears to be a parallelism between the two sets of figures for the same cows.—Midland Farmer.

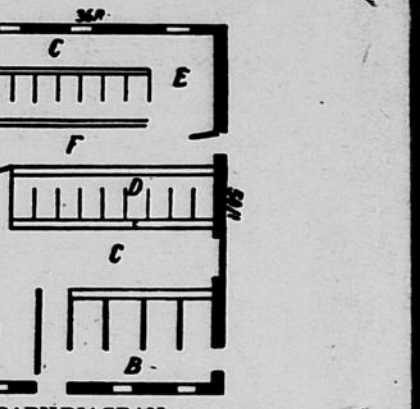
Selling Milk to Shippers.
The man that sells milk to shippers to be sent to the city cannot afford to accept a small price for it. Under existing conditions in the west a dollar a hundred is a small enough price for a man to receive throughout the year, and in the winter season it should be higher than this. The man that sells milk in this way has no skim milk for his cows and pigs. This interferes very much with the business of hog raising, which is one of the most profitable enterprises of the farm.

Mistletoe and Green Boughs.
On a ranch where I was some years ago during the summer, when green feed was scarce, a wood chopper cut down some live oak trees, and the cows, which were all with calf, ate the mistletoe and green boughs, and they all "slunk" their calves. Another cow on the same ranch, which did not eat the mistletoe, carried her calf to full term. Feeling some fresh mistletoe to cows which retain the afterbirth I would cause them to clean all right.

PLAN OF A STOCK BARN.
Building for the Stock Should Be Arranged with View to Greatest Convenience.

One thing a farmer should work hard for is to have his farm buildings arranged as conveniently as possible. Not long ago I was in a barn and was impressed by the great loss of energy the owner of the barn sustained every time he fed his horses and cattle. Every pound of hay had to be carried from the mow quite a distance to a pitch-hole down which it was thrown, thence to be carried along alleys until the mangers were reached. The straw shed in that barn was just as unhandy. All the straw used had to be conveyed 50 or 60 feet before reaching the stables.

Now a little foresight would have rendered all this extra labor unnecessary. When the barn is being built is the time



THE BARN DIAGRAM.

for the man who feeds the stock to arrange things. In our barn, explains an Illinois correspondent of Prairie Farm, we have the feed as handy as possible. I give herewith the plan of a barn that has many advantages. A is the mixing room; B, horse stable; C, feed alleys; D, cow stalls; E, box stall; F, passage behind cattle; G, manger; H, roof house under driveway; I, silo. This plan is for a barn 36x50 feet, with silo, and is suitable for three horses and 15 cows.

The framework above the basement provides for an 18-foot bay above the horse stable, then a 12-foot driveway and then a 20-foot bay. In order to have a loaded wagon, there should be an over-lay of six feet in the mow over the cattle. This will give plenty of room on the thrashing floor. The stairway to the basement is from the mixing room and the hay or feed from above is let down through a swinging door beside the stairway.

The basement consists of 16 single cow stalls, box stalls and four horse stalls with feed rooms. Provision is made for a concrete roof house arched over with concrete under the driveway. The silo is on the outside of the barn beside the driveway and it can be made any size desired, one 15 feet in diameter and 30 feet high would be required for the stock the basement will house.

A MAP OF FARM DRAINS.
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