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THE MYSTERY OF COUNT LANDRINOF.

By FRED WHISHAW.

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CHAPTER VI. DETECTIVE IN THE CASE.

After this failure, which had promised at one moment to be a grand success, Percy and I felt so humbled that we actually consulted with mother as to whether the police should be invited to take over the matter, or at least asked to assist us in our further inquiries.

My dear mother was, however, very much adverse to such a step. She had always felt horror of the Russian detective force, that "terrible third section," the ununiformed, secret, mysterious, spying creatures who swarm, or swarm at that time, in the capital city of the czar. "For the love of heaven," she entreated us with tears in her eyes, "let us keep our sorrow out of their knowledge. I would not have those hateful people to know of our grief or to bandy about your dear father's name as a stalking horse for their arrestings and spyings. We will leave them out as long as we can."

Mother was convinced that Percy and I had, as I have said, struck the trail of the mystery at Erinofka, and this opinion received a kind of terrible confirmation a few days later when, walking in the Nefsky with Percy, I met Hulbert, the Englishman, who, with father and another, rented the shooting of that splendid moor.

Hulbert was decorously sympathetic about our family trouble, for of course he knew of it, though we carefully preserved it from becoming a matter of general knowledge and little tattle. Then he told me that he had just been to Erinofka, and that an extraordinary and horrible murder had been committed in the village. No stranger had been seen about the place, it was said, yet one of the villagers had been stabbed dead in his hut—heaven only knew why or by whom, for he hadn't an enemy in the world.

My heart almost stopped beating when I heard this. I glanced at Percy and caught his eye. His face had suddenly gone quite pale; so, he said afterward, had mine.

"What is it?" said Hulbert. "Are you one who can't bear to hear of bloodshed? I'm sorry I told you."

"I don't like horrors," I said, "but do go on: what was the poor fellow like? Did you go and see him?"

"I did, as it happens. A small fellow with a bald head, rather little eyes and a longish beard."

It was our mysterious informant to the life. Then his tale had been true, and the unfortunate fellow had actually met his doom for breaking faith with his terrible employers. How did the rascals know that he had broken faith? Was it our fault? God forbid! I had tried my best to shelter him. It was his own fault. He ran the risk with his eyes open. Probably the poor wretch did not really believe the threats of those fearful people whom he had driven to Bala.

And these were the very persons into whose hands father must have fallen. If it were indeed so, then God help him!

We decided to tell mother nothing of this last development, for it could only frighten and shock her and would do no good.

But we persuaded her to allow us to engage the services of a private detective, one who should be entirely unconnected with the police. If we could find a suitable person, we explained, he could go to Erinofka and take up the trail where we had lost it. We were known there now and would be taken in at every turn by those, or their agents, whose interest it was to keep the truth from us. A professional detective would be far more likely to manage successfully this delicate matter of clew hunting than we should. Somewhat reluctantly, my mother agreed to allow us to employ such a man, and by dint of many inquiries we hit upon a young fellow, by name Borofsky, who suited us very well.

Borofsky was not very much older than I. He may have been 22, at most, while my age was just 19 and Percy's about the same; not a very aged trio to undertake and conduct so delicate an inquiry as this of ours.

He dined with us on the evening of his engagement, and we talked over the entire subject. Borofsky thought well of the work we had done at Erinofka. We had hit upon the right track, no doubt, he said. But probably the rascals who had drugged and carried father off had long since placed him in safety, and even if we could follow the trail as far as St. Petersburg we should lose it there.

"But what do you suppose they wanted with the count, Mr. Borofsky?" asked Percy. "Money, by way of ransom, or what?"

"Heaven knows!" said Borofsky. "That is one of the things we must find out."

Then our friend started us by saying "By the way, the pristin of the police department of this district mentioned your father to me today. I was at the office on another matter of business which does not concern this affair. What do you think the pristin said?"

"I am ready to admit that their system is marvelous, and they generally know where to lay their hands upon any given person. I was not speaking of your father, nor had I mentioned him. But the pristin said, 'You are to undertake business for Count Landrinof, Borofsky. I conclude, since you have been for two days in communication with the young count.' (They watch us, you see, these fellows.) 'It is odd that the old bird should have gone to prosecute his inquiries in London, whatever they may be, while the young one leaves London in order to work out something here.'

"Is the count in London, then?" I said innocently. "I did not know it." And the pristin said, "Certainly!" and that your father had left St. Petersburg on the 1st of August—about a week or ten days ago. Of course we know this is not the case, but it is odd that the pristin should have said it."

I said nothing. I was too astonished. Could Percy after all have seen the old dad, then? I had persuaded him long since that he had been the victim of an illusion, a chance likeness, and that wherever my poor father should prove to be he could not be in London. But this was surprising, an utterly unexpected and bewildering confirmation of Percy's story.

Percy himself was equally surprised and startled, and Borofsky was not slow to observe our excitement.

"Well, what?" he said, smiling. "You don't attach any importance to what the pristin told me, do you? I think you need not, for these brigands, or whoever the mysterious rascals should prove to be, would scarcely take their victim so far afield. They would be safe 50 yards from the frontier. Why should they go so far?"

I consulted with Percy. Ought we not to tell Borofsky that Percy believed he had seen my father in London?

"It would be a pity to set him upon a false scent if it should have been a case of mistaken identity, as of course it may have been!" said Percy.

"And as I quite believe, even now, that it was," I said, "but I think Borofsky should know. It would not hurt, and it might possibly lead to some development."

We told Borofsky, and I don't know how I have seen any one quite so surprised.

"Why on earth didn't you tell me this?" he said. "It is most important corroboration of the pristin's words."

I explained that we had believed Percy to be the victim of an optical delusion.

"Well," he said, "without the pristin's confirmation of it, I, too, should have said Mr.—this gentleman—had made a mistake; also without this gentleman's corroboration I should and did say that the pristin had for once been too clever or not clever enough. But, taking both stories together, I find that each assertion stands stronger upon its legs by reason of the support it derives from the other. In a word, if I must give my opinion, I should now be inclined to declare that this gentleman did see the count in London, though why his abductors should have taken him there is what at present is quite beyond me to explain. Let us sleep on the matter and take counsel in the morning."

And, it being midnight by this time, we departed to our rooms. As for me, I went to bed with a sense that the mystery was by no means put forward by this new development, but rather set back and complicated.

CHAPTER VII. THE COUNT REPORTED FOUND.

It is impossible, I suppose, to witness the enthusiastic confidence of another in the correctness of his own reading of a mystery without, in some measure, becoming infected. I did not agree with my young detective. I could not persuade myself that my dear father, whom I loved and respected with all my heart, could possibly be in London and enjoying, as was obviously the case, at least a certain degree of liberty, without using that liberty to write or wire to his wife in order to relieve the anxiety from which he must know she would be suffering. It would not be like father. Why should he do it?

"Because," said Borofsky, in effect, "he hasn't. He has written, and the letter has miscarried or has been intercepted."

"By whom?" I asked.

Borofsky shrugged his shoulders. "If we knew that," he said, "there would no longer be any mystery. It may have simply miscarried. The chapter of accidents is a long one in Russia, as you know, and must always be reckoned with."

"But we can't get over the fact that Percy saw this man in London and said that, though he looked like father, he was dressed so—so funny, and in fact—to put it quite plainly—that he looked a downright booby, which my dear father could never possibly do!"

"Disguises do wonders!" said Borofsky, shrugging his shoulders. "But why should he be disguised?"

the man Percy met in Oxford street was my father and no other. Then it occurred to Borofsky that it would be well if one, at least, of our little hunting party of three were to take up his post in London in the hope of meeting with this mysterious personage, whether father or some one else.

"You are the right one to go," said Borofsky, wagging his head at me, "for you would be less likely to be the victim of mistaken identity. It would be useless for me to go because, unfortunately, the count is a stranger to me, and I should not know him if I saw him. And as for this gentleman—Percy—'he might, of course, be deceived, not being a son of the count.'"

"I don't think I should, all the same," said Percy.

"I can't possibly leave my mother," I put in. "For some little while at all events. I am sure Percy knows my father well enough not to mistake him for any one else if he gets a real good look at him, and perhaps a talk as well. Would you mind undertaking the job, Percy?"

"Of course not," Percy scoffed. "If you think I'll do it," he added. "What do you think, Mr. Borofsky?"

"You'll do well enough," said Borofsky, "if your friend here cannot see his way to going. Are you anything of a photographer?" he asked unexpectedly.

"Only with a little snap shot machine," laughed Percy. "Why? Am I to photograph all the suspicious people I see?"

"Not quite that; but if you should meet the count or this individual you consider so marvelously like him and could get a snap shot at him you might send us over a copy and the count or Count Boris could easily identify and repudiate the gentleman as per portrait. That would save a great deal of trouble, for though you might make a mistake they could scarcely do so. Thus when your print arrived we should be able to say at once: 'This is the count. We have found him.' Or, 'This is some one else and Mr. Percy may return to help us look elsewhere for the count.'"

Percy laughed.

"Well," he said, "I'll take my hand camera anyway. It's only a tiny thing at best, though; so don't expect much result. And if I'm arrested by the city police for taking snap shots at innocent persons I shall expect you to come and bail me out!" Which favor we promised Percy should not be denied him in case of need.

Then we dispatched Percy by train, bidding him wire to us immediately in case he should meet with any kind of success, and warning him above all, if ever he caught sight of the man—father or another—whom he had seen on a former occasion, to make sure of his address by following him, and if possible to watch or have the place watched until we should have had an opportunity of seeing the portrait and, perhaps, even of running over to London to see the original himself.

I don't think Percy was very sanguine as to his mission and the chances of seeing his former friend again. It would be the merest fluke if he did, he said. One might as well search for a grain of wheat in the proverbial sackful of chaff.

Before we left the station the idea occurred to Borofsky that it would be interesting to ask the young fellow at the ticket office whether Count Landrinof had traveled to London lately. The count was so well known in St. Petersburg that the clerk would probably have recognized him, and might tell us the very day he started, and whether alone or accompanied. This would at least show us whether Percy's mission was a mere fool's errand or whether the count, having really departed from London, might still be found there.

"But the clerk will think me such a fool not to know whether my own father has gone to London or not!" I protested.

"Can't you say you require the date of his departure for some case you're working up?"

"Good idea," said Borofsky, and forthwith he evolved a fine cove and bull story about some domestic robbery in our household, supposed to have been committed by one of the servants, and how certain evidence rested upon the exact date of the count's departure, which date we had forgotten.

The ticket clerk, on hearing all this, scratched his head and assumed an air of the deepest thought. He had been paring his nails when we disturbed him, and he kindly laid aside this fascinating occupation in order to attend to us.

"I remember the count taking his ticket," he said presently. "It was—let me see—about a fortnight ago, was it not? Stop a minute. I do not issue so very many tickets for London direct—here we are, August—no, it is July. This must be it, I think, 17-29 July, seventeenth old style, twentieth new. I believe that must be the day. You may take it as pretty certain."

"Good!" said Borofsky. "That is the very day we fixed upon; the certainty of it will enable us to place our hands upon the guilty party. We are so much obliged to you. By the bye," he added, "you did not happen to notice the clothes in which his excellence traveled? There is a little point about a certain silk hat, which may or may not have been among the articles stolen. Had the count a tall hat now or a soft Tyrolean?"

"A tall hat," said the clerk promptly, "and a frock coat, such as I have generally seen his excellence wear. I happened to notice it because some one made the remark that Count Landrinof always looked far more of an Englishman than a Russian."

I gave the clerk a cigar. He deserved it.

Borofsky was jubilant as we left the station.

"You see," he said, "your father did go to London and just at the date of his disappearance too. Moreover, he was dressed as usual, and he went alone, for apparently only one London ticket was issued."

"That makes the mystery all the worse," I said, "for why should my dear father, who was always as happy in his own house as any man can be—why should he suddenly depart for Lon-

don, alone and without notice, unless carried away by force or cunning, the victim of some motive and of some persons as to whose identity we can only guess?"

"As to going alone," said Borofsky, "others may easily have escorted him to the frontier and handed him over to a second batch of escortors. It is sufficient that this man was the count. Everything points to it. The rest we shall learn when your friend shall have found out for us his whereabouts."

As a matter of fact Percy had scarcely been a week away when one evening, to our intense excitement, we received a telegram laconically worded as follows:

"I think I've got him. Will wire again presently."
PERCY.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Miscellaneous Reading.

PRAYER AT ALL TIMES IS POSSIBLE.
The Rev. James S. Moffatt, of Chester, S. C., Preached on the Subject.
From the Pittsburg Dispatch.

The Rev. James S. Moffatt, D. D., of Chester, S. C., occupied the pulpit of the First United Presbyterian church, Carnegie, last night, and delivered an interesting and powerful sermon. His text was taken from the 17th verse of the 8th chapter of Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians: "Pray without ceasing." During the discourse he said:

"Our first impulse on reading these words is to ask the question of ourselves: Is not this absurd, impracticable and impossible exaction? Is it possible that we are asked to spend all our time on our knees in prayer? Could anyone do such an absurd, impracticable, improbable and impossible thing as this, and the natural answer suggests itself that the exaction could not be complied with."

"If we were asked to comply with the wording alone of this text we would all plead that we are too busy; that we cannot be on our knees all the time while our affairs are unattended. Yet when looking through the Scripture we are attracted to the example of Daniel in complying with the command to pray without ceasing. Daniel was one of the head men in a kingdom of 150 provinces—in fact, he was second only to the king himself—and yet we find that he had certain times for prayer."

After giving a picture of Daniel's daily life he continued: "When Samuel bade farewell to the Israelites as their judge he said: 'God forbid that I should ever sin in ceasing to pray for you,' and our first thought is, 'How did he manage to pray for them during the remaining years of his life? This is not the meaning of his words, but what he meant was that the people of Israel were very dear to him and he would lose no opportunity of praying for them. When a child in roaming around gets hurt it goes straight to his mother and pours out its trouble in her lap. So with the Christian, his first thought when in trouble should be to go to God and lay his troubles before Him. We can pray without ceasing, however, for praying does not necessarily mean that we should be on our knees. We can pray at the desk, behind the counter, on the street, at the plough, everywhere, even though our hands be busy."

LINE SWERVED BY A GRAVE.

Missouri Woman Persuaded a Bluff Engineer to "Move His Road Over."
From the Philadelphia Call.

The engineer who lays out a railroad dislikes to move a stake when it has once been driven.

Once, when the present chief engineer of a western railroad was locating a line in Missouri, he was asked to change the stakes and refused. After the stakes had been set, a young, unshaven man appeared and asked that the road be "moved over a bit."

"The road cannot be changed," promptly returned the engineer; "this is the best place for it."

The man went into a house, got a rifle, came out, and pulled up the stakes. The indignant engineer started toward him; but was intercepted by an elderly woman.

"Can't you move your road over a little piece, mister?" she asked.

"I don't see why I should," responded the engineer. "My business is to locate the line, and you can call on the company for damages. What does that young blackguard mean by sitting there on a stump with a gun?" he angrily demanded.

"That's Nip, he ain't no blackguard. That's Nip, my son."

"Well, I'll nip him if he gets funny. Oh, no, you won't. I ain't afraid of that," said the woman. "What come over me when I seen you starting for Nip was that he r'aps you had a mother, and how bad she'd feel to have you come home that way."

"What way?"

"Well, if you persist in driving them stakes there you'll go home dead."

"Look here, do you think I'm to be bluffed by that ruffian?"

He moved a mile of road. From that day forward until the road was finished, and long after, the widow's home was the stopping place for the engineer.

VAGARIES OF FORTUNE.

Klondike Millionaire Returns to Pick and Shovel.

Alexander McDonald, king of the Klondike, has failed, says a San Francisco dispatch of August 11. His liabilities are estimated at \$6,000,000. His assets are of uncertain value.

After knowing for two years what it is to be a millionaire many times over, he has shouldered his pick, and with- out complaining, has started again as a poor miner, leaving his wife in Dawson with a score of creditors for whose benefit all his interests, both mining and trading, have been assigned.

In his formal declaration of insolvency filed at Dawson July 29th, McDonald states his liabilities to be approximately \$6,000,000, while there is no way of fully computing his assets, as his investments are of largely problematic value. As they have to be sacrificed, McDonald himself says there will not be enough to go around, although he believes their ultimate value will prove \$20,000,000 at least. He is not at all disheartened at his change of fortune. Indeed he appears relieved.

"It's too much worry," he declares, "to be a millionaire."

McDonald was one of the first, as well as one of the most fortunate, of the Klondike pioneers.

His bride, an English girl, almost 20 years his junior, looks at the situation with philosophical fortitude. She says she is quite satisfied so long as he keeps his health and courage.

When McDonald married Margaret Chisholm, in London, February 6th, 1899, his wealth was variously estimated from \$10,000,000 to five times that sum. McDonald passed through Tacoma last October en route from Dawson City to London, and it was stated then in various dispatches that he carried with him for expense money fully \$2,000,000. It was also related by the press that four years ago he passed through Tacoma practically penniless, headed for the Klondike, with the avowed purpose of "pulling out his stake."

When McDonald went to England a few months ago to organize a syndicate to control the transportation and provision business of the far north, he left his business in the hands of incompetent agents. On his return creditors made demands which he could not meet. Before going to the Klondike McDonald prospected in Colorado.

INSURED FOR \$10,000,000.

That is Said to Be the Aggregate of Policies on the Prince of Wales's Life.
From the Chicago Record.

A big insurance man told me recently in New York that the Prince of Wales was the heaviest risk of any patron of the insurance business, and that his death would cost English, German, French and American companies not less than \$10,000,000.

"No other person carries 20 per cent. of that insurance," he said, "but comparatively little of it is for the benefit of his family; perhaps not more than \$1,000,000. Some years ago large policies were taken out by his creditors as security for money loaned. If he should ever pay his debts they would, of course, revert to him, and might be carried for the benefit of his family; but his premiums, like the premiums on all of the royal families of Europe, are very high—much higher than those paid by private individuals for the same amount of insurance."

"It is a curious fact," continued my insurance friend, who spends a good deal of his time in England, "that \$2,000,000 or \$3,000,000 of insurance, perhaps more than that, has been placed on the life of the Prince of Wales as a speculation by persons who do not know him and have never had any relations with him whatever. This would not be possible under the insurance laws of the United States, but it is allowed by some of the English companies. Over there any man can secure a policy on the life of a neighbor, provided he can persuade the neighbor to submit to a medical examination or find a company which has recently had him examined. Thus when the Prince of Wales undergoes an examination for insurance lots of speculators apply to the same company for policies on his life, or get certified copies of the report of the medical examiner and use them with other companies. It is pure speculation. They pay a high premium, a margin, so to speak, or, to put it in another way, they book a wager with the insurance companies that the price will die before the total of their premiums exceeds the amount of the policy. Therefore many persons would be financially benefited if Albert Edward should drop off suddenly one of these fine days. The price is perfectly aware of this fact. He knows very well what advantages have been taken of his situation, but I do not suppose it makes any difference with his habits."

ANOTHER ALGER CRIME.—An old story comes from Atlanta by way of Chicago. It is to the effect that Mayor Woodward, of Atlanta, also is trying to lay his burden upon the shoulders of ex-Secretary Alger. "For 23 years," said the Atlanta mayor, according to this story, "I did not let a drop pass my lips." But when the president and party visited Atlanta, the mayor was compelled to sit at the banquet table with the city's guests. "Seated at the big round table," he says, "with Secretary Alger on one side and General Shafter sitting in front of me, my enthusiasm got the better of my discretion." And the upshot was, the mayor got drunk.—Savannah Morning News.

"NATURE'S PROUDEST PRODUCT."

The Georgia Watermelon Furnishes the Subject For a Prose Poem.

Colonel Henry Waterson in Courier-Journal.

One item that appeared in the current news of the past week should have aroused more than a passing impression upon the mind of even the careless reader. It was a statement to the effect that the crop of Georgia watermelons this year, though not an unusually large one, was a drug upon the markets.

No better proofs of racial degeneration could be adduced than this statement that the watermelon is no longer the eager desire of the palate.

The appetites implanted in man in the Garden of Eden, where the watermelon undoubtedly had its origin, have been sadly perverted if this so.

The watermelon is the Ariel of the garden. It is the child of the sun, the heir of the fountain. Its flavor is like the perfume of the rose, a rare and exquisite property that clings voluptuously upon the palate and yet that cannot clog in its unspearable richness.

That watermelons can no longer be sold with profit in city markets is a deplorable proof of what has come over the race that with

"Blinded eyeballs poring over miserable books and with stomachs stuffed with mysterious condiments has come to disregard the choicest gift that nature has prepared for her children's appetites."

What are we to think of the garden tribe? Undoubtedly his morals are as questionable as his appetite, and his judgment and intellect must be equally gone astray.

We want none of them. Away with the man who does not respond to the sight of a Georgia melon wherever it may be—whether in the small "patch," where in the early morning it glimmers among the flowers and the dew, pure as Aphrodite arising from the sea, or served in the delicious dish composed of its own green and white rind, or even heated by hundreds in the market houses, or alluringly cut and sliced and displayed in blocks of ice on the street corners.

Wherever it is, so long as it is ripe and perfect, the watermelon is a thing of beauty. It should be a joy forever, and the Georgia planter who supplies us with this glory of early summer ought to be made rich.

He is a public benefactor and he should be encouraged to continue in his work even if it is necessary to grant him a government subvention. The man who adds as much as he to the joys of life deserves a pension as much as the soldier who does his best to increase its horrors.

THE STALEST BREAD.

Baked in August, A. D. 79, the Germs of Dyspepsia Are Probably All Out of It.
From the London Daily Mail.

Sufferers from indigestion are advised to eat stale bread, the staler the better, they are told. There is in the museum at Naples some bread which ought to be stale enough for anybody. It was baked one day in August, 79 A. D., in one of the curious ovens still to be seen at Pompeii. More than 18 centuries, therefore, have elapsed since it was drawn "all hot" and indigestible from the oven. So it may claim to be the oldest bread in the world. You may see it in a glass case on the upper floor of the museum. There are several loaves of it, one still bearing the impress of the baker's name.

In shape and size they resemble the small cottage loaves of England; but not in appearance, for they are as black as charcoal, which, in fact, they closely resemble. This is of their original color; but they have become carbonized, and if eaten would probably remind one of charcoal biscuits. When new they may have weighed about a couple of pounds each, and were most likely raised with leaven, as is most of the bread in Oriental countries at the present time.

The popular idea that Pompeii was destroyed by lava is a fallacious one. If a lava stream had descended upon the city the bread and everything in the place would have been utterly destroyed. Pompeii was really buried under ashes and fine cinders, called by the Italians lapilli. On that dreadful day in August, when the great eruption of Vesuvius took place, showers of fine ashes fell upon the doomed city, then showers of lapilli, then more ashes, and more lapilli, until Pompeii was covered over to a depth of 15 and even 20 feet.

Other combustibles besides the bread were preserved, and may now be seen in the same room in the museum. There are various kinds of grain, fruit, vegetables and even pieces of meat. Most interesting is a dish of walnuts, some cracked ready for eating, others whole. Though carbonized, like all the other eatables, they have preserved their characteristic wrinkles and lines.

There are figs, too, and pears, the former rather shriveled, as one would expect after all these years, the latter certainly no longer "juicy." But perhaps the most interesting relic in the room is a honeycomb, every cell of which can be distinctly made out. It is so well-preserved that it is hard to realize that the comb is no longer wax nor the honey honey.

A piece of comb seems to have been cut out, and one can imagine some young Pompeian having helped himself to it and sitting down to eat it, when he had to jump up and fly for his life. One cannot help wondering what became of the piece—whether the young fellow took it with him and ate it as he ran, or whether he left it on his plate, intending to return for it when the eruption was over.

A PHILIPPINE ARMY.—A Washington dispatch of Monday says: A statement prepared at the war depart-

ment shows that by October 22d there will be at Manila, or on the way to the Philippines, 46,000 men. They will reach the islands before the beginning of the dry season. The troops to be sent from this country are 10 regiments of volunteers, amounting to 13,000 men; recruits for skeleton regiments organized in the Philippines, 1,900; recruits for regulars, 3,500; eight troops Third cavalry, 965; marines, 400.

Beginning tomorrow and up to October 22, there will sail from the Pacific coast 17 transports, with a carrying capacity of 693 officers and 17,370 men, which will include nearly all the organizations above named.

EX-SLAVE PENSION HUMBUNG.

The Postoffice Department Ranning Down the Frauds

Washington Correspondence of The News and Courier.

At last the postoffice department has decided to put a stop to the systematic robbery of ignorant colored people by a gang of schemers, who claim they can secure pensions for all former slaves. The plan is to exact from every colored person, who was formerly a slave, the sum of 25 cents, as a "registration fee." The promise is given that the money thus collected will be used to promote the passage of a pension bill which will give every ex-slave several hundred dollars when the bill passes.

There are at least three of these associations doing business among the colored people all over the country, and in spite of the fact that the ignorant colored people have been warned against these swindlers, the poor deluded creatures persist in giving up their hard-earned quarters under the impressive eloquence of the promoters of the swindle and their confederates.

The Ex-Slave Mutual Benefit and Pension association, with headquarters at Nashville, Tennessee, was exposed in these dispatches several months ago, upon information furnished by a United States senator, who was appealed to by some of his colored constituents for information as to the possibility of the passage of such a law.

At that time the attention of the postoffice department was drawn to the subject, and since then a careful investigation of the scheme has been in progress by postoffice inspectors.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Barrett has made a thorough investigation of one of these organizations, which is managed by Isaac L. Walton, of Madison, Ark., and as a result the postoffice department today issued an order forbidding the delivery of all mail addressed to Walton, to the Ex-Slave Petitioners' Assembly and to the Ex-Slave Assembly, on the ground that they are operating through the mails a scheme devised for obtaining money under false and fraudulent pretenses.

The object of the Ex-Slave Petitioners' Assembly is stated in its circulars to be to petition congress to pass a law granting pensions to former slaves. Persons who desire to become members of this organization are required to make a first remittance of 25 cents, and it appears from the information obtained by the postal authorities that 12,381 former slaves have remitted that amount to Walton. In addition to contributing fees to the assembly for an alleged newspaper, published