

WOMAN DUPES MARK TWAIN.

Housekeeper of the Humorist Gets Big Lot of His Money and Flees to Europe—May Have Forged His Name.

New York, June 21.—The story which gained currency today relative to the irregularity of the conduct of Mrs. Ralph W. Ashcroft in the management of the household affairs of Mark Twain and the subsequent serving of a writ of attachment at her home through the efforts of the latter received official verification from the humorist today at his home in Redding, Conn.

Mr. Clemens was lying down when a reporter visited the house today and went down word that Sunday being a day of rest he was about to take a nap. That he feels strongly upon the subject was proved when he sent down his private secretary with authority to speak freely on all phases of the matter. Later the secretary was joined by Miss Clara Clemens, the oldest daughter of Mark Twain, who has gained some repute as a concert singer and was the original cause of the whole matter being brought to light.

"To really understand the case one has to go way back," said Mr. Clemens' secretary. "Mrs. Ashcroft had been Mr. Clemens' secretary for seven years, having come to him upon the recommendation of his business agent in Hartford.

"At that time she was plain Miss Lyon. When she made her appearance upon the scene Miss Clara Clemens was away on a concert tour, and Miss Jane, Mr. Clemens' other daughter, was in a sanitarium so she had a clear field for whatever she wanted to do. She was a very quiet and efficient young lady and very soon secured Mr. Clemens' absolute confidence and became the head of the household, directing all his affairs.

"When Mr. Clemens began to build his new place at Redding she supervised the work and furnishings and had carte blanche so far as making expenditures was concerned. It must be admitted that she performed these duties very well and as an acknowledgment of her services Mr. Clemens deeded her a piece of property here. The place consisted of about twenty acres and had on it an old-fashioned farm house, which Miss Lyon proposed to repair as a residence for her mother.

"At this time she was receiving a salary of \$50 a month besides her keep, traveling expenses and such other expenses. Also she had been in Mr. Clemens' employ so long that he had not the slightest suspicion of anything she chose to do or tell him.

"It was in 1907 that she began the reconstruction of the old house, about a year before Mr. Clemens' place, Redding, was completed. During the course of these operations she informed Mr. Clemens that it would be necessary for her to mortgage the property he had given her in order to raise the amount requisite for the repairs. He told her not to do any such thing, but to use his money and make an accounting when the work should be completed.

"Mrs. Ashcroft accepted this proposition and the repairs and construction on her house continued until the fall of 1908 when she reported that she had used \$1,500 of Mr. Clemens' money. He never examined his bank account nor his check book; everything was absolutely in Miss Lyon's hands and he never questioned her word.

"It was not until February or March of this year that any complications arose. Some friends of Mr. Clemens who were familiar with the facts told him that Miss Lyon was not living by any means in a fashion in accordance with her income. She had furnished her house most lavishly, all sorts of luxurious fixings had been installed, and, if one could judge by appearance, the amount she had claimed for repairs, coupled with her salary for a year, could not buy half the things she had provided herself with.

"Both of Mr. Clemens' daughters urged their father to have an investigation made."

"And that," broke in Miss Clara Clemens, "increased Miss Lyon's dislike for the rest of us. I had an awful time getting father to take the matter up at all, but finally he consented to place the matter in the hands of Mr. Ashcroft, who for two years had been a financial manager. Shortly afterward Miss Lyon announced her engagement to Mr. Ashcroft. They were married March 18 of this year, and shortly afterward went down to the old house father had given Miss Lyon. It was then that I persuaded him to make the investigation, upon which no headway had been made up to date.

"Mr. Henry Rogers, who had been considerably interested in the matter since the beginning, offered to take it up then, and we gave it to him so that an expert might go over it under his supervision. Miss Lyon's accounts were found to be in such a confused state that very slow progress was

made with them. In the midst of all, Mr. Rogers died and that complicated things still more.

"When we at last got straightened out again," continued Miss Clemens, "we put the matter in the hands of John B. Stanchfield. At this stage Miss Lyons—Mrs. Ashcroft, yes, that was what she called herself—developed a sudden case of nervous prostration, due, she said, to the delay, and she and her husband decamped to England by way of Holland, sailing on the 9th of this month. Shortly after that the report from Mr. Stanchfield came in, and it was of such a nature that it warranted father to get out a writ of attachment on the property he had given her for \$4,000.

"The report showed that instead of \$1,500, Miss Lyon had expended over \$3,500 on her house alone. Now, where could a woman earning \$50 a month find money for that? Besides, it showed that her check book credited an amount exceeding \$9,700, credited to 'cash.'"

Here Miss Clemens leaned over and began to speak very frankly:

"I have run father's household for him myself, and I know just about what it costs. That \$10,000 was all drawn during the years 1907 and 1908. Every single bill except small sundries and occasional traveling expenses is paid by check, and it all shows on Mrs. Ashcroft's book.

"Now, what did she do with such an astonishingly large amount of 'cash'?"

"But this was not the worst of it," went on Miss Clemens. "This investigation also showed a power of attorney given to both Miss Lyon as she was then and Mrs. Ashcroft in November, 1908, which I believe was the most broad and comprehensive instrument of the sort ever executed. The lawyers agree with me, too. It was such a paper as no one would have signed if he had read it, yet it bore my father's signature. He distinctly says that he never knowingly signed any such thing, and the two witnesses, a former gardener and stable man of ours, when they were spoken to, said positively that they had never seen it before.

"This power of attorney had been filed everywhere that it could be of any use to the holders, and there is no telling what they did under its protection. That, of course, we revoked at once."

Questioned as to what further action her father intended taking in the affair, Miss Clemens replied:

"We are going to keep right on with the investigation, Mr. Stanchfield and Charles B. Lark are still at work upon it. We want to find out just what Mr. and Mrs. Ashcroft did under that power of attorney, and we should also like to get itemized bills from stores which were paid in check by Mrs. Ashcroft, without giving any hint of what the money was paid for."

"Will you have the couple recalled to this country for trial?"

"I believe that is what is being planned."

"And following a civil trial, will you have a criminal one?"

"That has not been gone into as yet, but if I have anything to say about it we certainly shall."

Mrs. Lyon, mother of Mrs. Ashcroft, insisted that her daughter's departure for Europe had been occasioned solely by falling health.

"She will return in the fall, I expect," said she, "and will answer any charges that they may care to make against her. But I am certain my girl is innocent of anything wrong."

ROOSEVELTS GOING ABROAD.

Will Spend Summer in Europe, Returning in the Fall.

New York, June 22.—Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt and three of the Roosevelt children, Miss Ethel, Archie and Quentin, will leave New York June 26, on board the White Star liner Cretic for Gibraltar and will spend the summer on the continent. The party will spend a month with Miss Carew at her villa near Rome. Mrs. Roosevelt and her children will sail for America about November 1, having abandoned the previous plan of remaining in Europe through next winter and going up in the Nile in spring to meet Col. Roosevelt.

The Charleston Gulls defeated the Jacksonville Scouts last Saturday, much to the joy of the Charleston baseball lovers. It is hoped that the needed financial aid will be forthcoming immediately in order to raise Charleston's standard in the league.

How's This?

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We, the undersigned, have known F. J. Cheney for the last 15 years, and believe him perfectly honorable in all business transactions, and financially able to carry out any obligations made by his firm. Walding, Kinnaman & Marvin, Wholesale Druggists, Toledo, O.

CONVICT LABOR.

City Council Discusses the Proposition Of Working the City Convicts—A Letter From Mayor Gilbert, of Florence.

In the meeting of the City Council Tuesday night, the question of whether or not it is advisable for the City of Sumter to work the convicts sentenced by the Recorder was discussed to some extent. Some investigations made by a member of the Council shows that, by proper management and supervision, the working of city convicts is a paying proposition to a city. The following letter from Mayor Gilbert, of Florence, to Mr. Jas. R. Ligon, shows that Florence has found the working of convicts a paying proposition:

Florence, S. C., June 7, 1909.

Mr. Jas. R. Ligon, Sumter, S. C.

Dear Sir:

Replying to your letter of June 4th relative to cost of operating our chaingang, beg to advise that the cost of operating is as follows:

Wages of guard \$55 per month
Wages of helper \$16 per month
Cost of rations, clothes, tools etc. \$25 to \$35 per month

The number of convicts worked ranges from ten to twenty five, and therefore some months the gang costs more, and some months less than the figures given above. During the past two years the average cost per man per day has been 28 1-10 cents. Of course the more you have in the gang the less the average cost per man, as your guard and his helper receive the same pay on a small number as when the gang is full. Our experience has been that the chaingang is a paying investment, if you give it proper supervision.

Yours truly,

H. K. GILBERT, Mayor.

As contrasted with paid laborers the convicts would be much less expensive. Paid laborers receive from eighty cents to one dollar per day; while the convict laborers would cost not more than sixty cents per day, if their expenses were double that of the convicts in Florence. As to efficiency of convict labor, it is as good as paid labor if properly supervised. Furthermore, quarters for the convicts can be built near the stables where the city mules are kept and much time can be saved in getting ready for work at morning and noon. There is ample room to erect a building in the rear of the opera house without interfering with stables if there are any scruples against putting the convicts upstairs in the same building in which the mules are kept on the ground floor. A new brick building can be erected at a nominal expenditure in which both convicts and mules can be kept; and perfect sanitary conditions preserved. Such a building is a necessity in this city. This building would serve as a city jail in which to keep those held in custody for trial, as well as the convicts serving their terms after conviction.

The city needs the labor of the convicts here to remedy the condition of some of the streets which is causing considerable complaint. If properly supervised, the city can get more service out of the convicts by working them, than by turning them over to the County under the present arrangement.

The average number of convicts in Sumter will be greater than in Florence, for the reason that, at a very conservative estimate, Sumter has from 35 per cent to 40 per cent more population than has Florence. Suppose the average number of convicts is 15, which is a low estimate, and suppose the cost of maintenance to be 50 cents per man, and allow 24 instead of 26 working days in the calendar month. The expense for that time would be \$180 whereas the expense of hired laborers at 35 cents per day would be \$306.00 for the same number of days. At a low estimate, from \$75 to \$100 ought to be saved every calendar month by using convict labor.

The matter is an important one to consider, and the City Council will very probably take some definite action on the matter at their next session.

THE CITY CONVICTS.

At the meeting of City Council it was decided, on the motion of Alderman Ligon, with but one dissenting vote, that upon the expiration of the contract with the County next month the city should employ all city convicts on the streets. A committee was then appointed to select a site for a city prison and report back to Council.

The matter is therefore settled, unless Council should see fit to rescind, at the next meeting, the action taken at the last meeting. The only reason that could be advanced in favor of rescinding the action would be the certainty of making a more satisfactory contract with the County by which the city would obtain a larger share of the labor of city convicts than under the contract now in force.

DISPENSARY FUNDS MOVED.

\$150,000 Taken from Columbia Banks And Deposited Elsewhere.

Greenville, June 22.—The dispensary commission has taken some of the dispensary funds from the banks in Columbia, and have placed them with other banks throughout the State. This was done at the last session of the commission.

This morning, in an interview Mr. Patton said:

"We moved about \$150,000 from Columbia banks and re-deposited in other banks in the State for the very good reason that Columbia, including the amount in the State treasury, had about \$350,000, which is considerably more than half the entire fund. Since they are State, and not Columbia funds, and since banks in other parts of the State wished it, and were willing to pay interest and put up the collateral, we felt justified in moving a minority of the amount deposited in Columbia. After this removal is completed Columbia will still have (including the amount in the State treasury) more than one-third of the entire fund, which we still think, is the lion's share. We had reason to believe that the banks of Columbia, or a part of them, did not want the funds since they regarded it a burden, (while tied up in the United States court,) to the extent that they did not want to pay interest on the funds. If these funds were so burdensome to the Columbia banks, while they were tied up with injunctions, we feel that we ought not to burden them further since we are at liberty to remove them. There were two deliberate attempts by some of the banks of Columbia to avoid the payment of this interest, although we had their written agreement to do so. An officer of the Loan and Exchange Bank made an effort to get the banks of Greenville holding these funds to join them in an effort to avoid the payment of this interest, which the banks here flatly refused to do.

"I notice in the morning papers that Dr. Murray refused to allow the resolution passed by the commission on Saturday to remove these funds published. I see no reason why it should not be published, as there was no secret about it."

Twenty-five thousand dollars will be brought to the Greenville banks, divided between the Norwood National, the Farmers' and Merchants', and the Fourth National Banks. The People's Bank and the City National already had deposits. The other banks did not make application for the funds.

Greenville will get about \$25,000 of the funds divided among the banks named above. Spartanburg, Anderson, and the other cities of the State will receive their share. In Charleston there is already some of the fund or deposit, and this will not be increased by this new apportionment, because of the fact that application was not made for it.

*To avoid serious results take Foley's Kidney Remedy at the first sign of kidney or bladder disorder such as backache, urinary irregularities, exhaustion, and you will soon be well. Commence taking Foley's Kidney Remedy today. W. W. Sibert.

Mr. B. F. Burs, a bright and promising young man, formerly of Lancaster, has been made assistant general manager of the Baltimore News, having been transferred from Mr. Munsey's Washington paper.

*Everyone would be benefited by taking Foley's Orino Laxative for constipation, stomach and liver trouble, as it sweetens the stomach and breath, gently stimulates the liver and regulates the bowels and is much superior to pills and ordinary laxatives. Why not try Foley's Orino Laxative today? W. W. Sibert.

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Mr. W. A. Jones, President of the South Atlantic League, reports the situation in Charleston baseball is encouraging. He says that the League has ample security for the money spent in paying off the Charleston players, and that the League will be reorganized within a few days.

Trouble Makers Ousted. *When a sufferer from stomach trouble takes Dr. King's New Life Pills he's mighty glad to see his Dyspepsia and Indigestion fly, but more—he's tickled over his new, fine appetite, strong nerves, healthy vigor, all because stomach, liver and kidneys now work right. 25c at Sibert's Drug Store.

*Sometimes you may be told that there are other things just as good as DeWitt's Kidney and Bladder Pills, for any ailment of the kidney or bladder, which always result in weak back, lumbago, rheumatic pains, rheumatism and urinary disorders. A trial of L. VITT'S Kidney and Bladder Pills is sufficient to convince you how good they are. Send your name to E. C. DeWitt & Co., Chicago, for a free trial box. They are sold here by all druggists.

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Tickets on sale June 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 28th, July 5th and 12th, 1909, limited to leave destination fifteen days from, but not including date of sale. Extension of limit returning to Sept. 30th, may be obtained by depositing ticket with the Depot Ticket Agent at destination within two days after arrival and payment of fee of \$1.00. For information, call on Ticket Agent, or write W. J. CRAIG, Pas. Traf. Mgr. T. C. WHITE, Gen. Pas. Agent. WILMINGTON, N. C.

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