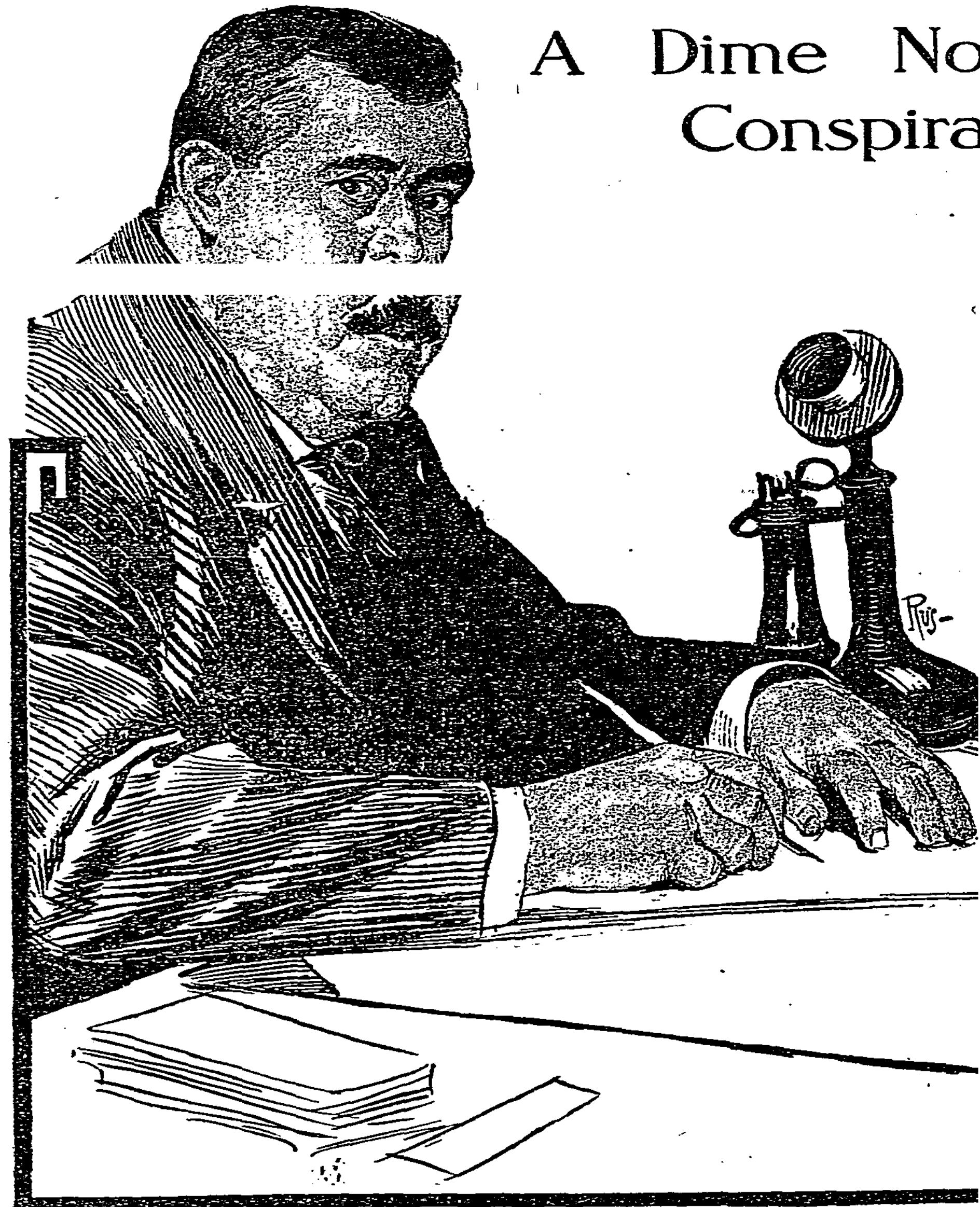


# HOW FLYNN FOILED THE SICILIAN COUNTERFEITERS

A Dime Novel in Real Life Is the Story of the International Conspiracy Which Came to an End Last Week With the Suicide of the Head of the Plot.



William J. Flynn.

ONE day last week an old Sicilian jumped off a Weehawken ferryboat and drowned himself. That is the poem. Here is the story:

Coytesville, N. J., is a little village tucked away from railroads, and at the end of a trolley that is none too busy. Nobody journeys to Coytesville save the returning natives who may have gone forth for provisions or on an excursion planned to break the monotony of life at home.

Occasionally a peddler wends his way through the quiet, shady streets of the village, and his coming brings a great outburst of dogs of all degrees of dogdom. Once in a great while some one will get off at the end of the trolley tracks and inquire about a place to live. He may or he may not stay.

One of these latter appeared in Coytesville a month ago. He was a dignified man of fifty, with gray splashing his hair at the temples and silver in his mustache. His complexion was the swarthy complexion of the Southern Italian.

The middle-aged visitor walked east, pausing at the crossings of the roads to peer to right and left and inspect the clusterings of cottages or the weed-filled vacant lots. As he approached the heavily-wooded crest of the Palisades across the Hudson from Washington Point, and within the flight of an arrow from Bronx Borough, he found the cottages becoming less pretentious. The lawns became smaller and smaller until, after crossing four roads running north and south, the cottages no longer boasted pretenses of the sort, and were seemingly content with a vegetable garden in the rear and little tangled flower gardens around the front doors.

The dark-complexioned visitor turned south on the fourth road, the one nearest the woods, which cloud the brow of the Palisades. This road is dignified by the name, "Sixth Street." It is a country lane, bending and closely hedged with daisies and weeds. Gnarled apple trees spread their shade over it here and there, and patches of shadow dance in the gray dust.

This particular part of remote Coytesville seems to be as far removed from the rest of the big, busy world as is the soft tread of Gray's meter in "The Elery" from the tramping of feet on Wall Street.

Here are to be seen cottages that suggest sentiment, and remind you of the House of Usher. They seem so time-worn that they appear a part of the air and little visible brothers and sisters of the wind and the shadows. How they stand up without props seems a question each little gable asks itself. The shingles are soft and the ledges of doors and windows seem to droop as if they were fleshy and heavily borne upon. Poor people inhabit them; silent people. The children there do not play out in the road, although no automobile would ever go that way to frighten their moth-

ers. There is no sound of laughter from the lips of little ones, and there are no calls from the throats of their elders. The little ones are in the backyards pulling weeds from the vegetable patches, and their elders are toiling at tasks elsewhere.

The village is too far from the railroad to suffer from the shriek of locomotives, and this section of it is far enough away from the trolley's terminus to miss the clang of the gong and the grinding of brakes against the wheels.

One of the little places in this country lane boasts a new coat of paint and a sign. The sign reads:

MANNING'S BAKERY.

Opposite "Manning's Bakery" is a cottage not yet finished.

The stranger went into the bakery and asked a pleasant faced woman behind a tray of pies, who owned the house opposite. She told him. He thanked her and found the owner and rented the shack for a month.

The stranger paid \$18, a month's rent. In advance. He did not give a name. His money did all the talking. A few days after the renting of the cottage across the road and in the row of little houses that were ready to fall from the exhaustion of the years, the stranger appeared with another man, also swarthy, after the complexion of those who come from Sicily. The two brought their belongings in handbags.

Later came a wagon bringing furniture, beds, bureau, tables, and chairs, all wonderfully new, glistening from the high varnish that is put on the "golden oak" style of household ware.

"Sixth Street" had never seen such splendid furniture and "Sixth Street" denizens are staring up of nights wondering what is to become of it all now that the tenants have gone and the agents of the Secret Service of the United States have the keys of the house.

The coming of the strangers made a day's excitement in the street and then men, women, and children resumed their tasks and the two strangers found themselves in an ideal spot for privacy. Nobody bothered them. They had a shelter on the very edge of things. A week passed and then two other strangers came to the house, bringing hand bags. There was a little flurry of wonderment over the coming of the guests and this died down.

The villagers accepted the newcomers as fixtures and there was an end of the excitement right there.

One day a garlic peddler, who had bought 100 pounds of his wares in Elizabeth Street, came up to Coytesville from Port Lee. He was seeking out Italian families and inquiring with many smiles and pleasant words where he might find them. To the cottage of the strangers he was directed and he went tapping at the door.

There was a shuffle of feet inside, an uneasy feeling came into the air, and the peddler glanced toward the windows and saw two pairs of keen eyes studying his face.

"Buon giorn, Signori!" he called in half-frightened greeting.

"What you want?" came back in English. "I have garlic, Signori; fine garlic from Napoli." "Go away." The Neapolitan from Elizabeth Street hurried off. The man who had ordered him away was Francesco Martino, one of the most dangerous and one of the most skillful of the few really great international counterfeiters. The man who had peered out of the window with Martino was Carmelo Codero, sometime of Palermo, lately of

enough to rush to the road and separate two roosters which were battling good and plenty. "I'll have to put one of them roosters in the pot Sunday," she said. "Now, where was I? Oh, yes. There were four of them—two rather old men and two young men, about 25 years old. The young men did not stay there all the time. They would come and go. The old ones were always in the house. Another strange thing was that they never lighted a lamp or a candle at night." It was probably the good judgment of

ville, piece by piece in handbags and dress suit cases. The Secret Service men who cut short this proposed big issue of "queer" one dollar certificates also learned after they found and raided the plant that the especially made paper for the issue had been brought over in small quantities by the two younger men not yet apprehended. William J. Flynn, once more at the head of the Secret Service Bureau in New York after his disastrous experiment as a Deputy Police Commissioner, is one of the most patient and careful detectives

Martino settled there as a quiet, unobtrusive person and moved in the glittering "golden oak" furniture. Flynn knew of this. Martino had two guests. Flynn knew of it even better than the inquisitive neighbors in their shingled and time-eaten homes. Martino had the press brought over in sections in grip-sacks. Flynn knew of it. The soft paper, with false threads to fool the guileless, was in the building. Flynn enjoyed this, for he knew that the time was near for a "collar."

Rubano held the working end of the gun. "Hands up!" he commanded. Martino looked into Rubano's eyes and threw up his hands.

The detectives entered the cottage and found the press wet with ink, the plates upon it, and a fresh one-dollar certificate on the table.

Beside the certificate was a glass half filled with beer. The head had told on the old man, the head of the international counterfeiters, and he had stopped to refresh himself. The glass half filled with beer, long stale and flat, is still on the table. The certificate, along with the press, the plates, and the paper, are all stored away in Flynn's office.

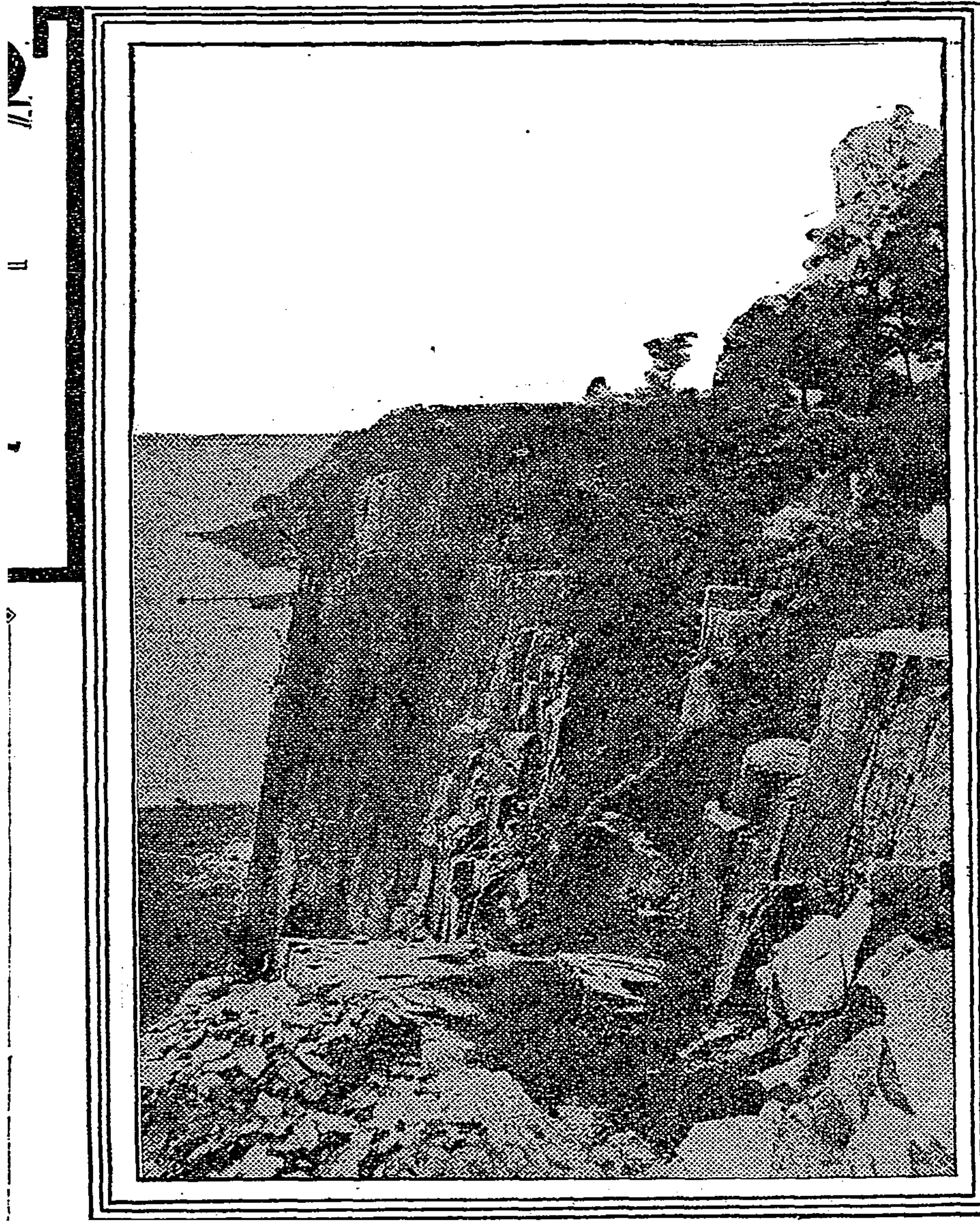
The case was a clean one. The old for was caught in his hole. Martino knew it. He told Flynn's men that he would go with them quietly. With two of the men watching him, he sat on the little porch of the cottage and stared over at the bakery as the pie lady's two roosters renewed their war. He was passive. He was studying the prospect of joining Lupu, the Wolf, another able counterfeiter, who had been caught and is now winding up his days behind Federal bars.

Inside the cottage Rubano was busy. He ripped open the mattresses of the beds and found hundreds of dollars in queer money. In the basement, an evil and dank place, he found ink and bundles of paper. In a corner of one bedroom he found a shotgun loaded with the heaviest make of shot and two revolvers, with a box of heavy calibre cartridges.

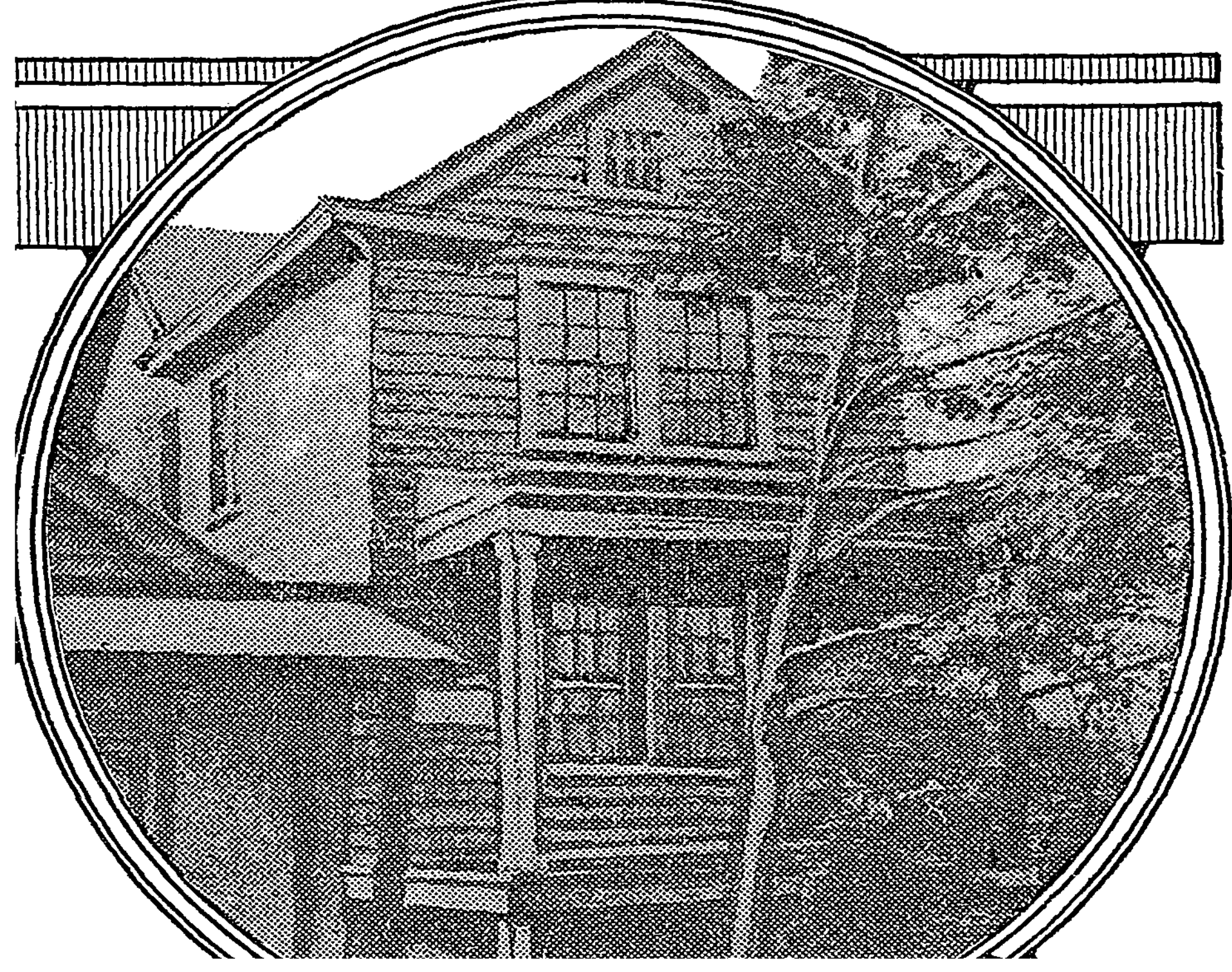
Martino had made ready for a fight and flight. He had not been given the opportunity of either.

Had the raid been made in the nighttime instead of in broad daylight Martino would have stood a splendid chance. It will be remembered that this country lane in Coytesville, called "Sixth Street," is the nearest north and south road to the woods shadowing the stone wall which rises high in the air on the Jersey shore. But between that country lane and the parapet called the Palisades there is wild woodland. The foxes still run there, and sometimes deer are to be seen. There are bird enthusiasts who occasionally swing in bosons' chairs to photograph amid the rocks the fledglings of eagles.

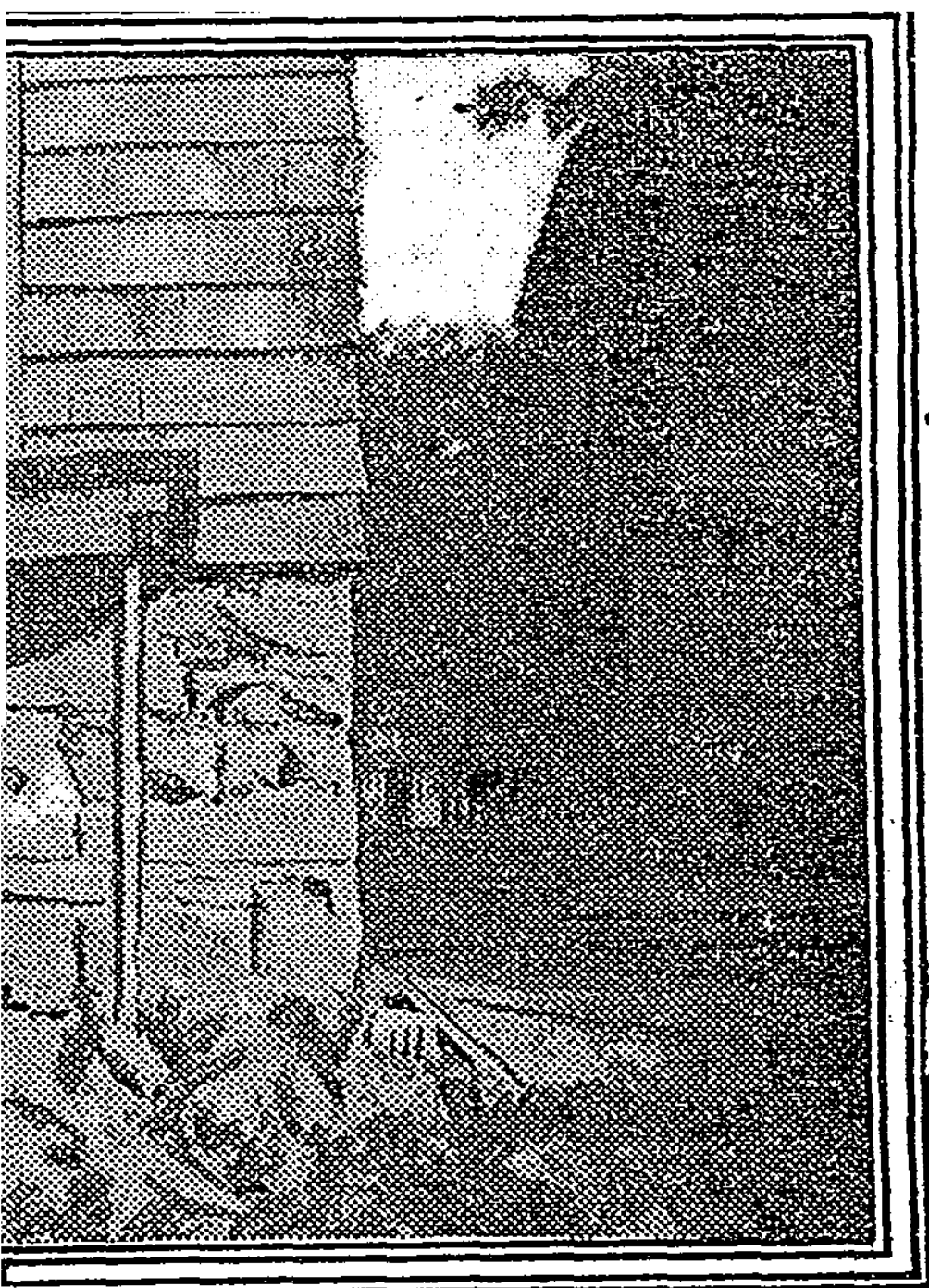
For a get-away the cottage was finely



Point on Palisades in Rear of Counterfeiters' House in Coytesville.



House Occupied by Counterfeiters at Coytesville, N. J.



Entrance to Basement of Counterfeiters' House.

67 Catharine Street, Manhattan, and now being boarded in a steel cage by the United States Government.

It was the finesse which belonged to Martino that brought about this ideal little corner for a counterfeiter's den, and had it not been for the international secret service work that is now done between Italy and the United States the band in the cottage on "Sixth Street," Coytesville, N. J., might have gone on making "queer" money and floating it for years. The lone village constable of Coytesville never would have known what was going on, the officials of Port Lee Borough never would have been the wiser, and the master counterfeiter and his workers would have gone on for years safe and secure at their task in the bending road that lies between the brow of the Palisades and the woods that spread to the westward, where there are railroads and many cities and villages.

From keen-eyed women who peered through shutters and cracks of doors during the first week of the coming of Martino and his band or counterfeiters a Times man learned much about the method of establishing the plant opposite Manning's bakery.

The lady who sells the pies had stopped for a rest and she was fanning herself with her gingham apron. It was a lucky moment for the pie lady. She ached to gossip and there was no one with whom to prattle. She took the reporter into her broad bosom (entirely as a matter of figure—that is, a figure of speech) and began to talk about the gray Sicilian.

"He was very liberal," she said. "That he was. He would come in and ask for water, and when I would give him a glass he would give me 5 cents. The idea of paying 5 cents for a glass of water. He never said anything, but was polite. He gave the children a nickel every now and then."

"But the funny thing, and the thing that made us wonder, was that there was no woman in their house. We always look for a woman. Why should they want to keep house if they did not have a woman to do things?"

The pie lady paused in her gossip long

Martino, who saw to it that no light was ever shown in the windows of his cottage at night. A light would have brought wondering villagers with keen eyes when the villagers had finished the toll of the day and had idle time on their hands. In the daytime they were all busy, and a drawn curtain offered no temptation. Then, too, in the daytime a peeping Tom could be easily trapped.

Once installed in the place Martino's task was to get his tools inside without creating suspicion. He was no ordinary counterfeiter. He had played the game many years with success. He had been so cautious that he had traveled all the way to Sicily to have the plates made for the counterfeiting of a one-dollar silver certificate for this issue, which he intended to be large.

Had he had the plate made in this country he would have been in danger of being shadowed by Secret Service men, for there are always patient detectives attached to Flynn's New York bureau, who will watch the shops where engraving materials are sold in the hope of breaking out a lead on a counterfeiting gang.

So Martino went to Sicily and there had his plates made. To get them into this country was easy enough. They could be jammed into a half loaf of bread and brought in by a confederate who would munch the bread as he answered or tried to answer questions on Ellis Island. A dozen ways of the sort could be easily arranged.

It would seem to the uninitiated that the big problem before him in the firm establishment of this plant would be the making of the counterfeit bills through this quiet country lane where curious women peeped at windows when they had the time—and they always make the time in a village when a wagon rolls by out of season.

Martino bought his press in New York and dissembled it. He was a master mechanic, and could tear to pieces and rebuild anything with cogs and wheels. From some part of the lower east side, most probably in the near neighborhood of 67 Catharine Street, the dissembled press was taken to the cottage in Coytes-

that have ever handled problems of the underworld.

Flynn knew when the plates for the Martino gang were designed. He knew when they were finished. He knew when they were turned over to the master hand-ler of counterfeit money, and he knew when Martino sailed for this country from Sicily. He may not have known how the plates were sent over and if he did he was wise enough not to interfere with their delivery.

Martino was the man to shadow. The detective's agents in Sicily—and Sicily is now honeycombed with them, for the reason that Sicily's criminals have flooded the United States, and have furnished an assassin for Petrosino—cabled Flynn in cipher every detail of every step that Martino made.

Of course, Petrosino was not of the Secret Service branch, but he was a brave and fearless Detective Sergeant of the New York force of criminal hunters. And when it comes down to murdering in cold blood a manhunter, the crime takes on the nature of a family affair and secret service men and police detectives are glad to work together for the final adjudication of the matter—and vengeance.

Flynn has long been known as a detective who worked from the inside out. Perhaps no man in his position has had an abler corps of stool pigeons. The reason for this is that he never allows a man who has worked up a case to make an arrest and appear as a witness. He managed this with Lupu, the Wolf, and his band of counterfeiters. None of the Italian criminals in New York when Palermo or Vitrolo knows now how Flynn put that bunch in jail at Atlanta for the rest of their natural lives. The "Wolf" will hardly live to serve his sentence. He and his confederates are shooed away for the rest of their natural lives.

Flynn was duly informed of every move of the Martino scheme to make \$1 certificates on a million-dollar scale, and he knew that Martino was in this country, suave, keen, and careful. The kindly, rather grave Italian who was the master of this gang never slept and never had a waking moment without a shadow at his heels.

Flynn was patient. Martino picked out the quiet of this bending lane in a remote New Jersey village. Flynn knew of it.

On the second floor of the cottage the press that had been dissembled was assembled again. Flynn knew of this.

The coveted plates, made with such care in Sicily and smuggled to this country, were drawn from their hiding place. They were fitted in their grooves in the press and a sheet of the finely made paper was put in the rack. An impression of a \$1 silver certificate was made. Here was evidence. Flynn still waited.

The newspaper accounts of the capture of Martino and Codero all declared that not a note was struck off. This news item was inspired by the Secret Service under Flynn. It is a service that works in the dark, and the darker it can make a news item appear the better it is for the next case that is tackled. Besides, a skillful cross-examiner for the defense might arise and ask if Flynn's men had not helped in the creating of a felony. Some of them—and they are a bold lot when boldness is required—might have even offered the loan of a cog to the press.

Flynn waited and the counterfeit plant in the country lane, just across the winding Hudson from the Bronx, was turning out a fortune in finely engraved and printed \$1 certificates. Then Flynn decided that he had all the evidence he wanted for conviction.

The chief of the New York bureau sent Klink, Rubano and Burke to the cottage. Their orders were to take Martino and bring him in. Codero was in Catharine Street. Other men were sent to get him. They got him all right and he is under lock and key.

The three men sent after Martino took the trolley at Edgewater, transferred to the line which skirts the edge of the Palisades, and came to its end. All the dogs of the village outrushed to snap at their heels. They cursed back the dogs and lolled along.

Flynn's men turned into the country lane where glistens Manning's bakery in its new coat of paint and where seemed to reel under the blast of last Tuesday's heat the feeble old cottages about it. They went to the front door of Martino's counterfeiting plant and knocked upon it.

Martino answered. A blue steel tube was stuck under his rather pink nose, colored by tobacco and good, Chianti. Back of the tube was the mechanism of a hammerless Colt revolver and seven .38-calibre pellets of lead.

placed. A search of the forest at night might have meant broken necks and limbs for the pursuers. The pursued, knowing the country, might easily have found his way to the south for a mile and a half, found a quick-descending road to the river's edge, and a motor-boat would have ended the chase with disappointment to the man hunters.

Martino knew all the advantages of these things, and from the ugly, glaring entrance to his cellar, in the rear of his cottage, he could have made his way in the dark to the almost trackless woodland to the east. But he was caught in the bright sunlight, and a dash for liberty would have meant a well-aimed bullet, a wound in the leg, and the trial and conviction of a cripple.

Flynn's men cleaned up the job of gathering the evidence in the cottage, and took Martino to the trolley. Following the policy of hiding their workers the Secret Service has a rule of not putting the iron bracelets on a prisoner when this can be avoided. Martino said that he would not make a row.

The trolley took the master counterfeiter and his captors to the Weehawken Ferry. Martino was quiet, and there was no reason to believe that he would cause any trouble. The day was piping hot. When the ferryboat Newburg was mid-stream he rose, and said that he would raise a window. He raised it, and, with a spring, went through it to the river.

Martino could not swim a stroke, or, if he could, he deliberately drowned himself. A life preserver was thrown him, and boathooks were poked at his ghastly face as it appeared above the waters, but he would have none of this. He was staring at the face of death, and he welcomed it in preference to the visions that Lupu, the Wolf, may have in his cell.

Flynn's men went back to the Custom House and Flynn's office with material for a coroner's slip. They found Codero there a prisoner, but the master man of the gang, the planner and thinker, was dead, and had cheated the Secret Service.

In the rooms given Flynn in the Custom House he has the "bunk" one-dollar certificates piled along with the press, the paper, the ink, and sundry additional tools for the making of fortunes in the "queer." He has Codero good and tight in jail, but Martino, the best of them all, has cheated Flynn and the courts. There are two young men roaming the country that he is still having his men shadow, for they were pupils of Martino and may yet become post-graduates if the Secret Service does not land them.

Coytesville, at the end of the trolley line, still shudders with excitement. It will be years before the end of this adventure has been told for the last time.

"But," said Mr. Reilly, the owner of the cottage occupied by the counterfeiters and rented by the master of the gang, "he paid in advance and he paid in good money."

"It's too bad he's dead," said the pie lady, waving her gingham apron after passing the Times man a glass of cold water. "He would pay 5 cents for a drink of water. Think of that. And he often gave the children a nickel. We looked the money over after he was taken away, and it was all good money. He never tried to pass any bunk money on us."