

**HOW TO DETECT COUNTERFEIT
BANK NOTES; OR, AN ILLUSTRATED
TREATISE ON THE DETECTION OF
COUNTERFEIT, ALTERED AND
SPURIOUS BANK NOTES**

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How to Detect Counterfeit Bank Notes; or, an Illustrated Treatise on the Detection of Counterfeit, Altered and Spurious Bank Notes by George Peyton

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GEORGE PEYTON

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HOW TO DETECT
COUNTERFEIT BANK NOTES;

OR,

AN ILLUSTRATED TREATISE

ON THE

DETECTION OF COUNTERFEIT, ALTERED, AND SPURIOUS
BANK NOTES,

WITH ORIGINAL BANK NOTE PLATES, ENGRAVED EXPRESSLY FOR THIS WORK

BY

RAWDON, WRIGHT, HATCH & EDSON,

BANK NOTE ENGRAVERS, OF NEW YORK.

BY GEORGE PEYTON, EXCHANGE BROKER.

SIXTH THOUSAND.

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CALIFORNIA.

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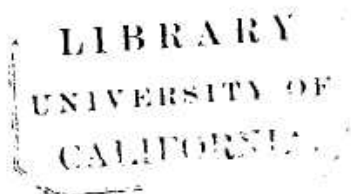
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P R E F A C E .



IN a work of this description, whose title is "HOW TO DETECT COUNTERFEIT BANK NOTES," a preface is hardly necessary, because, if the book possesses any merit it will immediately commend itself to the business public. I would state, however, that this work is written with a view of not only enabling all who take an interest in the subject to become experts in the science of detecting fraudulent bank notes, but also to make them conscious of the method by which they become so. I have condensed the letter-press, and avoided technicalities, as much as possible; though, from the nature of the work, I have been forced into repetitions, which, however essential, rather mar, in a literary point of view, the symmetry of the treatise; and, in conclusion, if the reader will display as much assiduity in studying it, as I have in my endeavors to make it clear and comprehensive for his benefit, I shall be amply compensated for any labor that may have been expended in its production.



PEYTON'S SYSTEM

OF

DETECTING COUNTERFEIT BANK NOTES.

IN presenting the third edition of this small volume to the public, I have found no occasion to modify or expunge any of the principles laid down in the earlier editions; on the contrary, I have received gratifying evidence, not only of their practicability, but also of the facility with which pupils, through their instrumentality, became, in a short time, accurate judges of bank notes.

Since the first edition was issued, various efforts have been made by bank-note engravers to prevent, if possible, the counterfeiting and altering of bank notes; and with, I regret to say, very indifferent success. The truth is, that bank-note engraving has been carried to such a degree of perfection in this country, that it may well be questioned whether it is susceptible of much further improvement. As I stated, however, in the earlier editions of this treatise, and wish to state again,

in the most earnest manner, "that all the advantages which the present system of bank-note engraving presents, and all the safeguards against fraud which it furnishes, are beneficial to those, and those only, who are *critically* familiar with it as a work of art." In other words, those who are ignorant of the nature and construction of the designs found on all modern bank notes, known as lathe-work, bas-relief, parallel ruling; and who look upon the exquisitely engraved vignettes as merely pictorial embellishments, can never become capable of determining, with any degree of accuracy, the genuineness of bank notes.

It certainly requires no argument to prove that the most perfect bank-note design, both as to construction and execution, can be of little service, so far as protection against fraud is concerned, to one who has lost his eyesight; and I cannot see the impropriety of considering all who have not availed themselves of the decided advantages which a knowledge of modern bank-note engraving confers, in the detecting of counterfeit bank notes, as but little better off than their blind neighbor. It is remarkable, in a business community like ours, in which everything relating to profit is so perseveringly kept in view, that so important a feature as that of being able to distinguish a good bank note from a bad one, should have received so little attention.

"The enormous quantities of fraudulent bank notes,

of every possible character," says an influential Bank-Note Detector, in a late issue, "put in circulation daily, is incredible." It is evident, notwithstanding the large number of publications devoted to the description and detection of fraudulent issues, that the number of forgeries is increasing every day. It is also certain that those who consult the pages of these "detectors," obtain nothing but vague and contradictory ideas, of no permanent value whatever; and who, after years of perplexing study, find themselves as ignorant of the subject of detecting counterfeit notes, as when they first began their inquiries.

Hence it is that so many persons have abandoned the idea of ever becoming competent judges.

Now, the true method of detecting counterfeit bank notes will be found, on a careful examination, to be quite simple.

If the reader had never seen a diamond, for instance, and it became necessary for him to acquire a sufficient knowledge of its character to enable him to distinguish it readily from an imitation, what course would he pursue? He would, I think, obtain from a reliable source a diamond of whose genuineness there could be no doubt. He would then, by frequent and careful examination of this specimen, gradually familiarize his eye with those characteristics by which, independently of its physical properties, the true gem can alone be recog-

nized. If he is now informed that *all genuine diamonds* are precisely of the character of the one under consideration, and that the only shade of difference, if difference it may be called, is that produced by the lapidary, in his method of cutting the rough stone, his knowledge of the subject will have been much increased. He will now be shown the few styles in which diamonds are cut, and these, with a little examination of the gems so shaped, he readily comprehends; and so obtains a practical knowledge of a subject of which he was, a few days before, entirely ignorant. If an imitation diamond, made of glass, be now shown to him, he will immediately detect its character; and why? because he would perceive that it possessed none of those essential qualities which he knows, by experience, are to be found in the true stone.

Now the character of every commodity—bank notes included—of which the eye is the determining agent, has to be decided on precisely similar grounds; and it is only asserting a truism, in saying that it is impossible to detect a counterfeit article without an intimate knowledge of the genuine one; and that the ability to detect the one is in direct ratio to the knowledge possessed of the other.

The method of instruction adopted in this treatise is analogous, in many respects, to the above illustration.