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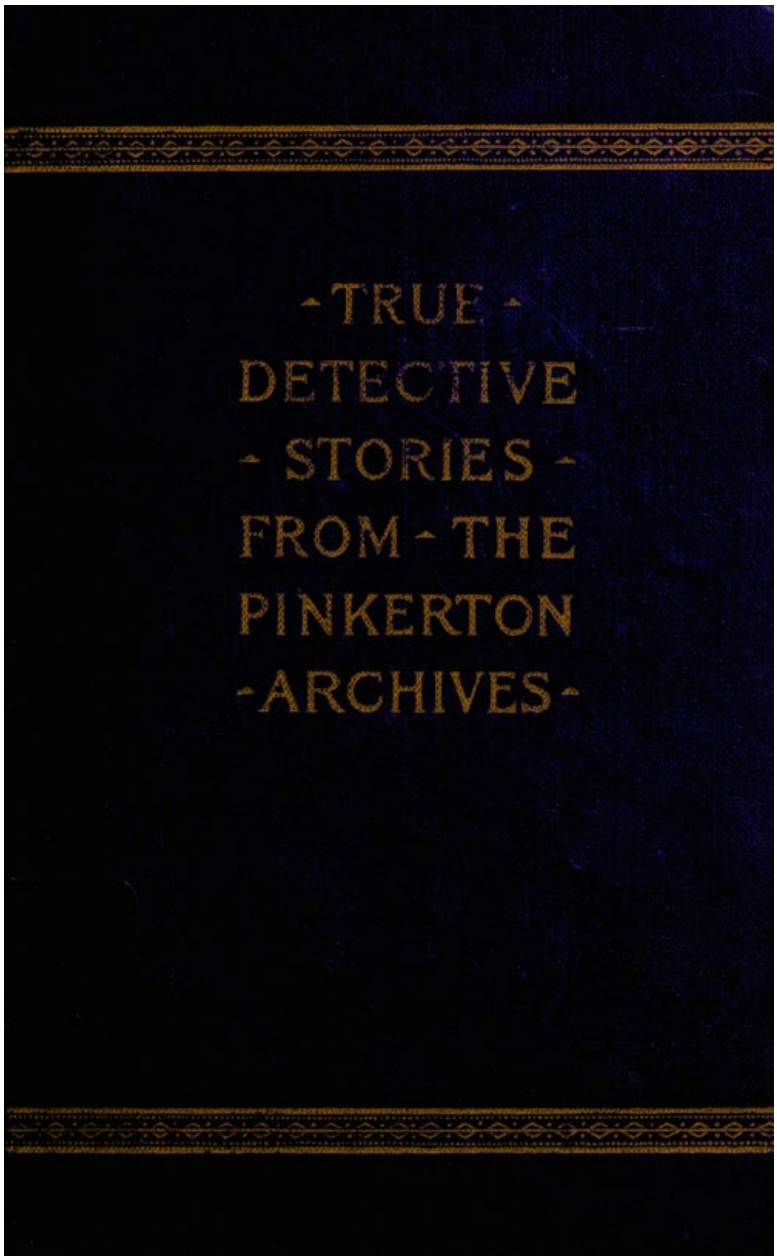

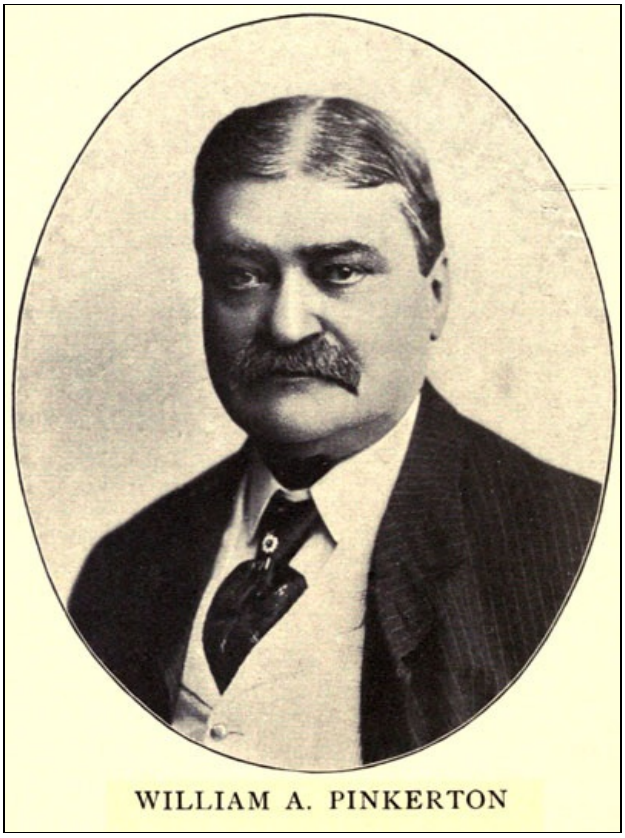

WILLIAM A. PINKERTON

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True Detective Stories

From the Archives of the Pinkertons

By

Cleveland Moffett

NEW YORK:
G. W. Dillingham Co., Publishers,

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The Northampton Bank Robbery [1]

The Northampton Bank Robbery [3]

About midnight on Tuesday, January 25, 1876, five masked men entered the house of John Whittelsey in Northampton, Massachusetts. Mr. Whittelsey was the cashier of the Northampton National Bank, and was known to have in his possession the keys of the bank building and the combination to the bank vault. The five men entered the house noiselessly, with the aid of false keys, previously prepared. Passing up-stairs to the sleeping-apartments, they overpowered seven inmates of the house, gagging and binding them so that resistance or alarm [4] was impossible. These were Mr. Whittelsey and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Cutler, Miss Mattie White, Miss Benton, and a servant-girl.

The bedroom of Mr. and Mrs. Whittelsey was entered by two men who seemed to be leaders of the band. One wore a long linen duster buttoned nearly to the knees, also gloves and overshoes; the other wore a jacket and overalls. Both men had their faces concealed behind masks, and one of them carried a dark-lantern. On entering the room the two men went directly to the bed, one standing on either side, and handcuffed Mr. Whittelsey and his wife. Both carried revolvers. The proceedings were much the same in the other rooms.

After some delay and whispered consultation, the robbers ordered the five women to get up and dress. When they had done so, they were roped together by ankles and wrists, and taken into a [5] small room, where they were kept under guard by one of the band. Mr. Cutler also was imprisoned in the same way. Then the two leaders devoted themselves to Mr. Whittelsey. They told him plainly that they had come for the keys of the bank and the combination of the vault, and that they would "make it hot" for him unless he gave them what they wanted. Mr. Whittelsey replied that it was useless to attempt to break into the bank, as the locks were too strong for their efforts and he would not betray his trust. At this the man in the linen duster shrugged his shoulders and said they would see about that.

Mr. Whittelsey was then taken downstairs, and again summoned to surrender the keys. Again he refused. At this the man in the overalls put his hand in the cashier's trousers-pocket and drew forth a key.

"Is this the key to the bank?" he asked. [6]

"Yes, it is," answered the cashier, hoping to gain time.

"You lie," said the robber, with threatening gesture, at the same time trying the key in the lock of the front door of the house, which it turned.

"Don't hit him yet," said the other; "he is sick." Then he asked Mr. Whittelsey if he wanted a drink of brandy. Mr. Whittelsey shook his head no. Then the man in the linen duster renewed his demands. He wanted the combination of the vault. Mr. Whittelsey gave him some figures, which the robber wrote down on a piece of paper. These were for the outer door of the vault. He demanded the combination for the inner door, and Mr. Whittelsey gave him other figures. Having written these down also, the robber came close to his prisoner and said, "Will you swear these figures are correct?"

"I will," answered Mr. Whittelsey.

"You are lying again. If they are correct, let's hear you repeat them." [7]

The cashier could not do this, and so disclosed that the figures were not the right ones.

"See, Number One," said the robber, addressing his comrade, "we're wasting time; we'll have to teach him to stop lying."

As he spoke he struck the sharp point of his lead-pencil into Mr. Whittelsey's face so violently as to make a wound, and followed this with several blows on the body.

"Will you tell us now?" he asked.

Mr. Whittelsey kept silent. Then both men came at him, wringing his ears, shaking him by the throat, hurling him to the floor, and pounding their knees into his chest. For three hours this torture was continued. More than once the ruffians placed their revolvers at Mr. Whittelsey's head, declaring they would blow his brains out unless he yielded. Finally he did yield; the suffering was too great; the supreme instinct of self-preservation asserted itself. Toward four [8] o'clock in the morning, bruised from head to foot, and worn beyond further resistance, he surrendered the keys, and revealed the true combination of the vault.

Then the robbers went away, leaving two of their associates to watch over the prisoners. One of the band, before his departure, did not disdain to search Mr. Whittelsey's clothes and take his watch and chain and fourteen dollars in money. The last of the band remained in the house until six o'clock; and it was an hour later before Mr. Whittelsey succeeded in freeing himself from his bonds.

He hurried at once to the bank, arriving there soon after seven o'clock. He found the vault door locked, and its dials broken off, so that it was impossible at the moment to determine the extent of the robbery, or, indeed, whether there had been any robbery. It was necessary to send to New [9] York for an expert before the vault could be opened, which was not accomplished until late that night, twenty hours after the attack had been made. Then it was found that the robbers had been only too successful, having secured money and securities estimated at a million and a quarter dollars. Much of this sum was safe-deposits, and the loss fell on the depositors; and to some it was the loss of their whole property.

At this time the authorities had no clue to the identity of the robbers, though they had left behind them numerous evidences of their presence, such as dark-lanterns, masks, sledge-hammers, overshoes, and the like. Their escape had been managed as skilfully as the robbery itself. Sheriff's officers and detectives did their best during subsequent days and weeks, but their efforts were in vain. The president of the bank offered a reward of twenty-five thousand dollars [10] for the apprehension of the robbers and the return of the property; but there were no discoveries.

When several months had elapsed, the Pinkertons were called into the case. They began by carefully studying certain communications that had been received by the bank directors from persons claiming to have in their possession the missing securities. The first of these communications was dated New York, February 27, 1876, about a month after the robbery. It ran as follows, the letters of each word being carefully printed with a pen, so that there was little chance of identification through the handwriting:

> "DEAR SIRS: When you are satisfied with detective skill you can make a proposition to us, the holders, and if you are liberal we may be able to do business with you. If you entertain any such ideas, please insert a personal in the New York 'Herald.' Address to XXX, and sign 'Rufus,' to which due attention will be paid. To satisfy you that we hold papers, we send you a couple of pieces." [11]
>
> [No signature.]

No attention had been paid to this letter, although two certificates of stock accompanied it which had undoubtedly been in the bank's vault. Three other letters of a similar nature had been received later. To one of these the bank people had sent a guarded reply, which had called forth the following response, dated New York, October 20, 1876:

> "GENTLEMEN: Since you have seen fit to recognize the receipt of our letter, we will now send you our price for the return of the goods. The United States coupon bonds and money taken cannot be returned; but everything else—bonds, letters, and papers, to the smallest document—will be returned for one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. If these figures suit you, we will make arrangements, according to our promise, and you may have the goods as soon as preliminaries can be arranged for the safe conduct of the business. If you agree to this price, insert in the New York 'Herald' personal column the simple word 'Agatha.' [12]
>
> "Respectfully, etc.,
>
> "RUFUS."

The special value of these letters was in helping the detectives to decide which one of several gangs of bank robbers then operating in the country was most likely to have committed the crime. Being familiar with the methods of each gang, Robert Pinkerton was able to draw useful inferences from evidence that would otherwise have been insignificant. He knew, for instance, that the notorious gang headed by James Dunlap would be more apt than any other to thus negotiate for the return of all the securities in a lump, since it was Dunlap's invariable rule to insist upon personally controlling the proceeds of his robberies until final disposition was made of them. On the other hand, the gangs headed respectively by the notorious "Jimmy" Hope, [13] "Worcester Sam," and George Bliss might have divided the securities among the members, and then tried to negotiate a compromise on the individual portions.

A fact of much significance to the Pinkertons was the rather remarkable interest in the case, and apparent familiarity with it, shown by one J. G. Evans, an expert in safes and vaults and the representative of one of the largest safe-manufactories in the country.

The day after the robbery Evans had been at Bristol, Connecticut, in the interest of his firm, who, on receipt of the news, had immediately wired him to proceed to Northampton. His presence in Northampton was regarded as nothing strange, for he had been there several times during the months just preceding the robbery, and once had inspected the lock and dials of the vault of the robbed bank. What did seem a little strange, however, was Evans's evident interest in the [14] negotiations for a compromise. On a dozen different occasions he talked with the president and other officers of the bank regarding the robbery, and insinuated quite plainly that he might be in a position to assist them in recovering their lost securities. A few months after the robbery he even went so far as to tell one of the directors that he could name the members of the gang.

This disposition of Evans to put himself forward in the negotiations had all the more significance to Robert Pinkerton from the fact that it had been rumored that a series of daring bank robberies lately committed in various parts of the country had owed their success to the participation of an expert in safes and locks, who had been able, through his position of trust, to reveal to the robbers many secrets of weak bank locks, safes, and vaults. Up to this time these rumors had remained indefinite, and no one ventured to name the man. It was known, however, that the false [15] expert was a man of high standing in his calling and generally regarded as above suspicion. It was also known that there was great jealousy in other gangs of bank robbers because of the amazing success of the gang with whom this man was working, and that overtures even had been made by the leaders of some other gangs to win over to their own gangs this desirable accomplice. Robert Pinkerton had already concluded that the gang so ably assisted was the Dunlap gang; and he was now pretty well persuaded, also, that the Northampton robbery had been committed by the Dunlap gang. There was every reason, therefore, for keeping a sharp eye on the safe-expert Evans.

As he studied the case, Mr. Pinkerton recalled a circumstance that had happened in the fall of 1875. On the night of November 4, 1875, the First National Bank of Pittston, Pennsylvania, had been robbed of sixty thousand dollars, and Mr. Pinkerton had gone there to investigate the case. [16] He met a number of safe-men, it being a business custom with safe-men to flock to the scene of an important bank robbery in order to supply new safes for the ones that have been wrecked. While they were all examining the vault, still littered with debris of the explosion, the

representative of one of the safe-companies picked up a small air-pump used by the robbers, and, looking at it critically, remarked that he would have sworn it belonged to his company, did he not know that was impossible. The air-pump was, he declared, of precisely his company's model, one that had been recently devised for a special purpose. At the time Mr. Pinkerton regarded this as merely a coincidence, but now the memory came to him as a flash of inspiration that the man who had remarked the similarity in the air-pump represented the same company that employed Evans.

In view of all the circumstances, it was decided to put Evans under the closest questioning. He [17]
did not deny that he had made unusual efforts to effect the return of the securities, but professed that it was because he was sincerely sorry for the many people who had been ruined through the robbery. And he professed to believe, also, that he had been unjustly treated in the affair, though just how, and by whom, he would not say. To the detective's trained observation it was apparent that he was worried and apprehensive and not at all sure of himself.

In November, 1876, George H. Bangs, superintendent of the Pinkerton Agency, a man possessed of very remarkable skill in eliciting confessions from suspected persons, had an interview with Evans. He professed to Evans that the detectives had secured evidence that practically cleared up the whole mystery; that they *knew* (whereas they still only surmised) that the robbery had
been committed by the Dunlap and Scott gang, and that Evans was a confederate; that for weeks [18]
they had been shadowing Scott and Dunlap (which was true), and could arrest them at any moment; that there was no doubt that the gang had been trying to play Evans false (a very shrewd guess), and would sacrifice him without the slightest compunction; and, finally, that there was open to Evans one of two courses—either to suffer arrest on a charge of bank robbery, with the prospect of twenty years in prison, or save himself, and at the same time earn a substantial money reward, by making a clean confession of his connection with the crime. All this, delivered with an air of completest certainty, was more than Evans could stand up against. He broke down completely, and told all he knew.

The story told by Evans is one of the most remarkable in the history of crime. He admitted the
correctness of Robert Pinkerton's inference that the Northampton Bank had been robbed by [19]
Scott and Dunlap and their associates, and in order to explain his own connection with this formidable gang he went back to its organization in 1872. The leader of the gang was James Dunlap, *alias* James Barton, who, before he became a bank robber, had been a brakeman on the Chicago, Alton and St. Louis Railroad. His inborn criminal instincts led him to frequent the resorts of thieves in Chicago, and thus he met "Johnny" Lamb and a man named Perry, who took a liking to him and taught him all they knew about breaking safes. Dunlap soon outstripped his masters, developing a genius for robbery and for organization that speedily proved him the most formidable of all the bank robbers then operating in the country, not even excepting "Jimmy" Hope, the notorious Manhattan Bank robber. He had the long-headedness and stubbornness of
his Scotch parents, united with the daring and ingenuity peculiar to Americans. In the fall of [20]
1872 he organized the most dangerous and best-equipped gang of bank robbers that the country had ever known.

Dunlap's right-hand man was Robert C. Scott, *alias* "Hustling Bob," originally a deck-hand on a Mississippi steamboat and afterward a hotel thief. Scott was a big, powerful man, with a determination equal to anything. Their associates were what one might expect from these two. Other members of the gang were Thomas Doty, William Conroy, "Eddie" Goody, John Perry, James Greer, a professional burglar originally from Canada, and the notorious John Leary, *alias* "Red" Leary, of whom more will be said later on. In addition to these, the gang contained several members of less importance, men who acted merely as lookouts, or as go-betweens or messengers.

The first large operation of Dunlap's band occurred in 1872, when they plundered the Falls City [21]
Bank in Louisville, Kentucky, of about two hundred thousand dollars, escaping with their booty. This was satisfactory as a beginning, but Dunlap and Scott dreamed of achievements beside which this was insignificant. They began a careful investigation through many States, to learn of banks of weak structure containing large treasure. One of the gang finally found precisely what they were in search of in the Second National Bank of Elmira, New York, which institution, being a government depository, contained, as they learned on good authority, two hundred thousand dollars in greenbacks and six millions in bonds.

A survey of the premises satisfied the gang that, massive though it appeared, with its ponderous iron walls and complicated locks, the vault of this bank was by no means impossible of access.
The floor above the bank was occupied by the Young Men's Christian Association, one of the [22]
association's rooms being directly over the vault. There was the floor between, and under that four feet of solid masonry, some of the stones in it weighing a ton. And under the masonry was a layer of railroad iron, resting on a plate of hardened steel an inch and a half thick. All this, however, so far from discouraging the conspirators, gave them greater confidence in the success of their plan, once under way, since the very security of the vault, by structure, from overhead attack lessened the strictness of the surveillance. Indeed, the most serious difficulty, in the estimation of the robbers, was to gain easy and unsuspected admission to the quarters of the Young Men's Christian Association, on the second floor. The secretary, a very prudent man, had put on the outside door of the association rooms an improved Yale lock, which was then new
upon the market and offered unusual obstacles to the lock-picker. Neither Dunlap, Scott, nor any [23]
of their associates had skill enough to open this lock without breaking it, which would, of course, have been fatal to their plan. For days, therefore, after all the other details of the robbery had

been arranged, the whole scheme seemed to be blocked by a troublesome lock on an ordinary wooden door.

So serious a matter did this finally become that Scott and Dunlap went to the length of breaking into the secretary's house at night, and searching his pockets, in the hope of finding the keys and getting an impression of them. But here, again, the secretary had taken precautions that defeated their purpose, for he had hidden the keys under a carpet, where the robbers never thought of looking for them. Disappointed in their search, they went away, making no attempt to carry off anything, a bit of forbearance which caused the excellent secretary much wonder the next morning, when he found that nothing was missing, although there were plain traces of intruders. [24]

The Yale lock still continuing an insoluble difficulty, Perry finally made a journey to New York, in the hope of finding some device by which to open it. There, in the course of his search, and in a curious way, he made the acquaintance of Evans, then a salesman in the employ of a prominent safe-company.

Before entering the employ of the safe-manufacturers, Evans had conducted an extensive mercantile business for himself in a large Eastern city, where he was regarded as a man of wealth and integrity. He had large dealings through the South, with extensive credits; but the outbreak of the war had forced him into bankruptcy. It was hinted that there was some over-shrewd practice connected with his failure, and his subsequent sudden departure for Canada gave color to the insinuation. At any rate, he compromised with his creditors on a basis [25] advantageous to himself.

On his return from Canada, Evans took up his residence in New York City, and began to cultivate habits far beyond his income, notably the taste for fast horses. Perry heard of Evans through one Ryan, whom he had known as a "crook" years before, but who was then running a livery-stable in an up-town street. As a matter of fact, this livery-stable was merely a blind for the sale of unsound horses "doctored up" to deceive unsuspecting buyers. But of this Evans knew nothing, and, in good faith, had stabled one of his own horses with Ryan. This had led to an intimacy between him and Ryan, and now, at Perry's suggestion, Ryan encouraged Evans in his disposition to live beyond his means.

Before long Evans found himself much cramped financially. Being unable to pay Ryan the money he owed him for stabling, he began to talk of selling his horse; and one day, when he was [26] complaining of being short of money, Ryan said, "If I had your position I'd never lack for money."

Evans asked him what he meant.

"Oh," said Ryan, "there are plenty of people who would put up well to know some of the things you know about safes and banks."

By degrees Ryan made his meaning more clear, and Evans grew properly indignant. The subject was dropped for the moment, but, in subsequent meetings, Ryan kept reverting to it. Meantime Evans found himself growing more and more embarrassed, and one day he said, "What is it these people want to know?"

"Well," said Ryan, "they would like to know, for one thing, if there is any way of beating these new Yale locks?"

"You can't pick a Yale lock," answered Evans—"that would take too long; but there is a way of getting one open." [27]

"How?"

"We'll talk that over some day."

Having once nibbled, Evans was not long in biting at the bait thus adroitly held before him. He consented to be introduced to Perry, who shrewdly showed him what an easy matter it would be for a man who knew the secrets of safe-makers and could locate weak banks, to make a great deal of money, without danger to himself.

"Why," said Perry, "you can make more in one night with us, without any one's suspecting it, than you can make in a year working for these safe-people."

The result was that Evans, in consideration of fifty thousand dollars, finally agreed to provide some means of opening the Yale lock which barred the robbers from the coveted treasure at Elmira.

Perry, in great delight, hurried back to Elmira, and reported his success to Dunlap and Scott. In order to bring Evans to Elmira in a way not to excite suspicion, a letter was written to the [28] company he served, containing a tempting proposition regarding the purchase of safes. Evans was at once sent to Elmira to look after the matter. He stopped at the Rathbone House, where he was waited upon by Scott, with whom he concerted a plan of operations. Scott was to slip a thin piece of wood into the lock at night, so that the lock would not work. Then, as Evans's presence in the city had been made known, it was hoped that he would be called upon, as an expert in difficult locks, to find out what was the matter. This would give him an opportunity to secure an impression of the key. The plan worked only too perfectly; and within twenty-four hours the conspirators were able to pass in and out of the Young Men's Christian Association rooms as they pleased, without the knowledge of any one. [29]

It now remained, in order to achieve the robbery, to dig down into the vault—an immense task, for which the constant presence in Elmira of the whole gang was necessary. It was also necessary that their presence should not be noticed, and to that end a woman from Baltimore, who had been associated with one of the gang in previous undertakings, came on to Elmira and took a house in the suburbs, giving out that she was the wife of a man whose business kept him traveling most of the time. The house was simply furnished, and every day, for the benefit of the neighbors, the woman made a great pretense of sweeping the steps, cleaning the windows, and busying herself about the yard in various ways. Meantime, inside the house, in careful concealment, the members of the gang were living—Scott, Dunlap, "Red" Leary, Conroy, and Perry. They never went out in the daytime, and they left the place at night so cautiously, going [30] one at a time, that, although they lived here for six weeks, their presence was never suspected.

Every night they gathered in the rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association after the young men had gone home, using their false keys to obtain admission; and they remained there hours at a time, doing what would ordinarily be the noisiest work; but their movements were so cautious and well planned that their presence in the building was never suspected. Every night the carpet and flooring were taken up, and, after they had finished their excavations, were carefully relaid. Tons of masonry and heavy stone were removed, shoveled into baskets, and carried up to the roof of the opera-house, adjoining the bank building, where there was small chance of the debris being discovered. Thus the unwearying rascals worked downward through the layer of railroad iron, and at last found themselves separated from the inside of the vault by only the plate of steel. [31] Success seemed within their very grasp, when an unforeseen accident spoiled everything.

One day the president of the bank, Mr. Pratt, was surprised, on entering the vault, to find the floor sprinkled with a fine white dust. An investigation was made, and the whole plot was uncovered. The members of the gang, however, got word in time, and all managed to escape except Perry, who was convicted of attempted burglary and sent to the Auburn prison for five years.

Undisturbed by the failure, Scott and Dunlap proceeded to scour the country again in search of another bank suited to their operations, and in February, 1874, notified the gang, which now contained some new members, that they had "found something to go to work at" in Quincy, Illinois. The attack on the Quincy bank was made in very much the same way as the attack on the bank at Elmira. The Baltimore woman again rented a house which afforded shelter and [32] concealment to the men; access was obtained to rooms over the vault by false keys, as before; the flooring was taken up and put down every night without exciting suspicion; the masonry was removed, the iron plates of the vault were penetrated, and, finally, one night Scott and Dunlap were able to lower themselves through a jagged hole into the money-room beneath.

It now remained to force open the safes inside the vault; and to accomplish this the robbers used, for the first time in the history of safe-wrecking in America, what is known as the air-pump method, which had been devised by Evans, and carefully explained by him to Scott and Dunlap. Evans's employers were at this time introducing a padding designed to make safes more secure; and Evans had hit upon the idea of introducing powder into the seams of a safe-door by an air- [33] pump, in the presence of a possible customer, in order to impress him with his need of the new padding. Evans himself was not present at the breaking open of the Quincy bank, and he had nothing to do with the robbery beyond furnishing instruction and the air-pump. Scott and Dunlap did the work.

As a first step, all the seams of the safes formed by the doors were carefully puttied up, save two small holes, one at the top and one at the bottom. Then, at the upper hole, Scott held a funnel filled with fine powder, while Dunlap applied the air-pump at the hole below. By the draft thus created, the powder was drawn into all the interstices between the heavy doors and the frames of the safes. Then a little pistol, loaded simply with powder, was attached near the upper hole, and, by a string tied to the trigger, discharged from a safe distance above. There were several attempts made before a complete explosion was effected; but finally the safes were blown open [34] and their contents secured, the robbers making good their escape with one hundred and twenty thousand dollars in money and about seven hundred thousand dollars in bonds. No part of this money was ever recovered by the bank, nor were any of the gang captured at this time. The securities were, however, afterward sold back to the bank. Indeed, so cleverly had the whole affair been managed that no suspicion fell upon either Scott, Dunlap, or any of their associates.

Here were fortunes made easily enough, with plenty more to be made in the same way, and the gang were in high feather over their success. During the summer of 1874 Scott and Dunlap lived in princely style in New York. They attracted much attention at Coney Island during the season, where they drove fast horses. No one suspected that they were the leaders of the most desperate [35] gang of bank robbers ever organized in this or any country.

By fall their money began to run short, and they decided to look about for another job. In the Quincy robbery they had broken their agreement with Evans, paying him only a small sum for the use of the air-pump which he had furnished them. Now, however, they called upon him again, and, partly by threats, partly by generous offers, induced him to assist them again. A series of unsuccessful attempts at robbery were made on banks in Saratoga; Nantucket; Covington, Kentucky; and Rockville, Connecticut. In several instances failure came at the very time when success seemed sure. In the case of the Covington bank, for instance, nitroglycerin was used in blowing open the safe, and the explosion was so violent that the men became frightened and fled in a panic, leaving behind untouched, although exposed to view, two hundred thousand dollars in [36]

greenbacks and one million five hundred thousand dollars in negotiable bonds. In the case of the Rockville bank their plans had worked out perfectly, and they had removed everything from the top of the vault but a thin layer of brick, when Scott accidentally forced the jimmy with which he was working through the roof of the vault and let it fall inside. As it was too late to complete the work that night, and as the presence of the jimmy inside the vault would inevitably start an alarm the next day, they were obliged to abandon the attempt entirely.

The gang's most desperate adventure befell in connection with the attempt on the First National Bank of Pittston, Pennsylvania. This was made late in the fall of 1875. The bank occupied a one-story building covered with a tin roof, and the robbers decided to make the attack from the roof. But there was a serious difficulty in the fact that in case of rain coming any time after they had [37] begun operations, water might soak through the openings they had made and betray them. Dunlap's ingenuity, however, was equal to this emergency; and each night, after finishing their excavation, they carefully relaid the sheets of tin that had been disturbed, protecting the joints with red putty, which matched the roof in color. So well did they put on this putty, that, although it rained heavily the very day after they began, not a drop leaked through.

On the night of November 4 only one layer of bricks separated them from the top of the vault, and it was decided to finish the work and do the robbery that night. Two hours' hard labor with "drag" and "jack-screw" sufficed to effect an opening, and Scott and Dunlap were lowered into the vault. They found three Marvin spherical safes protected by a burglar-alarm. But Dunlap was somewhat of an electrical expert, and was able to so surround the burglar-alarm with heavy [38] boards as to render it of little or no danger. They experienced much difficulty, though, in blowing open the safes. The first one attempted yielded on the second explosion, and they secured five hundred dollars in currency and sixty thousand dollars in bonds. The next one was far more troublesome, not less than ten explosions being required to make way into it. And just as the task was at last accomplished, and they were on the point of seizing a great sum of money, there came a warning call from Conroy, who was doing sentry duty on the roof, and it was necessary to fly.

When Dunlap and Scott had been dragged out of the vault by their associates, they were found scarcely able to run. During all the twelve explosions of powder and dynamite they had never left the vault, but, crouching behind the boards that guarded the burglar-alarm, had remained within arm's length of explosions so violent that they tore apart plates of welded steel and shook the [39] whole building. Worse than the shock of these explosions were the noxious gases generated by them, which Scott and Dunlap had to breathe. On coming out, their clothes were wringing wet with perspiration, and they were so weak that their legs tottered under them, and their comrades had to almost carry them for a time. But, nevertheless, they managed to walk thirty miles that night, to Lehigh, where they boarded a train to New York.

It was on this occasion that there was left behind in the vault the air-pump which Robert Pinkerton afterward recalled so shrewdly to Evans's disadvantage.

Coming, in his confession, to the Northampton Bank robbery, Evans said that the gang had considered making an attempt there for several months before the robbery was actually executed. For a time they had designed to rob the First National Bank, where Evans had been [40] employed to put in new doors, but this scheme they afterward abandoned. Enjoying the fullest confidence of the Northampton Bank officers, Evans had made repeated visits to the bank and gained important information for his associates. It was through his influence that the bank directors decided to give the whole combination of the vault to the cashier, Whittelsey, who had previously been intrusted with only half of it, the remainder being given to one of the clerks.

On the night of the robbery Evans was in New York, but he had gone to Northampton a day or two after, as already stated. Then, for the first time, he realized what immense wrong and suffering would be inflicted upon innocent people by the robbers, and he said it was this that had prompted him in his efforts to have the securities restored to the owners.

Returning to New York, he at once communicated with Scott and Dunlap by means of "Herald" [41] personals, and had several interviews with them in the city during the month of February. While they were anxious to dispose of the securities, it was plain from the first that they distrusted Evans and proposed to lessen his share of the profits. While pretending to approve the steps he was taking for a compromise with the bank, they were really, without his knowledge, carrying on secret negotiations with the same object. The suspicion on either side grew until finally it could no longer be concealed. Meeting Scott in Prospect Park some time after the robbery, Evans said, "When are you going to settle and give me my share?"

"You'll never get a cent," answered Scott; "you've given the whole gang away."

For some time they did not meet again. Evans continued his vain efforts for a settlement, growing more and more anxious as the months went by and he saw the danger to himself become more [42] threatening. On the 9th of November he met Scott, Dunlap, and "Red" Leary on the outskirts of Brooklyn, and a violent quarrel occurred about the division of the spoil. Reproaches and threats were exchanged with stormy language, and at one time Evans's life was actually in danger.

It was soon after this interview that Evans decided, under the management of Superintendent Bangs, to save himself by making a full confession. He had fewer scruples about betraying his associates, because he had become convinced that in the previous robberies, notably in the one at Quincy, Illinois, he had been treated most unfairly by Scott and Dunlap.

Evans said that for several weeks preceding the Northampton robbery the gang had concealed

themselves in the attic of a school-house which stood four or five rods from the highway and apart from other houses. His statement was substantiated by the discovery in this attic, after the [43] robbery, of blankets, satchels, ropes, bits, pulleys, and provisions, including a bottle of whisky bearing the label of a New York firm.

After the vault had been rifled, the money and securities were placed in a bag and a pillow-case, and carried to the school-house, where they were stowed away in places of concealment that had been previously prepared. One of these was underneath the platform where the teacher's desk stood. Another was a recess made behind a blackboard, which was taken off for the purpose and then screwed carefully in place. For nearly two weeks this treasure, amounting to over a million dollars, lay unsuspected in the school-house, the teacher walking over a part of it, the children working out their sums on the blackboard which concealed another part. It was left there so long because the robbers were unable to return for it, owing to the strict watch for strangers that was [44] kept at the railway-station and along all the roads. Finally Scott bought a team of horses for nine hundred dollars, and, with Jim Brady, drove over to Northampton from Springfield. After securing the booty, they had serious trouble in getting away. Brady fell into the mill-race, which they were crossing on the ice, and this accident necessitated their camping out all night in a cabin in the woods.

After hearing Evans's story, the question foremost in Mr. Pinkerton's mind was where the stolen securities had been concealed. From what Evans said, and from what he knew himself about the methods of the gang, he was satisfied that Dunlap possessed this secret, and would intrust it to no one unless absolutely compelled to do so. The likeliest way of compelling him was to put him under arrest, which might very well be done now that Evans had consented to turn State's [45] evidence. For weeks Pinkerton "shadows" had never been off Scott and Dunlap, who spent most of their time in New York, the former living with his wife at a fashionable boarding-house in Washington Square.

Instructions were accordingly given to the "shadows" to close in upon them, and on February 14, 1877, both men were arrested in Philadelphia, as they were on the point of taking a train for the South.

Despite the large sum of securities in their possession, the men had run short of ready money, and, while awaiting a compromise, were starting out to commit another robbery. They were taken to Northampton, and committed to jail to await trial.

It happened as Mr. Pinkerton foresaw. Brought into confinement, Dunlap and Scott were compelled, in the conduct of their affairs, to reveal the hiding-place of the booty to some other member of the gang. They chose for their confidant "Red" Leary. The securities, as subsequently [46] transpired, were at this time buried in a cellar on Sixth Avenue, near Thirty-third Street, New York. The precise spot was indicated to Leary by Mrs. Scott, who, in doing so, reminded Leary of an agreement entered into by the members of the gang before the robbery, that any one of their number who might get into trouble could, if he saw a necessity, call upon his confederates to dispose of all the securities on whatever terms were possible and use the proceeds in getting him and others—if others were in trouble also—free. At the time Leary scoffed at this agreement, but was perfectly willing, even eager, to have it enforced a little later, when, by the orders of Inspector Byrnes, he was himself arrested on the charge of complicity in the memorable Manhattan Bank robbery, which had occurred some time before. Having failed in a purpose of "shadowing" Leary to the place where the securities were hidden, Robert Pinkerton decided that [47] the best move to make next would be to arrest Leary for complicity in the Northampton robbery. Steps were taken to have requisition papers prepared, and it was pending the arrival of these that Leary was held on the other charge, for it was not thought that he had really taken part in the Manhattan Bank robbery.

The criminal annals of the United States contain no more thrilling chapter than that of the adventures of "Red" Leary. He was a typical desperado in appearance, with his shock of red hair, and his bristling red mustache, and his ugly, heavy-jawed face, while his huge neck and shoulders, his big head, and powerful hairy hands impressed one with his enormous physical strength. He weighed nearly three hundred pounds, and his "pals" used to point with pride to the fact that he wore a bigger hat than any statesman in America—eight and a quarter. [48]

While much of Leary's life had been spent in deeds of violence, he had shown on occasions such splendid bravery, and even heroism, as almost atoned for his crimes. There are few soldiers who would not be proud of Leary's record on the battle-field. He was among the first to respond to his country's call in our own Civil War, being a volunteer in the First Kentucky Regiment under Colonel Guthrie, and he was a good soldier from the time of his enlistment up to the moment of his honorable discharge.

The ablest lawyers were now secured in his defense, and by every possible method of legal obstruction they kept alive a controversy in the New York courts until the early days of May, 1879. Meanwhile Leary reposed in Ludlow Street Jail, where he enjoyed all the privileges ever accorded to prisoners. In return he paid the warden the substantial sum of thirty dollars a week; [49] and it was evident that, whether he had or had not been concerned in the Northampton robbery, he had in some way obtained abundant money. He was visited constantly by his wife.

On the afternoon of May 7 Mrs. Leary called at about five o'clock with "Butch" McCarthy, and the three were alone in Leary's room until nearly eight o'clock. After that Leary strolled about in the prison inclosure, and at about a quarter past ten keeper Wendell, who had charge of the first tier,

in which Leary's room was located, saw him going up-stairs from the second to the third tier. Although in this Leary was going directly away from his own room, there was nothing to excite surprise, for Leary had been accustomed to use the bath-room on the third tier. A quarter of an hour later Wendell started on his rounds, according to the prison rule, to see that each one of the men in his tier was securely locked up for the night. When he came to Leary's room he was a [50] little surprised to find him still absent, but supposed he would be there shortly. But after waiting a few minutes and finding Leary still absent, the keeper became alarmed, and began a search. He first went to the bath-room, and not finding Leary there, searched in other places, high and low. Then he returned to the bath-room, and there made a discovery which filled him with consternation. He saw in the brick wall, what at first had escaped his attention, a gaping hole, large enough to allow the passage of a man's body. The hole opened into a tunnel that seemed to lead downward. The alarm was at once given, and it soon appeared that the keeper's fears were only too well founded. "Red" Leary had escaped.

It was found that the tunnel from the bath-room led into a room on the fifth floor of a tenement-house at No. 76 Ludlow Street, adjoining the jail. The wall of the house added to the wall of the [51] jail made a thickness of four feet and a half of solid masonry, which had been cut through. In the three rooms that had been rented in the house by Leary's friends were found abundant evidences of the work.

Leary, after his escape, fled to Europe, but was afterward arrested in Brooklyn by Robert Pinkerton and three of his men, who "held him up" in a sleigh at the corner of Twenty-seventh Street and Fourth Avenue, Brooklyn; and before Leary could make use of a large revolver which he had on his person, the horse was grabbed by the head and pulled to a standstill, and Leary was dragged out of the sleigh and handcuffed. He was taken immediately to Northampton, and put in jail there.

Some time previous to this the Pinkertons had located Conroy, who had also escaped from Ludlow Street Jail, in Philadelphia; and immediately on the arrest of Leary, Robert Pinkerton sent [52] one of his detectives from New York to Philadelphia, who was fortunate enough to arrest Conroy at one of his resorts on the same night, and he was also delivered in jail at Northampton.

Some months previous to this the Pinkertons had also arrested Thomas Doty, another member of the band, and lodged him in the Northampton jail.

In the mean time, Scott and Dunlap, now in State prison, had made a confession as against Leary, the holder of the securities; and when Leary was brought to Northampton, they wrote him a letter, notifying him that unless the securities were handed over to their proper owners, they would take the witness-stand against him and convict him, but that if he did turn over the necessary securities they would refuse to take the stand. This resulted in the recovery by the Northampton Bank of nearly all the securities stolen from the bank and its depositors, this not [53] including, however, the government bonds and currency stolen at the time. Some of these securities had depreciated in value upward of one hundred thousand dollars since they were stolen. The amount of the securities recovered represented seven hundred thousand dollars; they had been in the hands of the thieves upward of two years.

After the securities were returned, Scott and Dunlap refusing to take the stand against Leary and Doty, the authorities were eventually obliged to release them, as Evans had also refused to take the stand against them. Conroy, who had simply been a go-between, and not an actual participant in the robbery, was released at the same time by order of the court.

The trial of Scott and Dunlap took place at Northampton in July, 1877, a year and a half after the robbery. Evans took the stand against them, his evidence making the case of the prosecution overwhelmingly strong. After three hours' deliberation the jury brought in a verdict of guilty, and [54] the prisoners were sentenced to twenty years each in the State prison. Scott died in prison, and Dunlap, having been pardoned several years ago, is now living in a Western city, a reformed man, and is earning an honest living. As far as is known, since leaving the penitentiary he has never returned to his evil ways. Conroy also has taken to new ways, is honest, and is generally respected by all who know him.

"Red" Leary came to his death in a curious way. One night in April, 1888, he had been drinking with some friends at a well-known sporting-resort in New York, on Sixth Avenue, between Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth streets. In the party was "Billy" Train, an old bunko-man. They were all somewhat intoxicated and inclined to be uproarious. As they came out on the street, "Billy" Train picked up a brick and threw it up in the air, yelling: "Look out for your heads, [55] boys." To this warning Leary paid no attention, and the brick came down on his head with full force, fracturing his skull. He was taken to the New York Hospital, and died there, after much suffering, on April 23.

As for the safe-expert, Evans, he is engaged in legitimate business, and is prospering. In compiling this chapter from the records, the writer has, by request, changed some of the names of the parties, who since that time have reformed, and are now respected members in the communities where they reside, and the author has no desire to injure them.

The Susquehanna Express Robbery [57]

The Susquehanna Express Robbery [59]

At Susquehanna, Pennsylvania, are located the great shops of the Erie Railroad, where fifteen hundred men work throughout the year. These men receive their wages on a fixed day toward the end of each month, the pay-roll amounting to many thousands of dollars. It was customary, fourteen years ago, for the company to have a sum of money sufficient for this purpose shipped from New York by express a day or two before the date when the wages were to be paid. Following out this practice, on the night of June 20, 1883, the Marine National Bank of [60] New York shipped by the United States Express Company a sealed package containing forty thousand dollars for the Erie Railroad Company, in care of the First National Bank of Susquehanna. The package contained United States currency and bank-notes, almost entirely in small bills, none larger than twenty dollars.

The usual precautions were observed in shipment, a trusted clerk of the Marine Bank carrying the package to the express company's office and taking a receipt for it from the money-clerk, who examined it first to make sure that the seals of the bank were intact and that in all respects it presented a correct appearance. Having satisfied himself on these points, the money-clerk placed the package in one of the canvas pouches used by the United States Express Company, sealed it carefully with the company's private seal, and attached a tag bearing the address of the company's agent at Susquehanna. [61]

After a brief delay the pouch was delivered to express messenger Van Waganen, who saw it placed in one of the small iron safes used by express companies in conveying money from city to city. The messenger rode with the safe to the train, and then remained on guard in the express-car, where the safe was placed, as far as Susquehanna, at which point he delivered the pouch to Dwight Chamberlain, a night-clerk and watchman in the joint employ of the Erie Railroad and the United States Express Company. The train left New York at 6 P. M., and reached Susquehanna about midnight.

Watchman Chamberlain, having received the pouch at the station, carried it into the ticket-office and locked it inside a safe belonging to the Erie Railroad Company. He remained on duty the rest of the night, and at seven o'clock the next morning a messenger from the First National Bank of Susquehanna came to get the package. Chamberlain unlocked the safe, took out the pouch, [62] opened it, and then emptied its contents on the table. To his great surprise the package containing the forty thousand dollars was gone, and in its place were several bundles of manila paper cut to the size of bank-bills and done up in small packages as money is done up.

The agent of the company, Clark Evans, was immediately notified, and he at once telegraphed the news of the robbery to the officials of the United States Express Company in New York, who with very little delay placed the matter in the hands of the Pinkerton Detective Agency. The direct supervision of the work was undertaken by the late George H. Bangs, at that time general superintendent of the Pinkerton Agency, and a force of detectives at once started for Susquehanna.

An important discovery was made on closer examination of the pouch. It was found that this pouch was not the one that had been sealed up in the express office at New York, but a bogus [63] pouch, so much like the other that the change might easily have escaped notice. The chief points of difference were the tag and the seal, the former having been addressed in a different hand from that of the New York money-clerk, and the latter being an old seal not in use by the company at that time. But the general appearance of the pouch was such that neither the messenger, Van Waganen, nor the watchman, Chamberlain, could swear that it was not the one that he had handled.

After going over the ground carefully and cross-examining Van Waganen and Chamberlain, Superintendent Bangs concluded that the robbery had not been committed on the train and that the genuine money package had reached Susquehanna and been locked in the railroad company's safe by the night-clerk. He was strengthened in this conclusion by the statement of [64] Chamberlain, who admitted that, after locking up the money, he had only been in the ticket-office at intervals during the night. For this he was in no way to blame, as he had other duties to perform about the station, notably those of way-bill clerk.

Thus the robbers would have had full opportunity to approach the safe unobserved and exercise their skill upon it, could they have secured entrance to the ticket-office. Nor was this a difficult matter, since the door leading into it was known to have three keys, in the hands of various employees of the road, from whom they might have been procured or stolen. More important still was the fact, ascertained by Mr. Bangs, that the safe itself had three keys, intrusted to as many men, whose duties required them to have access to the safe. It subsequently transpired that two of these keys had been made by the men who carried them, for their own convenience and [65] without the knowledge of their superiors. The door leading into the ticket-office opened from the men's waiting-room, where people had been coming and going during the entire night of the robbery. Such of these people as could be found were questioned closely as to what they had observed on this night, but they could furnish no information that threw light upon the case.

Some significance was found in the coincidence that nine years before there had been a robbery at Susquehanna, in which thirty thousand dollars had been stolen from the express company's

safe. The Pinkertons knew that for years a band of professional thieves had been traveling through the country, operating on safes that could be opened with a key. Among them were experts in fitting locks, especially skilled in making keys from impressions, and known as professional "fitters." At first it was considered possible that the robbery had been committed by [66] these men; but, after the most careful search and inquiry, Superintendent Bangs concluded that this was not the case and that the pouch had been stolen by some person or persons resident in Susquehanna, presumably by one or more of the railroad employees who had access to the office, or by persons intimately acquainted with some of the men who had keys to the safe.

"Shadows" were put on all persons who might have had access to the ticket-office and the safe; but, although this was continued for weeks, nothing conclusive came to light.

About this time a reorganization of the Pinkerton Agency became necessary, through the death of Allan Pinkerton, the founder, and George H. Bangs, the general superintendent; and Robert Pinkerton assumed charge of the investigation at Susquehanna. He undertook the difficult task of picking out one guilty man (or possibly two or three) from a body of fifteen hundred workmen. [67] For, despite lack of evidence either way, there was no doubt in the detective's mind that the money had been taken by some of the employees of either the express or the railroad company. Pinkerton men were taken to Susquehanna and given employment in various positions for the railroad and express companies, their duty being to make friends and hear gossip, and, if possible, in an unguarded moment, at some saloon or boarding-house, or perhaps at the chatty noon hour in the works, secure some important secret. Other detectives came with money in their pockets, and, under the guise of sporting men, made themselves popular at resorts where a poor man come dishonestly and suddenly into money would be apt to spend it.

Day after day, month after month, the watch was continued from many points of view, the conversations of hundreds of workmen were carefully noted, the gambling houses and their [68] inmates were kept under constant scrutiny, the lives of this man and that man and scores of men were turned inside out, and all without any one in Susquehanna suspecting it, the general opinion being that the robbery had been put aside along with many other unsolved mysteries.

A whole year passed before any promise of success came to cheer the express company and the patient detectives. In the summer of 1884, Robert Pinkerton, having received information that a professional burglar, who had been arrested some weeks previous for a burglary at Milwaukee, had valuable information about an express robbery, immediately journeyed from New York to Milwaukee to interview the man. He learned from the burglar that some years before he had operated with a man named John Donahue; that about the time of the Susquehanna robbery Donahue had been away from home, and that shortly after the robbery he had returned with [69] plenty of money and paid off several old debts. Mr. Pinkerton at once recognized in Donahue a notorious thief who, to escape justice, had taken up his residence at Fort Erie, Canada, where he had opened a hotel.

The burglar also gave Mr. Pinkerton a description of a man who had visited Donahue at his hotel on several occasions, and who had the general appearance of a workman. He suspected that this man had been in some way concerned with Donahue in the Susquehanna robbery; he knew that he had resided at one time in Buffalo, New York, and worked in the shops there, and he thought that he might be then living in Susquehanna, Pennsylvania.

From the description, Mr. Pinkerton was able, on going to Susquehanna, to identify the suspected man with one George H. Proctor, who had formerly been foreman in the railroad company's shops, but had resigned his position some months before and moved to Buffalo. In the [70] investigation that was at once begun it was found that Proctor had recently been speculating largely in oil and spending money freely, although while living in Susquehanna he was known to have had no resources besides his salary. It was learned further that Proctor had deposited money with three Buffalo banks and had accounts with various firms of brokers, and also that he was paying frequent visits to gambling-houses and in general leading a fast life. Proctor's deposits, it was learned, had at one time amounted to about eleven thousand dollars, but most of this sum had been subsequently drawn out and lost in speculation.

All of this was strong presumptive evidence against a man who was known to have been poor a few months before, and a more significant discovery was made a little later, when Proctor went [71] on a trip to Canada, evidently on important business. The detective who followed him found that the men with whom he had dealings, and with whom he passed nearly the whole time of his visit, were professional thieves, well known to the police.

In view of all that had come to light, it was decided to effect Proctor's arrest. This was made easy by his habit of coming to Susquehanna every few weeks to see his wife and three children, who had remained there. During these visits it had been remarked that he was especially intimate with employees of the railroad and express companies who were connected with the ticket-office.

All unsuspicious of the danger that threatened him, Proctor took the train from Buffalo on the night of Saturday, November 16, with a ticket for Susquehanna. Word was at once telegraphed to Robert Pinkerton, who, in company with E. W. Mitchel, superintendent of the United States [72] Express Company, started for Susquehanna, reaching there Monday morning. They learned that Proctor was still in town, but keeping very closely to his house. It was not until ten o'clock in the evening that he appeared on the street, his purpose in going out being to purchase some groceries. As he came from the store Robert Pinkerton stepped forth from his place of waiting and took him into custody. He was taken to a private house, where Mr. Pinkerton passed nearly

the whole night in conversation with him. Before daylight Proctor had made what purported to be a full confession.

Proctor stated that he had moved to Susquehanna in 1880, having resided in Buffalo previous to that time. While in Buffalo he had occasionally of a Sunday visited Fort Erie, Canada, and there had made the acquaintance of John Donahue. At first he did not know that Donahue was anything more than the keeper of a hotel. He found him an entertaining companion, a good story-teller and [73] singer of comic songs, and very generous with his money. They came to see much of each other, and after Proctor's removal to Susquehanna they kept up an occasional correspondence. Proctor, having a monthly pass over the Erie Railroad, and being able to procure passes on other roads, made several trips to Fort Erie, always stopping at Donahue's hotel. On one of these visits he chanced to read aloud to his friend the newspaper account of a clever robbery in Montreal, where a band of sneak-thieves had robbed a paymaster of a sum of money he had in a bag to pay off employees. This turned the conversation to criminal exploits, and Proctor related the circumstances of the express robbery at Susquehanna some years before. Donahue showed great interest, and inquired how it happened that the express company had so large a sum of money at [74] Susquehanna. Proctor explained about the extensive railroad shops there, and incidentally remarked that the same system of paying the hands was still in practice. Donahue then requested Proctor to ascertain for him how much money was being shipped each month at that time, the day of shipment, the train, the kind of safe used on that train, and full details about the lock—whether opened by a combination or a key. Donahue professed that his only motive in seeking this information was curiosity, and Proctor promised to learn what he could.

It was about a fortnight after this that the two men met again, Proctor having secured all the facts about the monthly transfer of money from New York to Susquehanna. These he confided to Donahue, who seemed greatly pleased at the report. He showed Proctor the greatest attention, spending money freely. Then he pressed Proctor with further questions, asking how the money [75] was wrapped up, what kind of pouch it was carried in, and so on. Finally he came out bluntly with the opinion that Proctor was a fool to waste his time working in a dirty shop when he might be living in luxury. Then, seeing that the foreman took no great umbrage at this suggestion, he asked him if he could get an impression of the safe-key, and also one of the key to the door of the ticket-office. After some show of reluctance, Proctor finally consented to try.

Returning to Susquehanna, Proctor took advantage of his friendship with employees about the ticket-office to get possession of the keys long enough to take the desired impressions, and these he mailed to Donahue, in whose service he was now fully enlisted. Donahue wrote back, expressing satisfaction, and saying that he and another man, named Collins, had paid a secret visit to Susquehanna, and had found everything as Proctor had represented. A little later Proctor [76] went to Canada again, and was introduced to Collins. At this meeting it was arranged that Donahue should procure a canvas bag like the one used by the express company, and that a dummy money package should be placed inside, so that a substitution might be effected on the arrival of the next shipment. Proctor was to take no active part in the robbery, but was instructed to return home and continue at his work, showing no concern, whatever happened.

"If there's an earthquake at Susquehanna when pay-day comes around, you don't know anything about it, do you understand?" Such was the final order given to Proctor, and he obeyed it implicitly.

A month passed, and, hearing nothing, Proctor went to Canada again, and had another talk with his two confederates. They told him that they had gone to Susquehanna prepared to do the "job," [77] but had learned, accidentally, that the money that month had been sent in gold, which would have been too heavy for them to carry away, and they had therefore decided to wait until a month later.

This was in May, and the following month the robbery occurred. Two weeks later Proctor went to Canada, and received eleven thousand dollars as his share of the plunder. Donahue and Collins explained to him that he did not receive more because they had been obliged to give a fourth share to another man who had worked with them. They cautioned him not to spend a dollar of the stolen money for months to come, as the detectives would be always on the lookout for suspicious circumstances. They also advised him to continue at his work, under no circumstances giving up his position within a year.

Proctor had strictly followed these suggestions, living and working as he had done before the robbery, and not spending any part of his portion. Having changed the money into large bills and [78] sealed it up in a fruit-jar, so that the moisture could not injure it, he buried the jar head downward in his garden. There it remained untouched for months. But when the severe weather of the following winter set in, he dug up the jar, and taking the money to Buffalo, deposited it in three banks, in the name of his wife and his three children, with himself in each instance as trustee.

Although his trade became very irksome to him now that he had a small fortune in his possession, he prudently stuck to it until June, 1884. Then, a year having elapsed since the robbery, he decided that it would be safe for him to launch out into a pleasanter life. He accordingly went to Buffalo, where he entered into oil speculations with a friend who claimed to have "inside information" from the Standard Oil Company. Although fortunate at the start, the failure of Grant [79] & Ward brought them heavy losses, and soon their profits and their original capital were swept away. Proctor assured Mr. Pinkerton that, at the time of their talk, he was ruined, and that he had intended, during this very visit to Susquehanna which ended in his arrest, making application

for his old position as foreman of the boiler-shops.

Having heard Proctor's confession, Mr. Pinkerton took counsel with the officers of the express company. They, believing that Proctor had been only a tool in the hands of two smart professional criminals, agreed with the detective that the ends of justice demanded rather the apprehension of his confederates than his punishment alone. Proctor professed great penitence for his wrong-doing, and declared himself willing to do whatever was in his power to make amends.

The first step necessary to the capture of Donahue and Collins was to get them both into the United States at some point where they could be arrested at the same time. Donahue was still in [80] Canada, where he could not be taken. Mr. Pinkerton arranged with Proctor to write to Donahue that he had discovered another safe which offered a tempting opportunity, hoping in this way to induce him to cross the line into the United States. To give color to the story it was necessary to accord Proctor apparent freedom of movement; but he pledged himself not to leave Susquehanna without Mr. Pinkerton's permission, and to keep the detective informed by letter and telegraph of all developments. At the same time detectives were sent to Canada to keep watch over Donahue.

Collins, in the meantime, had been located in Albany, but no attempt was made to arrest him until Donahue could be brought over the line. Should he cross without notifying Proctor, the men "shadowing" him were to cause his arrest. It was arranged with Proctor that, in case his letter [81] failed of its purpose, he should go to Canada himself, persuade Donahue to send for Collins, and then induce the two to come back with him, when they would be arrested the moment they crossed the line.

On the 29th of November Robert Pinkerton received word by telegraph that Proctor had left Susquehanna suddenly in the night, telling the agent of the express company that he would return the next day. This looked very much as if Proctor had played him false, since it had been expressly stipulated that he should not go away without Mr. Pinkerton's permission. Days went by, and Proctor did not return. Then word came from one of the Pinkerton men at Fort Erie that Proctor had arrived at Donahue's hotel and had been joined there by Collins. This was a serious setback for the detectives. Not only were the three robbers safe from arrest where they were, but being fully aware of the danger threatening them, and being men of shrewdness, it was fair to [82] presume that they would now move with great caution.

It soon became evident that Donahue and Collins were thoroughly alarmed by the news Proctor had brought them; for they at once took energetic steps to mislead any one who might be watching them. Having retired as usual one night, they arose later, and drove in a wagon to a station on the Grand Trunk Railroad, where they boarded a freight train for Toronto. After a brief stay in that city they went on to Montreal, where they tried hard to lose themselves, but were unsuccessful, and returned to Fort Erie.

Meanwhile Mr. Pinkerton discovered that the story told him by Proctor was entirely untrue. So far from having been an honest man before the robbery, it came to light that he was already at that time a hardened criminal, having committed burglaries both in the United States and [83] Canada, and having been sentenced, under another name, to a term in the Massachusetts State prison. While in prison he had contrived to make keys that would unlock his own cell and those of three other prisoners, and the four had thus made their escape. One of them was the notorious Charles Bullard, who was at that time serving a term of twenty years for the robbery of the Boylston Bank of Boston. Proctor had also offered the privilege of escape to Scott and Dunlap, the Northampton Bank robbers, who were confined in the same prison, but they had distrusted his plan, and refused to avail themselves of it.

It was now necessary for the detectives to devise a new plan. Robert Pinkerton knew that some three years earlier Donahue had been concerned in the robbery of a bank at Winnipeg, and also in the robbery of a hardware store at Quebec. His brother, William Pinkerton, he also knew, had [84] a personal acquaintance with Donahue, from having arrested him a number of years before. He therefore sent for William Pinkerton to come to New York from Chicago, and on his arrival proposed to him that he go to Fort Erie, get an interview with Donahue, and tell him of Proctor's treachery in betraying Collins and himself; impress upon him that Proctor was a dangerous man to have dealings with; and try to induce him to lend his aid in delivering Proctor and Collins over the line, just as Robert Pinkerton had sought to have Proctor do in the case of Donahue and Collins. Donahue was known as a "stanch" man,—that is, one who is true to his friends,—and it was thought probable that he would refuse to take part in any such scheme. But in that event William Pinkerton was to threaten him with arrest for the old robberies at Winnipeg and Quebec.

This plan was carried out by William Pinkerton with greater success than had been expected. At [85] first Donahue stoutly refused to betray a comrade, but the danger threatening himself was made to appear so great that finally, seeing no other way out of his difficulties, he consented to do what was asked of him in regard to Proctor. Against Collins, however, he declined to give any aid. By working on Proctor's natural fear of arrest, he easily persuaded him that the immediate departure of all three of them—himself, Proctor, and Collins—for Europe was advisable. It was arranged that they should not sail from Quebec or Halifax, since the steamers from those points were likely to be watched by detectives, but that they should leave Fort Erie stealthily by night, make their way separately to Montreal, and meet there.

This plan was carried out, and within a few days the three were in Montreal, all apparently of one mind in their desire to escape the country, though in reality Proctor was the only one of the three [86] who thought himself in danger. Donahue had taken Collins into his confidence, and Collins was

quite of Donahue's opinion that they were doing the proper thing in saving themselves by surrendering a man who had shown himself willing to betray them.

It had been agreed between William Pinkerton and Donahue that at Montreal tickets should be purchased to Europe by way of Portland, Maine, and that the party should leave Montreal at a certain time by the Grand Trunk road. The line of this road runs for a number of miles through northern Vermont, and it was customary for the train the men were to take to wait over for an hour at Island Pond, a little place just across the Canadian line. Here, as it was arranged, Robert Pinkerton was to be waiting, ready to take Proctor into custody, and also (though in this part of the arrangement Donahue, of course, was not consulted) Donahue and Collins, should they be so [87] imprudent as to stay on the train until it crossed the line. To the forwarding of this latter end, indeed, a special stratagem was resorted to. Conceiving that Donahue and Collins, in order the more completely to allay Proctor's suspicion, might remain with him until the last station was reached on the Canadian side, the detectives arranged that on this particular night the train should not stop at that station, but push on at full speed to the American side.

On a certain Tuesday night, Donahue, Collins, and Proctor took the 10:15 P. M. train at Montreal for Portland. No sooner had they left the station than a Pinkerton representative, who had "shadowed" them aboard, telegraphed the fact to Robert Pinkerton at Island Pond. Proctor went early to his berth in the sleeper. In another berth, not far distant, never closing his eyes through the night, but lying there fully dressed, with weapons ready, was a Pinkerton detective, whose [88] instructions were to accompany the three robbers as long as they were together, and to stay with Proctor to the last.

It was five o'clock in the morning when the train drew up at Island Pond. On the platform stood Robert Pinkerton, carrying a requisition from the governor of Pennsylvania on the governor of Vermont for the arrest of Donahue, Collins, and Proctor, charged with robbing the United States Express Company of forty thousand dollars, at Susquehanna, Pennsylvania. The first man to leave the train was the "shadow," who informed his chief that Proctor was sound asleep in berth No. 12. Donahue and Collins, he said, had left the train long before it reached the last station on the Canadian side, so that the plan for their capture had fallen through. Mr. Pinkerton went aboard the sleeper at once, and going to berth No. 12, pushed aside the curtains. He could not see [89] distinctly for the darkness, but borrowing a lantern from one of the trainmen, let the light fall on the face of the person within, and saw it was Proctor, slumbering in complete unconsciousness that his hour of reckoning had come. A gentle push in the ribs awakened him with a start. Recognizing Mr. Pinkerton, he said with admirable coolness:

"You have spoiled the whole business. If you had not come in here to arrest me, I would have had those men across the line next week."

When he said this, Proctor supposed that Donahue and Collins were asleep in an adjoining berth; but, even to save himself, he never thought of betraying them, which goes to show that he was a "stancher" man than Donahue and Collins had been led to believe. For some time he endeavored to maintain his old character with Mr. Pinkerton; but on the way to Susquehanna, realizing the hopelessness of his case, he acknowledged the deception he had practised, and his full [90] responsibility with the others in the Susquehanna robbery. He also admitted his previous criminal record.

At Susquehanna, Proctor was placed in jail to await trial, and there Mr. Pinkerton visited him some time later. Something in the prisoner's manner convinced the detective that all was not as it should be, and he urged the sheriff to put Proctor in another cell and search his clothes and his cell thoroughly. This was done, and there were found a number of keys that fitted the locks of various doors in the jail, and also a large key fitting the gate from the jail-yard into the street. Proctor's rare mechanical skill had enabled him to make these keys in his cell, from impressions furnished him by a woman who had been allowed to visit him. Being a good talker, Proctor had won this woman's sympathy, and had also made a strong appeal to her self-interest by promising, on his escape, to share with her a large sum of money he had buried. [91]

At his trial Proctor pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment in the penitentiary at Cherry Hill, Pennsylvania. Here, again, he was caught in the act of making keys to aid him to escape. He laid various other plans for regaining his liberty, indeed, but all were frustrated. His imprisonment worked no reform in him. After he had served out his sentence, some burglaries committed in Maine brought him again under arrest, and, having been identified as a convict from the Massachusetts State prison, he was taken back to that institution, to serve out his unexpired sentence.

The United States Express Company had not relaxed its efforts against his associates after Proctor's capture. Donahue and Collins returned to Montreal, well satisfied with the work they had done, and thinking themselves safe from pursuit. But President Platt instructed Robert [92] Pinkerton to take every measure possible against them, and it was decided that as Donahue could not be reached and punished for the robbery at Susquehanna, he should be made to suffer for the early robbery at Quebec already referred to. Donahue's complicity in this robbery was proved by the discovery of a part of the stolen goods in his hotel at Fort Erie. Through the efforts of the express company and the Pinkertons he was now arrested, and on trial was convicted and sentenced to five years' imprisonment in the Kingston penitentiary. After his conviction Donahue told the detectives that he was a fool to have had anything to do with such a dangerous project as an express robbery, but that the opportunity at Susquehanna was so tempting that he could not resist it. After his arrest the express company attached all of his property, and, although they did

not succeed in getting a judgment against him, they fought him in the courts until his wife, acting for him, was obliged to mortgage all their possessions up to the last dollar, so that they never derived any substantial benefit from the stolen money. [93]

As for Collins, he remained a fugitive from justice for some time after the conviction of Proctor and Donahue. Several years later, however, seeing himself constantly threatened by the express company and the detectives, he decided to placate his enemies by stepping out from the ranks of the law-breakers and trying to lead an honest life. And he has succeeded, as the Pinkertons have reason to know; and his case goes to prove what is borne out by wide experience, that even the most desperate criminals are sometimes capable of genuine reform.

The Pollock Diamond Robbery [95]

The Pollock Diamond Robbery [97]

There were thirteen men in the smoker of a train on the Sioux City and Pacific Railroad when it drew out of Omaha at six o'clock on Friday evening, November 4, 1892, and started on its eastward run. Among these thirteen, sitting about half-way down the aisle, enjoying a good cigar, was Mr. W. G. Pollock of New York, a traveling salesman for W. L. Pollock & Co., of the same city, dealers in diamonds. In the inside pocket of his vest he carried fifteen thousand dollars' worth of uncut diamonds, while a leather satchel on the seat beside him contained a [98] quantity of valuable stones in settings.

On the front seat of the car, just behind the stove, sat a stolid-looking young man, who would have passed for a farmer's lad. He seemed scarcely over twenty, having neither beard nor mustache, and a stranger would have put him down as a rather stupid, inoffensive fellow. Compared with Mr. Pollock, he was slighter in build, although an inch or so taller. As he sat there staring at the stove, the passenger in the seat behind him, J. H. Shaw, an Omaha well-digger, a bluff, hearty man of social instincts, tried to draw him into conversation; but the young fellow only shook his head sulkily, and the well-digger relapsed into silence. Presently, as the train was approaching California Junction, the young man on the front seat rose and started down the aisle. Curiously enough, he now wore a full beard of black hair five or six inches long. No one paid any [99] attention to him until he stopped at Mr. Pollock's seat, drew a revolver, and said loud enough for every one in the car to hear him:

"Give me them diamonds."

Then, without waiting for a reply, he shifted the revolver to his left hand, drew a slung-shot from his coat-pocket, and struck Mr. Pollock over the head such a heavy blow that the bag of the slung-shot burst, and the shot itself fell to the floor. Then he said again: "Give me them diamonds."

Realizing that the situation was desperate, Mr. Pollock took out his pocket-book and handed it to his assailant, saying: "I have only a hundred dollars; here it is."

Pushing back the pocket-book as if unworthy of his attention, the man coolly aimed his revolver at Mr. Pollock's right shoulder and fired. Then he aimed at the left shoulder and fired. Both bullets hit, and were followed by two more, which went whizzing by the diamond-merchant's [100] head on either side, missing him, perhaps by accident, but probably by design, as the men were not three feet apart.

By this the other people in the car had disappeared under the seats like rats into their holes. To all intents and purposes Mr. Pollock was alone with his assailant. The latter evidently knew where the diamonds were secreted, for, ripping open his victim's vest, he drew out the leather wallet in which they were inclosed, and stuffed it into his pocket. Wounded though he was, Mr. Pollock now grappled with the thief, who, using the butt of his revolver as a cudgel, brought down fearful blows on Pollock's head. The latter, however, getting into the aisle, fought the robber up and down the car; but a crushing blow at last laid him senseless on the floor.

With perfect self-possession and without hurry the thief walked back down the aisle to Mr. [101] Pollock's seat, and took one of the two leather bags lying there, by mistake choosing, though, the one that did not contain the mounted diamonds. Then he went to the end of the car, pulled the bell-rope, and, as the train began to slacken its speed in response to this signal, jumped off the steps, rolled down a bank fifteen feet high, and disappeared.

Sharing, apparently, in the general consternation and terror inspired by the young fellow, the conductor, instead of holding the train to pursue the thief, signaled the engineer to go ahead, and no effort was made for a capture until the train reached California Junction, several miles farther on. Meanwhile the panic-stricken passengers recovered, at their leisure, their composure and their seats. Had but one of his fellow-travelers gone to the assistance of Mr. Pollock, the robber might easily have been overpowered. As it was, he all but murdered his man, plundered him of [102] his diamonds, and escaped without the slightest interference. When his pistol was picked up,

near the spot where he left the train, it was found that in the struggle the cylinder had caught, so that it would have been impossible to discharge the two chambers remaining loaded. Thus eleven able-bodied men were held in a state of abject terror by one slender lad, who at the last was practically unarmed.

At California Junction the wounded diamond-merchant was carried from the train, and that same night taken back to Omaha. Mr. Pollock, being a member of the Jewelers' Protective Union, a rich and powerful organization, established some years ago for the protection of jewelry salesmen against thieves, was entitled to its aid.

When the detectives reached the scene of the robbery, the robber had vanished as completely as if he had been whisked off to another planet. To be sure, farmers in the neighborhood brought [103] rumors of the stealing of horses, of a strange man sleeping in the woods, and of a desperate-looking character seen limping along the road. But all this came to nothing, except to establish, what seemed probable, that the diamond-thief had fled back to Omaha. A patient and exhaustive search in Omaha resulted in nothing. The man was gone, and the diamonds were gone; that was all anybody knew.

What made the case more difficult was the uncertainty as to the robber's personal appearance; for some of the passengers testified to one thing, and some to another. The black beard was a cause of confusion; only one witness besides Mr. Pollock remembered that the man wore such a beard. Mr. Pollock, however, was positive as to this particular, and it seemed as if he ought to know. It was also impossible to decide, from conflicting statements, whether the robber had a [104] mustache or not, and whether it was dark or light in color. The fact is, the passengers had been so thoroughly frightened at the time of the assault that the credibility of their testimony was much to be questioned.

Mr. Pollock reported that for several weeks previous to the robbery he had suspected that he was being followed. He also reported that on the day of the robbery he had been in the shop of the largest pawnbroker in Omaha, and that while he was there two noted Western gamblers had entered the shop and been presented to him as possible customers. He had made a trade of some diamonds with one of the men, and, in the course of the negotiations, had shown his entire stock. While the trade was in progress a negro on the premises had noticed, lounging about the front of the shop, a man in a slouch-hat who suggested the robber. From these circumstances it was decided that the robbery might be the work of an organized gang, who had been waiting their [105] opportunity for many days, and had selected one of their number to do the actual deed.

All his life it had been Mr. Pinkerton's business to study criminals and understand their natures. He knew that a crime like this one was much beyond the power of an ordinary criminal. Let a robber be ever so greedy of gold, reckless of human life, and indifferent to consequences, he would still think many times before declaring war to the death upon twelve men in a narrow car, on a swiftly moving train. This was surely no novice in crime, reasoned Mr. Pinkerton, but a man whose record would already show deeds of the greatest daring; a brave fellow, though a bad one. And even among the well-known experienced criminals there must be very few who were capable of this deed.

Mr. Pinkerton, therefore, set himself to studying the bureau's records and rogues' gallery to first [106] pick out these few. Page after page of photographs was turned over, drawer after drawer of records was searched through, and at last a dozen or more men were decided upon as sufficiently preëminent to merit consideration in connection with the present case.

Photographs of these dozen or so were speedily struck off, and submitted by the detectives to all the men who had been in the smoking-car at the time of the robbery, to the conductor of the train and the trainmen, to other passengers, to farmers and others who might have seen the robber while making his escape, and to various people in Omaha. The result was startling. Conductor D. M. Ashmore, without hesitation, selected from the dozen or more portraits one as that of the robber. Mr. Shaw, the Omaha well-digger, who had sat just behind the robber, selected the same photograph, and was positive it pictured the man he had tried to talk to. Other passengers also [107] picked out this photograph, as did various persons who had caught sight of the man as he escaped.

The portrait thus chosen by common accord was that of Frank Bruce, one of the most desperate burglars of the younger generation in the country, and it seemed only necessary now to find Bruce, to have the problem solved. Many days were spent, and hundreds of dollars, in searching for him. Dozens of cities were visited, and every conceivable effort made to get on his track; but it was not until his pursuers were almost weary of the chase that he was finally discovered living quietly in Chicago, on Cottage Grove Avenue, near Thirty-sixth Street, where he was operating with another high-class burglar, "Billy" Boyce.

Requisition papers were at once procured from the governor of Iowa on the governor of Illinois, and men were sent to take Bruce into custody, when the "shadows" reported that he and Boyce [108] had left for Milwaukee, where, of course, the requisition papers were valueless. Fortunately, that same night they attempted a burglary in Milwaukee, for which they were arrested and held for ninety days. This gave the Chicago detectives abundant time to identify Bruce as the missing robber.

Mr. Pinkerton himself went at once to Milwaukee, saw Bruce in the jail, heard his story, verified its essential facts, and within two days, to his own complete disappointment, and in spite of

himself, had proved a complete alibi for Bruce. To satisfy himself in this connection, Mr. Pinkerton brought conductor Ashmore and Mr. Shaw to Milwaukee, and pointed Bruce out to them; and, after looking carefully at him, both men declared they had made a mistake in choosing his portrait, and that Bruce was not the robber. [109]

With Bruce clear, the detectives were again without a suspect, and almost without a clue. Just here, however, Mr. Pinkerton recalled that on a trip to the West, some three years previous, to investigate the case of a man arrested at Reno, Nevada, on a charge of "holding up" a faro-bank, and while stopping over in Salt Lake City, Utah, he had run across some sporting men in that city with whom he was well acquainted, and on his telling them where he was going and what his business was, one of them, whom Mr. Pinkerton had known for years, had said: "Why, the man at Reno is innocent. The men who committed that robbery are in this city. One of them is a smooth-faced boy, about twenty years of age, and the other is a heavy-set, dark-complexioned fellow, with a dark mustache. They are the intimate friends and companions of Jack Denton, the well-known gambler of Salt Lake; and only a short time ago, at Salt Lake, they entered a house one night, going in through a rear door, and compelled two ladies, who were just returned from a ball, to give up a large amount of diamonds." [110]

Though not interested in this particular robbery, Mr. Pinkerton had mentally jotted down the intimacy of Jack Denton with this class of people; and he recalled it now in connection with the fact that Jack Denton was one of the two gamblers to whom Pollock had exposed his diamonds at the pawnshop in Omaha. He at once decided to secure definite information in regard to the boy who had been with Denton at Salt Lake three years earlier. Proceeding immediately to Salt Lake City, and making cautious inquiries, he learned that the boy in question, since he first heard of him, had been arrested and convicted of robbery at Ogden, Utah, and sentenced to one year's term in the penitentiary. An investigation at the penitentiary disclosed that the young man had given the name of James Burke, had served out his sentence under that name, and had been released about one month previous to the Pollock robbery. [111]

Denton, in the meantime, had left Salt Lake and gone to Omaha, there to make his home. The boy Burke, argued the detective, had naturally followed his friend to that place. An accurate description of Burke was got from the records of the Utah penitentiary, and some idea of him and his friends was derived from the officials of the prison. But where to find him in the whole great West was a question.

Inquiries at Salt Lake developed the further fact that Burke had had one intimate friend there, a man named Marshall P. Hooker. Hooker had now, however, left Salt Lake and removed to Denver. For a man of his class, Hooker was unusually talkative, and was known by "crooks" throughout the country as "Windy" Hooker. Plans were made for keeping a watch on him and on Jack Denton, in the hope, by "shadowing" the movements of these two, of ultimately locating Burke. [112]

Through the free talk of Hooker, reported back to the detective, it was soon learned that Burke was known by the alias of "Kid" McCoy, and that he had recently been operating on the Pacific coast in "holding up" faro-banks, and had also been concerned in two large robberies, one at Lincoln, Nebraska, and the other at Sacramento, California. His whereabouts at that time, however, were unknown.

Much time had now elapsed since the robbery, and the sensation caused by it had died out. Jack Denton and his friends seldom spoke of it, and Hooker never spoke of it unless the subject was introduced to him. Both men were extremely shy of strangers, and it was almost impossible for a detective to draw them out, as anybody who introduced the subject of the robbery was at once looked upon with suspicion. For the purpose of creating further talk upon the subject, Mr. Pinkerton caused to be inserted in the Omaha papers an advertisement as follows: [113]

> "Five hundred dollars will be paid for any information leading up to the identification of the party who robbed William G. Pollock on the Sioux City and Pacific train, November 4, 1892.
>
> "WILLIAM A. PINKERTON,
>
> "Paxton House, Omaha, Nebraska."

This at once attracted the attention of the local newspaper-men, and when Mr. Pinkerton arrived in Omaha he was interviewed by all the papers in the city in regard to the robbery. Thus interest in the robbery was at once renewed. Denton and the other persons under suspicion commenced talking of the matter again, none more freely than Hooker. [114]

The latter was then in Denver. Mr. Pinkerton instructed Mr. James McParland, Denver superintendent of the Pinkerton Agency, to send for him, and say to him that he had understood that he (Hooker) could throw some light on the robbery, and that a large sum of money would be paid him for the information he gave. Mr. Pinkerton explained to Mr. McParland that Hooker would lie to him and endeavor to get the money by giving him false information, but to listen patiently to what he had to say and lead him on as far as possible without giving him any money. This done, Mr. Pinkerton further predicted that Hooker would go back to his cronies and boast of the way he was fooling Pinkerton and how much money he expected to get; and that eventually, through his boastings, he would prove the means of locating Burke, *alias* McCoy.

And so, precisely, it fell out. Some of Hooker's companions were Pinkerton detectives, although [115]

Hooker did not know them as such, and they in time reported back that Burke was really the Pollock robber; that after committing the robbery he had gone back to Omaha, and from there had gone to Denver. From Denver he went to Salt Lake, and visited a prisoner in the Salt Lake penitentiary with whom he was intimate, gave this prisoner some money, and went from Salt Lake west to the Pacific coast.

Mr. Pinkerton next instructed that the record be examined for daring "hold-ups" that might have occurred in the country lately traversed by Burke. It was then found that a faro-bank at Colorado City, a small place between Manitou Springs and Colorado Springs, had been entered late at night by a masked robber, who compelled the dealer and other persons to hold up their hands, took the money in the drawer, and escaped; that later on a similar robbery had been perpetrated at San Bernardino, California; that later still the pool-rooms of James Malone, a noted gambler at [116] Tacoma, Washington, had been treated in the same manner; and, finally, that a light or pane of glass in a jewelry store at Sacramento had been broken in and a tray of diamonds snatched from the window by a daring thief. And all of these deeds, Mr. Pinkerton learned ultimately through Hooker's talk, had been done by Burke.

The watch on Denton at Omaha developed little, if anything, except that a close companionship existed between him and the Omaha pawnbroker.

During the summer of 1893, learning that an intimate friend of Burke's, a burglar who had been in prison with him in the Utah penitentiary, was confined in jail at Georgetown, Texas, Mr. Pinkerton decided to go and interview this man, and see if he could get any trace, through him, of the robber. In the meantime he instructed the detectives at Omaha and Denver to keep a [117] particularly close watch on Jack Denton and Hooker.

On Mr. Pinkerton's arrival at Austin, Texas, he found awaiting him despatches from Superintendent McParland of the Denver agency, stating that through Hooker's talk they had learned that "Kid" McCoy, or Burke, had been arrested at Eagle, Colorado, with a kit of burglar tools in his possession, and was then in jail at Leadville, Colorado.

Mr. Pinkerton at once telegraphed to have conductor Ashmore and Mr. Shaw, the well-digger, go to Leadville and see if they could identify the prisoner. Word was also sent to New York for Mr. Pollock to do the same. He also instructed Superintendent McParland at Denver to send his assistant, J. C. Fraser, to watch the case, so that if McCoy gave bail, or attempted to escape from the Leadville jail, they could be ready with a warrant for his arrest on account of the Pollock robbery. [118]

Having wired these instructions, Mr. Pinkerton proceeded on his journey to Georgetown, Texas, where he called on McCoy's former prison associate in the Utah penitentiary, but was unable to get him to tell anything about McCoy, though he volunteered, if Mr. Pinkerton would furnish him a bond and get him out of his Texas scrape, to go to Omaha and compel the "fence" who had received the diamonds to turn back the property. But the rule of the Jewelers' Protective Union was to get the thief first and the property afterward; so no treaty was made with the Texas prisoner.

Mr. Pinkerton now went to Kansas City, and found awaiting him there despatches from Superintendent McParland of the Denver agency, stating that conductor Ashmore and Messrs. Shaw and Pollock had positively identified the prisoner James Burke, *alias* "Kid" McCoy, as the [119] man who assaulted Mr. Pollock and robbed him of his diamonds.

Burke winced perceptibly when he saw conductor Ashmore and Mr. Shaw, and went fairly wild when confronted by Mr. Pollock. Requisition papers were obtained from the governor of the State of Iowa on the governor of Colorado, and the Colorado offense being a minor one, Burke was turned over to Assistant Superintendent Fraser and another detective, to be taken to Logan, Harrison County, Iowa. Before leaving Leadville, Mr. Fraser was confidentially warned by the sheriff of the county that he could not be too careful of his prisoner; for that Burke, through a friend of the sheriff, had made a proposition to the latter to pay him a thousand dollars if he would secretly furnish him with a revolver when he left the jail, his design being, with this revolver, to either "hold up" or kill the two detectives who had him in custody and make his [120] escape from the train.

On trial at Logan, Iowa, the man was easily convicted, and was sentenced to imprisonment for a term of seventeen years.

The Rock Island Express [121]

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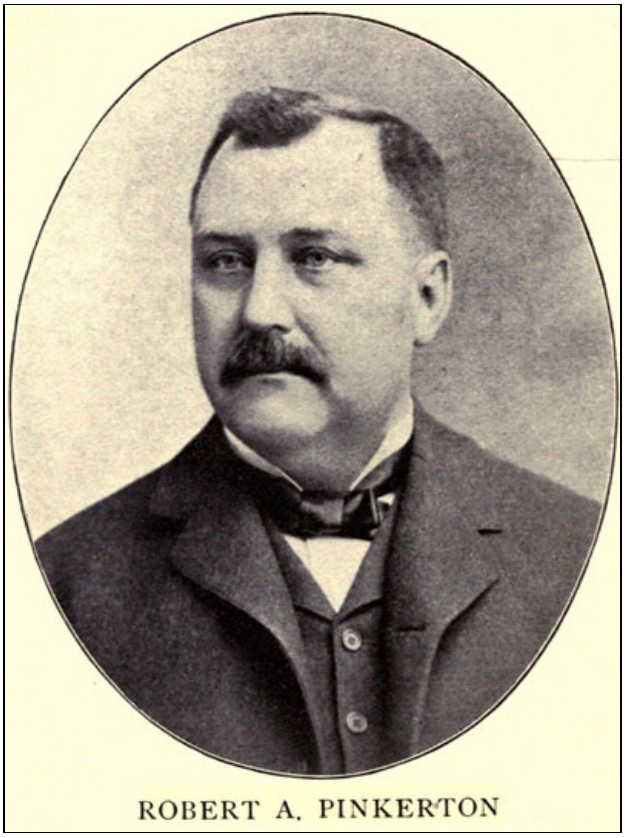
[122]



ROBERT A. PINKERTON

The Rock Island Express

I

The through express on the Rock Island road left Chicago at 10:45 P. M., on March 12, 1886, with twenty-two thousand dollars in fifty- and one-hundred-dollar bills in the keeping of Kellogg Nichols, an old-time messenger of the United States Express Company. This sum had been sent by a Chicago bank to be delivered at the principal bank in Davenport, Iowa. In addition to the usual passenger-coaches, the train drew two express-cars: the first, for express only, just behind the engine; and, following this, one for express and baggage. These cars had end doors, which offer the best opportunity to train robbers. Messenger Nichols was in the first car, and was [124] duly at his work when the train stopped at Joliet, a town about forty miles west of Chicago. But at the next stop, which was made at Morris, Harry Schwartz, a brakeman, came running from Nichols's car, crying, "The messenger is dead."

The messenger's lifeless body was found lying on the floor of the car. The head had been crushed by some heavy weapon, and there was a pistol-wound in the right shoulder. Apparently he had been overcome only after a hard fight. His face was set with fierce determination. His fists were clenched, and the hands and fingers cut and scratched in a curious way, while under the nails were found what proved to be bits of human flesh. The pistol-wound was from a weapon of 32 caliber; but it was not the cause of the man's death. This, unmistakably, was the blow, or blows, on the head, probably after the shot was fired. All who knew messenger Nichols were surprised [125] at the desperate resistance he seemed to have made, for he was a small, light man, not more than five feet five in height, nor weighing over one hundred and thirty pounds, and of no great credit among his fellows for pluck and courage.

The express-car was immediately detached from the train, and left at Morris, guarded by all the train-crew except Schwartz, who was sent on with the train to Davenport. After the first cursory inspection no one was allowed to enter the car where Nichols lay; and nothing was known precisely as to the extent of the robbery. The safe-door had been found open and the floor of the car littered with the contents of the safe.

An urgent telegram was at once sent to Chicago, and a force of detectives arrived at Morris on a special train a few hours later. Search-parties were at once sent out in all directions along the country roads, and up and down the tracks. Hundreds of people joined in the search, for the news [126] of the murder spread rapidly through the whole region, and not a square yard of territory for miles between Morris and Minooka station was left unexplored. It happened that the ground was covered with snow, but the keenest scrutiny failed to reveal any significant footprints, and the search-parties returned after many hours, having made only a single discovery. This was a mask found in a cattle-guard near Minooka—a mask made of black cloth, with white strings fastened at either side, one of which had been torn out of the cloth as if in a struggle.

Meantime Mr. Pinkerton himself entered the car and made a careful investigation. His first discovery was a heavy poker, bearing stains of blood and bits of matted hair. It was hanging in its usual place, behind the stove. The significance of this last fact was great, in Mr. Pinkerton's opinion; from it he concluded that the crime had been committed by a railroad man, his [127] reasoning being that the poker could have been restored to its usual place after such a use only mechanically and from force of habit and that an assailant who was not a railroad man would have left it on the floor or thrown it away.

Coming to the safe, Mr. Pinkerton found that the twenty-two thousand dollars were missing, and that other papers had been hastily searched over, but left behind as valueless.

Among these was a bundle of canceled drafts that had been roughly torn open and then thrown aside. Mr. Pinkerton scarcely noticed at the moment, but had occasion to remember subsequently, that a small piece of one of these drafts was missing, as if a corner had been torn off.

All the train-hands were immediately questioned, but none of their stories was in any way significant, except that of Newton Watt, the man in charge of the second car. He said that while [128] busy counting over his way-bills and receipts he had been startled by the crash of broken glass in the ventilator overhead, and that at the same moment a heavily built man, wearing a black mask, had entered the car and said, "If you move, the man up there will bore you." Looking up, Watt said further, he saw a hand thrust through the broken glass and holding a revolver. Thus intimidated, he made no attempt to give an alarm, and the masked man presently left him under guard of the pistol overhead, which covered him until shortly before the train reached Morris, when it was withdrawn. He was able to locate the place where the crime must have been committed, as he remembered that the engine was whistling for Minooka when the stranger entered the car. This left about thirty minutes for the murder, robbery, and escape.

Returning to Chicago, Mr. Pinkerton investigated the character of the man Watt, and found that [129] he had a clean record, was regarded as a trusty and efficient man, and had three brothers who had been railroad men for years and had always given perfect satisfaction. Watt's good reputation and straightforward manner were strong points in his favor, and yet there was something questionable in his story of the mysterious hand. For one thing, no footprints were found in the snow on the top of the car.

Brakeman Schwartz, the only man on the train who had not yet been questioned, "deadheaded" his way, in railway parlance, back from Davenport the following night on conductor Danforth's train, and reported to Mr. Pinkerton the next morning. He was a tall, fine-looking young fellow, about twenty-seven, with thin lips and a face that showed determination. He was rather dapper in dress, and kept on his gloves during the conversation. Mr. Pinkerton received him pleasantly, [130] and, after they had been smoking and chatting for an hour or so, he suggested to Schwartz that he would be more comfortable with his gloves off. Schwartz accordingly removed them, and revealed red marks on the backs of his hands, such as might have been made by finger-nails digging into them.

"How did you hurt your hands, Schwartz?" asked Mr. Pinkerton.

"Oh, I did that handling baggage night before last," explained Schwartz; and then he related incidentally that as he was on his way back to Chicago, the conductor of the train, conductor Danforth, had discovered a valise left by somebody in one of the toilet-rooms. Later in the day Mr. Pinkerton summoned the conductor, who said that the valise was an old one, of no value; and, having no contents, he had thrown it out on an ash-pile. The only thing he had found in the valise was a piece of paper that attracted his attention because it was marked with red lines. [131]

Examining this piece of paper carefully, Mr. Pinkerton saw that it had been torn from a money-draft, and at once thought of the package in the express messenger's safe. Now it is a remarkable fact that no human power can tear two pieces of paper in exactly the same way; the ragged fibers will only fit perfectly when the two original parts are brought together. There remained no doubt, when this test was made in the present case, that the piece of paper found on conductor Danforth's east-bound train had been torn from the draft in the express-car robbed the night before on the west-bound train. The edges fitted, the red lines corresponded, and unquestionably some one had carried that piece of paper from the one train to the other. In other words, some one connected with the crime of the previous night had ridden back to Chicago twenty-four hours [132] later with conductor Danforth.

Mr. Pinkerton at once ordered a search made for the missing valise, and also an inquiry regarding the passengers who had ridden on conductor Danforth's train between Davenport and Chicago on the night following the murder. The valise was found on the ash-heap where the conductor had thrown it, and in the course of the next few days the detectives had located or accounted for all passengers on conductor Danforth's train, with the exception of one man who had ridden on a free pass. The conductor could only recall this man's features vaguely; and, while some of the passengers remembered him well enough, there was no clue to his name or identity. As it appeared that no other of the passengers could have been connected with the crime, efforts were redoubled to discover the holder of this pass. [133]

II

So great was the public interest in the crime and the mystery surrounding it that three separate,

well-organized investigations of it were undertaken. The Rock Island Railroad officials, with their detectives, conducted one; a Chicago newspaper, the "Daily News," with its detectives, another; and the Pinkertons, in the interest of the United States Express Company, a third.

Mr. Pinkerton, as we have seen, concluded that the crime had been committed by railway men. The railway officials were naturally disinclined to believe ill of their employees, and an incident occurred about this time which turned the investigation in an entirely new direction and made them the more disposed to discredit Mr. Pinkerton's theory. This was the receipt of a letter from a convict in the Michigan City penitentiary, named Plunkett, who wrote the Rock Island Railroad [134] officials, saying that he could furnish them with important information.

Mr. St. John, the general manager of the road, went in person to the penitentiary to take Plunkett's statement, which was in effect that he knew the men who had committed the robbery and killed Nichols, and was willing to sell this information in exchange for a full pardon, which the railroad people could secure by using their influence. This they promised to do if his story proved true, and Plunkett then told them of a plot that had been worked out a year or so before, when he had been "grafting" with a "mob" of pickpockets at county fairs. There were with him at that time "Butch" McCoy, James Connors (known as "Yellowhammer"), and a man named "Jeff," whose surname he did not know. These three men, Plunkett said, had planned an express robbery on the Rock Island road, to be executed in precisely the same way, and at precisely the same [135] point on the road, as in the case in question.

The story was plausible, and won Mr. St. John's belief. It won the belief, also, of Mr. Melville E. Stone of the "Daily News"; and forthwith the railway detectives, working with the newspaper detectives, were instructed to go ahead on new lines, regardless of trouble or expense. Their first endeavor was to capture "Butch" McCoy, the leader of the gang. "Butch" was a pickpocket, burglar, and all-around thief, whose operations kept him traveling all over the United States.

The police in various cities having been communicated with to no purpose, Mr. Stone finally decided to do a thing the like of which no newspaper proprietor, perhaps, ever undertook before —that is, start on a personal search for McCoy and his associates. With Frank Murray, one of the best detectives in Chicago, and other detectives, he went to Galesburg, where the gang was said [136] to have a sort of headquarters. The party found there none of the men they were after, but they learned that "Thatch" Grady, a notorious criminal with whom "Butch" McCoy was known to be in relations, was in Omaha. So they hurried to Omaha, but only to find that Grady had gone to St. Louis. Then to St. Louis went Mr. Stone and his detectives, hot on the scent, and spent several days in that city searching high and low.

The method of locating a criminal in a great city is as interesting as it is little understood. The first step is to secure from the local police information as to the favorite haunts of criminals of the class under pursuit, paying special regard in the preliminary inquiries to the possibility of love-affairs; for thieves, even more than honest men, are swayed in their lives by the tender passion, and are often brought to justice through the agency of women. With so much of such [137] information in their possession as they could gather, Mr. Stone and his detectives spent their time in likely resorts, picking up acquaintance with frequenters, and, whenever possible, turning the talk adroitly upon the man they were looking for. It is a mistake to suppose that in work like this detectives disguise themselves. False beards and mustaches, goggles and lightning changes of clothing, are never heard of except in the pages of badly informed story-writers. In his experience of over twenty-five years Mr. Murray never wore such a disguise, nor knew of any reputable detective who did. In this expedition the detectives simply assumed the characters and general style of the persons they were thrown with, passing for men of sporting tastes from the East; and, having satisfied the people they met that they meant no harm, they had no difficulty in obtaining such news of McCoy and the others as there was. Unfortunately, this was not much. [138]

After going from one city to another on various clues, hearing of one member of the gang here and another there, and in each instance losing their man, the detectives finally brought up in New Orleans. They had spent five or six weeks of time and a large amount of money, only to find themselves absolutely without a clue as to the whereabouts of the men they were pursuing. They were much discouraged when a telegram from Mr. Pinkerton told them that "Butch" McCoy was back in Galesburg, where they had first sought him. Proceeding thither with all despatch, they traced McCoy into a saloon, and there three of them,—John Smith, representing the Rock Island Railroad; John McGinn, for the Pinkerton Agency; and Frank Murray, working for Mr. Stone,— with drawn revolvers, captured him, in spite of a desperate dash he made to escape. [139]

McCoy's capture was the occasion of much felicitation among the people interested in the matter. Mr. St. John and Mr. Stone were confident that now the whole mystery of the express robbery could be solved and the murderer convicted. But McCoy showed on trial that he had left New Orleans to come North only the night before the murder and had spent the whole of that night on the Illinois Central Railroad. It also appeared that McCoy's associate, Connors, was in jail at the time of the robbery, and that the man "Jeff" was dead. Thus the whole Plunkett story was exploded.

III

Some time before this the man who had ridden on the free pass, and given the detectives so much trouble, had been accidentally found by Jack Mullins, a brakeman on conductor Danforth's train. He proved to be an advertising solicitor, employed by no other than Mr. Melville E. Stone, [140]

who would have given a thousand dollars to know what his agent knew; for the advertising man had seen the conductor bring out the valise containing the all-important fragment of the draft. But he had not realized the value of the news in his possession, and Mr. Pinkerton took good care to keep him from that knowledge. One hint of the truth to the "Daily News" people, and the whole story would have been blazoned forth in its columns, and the murderer would have taken warning. Not until he had seen the man safely on a train out from Chicago did Mr. Pinkerton breathe easily; and it was not until months later that Mr. Stone learned how near he came to getting a splendid "scoop" on the whole city and country.

The identification of the pass-holder removed the last possibility that the valise had been taken into the train by any of conductor Danforth's passengers. And yet the valise was there! How came [141] it there? In the course of their examination two of the passengers had testified to having seen Schwartz enter the toilet-room during the run. Brakeman Jack Mullins stated that he had been in the same room twice that night, that the second time he had noticed the valise, but that it was not there when he went in first. Other witnesses in the car were positive that the person who entered the room last before the time when Mullins saw the valise was Schwartz. Thus the chain of proof was tightening, and Mr. Pinkerton sent for Schwartz.

After talking with the brakeman in a semi-confidential way for some time, the detective began to question him about Watt, his fellow-trainman. Schwartz said he was a good fellow, and, in general, spoke highly of him. Mr. Pinkerton seemed to hesitate a little, and then said:

"Can I trust you, Schwartz?" [142]

"Yes, sir."

"Well, the fact is, I am a little suspicious of Watt. You see, his story about that hand overhead does not exactly hang together. I don't want to do him any wrong, but he must be looked after. Now, my idea is to have you go about with him as much as you can, see if he meets any strangers or spends much money, and let me know whatever happens. Will you do it?"

Schwartz readily consented, on the assurance that the railroad people would give him leave of absence. The next day he reported that Watt had met a man who wore a slouch-hat, had unkempt red hair, and in general looked like a border ruffian. He had overheard the two talking together in a saloon on Cottage Grove Avenue, where the stranger had discussed the murder of Nichols in great detail, showing a remarkable familiarity with the whole affair. Schwartz had a sort of Jesse James theory (which he seemed anxious to have accepted) that the crime had been committed by [143] a gang of Western desperados and that this fellow was connected with them.

Mr. Pinkerton listened with interest to all this, but was less edified than Schwartz imagined, since two of his most trusted "shadows," who had been following Schwartz, had given him reports of the latter's movements, making it plain that the red-haired desperado was a myth, and that no such meeting as Schwartz described had taken place. Nevertheless, professing to be well pleased with Schwartz's efforts, Mr. Pinkerton sent him out to track the fabulous desperado. Schwartz continued to render false reports. Finally, without a word to arouse his suspicion, he was allowed to resume his work on the railroad.

The "shadows" put upon Schwartz after this reported a suspicious intimacy between him and Watt, and a detective of great tact, Frank Jones, was detailed to get into their confidence, if [144] possible. He was given a "run" as brakeman between Des Moines and Davenport, and it was arranged that he should come in from the west and lay over at Davenport on the same days when Schwartz and Watt laid over there, coming in from the east. Jones played his part cleverly, and was soon on intimate terms with Schwartz and Watt, taking his meals at their boarding-house and sleeping in a room adjoining theirs. They finally came to like him so well that they suggested his trying to get a transfer to their "run," between Davenport and Chicago. This was successfully arranged, and then the three men were together constantly, Jones even going to board at Schwartz's house in Chicago. About this time Schwartz began to talk of giving up railroad work and going to live in Kansas or the far West. It was arranged that Jones should join him and Mrs. [145] Schwartz on a Western trip. Meantime Schwartz applied to the company for leave of absence, on the plea that he wished to arrange some family matters in Philadelphia.

Mr. Pinkerton, being informed by Jones of Schwartz's application, used his influence to have it granted. When the young man started East he did not travel alone. His every movement was watched and reported, nor was he left unguarded for a moment, day or night, during an absence of several weeks, in New York, Philadelphia, and other Eastern cities.

To one unfamiliar with the resources and organization of a great detective system it is incomprehensible how continuous "shadowing" day after day and week after week, through thousands of miles of journeying, can be accomplished. The matter is made none the simpler when you know that there must be a change of "shadows" every day. However adroit the [146] detective, his continued presence in a locality would soon arouse suspicion. The daily change of "shadows" is easy when the man under watch remains in one place; for then it is only necessary to send a new "shadow" from the central office early each morning to replace the one who "put the man to bed" the night before. But it is very different when the subject is constantly traveling about on boats or railways, and perhaps sleeping in a different town each night. Without the network of agencies, including large and small bureaus, that the Pinkertons have gradually established all over the United States, the "shadowing" of a man in rapid flight would be impossible. As it is, nothing is easier. Schwartz, for instance, spent several days in Buffalo, where

his actions were reported hour by hour until he bought his ticket for Philadelphia. As he took the train a fresh "shadow" took it too, securing a section in the same sleeping-car with him, and [147] taking his meals at the same time Schwartz took his, either in the dining-car or at stations. No sooner had the train left the station than the Pinkerton representative in Buffalo reported by cipher-despatch to the bureau in Philadelphia, whither Schwartz was going. The exact form of the despatch, which well illustrates a system in constant use in the Pinkerton bureaus, was as follows:

"R. J. Linden,

"441 Chestnut Street,

"Philadelphia, Pa.

"Anxious shoes sucker Brown marbles man other dropping eight arrives put grand fifty marbles articles along or derby coat ship very tan seer wearing these have and is ribbon ink dust central Tuesday for dust to rice hat and paper vest yellow ink get must jewelry morning depot on.

"D. Robertson."

In despatches of this sort important information regarding criminals is constantly flashing over [148] the wires, with no danger of any "leak."

Thus, from one city to another, and through every part of the country, any criminal may be "shadowed" to-day as Schwartz was "shadowed," one set of detectives relieving another every twenty-four hours, and the man's every word and action be carefully noted down and reported, without his having the faintest suspicion that he is under observation. The task of "shadowing" a person who is traversing city streets is intrusted to men especially skilled in the art (for art it is) of seeing without being seen. This is, indeed, one of the most difficult tasks a detective is called upon to perform, and the few who excel in it are given little else to do. Where a criminal like Schwartz, upon whose final capture much depends, is being followed, two, three, or even four "shadows" are employed simultaneously, one keeping in advance, one in the rear, and two on [149] either side. The advantage of this is that one relieves the other by change of position, thus lessening the chance of discovery, while, of course, it is scarcely possible for several "shadows" to be thrown off the trail at once. An adroit criminal might outwit one "shadow," but he could scarcely outwit four. A "shadow," on coming into a new town with a subject, reveals himself to the "shadow" who is to relieve him by some prearranged signal, like a handkerchief held in the left hand.

The result of the "shadowing" in Schwartz's case was conclusive. No sooner was the brakeman out of Chicago than he began spending money far in excess of his income. He bought fine furniture, expensive clothing, articles of jewelry, presents for his wife, and laid in an elaborate supply of rifles, shot-guns, revolvers, and all sorts of ammunition, including a quantity of [150] cartridges. The "shadows" found that in almost every case he paid for his purchases with fifty-or one-hundred-dollar bills. As far as possible these bills were secured by the detectives from the persons to whom they had been paid, immediately after Schwartz's departure. It will be remembered that the money taken in the robbery consisted of fifty-and one-hundred-dollar bills.

IV

In addition to this, it was found, by the investigations of detectives at Philadelphia, that Schwartz was the son of a wealthy retired butcher there, a most respectable man, and that he had a wife and child in Philadelphia, whom he had entirely deserted. This gave an opportunity to take him into custody and still conceal from him that he was suspected of committing a higher crime. The Philadelphia wife and child were taken on to Chicago, and Schwartz was placed under arrest, [151] charged with bigamy.

Mr. Pinkerton went to the jail at once, and, wishing to keep Schwartz's confidence as far as possible, assured him that this arrest was not his work at all, but that of detectives Smith and Murray, who were, as Schwartz knew, working in the interests of the railroad people and of the Chicago "Daily News." Mr. Pinkerton told Schwartz that he still believed, as he had done all along, that Watt was the guilty man, and promised to do whatever he could to befriend Schwartz. The latter did not appear to be very much alarmed, and said that a Philadelphia lawyer was coming on to defend him. The lawyer did come a few days later, when a bond for two thousand dollars was furnished for Schwartz's reappearance, and he was set at liberty. Matters had gone so far, however, that it was not considered safe to leave Schwartz out of jail, and he was [152] immediately rearrested on the charge of murder.

Whether because of long preparation for this ordeal or because he was a man of strong character, Schwartz received this blow without the slightest show of emotion, and went back into the jail as coolly as he had come out. He merely requested that he might have an interview with his wife as soon as possible.

Mr. Pinkerton had evidence enough against Schwartz to furnish a strong presumption of guilt; but it was all circumstantial, and, besides, it did not involve Newton Watt, whose complicity was more than suspected. From the first Mr. Pinkerton had been carefully conciliatory of the later Mrs. Schwartz. At just the right moment, and by adroit management, he got her under his

direction, and by taking a train with her to Morris, and then on the next morning taking another train back to Chicago, he succeeded in preventing her from getting the advice of her husband's [153] lawyer, who was meantime making the same double journey on pursuing trains with the design of cautioning her against speaking to Mr. Pinkerton. She had come to regard Mr. Pinkerton more as a protector than as an enemy, and he, during the hours they were together, used every device to draw from her some damaging admission. He told her that the evidence against her husband, although serious in its character, was not, in his opinion, sufficient to establish his guilt. He told her of the bills found in Schwartz's possession, of the torn piece of the draft taken from the valise, of the marks on his hands and the lies he had told. All this, he said, proved that Schwartz had some connection with the robbery, but not that he had committed the murder, or done more than assist Watt, whom Mr. Pinkerton professed to regard as the chief criminal. The only hope of saving her husband now, he impressed upon her, was for her to make a plain statement of the [154] truth, and trust that he would use this in her husband's interest.

After listening to all that he said, and trying in many ways to evade the main question, Mrs. Schwartz at last admitted to Mr. Pinkerton that her husband had found a package containing five thousand dollars of the stolen money under one of the seats on conductor Danforth's train, on the night of his return to Chicago. He had kept this money and used it for his own purposes, but had been guilty of no other offense in the matter. Mrs. Schwartz stuck resolutely to this statement, and would admit nothing further.

Believing that he had drawn from her as much as he could, Mr. Pinkerton now accompanied Mrs. Schwartz to the jail, where she was to see her husband. The first words she said, on entering the room where he was, were: "Harry, I have told Mr. Pinkerton the whole truth. I thought that was the best way, for he is your friend. I told him about your finding the five thousand dollars under [155] the seat of the car, and that that was all you had to do with the business."

For the first time Schwartz's emotions nearly betrayed him. However, he braced himself, and only admitted in a general way that there was some truth in what his wife had said. He refused positively to go into details, seemed very nervous, and almost immediately asked to be left alone with his wife. Mr. Pinkerton had been expecting this, and was prepared for it. He realized the shock that would be caused in Schwartz's mind by his wife's unexpected confession, and counted on this to lead to further admissions. It was, therefore, of the highest importance that credible witnesses should overhear all that transpired in the interview between Schwartz and his wife. With this end in view, the room where the interview was to take place had been arranged so that a number of witnesses could see and hear without their presence being suspected; and the sheriff [156] of the county, a leading merchant, and a leading banker of the town, were waiting there in readiness.

As soon as the door had closed and the husband and wife were left alone, Schwartz exclaimed:

"You fool, you have put a rope around Watt's and my neck!"

"Why, Harry, I had to tell him something, he knew so much. You can trust him."

"You ought to know better than to trust anybody."

The man walked back and forth, a prey to the most violent emotions, his wife trying vainly to quiet him. At each affectionate touch he would brush her off roughly, with a curse, and go on pacing back and forth fiercely. Suddenly he burst out:

"What did you do with that coat—the one you cut the mask out of?" [157]

"Oh, that's all right; it's in the woodshed, under the whole woodpile."

They continued to talk for over an hour, referring to the murder and robbery repeatedly, and furnishing evidence enough to establish beyond any question the guilt of both Schwartz and Watt.

Meantime Watt had been arrested in Chicago, also charged with murder, and in several examinations had shown signs of breaking down and confessing, but in each instance had recovered himself and said nothing. The evidence of Schwartz himself, however, in the interview at the jail, taken with the mass of other evidence that had accumulated, was sufficient to secure the conviction of both men, who were condemned at the trial to life-imprisonment in the Joliet penitentiary. They would undoubtedly have been hanged but for the conscientious scruples of one juryman, who did not believe in capital punishment. Watt has since died, but Schwartz, at last [158] accounts, was still in prison.

About a year after the trial Schwartz's Chicago wife died of consumption. On her death-bed she made a full confession. She said that her husband's mind had been inflamed by the constant reading of sensational literature of the dime-novel order; and that under this evil influence he had planned the robbery, believing that it would be easy to intimidate a weak little man like Nichols, and escape with the money without harming him. Nichols, however, had fought like a tiger up and down the car, and had finally forced them to kill him. In the fight he had torn off the mask that Mrs. Schwartz had made out of one of her husband's old coats. It was Watt who fired the pistol, while Schwartz used the poker. Schwartz had given Watt five thousand dollars of the stolen money, and had kept the rest himself. He had carried the money away in an old satchel [159] bought for the purpose. A most unusual place of concealment had been chosen, and one where the money had escaped discovery, although on several occasions, in searching the house, the

detectives had literally held it in their hands. Schwartz had taken a quantity of the cartridges he bought for his shot-gun, and emptying them, had put in each shell one of the fifty- or one-hundred-dollar bills, upon which he had then loaded in the powder and the shot in the usual way, so that the shells presented the ordinary appearance as they lay in the drawer. The detectives had even picked out some of the shot and powder in two or three of the shells; but, finding them so like other cartridges, had never thought of probing clear to the bottom of the shell for a crumpled-up bill.

Thus about thirteen thousand dollars lay for weeks in these ordinary-looking cartridges, and were finally removed in the following way: While Schwartz was in jail, a well-known lawyer of [160] Philadelphia came to Mrs. Schwartz, one day, with an order from her husband to deliver the money over to him. She understood this was to defray the expenses of the trial and to pay the other lawyers. Superintendent Robertson remembers well the dying woman's emotion as she made this solemn declaration, one calculated to compromise seriously a man of some standing and belonging to an honored profession. Her body was wasted with disease, and she knew that her end was near. There was a flush on her face, and her eyes were bright with hatred as she declared that not one dollar of that money was ever returned to her, or ever used in paying the costs of her husband's trial. Nor was one dollar of it ever returned to the railroad company, or to the bank officials, who were the real owners.

The Destruction of the Renos [161]

The Destruction of the Renos [163]

The first, and probably the most daring, band of train robbers that ever operated in the United States was the notorious Reno gang, an association of desperate outlaws who, in the years immediately following the war, committed crimes without number in Missouri and Indiana, and for some years terrorized several counties in the region about Seymour in the last-named State. The leaders of this band were four brothers, John Reno, Frank Reno, "Sim" Reno, and William Reno, who rivaled one another in a spirit of lawlessness that must have been born in [164] their blood through the union of a hardy Swiss emigrant with a woman sprung from the Pennsylvania Dutch. Of the six children from this marriage only one escaped the restless, law-despising taint that made the others desperate characters, this single white sheep being "Clint" Reno, familiarly known as "Honest" Reno, and much despised by the rest of the family for his peaceful ways. Even Laura Reno, the one daughter, famed throughout the West for her beauty, loved danger and adventure, was an expert horsewoman, an unerring shot, and as quick with her gun as any man. Laura fairly worshiped her desperado brothers, whom she aided in more than one of their criminal undertakings, shielding them from justice when hard pressed, and swearing to avenge them when retribution overtook them after their day of triumph.

During the war the Renos had become notorious as bounty-jumpers; and at its close, with a fine [165] scorn for the ways of commonplace industry, these fierce-hearted, dashing young fellows, all well-built, handsome boys, cast about for further means of excitement and opportunities to make an easy living. Beginning their operations in a small way with house-breaking and store robberies, they soon proved themselves so reckless in their daring, so fertile in expedients, so successful in their coups, that they quickly extended their field until, in the early part of 1866, they had placed a wide region under contribution, setting all forms of law at defiance.

John Reno and Frank Reno, the elder brothers, were at this time the dominating spirits of the band, and they soon associated with them several of the most skilful and notorious counterfeiters and safe-burglars in the country, among these being Peter McCartney, James and Robert Rittenhouse, George McKay, John Dean, *alias* "California Nelse," and William Hopkins. The band [166] soon came to be named with the greatest dread and awe, good citizens fearing to speak a word of censure, lest swift punishment be visited upon them. The Reno influence made itself felt even in local politics, corrupt officials being elected at the instigation of the outlaws, so that their conviction became practically impossible.

The Renos, toward the end of 1866, began a series of train robberies which were carried out with such perfection of organization, such amazing coolness, and such uniform success as to attract national attention. The first of these robberies took place on the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad, being accomplished by only four men, Frank and John Reno, assisted by William Sparks and Charles Gerroll. Other train robberies followed in quick succession, the same methods being used in each, with the same immunity from capture, so that people in this region would say to one another, quite as a matter of course, "The Reno boys got away with another train yesterday." [167]

But while indulging in its own acts of outlawry, the Reno band strenuously objected to any rivalry or competition on the part of other highwaymen. A train robbery was perpetrated on the Jeffersonville Railroad early in 1867. The Renos had no connection with this robbery. It was accomplished by two young men named Michael Collins and Walker Hammond, the two men escaping with six thousand dollars, taken from a messenger of the Adams Express Company. But

their horses had carried them only a short distance from the looted train when they found themselves surrounded by the formidable Renos, who had quietly watched the robbery from a place of concealment, and now unceremoniously relieved the robbers of their plunder. Not content with this, and as if to intimidate others from like trespasses on their preserves, the Renos used their influence to have their rivals arrested for the crime by which they had profited so [168] little; and both were subsequently tried, convicted, and sentenced to long terms in the Indiana penitentiary. The Renos, meantime, although they were known to have secured and kept the six thousand dollars, were allowed to go unmolested, and continued their depredations.

Up to this time the Reno gang had confined their operations, for the most part, to Indiana; but now they began to make themselves felt in Missouri, where a number of daring crimes were committed, notably the robbing of the county treasurer's safe at Gallatin, in Daviess County. In this last act John Reno was known to have been personally concerned. The case was placed in the hands of Allan Pinkerton.

Taking up the investigation with his accustomed energy, Mr. Pinkerton traced John Reno back to Seymour, Indiana, where the gang was so strongly intrenched in the midst of corrupt officials and [169] an intimidated populace that any plan of open arrest was out of the question. Recognizing this, Allan Pinkerton had recourse to the cunning of his craft. He began by stationing in Seymour a trustworthy assistant, who was instructed, on a given day and at a given hour, to decoy John Reno to the railroad-station on any pretense that might suggest itself. Then he arranged to have half a dozen Missourians, the biggest and most powerful fellows he could find, led by the sheriff of Daviess County, board an express-train on the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad at Cincinnati, and ride through to Seymour, arriving there at the time agreed upon with his assistant. Along with them was to be a constable bearing all the papers necessary to execute a requisition.

When the train reached Seymour there was the usual crowd lounging about the station, and in it were John Reno and Mr. Pinkerton's lieutenant, who had entirely succeeded in his task. While [170] Reno was staring at the passengers as they left the train, he was suddenly surrounded and seized by a dozen strong arms; and before his friends could rally to his aid, or realize what was happening, he was clapped in irons, carried aboard the train, and soon was rolling away to Missouri, under arrest.

Reno's friends stoutly contested the case in the Missouri courts, arguing that the prisoner had been kidnapped and that the law had therefore been violated by his captors. The courts decided against them on this point, however; and John Reno, with several less important members of the gang, was tried and convicted. He was sentenced to twenty-five years of hard labor in the Missouri penitentiary.

This was the first break in the ranks of the band, the first instance in which they had suffered for their crimes. But the bold spirit of the organization was still unbroken. Three brothers still [171] remained to replace the one who was gone; and so far from learning caution, the band launched forthwith into still more daring and frequent offenses. Trains were "held up" right and left; robberies were committed; and early in 1868 the gang made a famous raid across the country through Indiana and Illinois, robbing safes in county treasurers' offices in a number of places. In several instances some of the members were arrested; but they always managed to have the prosecution quashed, or in some way to escape conviction. In the spring of 1868 their operations became so outrageous, and the situation so serious, that Allan Pinkerton was again called upon to do something in the cause of public safety.

In March of this year the safe of the county treasurer at Magnolia, Harrison County, Iowa, was robbed of about fourteen thousand dollars; and Allan Pinkerton detailed his son, William A. [172] Pinkerton, and two assistants, to run down the burglars. Arrived at the scene of the robbery, the detectives found that the thieves had made their escape on a hand-car and had gone in the direction of Council Bluffs. At this time in Council Bluffs there was a low saloon, kept by a man who had formerly lived in Seymour and who was known as a bad character. It was decided to keep a sharp watch on this resort, Mr. Pinkerton reasoning that since Seymour was the friendly refuge of the Renos, it was altogether likely that the outlaws would have a friend, and perhaps an abettor, in the saloon-keeper who had once lived there. After two days' watching, the detectives observed a large man of dark complexion enter the saloon and engage in close conversation with the proprietor, having with him, evidently, some mysterious business.

Investigation disclosed this man to be Michael Rogers, a prominent and wealthy citizen of [173] Council Bluffs, and the owner of an extensive property in the adjoining counties. Puzzled, but still persuaded that he had found a clue, Mr. Pinkerton put a "shadow" on Rogers, and hurried back to Magnolia, where he learned that on the day preceding the robbery Rogers had been seen in Magnolia, where he had paid his taxes, and in doing so had loitered for some time in the treasurer's office. This also looked suspicious. But, on the other hand, search as he might, the detective could find nothing against Rogers's character, every one testifying to his entire respectability.

Still unconvinced, Mr. Pinkerton returned to Council Bluffs, where he was informed by the man who had been "shadowing" Rogers that several strange men had been seen to enter Rogers's house and had not been seen to come out again. The watch was continued more closely than ever, and after four days of patient waiting, Rogers, accompanied by three strangers, was seen to [174] leave the house cautiously and take a west-bound train on the Pacific Railroad. One of these men, a brawny, athletic fellow nearly six feet tall, and about twenty-eight years of age, Mr. Pinkerton shrewdly suspected was Frank Reno, although he could not be certain, never having seen Frank

Reno. Feeling sure that if his suspicions were correct the men would ultimately return to Rogers's house, Mr. Pinkerton did not follow them on the train, but contented himself with keeping the strictest watch for their return. The very next morning the same four men were discovered coming back to the house from the direction of the railroad. But at that hour no train was due, which was a little curious; and another curious point was that they were all covered with mud and bore marks of having been engaged in some severe, rough labor. The hour was early; the dwellers in Council Bluffs were not yet astir. A little later the city was thrown into a [175] fever of excitement by the news that the safe of the county treasurer at Glenwood, in Mills County, about thirty miles distant, had been robbed the previous night. No trace had yet been got of the thieves, but everything indicated that they were the same men who had robbed the safe at Magnolia. One remarkable point of similarity in the two cases was the means employed by the robbers in escaping, a hand-car having been used also by the Glenwood thieves; and they, too, were believed to have fled in the direction of Council Bluffs. Investigation soon made this absolutely certain, for the missing hand-car was found lying beside the railroad, a short distance from the Council Bluffs station.

Putting these new disclosures beside his previous suspicions and discoveries, Mr. Pinkerton was further strengthened in his distrust of the man Rogers; and although the local authorities, to [176] whom he revealed his suspicions, laughed at him, declaring that Rogers was one of the most respectable citizens of the State, he resolved to attempt an arrest. Proceeding to Rogers's house with all the force he could command, he placed a guard at front and rear, and then, with a few attendants, made his way inside. The first person he met was Mr. Rogers himself, who affected to be very indignant at the intrusion.

"Who have you in this house?" asked Mr. Pinkerton.

"Nobody but my family," answered Mr. Rogers.

"We'll see about that," answered Mr. Pinkerton; and then, turning to his men, he ordered them to search the premises.

They did so, and soon came upon the three strangers, who were taken so completely by surprise that they made no effort at resistance. They were about to sit down to breakfast, which was spread for them in the kitchen. A comparison with photographs and descriptions left no doubt [177] that one of the three was Frank Reno. A second—a man of dark complexion, tall, and well built—proved to be Albert Perkins, a well-known member of the Reno gang. The third was none other than the notorious Miles Ogle, the youngest member of the band, who afterward came to be known as the most expert counterfeiter in the United States. Ogle at this writing is in the Ohio penitentiary, serving his third term of imprisonment. At his last capture there were found in his possession some of the best counterfeit plates ever made.

While they were securing the four men the detectives noticed that smoke was curling out of the kitchen stove, accompanied by a sudden blaze. Mr. Pinkerton pulled off a lid, and found on the coals several packages of bank-notes, already on fire. Fortunately the notes had been so tightly wrapped together that only a few of them were destroyed before the packages were got out. [178] Those that remained were afterward identified as of the money that had been stolen from the Glenwood safe. There was thus no question that these were the robbers so long sought for. A further search of the house brought to light two sets of burglars' tools, which served as cumulative evidence.

The men were carried to Glenwood by the next train. They were met by a great and excited crowd, and for a time were in danger of lynching. Better counsel prevailed, however, and they were placed in the jail to await trial.

With the men in secure, safe custody, there was no doubt of their ultimate conviction; and every one was breathing easier at the thought that at last the Reno gang was robbed of its terrors. Then suddenly—no one will ever know how it happened—the prisoners made their escape. Great was the surprise and chagrin of the sheriff of Mills County when, on the morning of April 1, 1868, [179] he entered the jail, only to find their cells empty. A big hole sawed through the wall told by what way they had made their exit. They left behind the mocking salutation, "April Fool," scrawled in chalk over the floors and walls of the jail.

A large reward was offered for the capture of the robbers, but nothing was heard of them until two months later, when an express-car on the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad was boarded at Marshfield, Indiana, by a gang of masked men, and robbed of ninety-eight thousand dollars. The messenger made a brave resistance, but could not cope with the robbers, who lifted him bodily and hurled him out of the car, down a steep embankment, while the train was running at high speed.

All the facts in the case pointed to the Reno brothers as the authors of this outrage, for by frequent repetition their methods of robbery had become familiar. Allan Pinkerton, furthermore, [180] obtained precise evidence that it was the work of the Renos from secret agents whom he had stationed at Seymour to watch the doings of the gang. Two of these agents engaged apparently in business at Seymour, one setting up as a saloon-keeper in a rough part of the town, another taking railroad employment, which kept him constantly near the station. A third made a wide acquaintance by passing for a gambler and general good fellow. So successful were they that Allan Pinkerton was soon in possession of facts proving not only that the Marshfield robbery had been committed by the Renos, but that another train robbery which followed was executed by

John Moore, Charles Gerroll, William Sparks, and three others, all members of the Reno organization. Moore, Gerroll, and Sparks were arrested shortly after, and placed on a train to be taken from Seymour to Brownstown, the county-seat. But they never reached their destination. [181] As the train stopped at a small station some miles from Brownstown, a band of masked men, well armed, rushed on board, overpowered the officers, hurried the three outlaws away to a neighboring farm-yard, and there strung them up to a beech-tree, while an old German who owned the farm looked on approvingly.

This was the first act of retributive justice done by the Secret Vigilance Committee of Southern Indiana, an organization as extraordinary as the situation it was created to deal with. The entire population of that part of Indiana seemed to have risen in self-defense to crush out lawlessness. A second act followed several days later, when three other men who had been concerned in the latest train robbery, having been captured by the county officials, were taken from their hands and condemned to the same fate as their companions. Each one, as he was about to be swung off, [182] was asked by the maskers if he had anything to say. The first two shook their heads sullenly, and died without speaking. The third, standing on a barrel with the rope round his neck, looked over the crowd with contemptuous bravado, and addressing them as a lot of "mossback Hoosiers," said he was glad he was not of their class, and was proud to die as a good Republican. The barrel was kicked away, the rope stiffened with his weight, and there ended the career of the sixth member of the band.

Hard times followed for the surviving Renos. Realizing that their power was broken, they fled in various directions. The three brothers, Frank, William, and "Sim," though still at large, were not left long to enjoy their liberty. A large price was placed on their heads, and betrayal came quickly. William and "Sim" were arrested soon after, in Indianapolis, and turned over to the local [183] authorities, who, in order to avoid the Vigilance Committee, took the prisoners to New Albany, in an adjoining county, where they were placed in jail.

The Vigilance Committee, growing stronger and more determined every day, now scoured the whole country for other members of the gang or for persons believed to be in sympathy with it. They literally went on the "war-path" through this whole region of Indiana, and it went ill with any poor wretch who incurred their suspicion. Like the "Whitecaps" of a later day, they sent warnings to all who came on their black-list, and administered by night, and sometimes by day, such promiscuous floggings and other forms of punishment that the tough and criminal element of the region was entirely cowed, and feared to raise a hand in defense of the Renos, as it had previously done. Up to the time the Vigilance Committee was formed not a member of the Reno gang had been convicted in that locality, largely because the people were afraid to testify against [184] them. They knew that if they should testify, their stock would be killed, their barns burned, and they themselves waylaid and beaten. This was the reason offered for the formation of the Vigilance Committee of Southern Indiana. Whether a justification or not, the committee must certainly be credited with having rid the State of a monstrous evil.

In the excitement of other events the Pinkertons had not forgotten the men who had escaped from the Glenwood jail. They finally traced Miles Ogle and Albert Perkins to Indianapolis; and there Ogle was captured, but Perkins escaped. Frank Reno was discovered a little later at Windsor, Canada, where he was living with Charles Anderson, a professional burglar, safe-blower, and "short-card" gambler, who had fled to Canada to escape prosecution. Reno, operating with Anderson, made a practice of registering as "Frank Going" if the enterprise in [185] which he was engaged was prospering, and as "Frank Coming" if it was not prospering. He and Anderson were now arrested on a charge of robbery and of assault with intent to kill, in the case of the express messenger hurled from his car at Marshfield, Indiana. Under this form their offense became extraditable; and after a long trial before the stipendiary or government magistrate, Gilbert McMicken, at Windsor, the men were ordered for extradition. Aided by the ablest lawyers, they carried their case, however, to the highest court in Canada. But the decision of the lower court was affirmed; and in October, 1868, the men were surrendered into the hands of Allan Pinkerton, who was delegated by the United States government to receive them. It was due to the patience and persistence of Mr. Alfred Gaither, the Western manager of the Adams Express Company, and his then assistant, Mr. L.C. Weir, now president of the company, and to [186] the general policy of the company to permit no compromise with thieves, that, regardless of cost and time, the prosecution was continued until it issued thus successfully.

Michael Rogers was also discovered to be in Windsor at this time, and he was known to have had a hand in the Marshfield robbery; but he escaped arrest, and remained securely in Windsor for a year or two. Later, though, he reached the penitentiary, being brought to grief by a burglary done at Tolono, Illinois. On coming out, he joined the notorious McCartney gang of counterfeiters, and had many narrow escapes. The last known of him, grown an old man, he was living quietly on a farm in Texas.

Made at last secure of Reno and Anderson, Allan Pinkerton chartered a tug to carry them to Cleveland, and thus avoid the friends who, as he had reason to know, were waiting across the river in Detroit to effect a rescue. When the tug had gone about twenty miles, it was run down by [187] a large steamer and sunk, the passengers, including the prisoners, being saved from drowning with the greatest difficulty. The prisoners were carried on to Cleveland by another boat, and from there were hurried on by rail to New Albany, where they were placed in jail along with "Sim" and William Reno.

The final passage in the history of the Reno gang occurred about a month later, in the latter part

of November, 1868, when one day a passenger-car was dropped off at Seymour, Indiana, some distance from the station. There was nothing remarkable in this, nor did the car attract any attention. That night a train passing through Seymour took up the car and drew it away. A few people about the station when the car was taken up remembered afterward that this car was filled with strange-looking men, who wore Scotch caps and black cloth masks, and seemed to be [188] under the command of a tall, dark-haired man addressed by every one as "No. 1." Although there were at least fifty of these men, it is a remarkable fact, developed in a subsequent investigation, that the conductor of the train could remember nothing about the incident, declaring that he did not enter the car and knew nothing of its being attached to his train. It is certain the company of masked men did everything in their power to avoid attention, scarcely speaking to one another during the ride and making all their movements as noiseless as possible.

The train reached New Albany at two o'clock in the morning. The car was detached, and was presently emptied of its fifty men as silently and mysteriously as it had been filled. A few hurried commands were given by "No. 1," and then the company marched in quiet order to the jail. Arrived there, they summoned the jailer to open the doors, but were met with a firm refusal and [189] the shining barrel of a revolver. There followed an exchange of shots, in which the sheriff received a ball in the arm, and two local police officers were captured. Without loss of time the jail doors were battered down; the company entered, and taking the three Reno brothers and their friend, Charles Anderson, from their cells, placed nooses that they had ready around the men's necks, and hung them to the rafters in the corridors of the jail. Then, having locked the doors of the jail, leaving the prisoners secure, they made their way silently back to the New Albany station, reaching there in time to catch the train that drew out at 3:30 A. M. The same special car in which they had come was coupled to this train, and dropped off at the switch when Seymour was reached. This was just before daybreak on a dreary November morning. [190]

Who these fifty men were was never discovered, although, because of the fact that Reno and Anderson had been extradited from Great Britain, the general government made an investigation. It was rumored, however, and generally understood, that the company included some of the most prominent people in Seymour, among others a number of railroad and express employees. It was found that at the time of the lynching all the telegraph wires leading from New Albany had been cut, so that it was noon of the following day before the country learned of it.

The newspapers described the leader of the party as a man of unusual stature, who wore a handsome diamond ring on the little finger of his right hand. Later some significance was attached to the fact that a well-known railroad official who answered this description as to stature and who had always worn a handsome diamond ring previous to the lynching, ceased to [191] wear his ring for several years afterward.

After the execution of her brothers, it was rumored that Laura Reno had taken an oath to devote the rest of her life to avenging them; and for a moment there were threats and mutterings of reprisals from allies or surviving members of the gang. But these latter were not heard again after a certain morning, the third day after the execution, when the people of Seymour, on leaving their homes, were startled to see on the walls and in other public places large posters proclaiming that if any property was injured or destroyed, or any persons molested or assaulted, or if there was any further talk in regard to recent happenings, some twenty-five persons, therein frankly named, who were known to be sympathizers with the Renos, or to be more or less intimately connected with them, had better beware. And as for the sister's deadly oath, she did no act in proof of the violent intentions imputed to her, but instead subsequently became the wife [192] of a respectable man and settled down to a useful life, though a much more commonplace one than she had previously known. John Reno, after serving fifteen years in the Missouri penitentiary, was released, and is said to be at present living on the old farm. "Clint" Reno, or "Honest" Reno, always stayed at the old homestead, and has never been willing to speak of his brothers or of what happened to them. Seymour, purged of the evil influences that corrupted it, has grown into a thriving and beautiful little city, and is to-day one of the model towns of Indiana.

The American Exchange Bank Robbery [193]

The American Exchange Bank Robbery [195]

Late in the afternoon of Friday, May 4, 1888, two messengers left the American Exchange National Bank, at the northeast corner of Cedar Street and Broadway, New York City, and started down the busy thoroughfare for the office of the Adams Express Company, a few blocks distant. They carried between them, each holding one of the handles, a valise made of canvas and leather, in which had just been placed, in the presence of the paying-teller, a package containing forty-one thousand dollars in greenbacks, to be transmitted to the United States [196] Treasury in Washington for redemption.

Although the messengers—Edward S. Crawford and old "Dominie" Earle—were among the bank's most trusted employees, their honesty being considered above suspicion, they were nevertheless

followed at a short distance by bank detective McDougal, an old-time police detective, whose snow-white beard and ancient style of dress have long made him a personage of note on Broadway. Detective McDougal followed the messengers, not because he had any fear that they were planning a robbery, but because it is an imperative rule of all great banking institutions that the transfer of large sums of money, even for very short distances, shall be watched over with the most scrupulous care. Each messenger is supposed to act as a check on his fellow, while the detective walking in the rear is a check on both. In such cases all three men are armed, and would use their weapons without hesitation should an attack be made upon them. [197]

The messengers walked on through the hurrying crowd, keeping on the east sidewalk as far as Wall Street, where they turned across, and continued their way on the west sidewalk as far as the Adams Express Company's building, which stands at No. 59 Broadway. Having seen them safely inside the building, the detective turned back to the bank, where his services were required in other matters.

Passing down the large room strewn with boxes and packages ready for shipment, the two messengers turned to the right, and ascended the winding stairs that in those days led to the money department, on the second floor. No one paid much attention to them, as at this busy hour bank messengers were arriving and departing every few minutes. Still, some of the clerks remembered afterward, or thought they did, that the old man, Earle, ascended the stairs more [198] slowly than his more active companion, who went ahead, carrying the valise alone. Both messengers, however, were present at the receiving-window of the money department when the package was taken from the valise and handed to the clerk, who gave a receipt for it in the usual form: "Received from the American Exchange Bank one package marked as containing forty-one thousand dollars, for transfer to Washington"; or, at least, so far as has ever been proved, both messengers were present when the package was handed in.

The two messengers, having performed their duty, went away, Earle hurrying to the ferry to catch a train out into New Jersey, where he lived, and Crawford returning to the bank with the empty valise. The valuable package had meantime been ranged behind the heavily wired grating along with dozens of others, some of them containing much larger sums. The clerks in the money [199] department of the Adams Express Company become so accustomed to handling gold, silver, and bank-notes, fortunes done up in bags, boxes, or bundles, that they think little more of this precious merchandise than they might of so much coal or bricks. A quick glance, a touch of the hand, satisfies them that the seals, the wrappings, the labels, the general appearance, of the packages are correct; and having entered them duly on the way-bills and turned them over to the express messenger who is to forward them to their destination, they think no more about them.

In this instance the forty-one-thousand-dollar package, after a brief delay, was locked in one of the small portable safes, a score of which are always lying about in readiness, and was lowered to the basement, where it was loaded on one of the company's wagons. The wagon was then driven to Jersey City, guarded by the messenger in charge, his assistant, and the driver, all three men [200] being armed, and was safely placed aboard the night express for Washington. It is the company's rule that the messenger who starts with a through safe travels with it to its destination, though he has to make a journey of a thousand miles. Sometimes the destination of money under transfer is so remote that the service of several express companies is required; and in that case the messenger of the Adams Company accompanies the money only to the point where it is delivered to the messenger of the next company, and so on.

The next morning, when the package from the American Exchange Bank was delivered in Washington, the experienced Treasury clerk who received it perceived at once, from the condition of the package, that something was wrong. Employees of the Treasury Department seem to gain a new sense, and to be able to distinguish bank-notes from ordinary paper merely [201] by the "feel," even when done up in bundles. Looking at the label mark of forty-one thousand dollars, the clerk shook his head, and called the United States Treasurer, James W. Hyatt, who also saw something suspicious in the package. Mr. Blanchard, the Washington agent of the Adams Express Company, was summoned, and in his presence the package was opened. It was found to contain nothing more valuable than slips of brown straw paper, the coarse variety used by butchers in wrapping up meat, neatly cut to the size of bank-notes. The forty-one thousand dollars were missing.

It was evident that at some point between the bank and the Treasury a bogus package had been substituted for the genuine one. The question was, Where and by whom had the substitution been made?

The robbery was discovered at the Treasury in Washington on Saturday morning. The news was [202] telegraphed to New York immediately, and on Saturday afternoon anxious councils were held by the officials of the American Exchange Bank and the Adams Express Company. Inspector Byrnes was notified; the Pinkerton Agency was notified; and urgent despatches were sent to Mr. John Hoey, president of the express company, and to Robert Pinkerton, who were both out of town, that their presence was required immediately in New York. Meanwhile every one who had had any connection with the stolen package—the paying-teller of the bank, other bank clerks, the messengers, detective McDougal, the receiving-clerks of the Adams Express Company, and the express messenger—was closely examined. Where and how the forty-one thousand dollars had been stolen was important to learn not only in itself, but also to fix responsibility for the sum lost [203] as between the bank and the express company.

Three theories were at once suggested: the bogus package might have been substituted for the

genuine one either at the bank, between the bank and the express office, or between the express office and the Treasury. The first assumption threw suspicion on some of the bank employees, the second upon the two bank messengers, the third upon some one in the service of the express company. Both the bank and the express company stoutly maintained the integrity of its own employees.

An examination of the bogus package disclosed some points of significance. Ordinarily, when bank-notes are done up for shipment by an experienced clerk, the bills are pressed together as tightly as possible in small bundles, which are secured with elastic bands, and then wrapped snugly in strong paper, until the whole makes a package almost as hard as a board. Around this [204] package the clerk knots strong twine, melts a drop of sealing-wax over each knot, and stamps it with the bank's seal. The finished package thus presents a neat and trim appearance. But in the present instance the package received at the Treasury was loosely and slovenly wrapped, and the seals seemed to have been put on either in great haste or by an inexperienced hand. Moreover, the label must have been cut from the stolen package and pasted on the other, for the brown paper of a previous wrapping showed plainly in a margin running around the label. The address on the package read:

"$41,000.
"United States Treasurer,
"Washington,
"D. C."

All this was printed, except the figures "41,000," even the dollar-sign. The figures were in the [205] writing of Mr. Watson, the paying-teller of the bank, whose business it was to oversee the sending of the money. His initials were also marked on the label, with the date of the sending; so that on examining the label Mr. Watson himself was positive that it was genuine.

All this made it tolerably clear that the robbery had not been committed at the bank before the package was intrusted to the two messengers; for no bank clerk would have made up so clumsy a package, and the paying-teller himself, had he been a party to the crime, would not have cut the label written by himself from the genuine package and pasted it on the bogus one; he would simply have written out another label, thus lessening the chances of detection. Furthermore, it was shown by testimony that during the short time between the sealing up of the package in the paying-teller's department and its delivery to Dominie Earle, who took it first, it was constantly [206] under the observation of half a dozen bank employees; so that the work of cutting off the label and pasting it on the bogus package could scarcely have been accomplished then without detection.

Earle and Crawford, the bank messengers, were submitted to repeated examinations; but their statements threw no light upon the mystery. Both stuck persistently to the same story, which was that neither had loosed his hold on the handle of the valise from the moment they left the bank until they had delivered the package through the window of the express company's money department. Accepting these statements as true, it was impossible that the package had been tampered with in this part of its journey; while the assumption that they were not true implied apparently a collusion between the two messengers, which was highly improbable, since Dominie Earle had been a servant of the bank for thirty-five years, and had never in that long term failed [207] in his duty or done anything to arouse distrust. Before entering the bank's employ he had been a preacher, and his whole life seemed to have been one of simplicity and honest dealing.

As for Crawford, who was, indeed, a new man, it was plain that if the Dominie told the truth, and had really kept his hold on the valise-handle all the way to the express company's window, his companion, honest or dishonest, would have had no opportunity to cut off the label, paste it on the bogus package, and make the substitution.

Finally came the theory that the money package had been stolen while in the care of the express company. In considering this possibility it became necessary to know exactly what had happened to the package from the moment it was taken through the window of the money department up to the time of its delivery at the Treasury. The package was first receipted for by the head of the [208] money department, Mr. J. C. Young. Having handed the receipt to the bank messengers, he passed the package to his assistant, Mr. Littlefield, who in turn passed it on to another clerk, Mr. Moody, who way-billed it in due form for Washington, and then placed it in the iron safe which was to carry it on its journey. Two or three hours may have elapsed between the receipt of the package and the shipment of the safe, but during this time the package was constantly in view of five or six clerks in the money department, and, unless they were all in collusion, it could scarcely have been stolen by any one there. As for the express messenger who accompanied the safe on the wagon to the train, and then on the train to Washington, and then on another wagon to the Treasury building, his innocence seemed clearly established, since the safe had been locked and [209] sealed, according to custom, before its delivery to him, and showed no signs of having been tampered with when opened in Washington the following morning by another representative of the express company. The messenger who accompanies a through safe to its destination, indeed, has small chance of getting inside, not only because of the protecting seal, but also because he is never allowed to have the key to the safe or to know its combination. Recently, as a still further safeguard, the Adams Express Company has introduced into its cars an equipment of large burglar-proof and fire-proof safes, especially as a guard against train robbers, who found it comparatively easy to break open the small safes once in use. In the present instance, of course, there was no question of train robbers.

One important fact stood out plain and uncontrovertible: that a responsible clerk in the money department of the Adams Express Company had receipted for a package supposed to contain [210] forty-one thousand dollars intrusted to the company by the bank. This threw the responsibility on the company, at least until it could be shown that the package as delivered contained brown paper, and not bank-notes. In accordance with their usual policy of promptness and liberality, the Adams people paid over to the American Exchange Bank the sum of forty-one thousand dollars, and said no more about it. But their silence did not mean inactivity. Their instructions to their detectives in this case, as in all similar cases, were to spare neither time nor expense, but to continue the investigation until the thieves had been detected and brought to punishment, or until the last possibility of clearing up the mystery had certainly expired.

Hastening to New York in response to the telegram sent him, Robert Pinkerton examined the evidence already collected by his representative, and then himself questioned all persons in any [211] way concerned in the handling of the money. Mr. Pinkerton, after his investigation, was not so sure as some persons were that the package had been stolen by employees of the express company. He inclined rather to the opinion that, in the rush of business in the express office, the false package, badly made up though it was, might have been passed by one of the clerks. This conclusion turned his suspicions first toward the two bank messengers. Of these he was not long in deciding Dominie Earle to be, in all probability, innocent. While he had known of instances where old men, after years of unimpeachable life, had suddenly turned to crime, he knew such cases to be infrequent, and he decided that Earle's was not one of them. Of the innocence of the other messenger, Crawford, he was not so sure. He began a careful study of his record. [212]

Edward Sturgis Crawford at this time was about twenty-seven years old, a man of medium height, a decided blond, with large blue eyes, and of a rather effeminate type. He went scrupulously dressed, had white hands with carefully manicured nails, parted his hair in the middle, and altogether was somewhat of a dandy. He had entered the bank on the recommendation of a wealthy New-Yorker, a young man about town, who, strange to say, had made Crawford's acquaintance, and indeed struck up quite a friendship with him, while the latter was serving in the humble capacity of conductor on a Broadway car. This was about a year before the time of the robbery. Thus far Crawford had attended to his work satisfactorily, doing nothing to arouse suspicion, unless it was indulging a tendency to extravagance in dress. His salary was but forty-two dollars a month, and yet he permitted himself such luxuries as silk underclothes, fine patent-leather shoes, and other apparel to correspond. Pushing back further into Crawford's [213] record, Mr. Pinkerton learned that he had grown up in the town of Hancock, New York, where he had been accused of stealing sixty dollars from his employer and afterward of perpetrating a fraud upon an insurance company. Putting all these facts together, Mr. Pinkerton decided that, in spite of a perfectly self-possessed manner and the good opinion of his employers, Crawford would stand further watching. His general conduct subsequent to the robbery was, however, such as to convince every one, except the dogged detective, that he was innocent of this crime. In vain did "shadows" follow him night and day, week after week; they discovered nothing. He retained his place in the bank, doing the humble duties of messenger with the same regularity as before, and living apparently in perfect content with the small salary he was drawing. His expenses were [214] lightened, it is true, by an arrangement voluntarily offered by his friend, the young man about town, who invited him to live in his own home on Thirty-eighth Street, whereby not only was he saved the ordinary outlay for lodgings, but many comforts and luxuries were afforded him that would otherwise have been beyond his reach.

Thus three months went by with no result; then four, five, six months; and, finally, all but a year. Then, suddenly, in April, 1889, Crawford took his departure for Central America, giving out to his friends that he was going there to assume the management of a banana plantation of sixty thousand acres, owned by his wealthy friend and benefactor.

Before Crawford sailed, however, the "shadows" had informed Mr. Pinkerton of Crawford's intention, and asked instructions. Should they arrest the man before he took flight, or should they let him go? Mr. Pinkerton realized that he was dealing with a man who, if guilty, was a criminal [215] of unusual cleverness and cunning. His arrest would probably accomplish nothing, and might spoil everything. There was little likelihood that the stolen money would be found on Crawford's person; he would probably arrange some safer way for its transmission. Perhaps it had gone ahead of him to Central America weeks before.

"We'll let him go," said Mr. Pinkerton, with a grim smile; "only we'll have some one go with him."

The Pinkerton representative employed to shadow Crawford on the voyage sent word, by the first mail after their arrival in Central America, that the young man had rarely left his state-room, and that whenever forced to do so had employed a colored servant to stand on guard so that no one could go inside.

Nothing more occurred, however, to justify the suspicion against Crawford until the early part of 1890, when the persistent efforts of the detectives were rewarded by an important discovery. It [216] was then that Robert Pinkerton learned that Crawford had told a deliberate lie when examined before the bank officials in regard to his family relations in New York. He had stated that his only relative in New York was a brother, Marvin Crawford, who was then driving a streetcar on the Bleecker Street line. Now it came to the knowledge of Mr. Pinkerton that Crawford had in the city three married aunts and several cousins. The reason for Crawford's having concealed this fact was presently brought to light through the testimony of one of the aunts, who, having been induced to speak, not without difficulty, stated that on Sunday, May 6, 1888, two days after the

robbery, her nephew had called at her house, and given her a package which he said contained gloves, and which he wished her to keep for him. It was about this time that the papers contained [217] the first news of the robbery, and, her suspicions having been aroused, she picked a hole in the paper covering of the package large enough to let her see that there was money inside. Somewhat disturbed, she took the package to her husband, who opened it and found that it contained two thousand dollars in bank-notes. Realizing the importance of this discovery, the husband told his wife that when Crawford came back to claim the package she should refer him to him, which she did.

Some days later, on learning from his aunt that she had spoken to her husband about the package, Crawford became greatly excited, and told her she had made a dreadful mistake. A stormy scene followed with his uncle, in which the latter positively refused to render him the money until he was satisfied that Crawford was its rightful possessor. A few days later Crawford's young friend, the man about town, called on the uncle, and stated that the money in the package [218] belonged to him and must be surrendered. The uncle was still obdurate; and when Crawford and his friend became violent in manner, he remarked meaningly that if they made any more trouble he would deliver the package of money to the Adams Express Company and let the company decide to whom it belonged. This brought the angry claimants to their senses, and Crawford's friend left the house and never returned. Finally Crawford's uncle compromised the contention by giving his nephew five hundred dollars out of the two thousand, and retaining the balance himself, in payment, one must suppose, for his silence. At any rate, he kept fifteen hundred dollars, and also a receipt in Crawford's handwriting for the five hundred dollars paid to him.

Other members of the family recalled the fact that a few days after the robbery Crawford had left in his aunt's store-room a valise, which he had subsequently called for and taken away. None of [219] them had seen the contents of the valise, but they remembered that Crawford on the second visit had remained alone in the store-room for quite a time, perhaps twenty minutes, and after his departure they found there a rubber band like those used at the bank. The detectives also discovered that on the 15th of May, 1888, eleven days after the robbery, Crawford had rented a safety-deposit box at a bank in the Fifth Avenue Hotel building, under the name of Eugene Holt. On the 18th of May he had exchanged this box for a larger one. During the following months he made several visits to the box, but for what purpose, was not known.

On presenting this accumulated evidence to the Adams Express Company, along with his own deductions, Robert Pinkerton was not long in convincing his employers that the situation required in Central America the presence of some more adroit detective than had yet been sent [220] there. The difficulty of the case was heightened by the fact that Crawford had established himself in British Honduras, and that the extradition treaty between the United States and England did not then, as it does now, provide for the surrender of criminals guilty of such offenses as that which Crawford was believed to have committed. Crawford could be arrested, therefore, only by being gotten into another country by some clever manœuver. The man best capable of carrying out such a manœuver was Robert Pinkerton himself; and, accordingly, the express company, despite the very considerable expense involved, and fully aware that the result must be uncertain, authorized Mr. Pinkerton to go personally in pursuit of Crawford.

Mr. Pinkerton arrived at Balize, the capital of British Honduras, on February 17, 1890, nearly two [221] years after the date of the robbery. There he learned that Crawford's plantation was about ninety miles down the coast, a little back of Punta Gorda. Punta Gorda lies near the line separating British Honduras from Guatemala, and is not more than a hundred miles from Spanish Honduras, or Honduras proper, directly across the Gulf of Honduras.

Difficulties confronted Mr. Pinkerton from the very start. People were dying about him every day of yellow fever, and when he started for Punta Gorda on a little steamer, the engineer came aboard looking as yellow as saffron, and immediately began to vomit, so that he had to be taken ashore. Then the engine broke down several times on the voyage, and the heat was insufferable.

As the boat steamed slowly into Punta Gorda it passed a small steam craft loaded with bananas. "Look," said one of the passengers to Mr. Pinkerton, not aware of the nature of Mr. Pinkerton's [222] mission, "there goes Crawford's launch now."

Landing at once, the detective waited for the launch to come to shore, which it presently did. The first man to come off was Marvin Crawford, whom Mr. Pinkerton recognized from a description, although he had never seen him. Then he saw Edward Crawford step off, dressed smartly in a white helmet hat, a red sash, a fine plaited linen shirt, blue trousers, patent-leather shoes, and so on. Mr. Pinkerton approached and held out his hand.

"I don't remember you," said Crawford; but his face went white.

"You used to know me in New York when I examined you before the bank officials," said the detective, pleasantly.

Crawford smiled in a sickly way and said, "Oh, yes; I remember you now."

Mr. Pinkerton explained that he had traveled five thousand miles to talk with him about the stolen money package. Crawford expressed willingness to furnish any information he could, and [223] invited Mr. Pinkerton to go up to his plantation, where they could talk the matter over more comfortably. Seeing that his best course was to humor Crawford, Mr. Pinkerton consented, though realizing that he thus put himself in Crawford's power. They went aboard Crawford's launch and steamed up the river, a very narrow, winding stream, arched quite over through most

of its length by the thick tropical foliage, and in some parts so deep that no soundings had yet found bottom. The plantation was entirely inaccessible by land on account of impassable swamps, and the crooked course of the river made it a journey of twenty-three miles from Punta Gorda, although in a straight line it was only six miles away.

Mr. Pinkerton was surprised at the unpretentious character of the house, which was built of cane and palm stocks and roofed with palm branches. Originally it had been one large room, but it was [224] now divided by muslin sheeting into two rooms, one at either end, with a hall in the middle. Almost the first thing Mr. Pinkerton noticed on entering was a fire-proof safe standing in the hall. It was of medium size and seemed to be new. He knew he was powerless, under the laws of the country, to search the safe, but he made up his mind that while he was in the house he would keep his eyes as much as possible upon it. That night he did not sleep for watching. But Crawford did not go near the safe until the next morning, when he went to get out some account-books. While the door was open Mr. Pinkerton saw only a small bag of silver inside, but he felt sure from Crawford's manner that there was a larger amount of money there.

Mr. Pinkerton remained at the plantation for forty-eight hours. On the second day he had a long interview with Crawford, questioning him in the greatest detail as to his connection with the [225] robbery. Crawford persisted in denying that he had had any connection with it, or had any knowledge as to what had become of the stolen money. Argue as he would, Mr. Pinkerton could not beat down the stubbornness of his denials. All direct approaches failing, at last he tried indirection. He spoke of Burke, the absconding State treasurer of Louisiana, who, along with a number of other American law-breakers, had fled to Central America. "Burke had a level head, hadn't he?" said he.

"How do you mean?" asked Crawford.

"Why, in going to Spanish Honduras. You know the United States has no extradition treaty there under which we could bring back a man who has absconded for embezzlement or grand larceny. Burke is as safe there as if he owned the whole country." [226]

"Is that so?" said Crawford, looking significantly at his brother Marvin, who was present.

"Yes," said Mr. Pinkerton, "it is. I only wish the fellow would come up here into British Honduras; then we might do something with him."

Here the subject was dropped.

Next Mr. Pinkerton exhibited to Crawford a sealed letter written by James G. Blaine and addressed to the chief magistrate of British Honduras, pointing to the seals of the State Department to assure Crawford of the letter's genuineness, and hinting mysteriously at the use he proposed making of this document and at the probable effect that would follow its delivery.

With this the interview closed, and Mr. Pinkerton announced his intention of going back to Punta Gorda. Crawford had practically told him to do his worst, and he had not concealed his intention of doing it. Nevertheless their relations continued outwardly pleasant, and Mr. Pinkerton was [227] treated with the hospitality that is usual in tropical countries. He saw no sign of any disposition on the part of either of the Crawfords to do him harm, but he kept his revolvers always ready, and gave them no chance to catch him napping.

Toward evening of the second day Crawford and his brother got the launch ready, and took Mr. Pinkerton down the river back to Punta Gorda, where they said good-by. At parting Crawford made a brave show of treating the whole matter lightly. "I may see you in New York in a couple of months," he said to the detective as they shook hands.

"If you see me in New York," said Mr. Pinkerton, "you will see yourself under arrest."

On landing, Mr. Pinkerton proceeded, with all the obviousness possible, to call at the house of the British magistrate, which was so situated that Crawford from the launch could not fail to see him [228] enter. This seems to have confirmed the impression he had been striving to create, that British Honduras, though in truth a perfect refuge for a criminal like Crawford, was none. Crawford, apparently thoroughly frightened, and thinking he had not an hour to lose, steamed back in all haste to his plantation, gathered together, as subsequently appeared, his money and other valuables, and then, under cover of night, dropped down the river again, put out to sea forthwith, and crossed the Bay of Honduras to Puerto Cortés, in Spanish Honduras, the country of all Central America in which Mr. Pinkerton preferred to have him. In short, Mr. Pinkerton's stratagem had worked perfectly.

Mr. Pinkerton's reason for wishing to get Crawford into Spanish Honduras was not because the treaty arrangements were more favorable there than in British Honduras, but because the Pinkerton Agency enjoyed unusual personal relations with the Honduras government. Several [229] years before, when President Bogram had in contemplation the federation of Central American States under one government, he had applied to the Pinkerton Agency for reliable detectives for secret-service work. In consequence of this the present head of the Honduras secret force was no other than a former Pinkerton employee who had been recommended by the New York office to the Honduras government, and upon whom Mr. Pinkerton knew he could rely absolutely. Another man equally disposed to favor him was Mr. Bert Cecil, a member of the cabinet, and at the head of the telegraph service, and thus in a position to render most valuable service in the apprehension of Crawford.

As soon as Mr. Pinkerton learned of Crawford's flight, he hurried in pursuit, crossing the bay to Livingston, in Guatemala. In so doing he risked his life, first by putting out to sea in a little dory, [230] and then by trusting his safety to a treacherous Carib boatman, who, when they were several miles out, evinced a strong disposition to take possession of the detective's overcoat, in order, as he explained with a cunning look, to turn its silk lining into a pair of trousers. At this, Mr. Pinkerton carelessly produced his revolver, which had a quieting effect upon the fellow, and the voyage was completed in safety. But soon after landing Mr. Pinkerton suffered an attack of fever, and being warned by the doctors to return to a Northern latitude, he got the government machinery in motion for the apprehension of Crawford, had photographs of the former bank messenger spread broadcast through the country, and then having cabled the New York bureau to send responsible detectives to take his place, he sailed for New Orleans.

Mr. Pinkerton was succeeded in Central America by detective George H. Hotchkiss, one of the [231] best men in the country, who arrived in Balize on the 18th of March. A telegram from Pinkerton's former employee, now chief of the secret police in Honduras, informed him that Crawford had been seen in San Pedro, Spanish Honduras, on the previous Saturday, and was being closely pursued by Spanish soldiers accompanied by Pinkerton men. Hotchkiss sailed at once for Puerto Cortés, where he learned from the American vice-consul, Dr. Ruez, that Crawford had left San Pedro hastily the previous Monday night. On further investigation the detective discovered that a San Francisco bully and former prize-fighter, "Mike" Neiland, had called at Crawford's boarding-house on Monday, and warned him that detectives were pursuing him from Puerto Cortés on a hand-car. Neiland had pretended to be Crawford's friend, and said he would keep him out of the hands of the detectives. Crawford, very much frightened, grabbed up some of his luggage and [232] left the house with Neiland. It was generally believed that Neiland had designs on Crawford's money, and would not hesitate to kill him, if need were, in order to get it.

Hotchkiss immediately requested Mr. Bert Cecil, at Tegucigalpa, the capital, to cover all telegraphic points, and, if possible, have Crawford and his companion arrested on some trivial charge. The day after he reached San Pedro, on March 22, he received a telegram saying that Crawford and Neiland had been arrested and taken before the governor at Santa Barbara. They had been searched, and about thirty-two thousand dollars had been found on Crawford's person. The money was in old and worn bills that in every way resembled those in the stolen package. Whether they were the identical bills or not it was impossible to say, as the bank had not recorded the numbers. [233]

On receipt of this news, Hotchkiss, accompanied by Jack Hall, a guide, set out across the country for Santa Barbara. The journey was accomplished, but only after the most terrible suffering and many privations and dangers. Moreover, the fever got its deadly clutches upon detective Hotchkiss; and when he had finally dragged himself into Santa Barbara, he cabled the New York office: "Crawford and money held for extradition. Am sick. Cannot remain. Coming on steamer Tuesday. My associate takes charge."

Before sailing for New Orleans detective Hotchkiss had an interview with Crawford, in the presence of the Spanish officials, and obtained from him a written confession of his guilt. While admitting that he had been a party to the robbery, the absconder tried to lessen his own crime by declaring that the plan to plunder the bank had been suggested to him by two men, named Brown and Bowen, whom he had met accidentally on a railway-train in New York, and with whom [234] he had afterward become very friendly. These men had taken him to Brown's house on Thirty-eighth Street, somewhere between Eighth and Ninth avenues (Crawford could not locate the place more precisely), and introduced him to a fine-looking woman presented as Mrs. Brown, who was also in the conspiracy. They told him that he was earning very little money for a man in such a responsible position, and that he might easily make a fortune if he would put his interests in their hands and be guided by their advice.

The outcome of several conversations was a plan to get possession of a valuable money package on some day when Crawford should know a large sum was to be sent away from the bank. He claimed that on the day of the robbery one of his fellow-conspirators, Bowen, followed behind himself and Earle after they entered the Adams express offices, and managed to substitute a [235] bogus package for the real one while the two messengers were going up the stairs. He did not make this attempt until he saw the bank detective McDougal turn back up Broadway. Crawford said that he managed it so as to precede Earle in going up the stairs, which gave Bowen, who was standing at the first turn, in the shadow, an opportunity to open the satchel and quickly make the substitution. Crawford declared that the conspirators gave him only twenty-five hundred dollars as his share of the booty, although promising him more. This sum he put in two envelops and sent to his aunt, the one to whom he afterward intrusted the package supposed to contain gloves.

Crawford stated further that Brown and Bowen, having been forced to flee the country, sent him word from Paris, some time later, in a letter written by Mrs. Brown, that the greater part of the stolen money had been buried in a flower-bed in the southeast corner of a yard on West Thirty-eighth Street, and asked him to dig it up and send it to them. A remarkable fact in this connection is that the yard referred to on West Thirty-eighth Street belonged to the house of the friend and benefactor with whom Crawford was living at the time of the robbery. [236]

Crawford claimed to have carried out these instructions, and deposited the package of money taken from the flower-bed in the safe-deposit vaults in the Fifth Avenue Hotel building, where, as a matter of fact, he was known to have rented a box. He gave as his reason for not sending the

money to Paris that he was in trouble himself, being under constant surveillance, and thought it best to keep the money secreted for the time. He admitted that he had carried this money with him to Honduras, and that it was the same found on his person by the detectives. By his description of Brown and Bowen, the former was a man about twenty-five years old, of slight [237] build and light complexion, while the latter was ten years older, two or three inches taller, with a sandy mustache and very fat hands. Mrs. Brown Crawford described as about twenty-five years old, a blonde, with regular features. He had no idea what had become of these people since he left America, having had no further communication with them. None of the alleged conspirators has ever been found, and they are believed to be purely mythical.

Detective Hotchkiss also had an interview with "Mike" Neiland, Crawford's companion in flight, who described his first meeting with Crawford at his boarding-house in San Pedro, and acknowledged that he had deliberately frightened Crawford into running away by his story of the pursuing detectives. He described their adventures and hardships in trying to escape over the rough country, the difficulties they experienced in buying mules, their sufferings from exposure [238] in the swamps, and finally their capture by the soldiers. Neiland said that Crawford gave him three thousand dollars in fifty-dollar bills, and also allowed him to carry, a part of the time, a large package wrapped in oil-cloth paper and sewed up tightly. Crawford had told him to throw this package away rather than let any one capture it; for, he said, it contained money which would send him to prison if found upon him.

As they pushed along in their flight, Crawford declared repeatedly that he would put an end to his life rather than be taken prisoner; and when the soldiers surrounded them he drew his revolver and tried to blow his brains out. One of the soldiers, however, was too quick for him, and struck the weapon out of his hand. After the capture Crawford vainly tried to bribe the guards to let him escape, offering them as much as ten thousand dollars. When the large package was [239] opened, it was found to contain bundles of bills sewed together with black thread, and with about a dozen rubber bands wrapped around them, and a stout covering of buckskin under the oiled paper. The money amounted to thirty-two thousand five hundred dollars, all in United States bills —fives, tens, twenties, fifties, and hundreds, but mostly fives. Ultimately the money was returned to the American Exchange Bank.

When organizing the pursuit of Crawford, detective Hotchkiss had arranged with the Honduras government that any letters and telegrams that might come addressed to the absconder should be delivered to him. Several letters were thus secured from the young man about town in New York who had befriended Crawford so constantly in the past, and who seemed now disposed to stand by him even in adversity and disgrace. The letters contained counsel and reproaches, and [240] seemed to indicate that relations of unusual familiarity had existed between the two men. Besides these letters, two cablegrams were intercepted from the same source, both being sent through an intermediary. The first was dated March 15, 1890, and read: "Tell Crawford go back. Papers bluff. No treaty exists." The second, sent two days later, read: "Inform Crawford will meet him in Puerto Cortés."

It is needless to say that the young man did not carry out his intention of joining Crawford in Honduras, for the same mail which would have brought him Crawford's reply carried the startling news that his protégé and friend was under arrest in Santa Barbara, a self-confessed bank robber.

The government of Honduras consented, thanks to their friendly relations with the Pinkertons, to deliver Crawford over to one of the representatives of the agency, and superintendent E. S. Gaylor, who had meantime replaced detective Hotchkiss, took him in charge. A guard of Spanish [241] soldiers brought the prisoner to Puerto Cortés, where he was placed in a hotel pending his transfer to a vessel sailing for the United States. Superintendent Gaylor himself was present to see that everything was managed properly, and he was seconded in his oversight by the former Pinkerton employee, the head of the secret police in Honduras. The final arrangements had been made, the government having taken advantage of a law authorizing the expulsion of "pernicious foreigners" in order to get rid of Crawford. The superintendent had actually taken passage for himself and Crawford, and selected berths, on an American vessel that was to sail on the morning of May 2, 1890; but the night before Crawford made his escape from the hotel, going without the money, which remained in the detective's keeping. How he escaped is still a matter of conjecture. [242] The hotel stood on the water's edge, and from a balcony to which Crawford had access he may have managed to spring down to a wall built on piles. From there he may have reached the hotel yard at the back, and escaped over one of the picket fences that separated the hotel from the adjoining property. There is also a possibility that the Spanish soldiers were bribed; but this has never been proved, and is scarcely probable, as Crawford at the time of his escape had not more than seventy-five dollars in Honduras bills in his possession.

During the following days and weeks untiring efforts were made to recapture him. The swamps were searched for miles, and soldiers were sent out in all directions. Mr. Gaylor believed that Crawford succeeded in making his escape into Guatemala, which was only thirty miles distant. He was undoubtedly assisted in his escape by the fact that people in the surrounding region [243] sympathized strongly with him and would have done anything in their power to conceal him from his pursuers. At any rate, the man was never recovered.

Seven years have passed since Crawford's escape, and all this time he has been left undisturbed in Central America, where he has been frequently seen by people who know him, and where he seems to be thriving. At last accounts he and his brother were engaged in business on one of the

islands in the Mosquito Reservation of Nicaragua, where they were regarded as dangerous men by the government, likely to incite revolution. So strong was this feeling on the part of the Nicaraguan officials that some years ago advances were made to the United States government to have Crawford surrendered, the Nicaraguan officials declaring that they would gladly give him up if a demand for his extradition was made by the proper authorities in Washington. For some [244] reason the demand has never been made, and probably never will be.

Immediately after Crawford had made confession, the American Exchange Bank, realizing that there was no longer any doubt that the robbery was committed by one of its employees, voluntarily refunded to the Adams Express Company the forty-one thousand dollars that had previously been paid to it by the company, together with interest thereon for two years, and a large part of the expenses. Therefore the only complainant in the case now available would be the bank officials, who, for some reason, have seen fit to let the matter drop.

Mr. Pinkerton's theory of the way in which this robbery was committed is that Crawford had an accomplice who had previously prepared the bogus package, and who, by previous appointment, was standing on the stairs in the express office when the two messengers arrived. It has always [245] been a question in Mr. Pinkerton's mind whether the old man Dominie Earle told the exact truth in his testimony before the bank officials. Not that he suspected Earle of having been implicated in the crime, but he has wondered whether Earle might not have been simply negligent to the extent of leaving Crawford in sole possession of the valise at some time after they entered the office. There is no doubt that Earle was very anxious to catch a four-o'clock train at one of the New Jersey ferries, in order to get home early. He may, in his haste, have allowed Crawford to go up-stairs with the valise unaccompanied.

This would explain how Crawford found opportunity to open the valise and make substitution of the bogus for the genuine package. Assuming that the accomplice was standing at a turn of the stairs, which are winding and rather dusky, it is perfectly conceivable that such a change of [246] packages might have been effected with scarcely a moment's delay.

But consenting that Earle told the exact truth, he admitted that he lingered behind Crawford a little in ascending the stairs, and in so doing he may have furnished sufficient opportunity for the substitution. An old man going up rather steep stairs naturally bends his head forward to relieve the ascent, and in such position he might fail to see what a man close in front of him even was doing. The trouble with this theory is that it supposes the label on the bogus package to have been a forgery.

There is still another theory suggested by Mr. Pinkerton to account for the presence of the bogus money package in the valise when the two messengers reached the counter of the receiving department. It is that Crawford's confederate had provided himself with a second valise, similar in all respects to the one used by the bank, and that in this had been placed the bogus package [247] with a forged label, making the substitution a matter of merely changing valises, which could have been accomplished in a second. It has also been suggested that Crawford might have managed the whole scheme himself, by having prepared a valise like the one he carried daily, arranged with two compartments, in one of which was placed the genuine package received from the paying-teller at the bank, while out of the other compartment was taken at the express office a bogus package previously placed there. What makes it the more reasonable to suppose that Crawford accomplished the theft single-handed is the fact that when arrested in Honduras the bulk of the stolen money was found on his person, while it was known that, in addition to the thirty-two thousand dollars then recovered, he had previously spent considerable sums in various ways. His voyage, for instance, must have been expensive; and it was found that he had given at [248] various times to members of his family sums ranging from twenty to fifty dollars. This would have left out of the original forty-one thousand dollars a very meager remuneration for a confederate.

Perhaps the most reasonable explanation of the robbery lies in the assumption that Dominie Earle, honest, but simple-minded, did not go up-stairs at all with Crawford, but left him at the foot of the stairs, influenced by his eagerness to get home. Granting this supposition, what would have been easier than for Crawford, left alone at the foot of the stairs, to have turned back with the valise and gone into the back room of some neighboring saloon, or other convenient place, where he could manipulate the label and substitute the bogus package? There is reason to think that the bogus package had been prepared weeks before, which would have accounted in a measure for its worn and slovenly appearance. The time occupied in doing all this need not have [249] been over fifteen minutes, which would not have been noticed at the bank, especially as the robbery occurred after banking hours. It is highly improbable, however, that Crawford could have accomplished the substitution on the stairs of the express office; for, while these are winding and somewhat in the shadow, they are by no means dark, and are plainly in view of clerks and officials who are constantly passing. Besides that, Crawford could not have carried the dummy package concealed about his person without attracting attention, for the original package was quite bulky, being about twenty inches long, twenty inches wide, and fourteen inches thick. The bogus package was not quite so thick, and more oblong, but could not easily have been hidden under a man's coat. Finally, even supposing Crawford did carry the bogus package with him in some manner, he would never have dared to expose himself to almost certain detection by [250] cutting off the label from the genuine package, pasting it on the bogus package, placing the latter in the valise, and hiding the genuine one in his clothes—and doing all this on the busy stairs of an express office where at that hour of the day a dozen men are going up and down every minute.

The sum of all these theories is, however, that, in spite of the fact that the author of the robbery is known and the bulk of the money has been recovered, the manner of the robbery is to this day a mystery.

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