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A THRILLING NARRATION.

THE LIFE AND PRIVATE
CONFESSIONS OF AN EX-CONVICT,
AS TOLD BY HIMSELF.

A COMPLETE EXPOSE OF MOST DARING ROBBERIES PERPETRATED
IN TEN STATES AND A THOUSAND TOWNS—NEW YORK, BAL-
TIMORE, NORFOLK, BUFFALO, MOHAWK, CAYUGA, CAN-
ANDAIGUA, WYALOSIA, INDIANAPOLIS, CHICAGO,
ST. LOUIS, ETC. A BOOK OF INTEREST AND
INFORMATION TO DETECTIVES, MER-
CHANTS, BANKERS, AND
MORALISTS.

By Albert G. Harrell.

Sent by Mail and the Trade Supplied.

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MY LIFE: A TRUE BILL.

WHEREIN IS FAITHFULLY CHRONICLED A FEW OF THE
THRILLING ADVENTURES OF EVERY-DAY LIFE AMONG
DARE-DEVILS, WHO PLAY THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL
MOLL-BUZZERS, CRACKSMEN, SNEAKS, AND CUT-THROATS;
CONTAINING, ALSO, COMPLIMENTARY REFERENCE TO
THE SCORE OR MORE OF DESPERATE MEN AND WOMEN
WITH WHOM I HAVE WORKED, FROM THE SEABOARD TO
THE MISSISSIPPI.

"Let the world slide, let the world go;
A fig for care and a fig for woe!
If I can't pay, why, I can owe,
And death makes equal the high and the low."

If you were to ask me why, or how I dare, publish a book like this, I should probably answer, that is my business; if you like the title of the book then buy and read. If you would learn something of the eventful, perilous life the men I write of lead—of the risks they run—the mental and physical sufferings they endure—the herculean labor they at times perform—then, also, buy and read. If you are a "Knight of the Jimmy" yourself the life experiences here truthfully recounted may be of service to you. If the churchman and moralist peruse these confessions and scowl at me because I choose to place them in the hands of a world already too wicked, I have only to refer him to the works of

Dumas, Hugo, Dickens, and the thousand and one authors, dead and living, who have dug deep into the dregs of society and portrayed possible and impossible modes of committing crime and escaping from the penalty prescribed by law. There is this difference, however, between them and me: they write fiction, I fact. The scenes here pictured, though containing much more of dark colors than light, I, a boy eighteen years of age, have actually passed through, playing a part more or less obscure, it is true, but always to the level best of my ability. This I swear, so let no man question the truth and accuracy of my portrayals—of these dark pages from the leaves of a short life's history.

EARLY DAYS—TILL TAPPING.

Necessity drove me into crime, and society has kept me there. Without being first personally consulted I came into this stormy world on the seventeenth day of October, 1857, in New York City. My father was poor but respectable—kept a retail grocery store on Third street, New York. When I was eight years of age he died of consumption—died too early to be disgraced in life by the infamous deeds of a degenerate son. Up to the date of his death I had been liberally supplied with spending money from his generous hand, and knew nothing of crime or its consequences. He died leaving numerous debts for my mother to settle. She attempted to carry on the business, but these debts embarrassed her, rendering it necessary for her to economise in every possible direction. My allowance of cash was almost entirely cut off, and young as I was, I felt the loss deeply. A year came and went, during which time I fell into bad company, and thus early began to become familiar with the wicked ways of a very wicked city. After due consideration I resolved to “raise the wind” by means of till-tapping, the art of which I had in a measure learned through conversation with older, more hardened companions. The first opportunity I would embrace, and it soon came.

THE FIRST OFFENSE.

One day, about a year after my father's death, my mother sent me to a meat market on Second street, between avenues A and B, after some meat for dinner. It will be borne in mind that I was then nine years old, though small of my age. As fate would have it the butcher kept his meats in the cellar, whither he went when I gave him my order. I noticed then that he had left the drawer in which money taken in was deposited, partly open. In an instant it occurred to me that here was an opportunity to commence business, and perhaps I would never have a better, so concluded to embrace it. It is needless to say that my little heart fluttered and flopped about amazingly. Fear of detection, a moral conviction of wrong, and the wan ghost of my dead father, whose grieved spirit I felt in and around me, all seemed to be tugging at my resolution. I wavered, faltered, hesitated for a moment, then madly rushed behind the counter, pulled the drawer open and clutched my little hand full of currency, pushed the drawer back about as it was, turned and fled from the shop which I had entered an innocent boy and left as a thief. Prudence dictated that it were best not to take all the money, as I could have done, but to lift only a part, then probably the shop-keeper would not miss what he had lost. The first alley reached I hurried down, eager to count my ill-gotten gains. I crept into a pile of boxes, out of sight, and found I had two dollars and ten cents—quite a fortune for a youth of nine years. I had not waited for the meat, therefore went home and told mother the butcher didn't have such as she wanted. My conscience annoyed me like everything, and several times I almost resolved to go back and return the money, rather than run the risk of being detected. Avarice however, got the advantage of me, and I kept it. That afternoon I took a couple of chums and went to the museum. Before night every cent had been spent, and since it had become impossible for me to make restitution I desperately resolved to let matters take their course. It was my first

offense, and if found out, even, the penalty would be light and I would grin and bear it. So far as I knew the money thus stolen was never missed; at least I was never accused of it. I waited patiently day after day, fearing and trembling, but heard nothing of the affair. Being successful in this first venture fixed things for me, and I soon after entered upon the calling of a professional till-tapper.

PLAYING "HOOKEY."

From this time forward for months, in company with two other boys, I followed my new calling. We got in our work principally of evenings, though occasionally making a successful haul by daylight. The money thus secured was spent variously, as is the case when the precious stuff falls into boyish hands. We put in considerable time in and about Central Park. Of course I had to account to my mother for my absence. She knew, too, that I sometimes had money. I lied to her, by telling her I was at work in a specified shop, at two dollars per week. This story quieted her, and until she discovered the falsity I had little to fear from her, poor unsuspecting, good old creature. In about two months, though, the fraud was exposed. I had been in the habit of carrying my dinner in a tin pail, and hiding the pail a few squares from home. One evening, on coming home I found my sister anxious and agitated, and on inquiring the cause, learned that somebody unknown to me had taken the pail from its hiding place and brought it to my mother. I ascertained also from my sister that mother had gone to the shop where I professed to be working, and knowing of course, what the result would be, I concluded to "skip out." I didn't wait for mother's return, or for supper. During the following two weeks I was virtually a vagabond. Slept in boxes, under sidewalks, anywhere in fact. Once in a while the receipts from till-tapping, which I kept up at every opportunity, would enable me to obtain a square meal. As I now recollect those weeks there was a good deal of irregularity

in dietary and sleeping habits. One day as the three of us were killing a long afternoon by taking a nap in an unused wagon my mother found us, and took me home. I then learned that she had been hunting almost constantly for me, day and night, and was nearly crazy with the trouble I had occasioned her. She talked to me, good old soul, as only a mother can talk to a wayward son. My conscience was pricked. I felt bad, and thought I would reform—made up my mind in short to be decent and help the old lady. This feeling lasted for some time. I really began to think it possible for me to become a good boy. I was attending school steadily and getting along well with my studies. But one day a boy came to the teacher and said my mother wanted me. I was excused, and the next minute learned from the boys that they had an expedition to Central Park in hand, and had gotten me out of school to accompany them. I hesitated, but finally went with them, and from that hour dates my second fall from grace. During the next three months I played "hookey" (stayed away from school) constantly, mother all the while supposing I was in school. I had the thing so fixed that she would not be apt to discover that I was all this time a truant, and not only a truant but a professional till-tapper at the same time. Occasionally a day, or part of a day she would need me at the store and then keep me away from school. On these occasions I would send one of my companions to her, as though coming from the teacher, to inquire if she had kept me from school. By this ruse I lead her to believe that every time I was absent the teacher sent to make inquiries. In this manner I fooled the old lady and stayed out all the time. It was rough, I admit, but we had lots of fun.

STEALING MUSIC BOOKS.

One night we got into the school house I had been attending and stole as many singing books as each of us could carry away. In order to realize upon this merchandise it must be

sold; so each took an armfull and began peddling them out, selling principally at dwelling houses. The books were worth twenty or twenty-five cents a piece, but we sold them at from three to five cents, representing that our father had bought them at auction, very cheap, and had set us to selling them. We were getting along swimmingly. Nearly all of the hundred or more books had been disposed of; but in an evil hour I went into a house which proved to be the residence of a scholar of the school from which the books had been stolen. He recognized me, and this recognition brought exposure. It was not long before officers of the law called at my mother's and accused me of the theft. I was in for it this time, sure. The evidence was convincing, and I again felt bad, sniffed the Toombs not afar off. Mother compromised the disturbance, however, by paying the school authorities the full value of all the property stolen, and I was not prosecuted. I realize now that it might have been profitable to myself and many others if they had sent me to Blackwell's Island for a while. My proud old mother could n't face the disgrace of such a public exposure, dreaming, too, probably that through her own influence she could bring about a reformation. But what a fatal illusion!

LICKING A BIG FELLOW.

I soon began to stay out nights, not coming home for days at a time, and all the time tapping tills. Complaints regarding my conduct were carried to my mother, which kept her continually in hot water. I didn't like this, for, bad as I was, it grieved me to be the source of grief to her, and I resolved to find out who was blabbing to her. The culprit I discovered to be a big lubberly fellow, nearly as large as two of me, but I was bent on punishing him. He was large enough to whip any two of us. The fact is, we were rather afraid to tackle him; but he must be threshed. I had an older brother at work in a cigar manufactory on Eighth street, whom we three little fellows waited upon. The interview

resulted in his agreeing to go down to the pier that afternoon and lick the big fellow, provided we would make up to him the loss accruing to him through the absence from the shop. The bargain struck, we all struck out for the pier and waited all the afternoon for the odious tattler. We didn't find him, so he escaped the licking planned for him. But this afternoon was a Black Friday to my brother—one he will never forget though he survive a century. Up to this time brother had been a steady, hard-working boy, learning the trade of a cigar maker. That afternoon while "laying for" the big fellow we told my brother of the easy life we were leading; that we always had money and no work; lots of fun, free to go where and when we chose without asking consent or permission of any one. We played upon him to such an extent that he was induced to join us. He did so, and since has blossomed into one of the most noted cracksmen of the day. That afternoon we initiated him into the mysteries of till-tapping, and that evening he met his first experience. The affair was successful, and he was much elated. He threw up his situation, and we were a quartette instead of a trio. Mother knew nothing of this for a long time. I had by this time become pretty thoroughly bad and irregular in habits. Stayed away from home most of the time, day and night. Brother was away, too, but through the day mother supposed him to be at the shop. The excuse he gave for being out nights was that he was hunting for his wild brother, and so the wool was pulled perfectly over mother's eyes.

FORCED EFFORT AT REFORM.

About a year had now passed, during which my young life was crowded with wicked experiences. Although I had robbed scores, perhaps hundreds, of tills I had so far escaped arrest. This almost unheard of success made me bold. Among the boys I was a "brick." The police knew me as a street gamin of unusual promise. My mother became

thoroughly disheartened at the result of her fruitless efforts to hold me in the path of rectitude, and determined to force a reformation if possible. To this end, at the beginning of my tenth year she caused me to be arrested and sent to the Juvenile Asylum on Thirteenth street, where I remained one month, and was then transferred to the institution on one hundred and seventy-fifth street. Here I stayed five months. During these six long months I had behaved myself, and was looked upon as a model inmate. Mother visited me occasionally. I purposely showed signs of repentance, and solemnly promised to quit the street and be a good boy. Upon the strength of appearances and promises my mother effected my release, and again took me home, vainly hoping and believing my reformation was complete. How thorough this reformation was may be seen by following up this autobiography and reading the pages which follow it.

OUT IN THE WORLD.

Instead of being benefited by the forced retirement inflicted upon me I was infinitely worse. Up to this time I had never stolen from mother. Bad as I was before I had never preyed upon friends or relatives. But that imprisonment rankled in my soul and hardened my heart. I became perfectly indifferent to the promptings of honor or conscience, and ready for anything. I cared absolutely nothing for friend or foe. I knew that by economy and frugality mother had saved up money, but just how much was unknown to me. Resolving to possess it at all hazards, I watched her, and one night laid hands upon it and left home without saying good bye to any one. My two old chums were waiting for me. And that night we crossed the river and went to Newark, N. J. We were all now upon strange ground. The fraternity of crime, the Free Masonry of criminals, however, soon enabled us to form acquaintances. Upon counting the money we found there was something over two hundred dollars—a large amount to be placed at the

untrammelled disposal of three street Arabs. The money was mine, of course, since I had stolen it unaided; but what was mine was my pals also. I bought them skates, clothes, revolvers, etc. For a week or two we lived high. I flung money about like a Prince, and it is a wonder the police did not swoop down upon me. While the money lasted we were like bees in clover as a matter of course. But one day we spent the last dollar, and then the boys forsook me, stealing away without my knowledge, and working their way back to New York. I was thus left alone in a strange city. For two reasons I dared not return home. They might arrest me, and despite the fact that my conscience had by this time become pretty thoroughly seared, I dreaded to face the mother whom I had so grievously wronged in devious ways. No, I would remain where I was and make the most of the situation. There was no necessity of my starving, since there were money drawers in Newark as well as in New York. I would enter upon my profession, and did so, forming affiliations with the countless little thieves of that beautiful city. We slept in all kinds of places and roamed about the streets, very much as I had done in the city of my birth. I had entered successfully into business, settled into the new traces comfortably, and began to think one city as good as another, when one day, while on the street, I felt a hand upon my shoulder, looked up and saw my mother, grieved yet glad to find me. One of my pals, I learned afterward, had managed to notify her of my whereabouts and she had come to take me home. Visions of the Juvenile Asylum and the Tombs arose before me, and I half resolved to jerk away from her and fly. A second thought evaporated the resolution, for then I knew she could put the police after me, and render escape next to impossible. I submitted and went home with her. Suspecting her own son to be the one who had robbed her the case had not been reported at police headquarters. I was pleased to hear this. On reaching home the old lady lectured me like a Christian,

resurrecting the shade of my dead father to add emphasis to what she said. She then proposed that if I would promise to try to be a better boy and reform she would sell out her grocery at any sacrifice and move out West, where I could be away from the villainous influence of the associations formed in New York. It may as well be recorded here that I was considered a very successful thief, which made me a quasi-leader of the gang with whom I was associated. This was particularly true regarding the two scamps who went with me to Newark. I "shook" these fellows when they served me that rascally trick in Newark. If they had ever amounted to anything as thieves—had ever made a reputation from that time to this—I would publish their names in this sketch. But they have not, and I leave them undisturbed in the rut of oblivion, the cowardly whelps. Pursuant to her proposition, in 1869, mother sold out and moved to Indianapolis, Ind., where I again found strange territory.

AT THE HOOSIER CAPITAL.

For some time after arriving at Indianapolis I tried to behave myself, and succeeded, though through mighty hard work, for I had then been in business about three years, you see, and felt discontented when doing nothing. My mother was too poor to furnish me with spending money, and I was too lazy to work for it. What little taste I had for books had about vanished, and school was no place for me. The upshot is easily foretold. I again began till-tapping, and made it pay better than ever. Somehow success has seemed to attend my adventurous labors from the time I robbed the butcher down to the present. It is true I have seen inside jail and prison walls; but in spite of an occasional "tumble" (detection) fortune has been good to me. I have no fault to find with her. Business was brisk for a long time, and I managed to cover my tracks admirably. Mother did not suspect me, for I was kind to her in the main. After a

while she feared I had retrograded, and began searching my pockets at night, which made me some trouble, as she would often find money which instinct taught her did not rightly belong to her son. Then she would beg me to return it to the parties from whom I had stolen it, and in several instances it was returned, she going with me to intercede with the wronged parties, and so I escaped arrest. I was now quite a lad and began thinking it about time to graduate from the boyish acquirement of stealing small sums from money-drawers, a thing which any ordinary boy could do. I was ambitious, and having put all ideas of reformation behind me, was determined to advance another round on the ladder of crime. It so happened that about this time I fell in with a couple of boys considerably older than myself. Their names were Dan Leehan and Jim Dunn, both of whom are now at the Indiana State Prison North serving a fourth term. We planned to burglarize a house on West street, and one night entered upon the execution of our plans. The enterprise didn't pan out well, for all three were arrested in the act and committed to the body of Marion county jail. This was rather discouraging for a first experience, and had they given me a dose of imprisonment I might have become disgusted with the life of a burglar and been prevented from entering actively upon such a calling. My mother interceded with Judge Chapman, of the Criminal Circuit Court, so well that both my companions and myself were released, after a confinement lasting but a day or two. I was then again free, but that imprisonment, brief as it was, did the business for me. While in there I became acquainted with Billy Williams and Charley Wallace, a couple of wild fellows who had been apprehended by the city police and by the Mayor sent to jail to await action by the Grand Jury. I don't recollect the nature of the crime with which they were charged. But this I do know, that they put the devil into my head, sealing my fate, and this is how they did it: Said they, in substance, it's nothing to tap tills. Anybody can do that. Go with us and we'll make a man of you. You shall

have plenty of money with little work and an easy time generally. This fired my ambition to become a first-class thief and decided my future course. Come what would I would learn the business in all its branches and details from active experience. Nothing but the intervention of the hard-eyed law should foil me. At this point I date the beginning of a career filled with perpetual physical peril. I never stop to think of affairs of the soul; neither does any hardened criminal. Since then I've seen service and been under fire many a time.

A TWO MONTHS' TRAMP—THROUGH THREE STATES.

A few days after my release from the Marion county jail Wallace and Williams were "turned up" (discharged) and the three of us at once started upon a professional tramp, St. Louis being the objective point. Terre Haute, Indiana, was the first stopping place, where we went through a hotel and secured something over five hundred dollars worth of "swag" (plunder). I had learned all there was worth learning in the art of till-tapping, graduating with honors. Altogether several thousand dollars must have passed through my hands during the five years I had been in the business. It was now the summer of 1871 and I was fourteen years of age. My tutors, Wallace and Williams, proved to be excellent teachers, and during the two months I was with them I managed to absorb all the elements of adult sneak thievery. Those months were spent in operating in the principal cities of Indiana, Illinois and Missouri. Our luck varied, of course. Some days we'd have several hundred dollars apiece, and at other times not a cent—the money, being secured without much outlay of physical strength, was spent with equal ease. Finally we reached St. Louis, where we "worked" a short time, and then started for Kansas City. While on the boat I "worked" a state room, taking a "trick" consisting of a yellow "super and slang" (gold watch and chain) and a "slang leather" with about fifty "cases" in it (a large pocket-book

and fifty dollars in money). As the steamer struck the dock at Lexington, Missouri, I jumped off to see what "swag" I had got. As I did so I gave my pals the "offer" to follow. Either they didn't see it, or there had been a "squeal" (discovery and report) on board, in which case no one would be allowed to leave the boat, for they didn't come ashore. Shortly after the steamer moved out into the river having Wallace and Williams still on board and leaving me on the dock at Lexington. From that time to this (July, 1875), I have never seen or heard of them in any shape whatever. I took a train immediately and went back to St. Louis, having in possession seven hundred dollars in money and a gold watch and chain, as the saved proceeds of a two months' campaign.

ONE OF A CIRCUS "MOB" OF THIEVES.

The steamboat affair had transpired in the afternoon, and in the evening I found myself at Madame Dovey's on Green street, St. Louis, where I gave my watch and chain to a "Molly," (prostitute). The next day I visited Barney's "fence," (one of the most celebrated thieves' rendezvous in St. Louis) corner of Third and Ammon streets, where I met "Big Irish Ryan," the noted confidence man. This accidental meeting resulted in my entering a school where another branch of thievery was taught me. In the profession it is called "sneak thieving." It was arranged that I should take a trip with Big Irish, he to do outside work and I inside. We started out with Henderson & Springer's circus, intending to stay with the establishment as long as the "cops" (officers) would consent. We started out with the circus, and soon found that there were rather too many harvesters in the field already, with each of whom we soon became acquainted. There were following, or traveling, with this show fifteen or twenty sneaks, divided up into gangs, or "mobs," as they are called in the profession, of from two to five members each. Each of these mobs work independently

of the other, doing business strictly upon their own hook, members of each sharing swag only with each other. I soon found that the business in this line was reduced to a science, just as is that of till-tapping, burglary, etc. We followed this circus from town to town, principally in Illinois, some days doing well and others accomplishing next to nothing. The *modus operandi* of this branch of the business is very simple, but generally effective. It is well known that circuses parade the streets of a city or town where they are to exhibit in the forenoon. It was our custom to mingle with the crowd which followed the display, relieving a gentleman occasionally of a watch or wallet; or a lady of her portemonnaie or pin until we came to a store or bank which gave indications of having money in its drawer or safe. The music of the band and general hubbub attending the parade would, of course, attract the attaches of the establishment to the front door, or out upon the sidewalk. Now, supposing there were two of us thieves operating as pals. One of us would enter into conversation with the clerk, book-keeper or cashier in front, while the other would slip around back of the store, and, entering through door or window, go through the safe or drawer in short order, and escape. If the clerk should happen to "smell woolen," or catch a glimpse of the depredator in the rear he would be very apt to get "slugged," (knocked down by a slung-shot quicker than lightning). In the confusion attending such a disaster both of us, unless we happened to get "collared," would get away and mix in with the crowd, to mingle our wonder and grief with that of other friends and spectators, but always to meet at the next corner and arrange plans for another raid. Often it wouldn't take more than three or five minutes to gobble up from fifty to a thousand dollars. Some days we could make several of these hauls, and then again get nothing. If there were three of us working together, one would act as decoy, another sneak in and get the "sugar" (money) while the third would be at a convenient place to receive it. If there were four, two decoys would exert themselves conjointly to amuse or entertain the

clerk. Before beginning the day's work a spot for a rendezvous would be agreed upon, so as to avoid any prolonged separation. At the appointed time, say midnight, the pals would meet and "whack up," that is divide up what swag had been captured during the day and evening.

THIRTY-NINE HUNDRED AND A "DEAD TUMBLE."

We made a big racket in a certain little town not far from Springfield, Ill., capturing at one swoop three thousand nine hundred dollars. This was taken from a safe, in the manner above described. There were three of us engaged in the enterprise, and consequently each of us had a "whack" (share) of thirteen hundred dollars. This was the best trick I have yet taken. I desire here to give Billy —, the Springfield detective, a little free advertising. Be consoled, Billy, with the truth I here tell you; if you had held Billy Childs you would have received the five hundred dollars reward instead of one hundred of the stolen money he paid you for allowing him to get away. He was your man, sure's you'r horn—that is, he was one of us. But you can't catch him now; it's too late and you are four hundred dollars out. I condole you, Billy. Be sharper next time, and rather more honest to your employers. They say "honesty is the best policy," and it certainly would have been in your case.

GETTING MIGHTY HOT.

There were so many of us, and we had kept up such a racket all along the line that it was getting uncomfortably warm for us about the circus tents. The managers were after us hot and heavy. Our depredations were injuring the reputation of the great moral show of Henderson & Springer, and its proprietors were exerting themselves to shake us off. It was uphill work to them, however, for they couldn't spot us. They may have had, and probably did have, their suspicions,

but they couldn't get any evidence to convict us, so had to make the most of the situation. You see there were "wire-workers" (expert pickpockets), "Moll-buzzers" (pickpockets who operate only upon women), "cracksmen" (burglars), and "gophers" (safe-blowers), almost a legion of dare-devils. I remained with this circus until it reached Carrollton, Ill., when I met a "dead tumble" (square detection), got a chase and had to change base on the double-quick. I picked a man's pocket and got thirty-seven dollars; but the "bloat" (man) caught me at it and I narrowly escaped arrest by running away, thus jumping my party, and closing my engagement with Henderson & Springer's great circus and menagerie. I now had but the thirty-seven dollars, the last trick taken, which I didn't have time to whack up with my pals. The thirteen hundred, with the other hundreds I had subsequently captured, had all been spent in gambling and otherwise fooled away.

BUT I BROKE FOR CHICAGO.

There I hoped to retrieve my fallen fortunes. Arriving in the city on the lakeside among the first objects which met my gaze were posters announcing the coming in a few days of Howe's Circus. From experience with the other I had ascertained that it paid to travel with that kind of cattle, and I therefore concluded to await the advent of Mr. Howe's concern and go out with it. While waiting I made Fitzsimon's saloon, a very "crooked place" on Clark street, my headquarters, occasionally doing a very profitable job of wire-pulling or sneaking. At last the show came, and with it a score of worthies, among whom I may mention Billy Childs, who had bought off Mr. Detective——— so cheaply, a fellow they called "English George" and another nicknamed "Beauty Hughes." This last gentleman had emerged from some kind of a melee with half his nose cut away, and this disfiguration suggested the name by which he was known

in the fraternity of thieves. I had become acquainted with two other notorious characters during my short stay in Chicago—Kate Gorman, alias "Red-headed Kate," and Dan Gorman, her man. I went into business with Kate and Dan. The former is, or was, a very skillful moll-buzzer, well known to the police at Chicago and the fraternity at large. She used to pick pockets at sight, her particular field of operation being among ladies inside the tents, while Dan and I skir-mished outside. We were operating together during the Great Fire of October, 1871. But we couldn't do much. There was plenty of opportunity to steal, and plenty of plunder, but facilities for shipping away were decidedly mixed. I worked successfully with Howe's Circus, making lots of money and spending just as much, until we reached Detroit, Michigan. We then crossed into Canada. Among other places visited was Chatham, where Billy Childs "croaked a bloat" (killed a man). We continued to work along with the show until it reached London, Canada, where my party and myself left it and went to Toronto. Soon after this I started for New York. I didn't do any business after leaving London. When I reached New York I had four hundred dollars, and with it went to No. 614 Broadway, next door to Reddy the Blacksmith's, and lost three hundred of it at faro. This disgusted me, and I made up my mind not to "go on the draft" (follow my profession) any more. After hanging about the streets of New York I found myself absolutely penniless—money all gone and no credit. I went to some of the boys and gave them a "stiff" for some "sugar"—that is, told them my condition and asked for help. Eight of them, boys and girls, threw in five dollars each, making me a purse of forty dollars. With this in my pocket I bade good-bye to New York and started for Indianapolis, where my mother and sister still resided.

BACK IN INDIANA.

Going into Indianapolis I "worked a bloat" (picked a man's pocket) on the train, getting a watch and chain, which

I put in a "hock" (pawn shop) for fifteen dollars. After remaining at home about a week I became again restless, and unhappy. Sighed all the time for the risks and excitement attending the checkered life I had been leading. Brother and I then went to Terre Haute, where we picked a gentleman's pocket and both got collared. We had been in the Vigo county jail about three weeks, when I wrote to mother, acquainting her of our whereabouts, of which up to that time she knew nothing subsequent to our leaving Indianapolis. She at once came and bailed us out, furnishing surety to the amount of five hundred dollars each. At the trial, which came on some time after, we were sentenced to one hour's confinement in jail and to pay one cent each. Luck again. Came back to the Hoosier capital, where I tapped one more till, that of Mrs. Kramer, who kept a butcher shop on Ft. Wayne avenue. I got twenty-two dollars, but was detected and jailed. My affectionate old mother again interceded with the judge and prosecuting attorney. The result was that I was released on condition that we would move out of the State of Indiana. To this mother consented and I was turned out of jail. Instead of going home, as mother expected I would do, of course, I ran away immediately and came back to New York, and as soon as mother could arrange her affairs, she, too, removed to New York. Poor old lady, her boys led her an uneasy life. She was perpetually in hot water.

A SNIFF OF SEA BREEZES.

About this time occurred another little episode in my life which perhaps is worth mentioning. We had scarcely got settled again before I was in trouble, as usual. One Sunday I snatched a pocket book from the hands of a gentleman at the corner of Eighth street and Second avenue, and run. People in vast numbers were going home from the Tenth street church. A "fly" lit on me and I was "collared." I was sent from the Essex Market police court to the Tombs,

where I remained in the boy's prison two weeks, awaiting, as I then supposed, transportation to Blackwell's Island. But in this I was mistaken, for another effort to reform me was to be made. They took me to Hart's Island, where I remained another two weeks. It was while here that I learned I was to be taught the science and art of navigation. The School Ship Mercury all this time was expected to arrive hourly from a sea voyage. While at Hart's Island they abused me shamefully. I got lots of clubbing and not half enough to eat. The Mercury arrived and I was sent on board, perfectly willing to go to the devil or anywhere else to get off that hell of an island. On shipboard at first I had an easy time comparatively, there being little to do and of course more or less fun among the boys. About the only unpleasant thing was the watch at night, which was rather lonely work. We were treated well and kindly, but at the same time few of us were by nature water-dogs. Water wasn't our elements, being landmen born and bred, and we sighed for shore. Of course there were countless efforts to leave the ship, but as she always lay between the islands of the harbor and never approached the pier, the thing was not so easy to accomplish.

ATTEMPTED ESCAPE.

One night, after having matured our plans, three of us jumped overboard, intending to swim to Green's Island, a quarter of a mile from the ship, and take our chances of getting back into the city. We had swam within a few rods of the shore, when one of the other boys ran afoul of a drift of seaweed. This frightened the fellow so that he set up a howl like a Comanche Indian in a death struggle with forty thousand wolves. And this was the death knell of our hopes, for a moment after we saw boats putting out from the ship. They captured the three and took us back to the ship. For this offense we were put down in the stocks and fed on "salt

wash" (pickled beef) and "hard tack." We were kept there until Commissioner Breman came on board, two weeks later, and reported us. He talked to us like a preacher, giving us, I suppose, most excellent counsel. He told us that if we would be good boys, attend to our duty, and not again attempt to escape, at the end of the first voyage we could be released. He very naturally and properly concluded that we had a repugnance to becoming sailors. We lay there six weeks longer, during which preparations were in progress for an extended voyage to the West Indies.

ANOTHER ATTEMPT AT ESCAPE.

I made no other attempt at escape until the day we started out to sea. The steamer Minnehonick and tugboat Hope were towing us out of the harbor. About half a mile away I saw a schooner hove to, and determined to make one more effort for liberty. A second time I jumped overboard and struck out vigorously for the schooner. By reason of the confusion attending the departure of the Mercury I was not missed. But in an evil moment Captain Somers' eye caught sight of an object in the water. At first he fancied it a sportive porpoise, but, bad luck to him, his glass told him it was a boy swimming for life and liberty. Instead of going on about his business, as I think he should have done, he stopped the ship, lowered a cutter and sent back after me. There was then nearly a mile between us, but I knew, of course, escape was out of the question. They picked me up, carried me on board, and put me again in the stocks, where I remained five weary weeks.

OFF FOR THE WEST INDIES.

There were about two hundred and sixty boys on board the ship, each known by number, mine being No. 158. That last jump was disastrous. After being in the stocks five

weeks they released me, and I hoped for pleasanter times during the remainder of the voyage. But 'twas "not for Joe." Instead of allowing me to go on deck, as the other boys did, they kept me between decks during the entire voyage, which lasted six months. Only twice during that time was I on deck—once at Garabaldi and again at St. Thomas. In this predicament my education must have been somewhat neglected, and it is just as well, as I should never have profited by it. The Mercury cruised around among the West India Islands for a long time, taking things very leisurely. Occasionally distinguished visitors would come aboard, when the boys would be put through their drill, that the officers might show their handiwork. It was on one of these occasions that I was allowed to come above. I thought then they had concluded I had been sufficiently punished, and would let me have the liberty granted the other boys. The reader will imagine my feelings, when told an hour after, "boy, you'll have to go below again." At the end of about five months, which seemed as many years to me, the Mercury put her stern toward the islands and started homeward. Nothing of importance happened from this time on until we reached the harbor of Norfolk, Va.

LOOKOUT OVERBOARD—SUCCESSFUL THIS TIME.

Near the port of Norfolk the lookout, or pilot, fell overboard, which resulted in running the ship into a sandbar, upon which she careened over upon her side, making the institution, as a tenement, uninhabitable, and rendering disembarkation necessary. We were all taken ashore by means of ropes stretched from ship to shore. The boys were marched to a large warehouse in Norfolk, engaged for prison purposes, into which they were stowed. Even this change was welcome to me, as it relieved me from the sight of those everlasting decks. I was not satisfied with the quarters, though, and at once set about devising means to escape. It

didn't take long to accomplish this. We had been there but a short time when I discovered it possible to slide down the ropes of an elevator which ran up into our quarters, and thus get clear of the building. I took a fellow-prisoner named Red Massett into my confidence. We watched an opportunity and skedaddled. Once free it became necessary to change our semi-sailor dress for a disguise of some kind, in order to effectually elude pursuit. This was done by going to the barracks and stealing from the soldiers each an old pair of pants, a woolen shirt, and a cap. We would gladly have paid for these; but neither of us had a cent. We needed them, and took them. Of course we were comical looking cusses in these old rigs, but who cared! The disguise was perfect. We boarded a freight train and managed to dead-beat our way to Baltimore, from which city we got aboard a peach train for New York—still dead-beats. By the time the Metropolis was reached Red and myself were sick as dogs, from eating so many peaches, and mighty little of anything else. But then I was again on familiar ground. That night I tapped a till of thirty dollars, and the next morning purchased a nobby suit of clothes at a high-toned Baxter street establishment, and Ephraim was himself again. My marine experience had been neither pleasant nor profitable, and I have never quite forgiven my mother for instigating the trip.

ON THE DRAFT AGAIN.

After remaining in New York a couple of weeks I started West again. The first "trick" taken on this trip was a bolt of cloth from a store in Buffalo, New York, which went into a "fence." Buffalo is a bad place for our business. They have too many "cops" (policemen) there, making it extremely risky to operate there. Our boys don't like the place, and though they go there occasionally, seldom ever make a haul. I didn't stay there long, but went to Dunkirk, where I cracked a "crib" without getting a bit of "swag." Went to

Erie, and could do nothing there. Becoming reckless at so much bad luck, turned in and gave Painesville, Ohio, a terrible racket. Here I cracked a hardware store, and among other goods, carried away twenty-one Smith & Wesson revolvers. These I peddled through the country next day, selling them to the farmers for from four to six dollars each, representing to them that I was a traveling agent for a Buffalo house. From Painesville, I went to Sandusky, where I had a regular hair-raising adventure.

IN A MIGHTY TICKLISH PLACE.

I had been in Sandusky two days, during which I had "spotted a place to heave in"—in other words, found a "crib to crack." When night came I repaired to the store, found everything lovely. It required but a few minutes to throw in the back door, through which I passed, locking it after me to prevent a surprise. I had been in the building but a few minutes when I heard a noise at the front door. A minute later two men entered cautiously. I overheard one say "We had better take in the cellar first and work up." I knew then the callers were in my own line of business, but I did not know who they were; neither did they know I was there. My heart was in my mouth. I was alone, and understanding perfectly the desperate character of cracksmen when cornered, I feared to move or speak through fear of their murdering me on the spot. I couldn't open the door without a noise, and didn't dare discover myself to them for fear of mistakes which might prove serious to me. Finally I pulled off my shoes and moved toward the front door, behind the counter, hoping to discover acquaintances. I heard one say to the other, "Hand me the 'jimmy' and the 'glim' (burglars' lever and dark lantern) and you watch the house what the bloat lives in." The proprietor of the store lived near by. I had utterly failed in my efforts to discover who the intruders were, and must either make myself and

presence known to them, thereby securing part of the "sugar," or allow them, by my keeping quiet, to take it all. This latter phase of the situation was not to be suffered if it could be avoided. I worked back to the rear very carefully, got the door open and went out without any disturbance, which was almost a miracle. Knowing there would be a pal on the watch outside, I ran around the square and approached him. I told him what I had done, and what I was doing when he and his pal interrupted me. He professed innocence; said he was waiting there for a couple of girls who had promised to meet him, and didn't know there was anybody in the store. I tried to convince him that I was all right, but failing, left him and went again to the rear, where I got my bag of burglar's tools and exhibited them to him. This settled the matter, and we went in, finishing the job in a jiffy. The trick was a fair one, in point of value, consisting of silks, laces, and costly dress goods, not to mention thirty-five dollars in "sugar" I had extracted from a drawer while behind the counter in my stockings. I never whacked up on this "sugar," as it came into my possession before the partnership was entered into. Persons not familiar with the careless manner in which burglars sometimes handle their side-arms can not realize the risk I run of having the top of my head shot off if those fellows had discovered me in there ahead of them. I soon learned that they were Charley Beasley and a fellow called "Big Fist," both of whom I had heard of but never seen before.

SHANDY MAGUIRE'S, CHICAGO.

The stuff captured at Sandusky was shipped by Express next morning to "Wm Maguire, La Salle street, Chicago, Ill." "Shandy," as Billy Maguire was better known, kept a "crooked place," or "fence," on the street here mentioned, where he was doing a bully business. We followed the goods without delay, and sold them to Shandy. They were richly worth seven hundred dollars, but he paid us only about

half that amount. The transaction was little more than completed, when in walked the "fly-cops" (detectives) and gobbled up the goods. Details of the robbery had been telegraphed ahead of us, and the authorities knew pretty well where to make inquiries. Shandy, of course, lost every dollar he had paid us, and was willing to get out of trouble at that; but he was mad though. We had left his place before the cops came, so knew nothing of the seizure until next day. I had been looking about the city and managed to gather in a handsome gold watch and chain, a pair of lady's bracelets and a necklace. These I took to Shandy to sell; but as soon as I came into his ranch he was going to throw me out immediately. And then it was I first learned of his loss. I left the madman and disposed of the truck to "Chicago Lize" for a "century" (one hundred dollars.)

OUT IN THIS COLD WORLD.

While at Chicago word came that a friend of mine, Charley Williams, alias "Red Foxey," had been arrested at Laporte, Ind. It is a true saying that there is honor among thieves. Here was a pal in trouble and my soul yearned to do something for him. I took the next train for Laporte, saw Charley, but couldn't do anything toward getting him out, so dropped him twenty-five dollars, and took a Peru railroad train for Indianapolis. At the depot in that city I relieved a gentleman of a watch and chain, which I forgot to give back to him. Soon after this I went to Louisville, taking the watch with me. The second day after arriving a fire occurred, during which I entered a room while the occupant was out to the fire, and made seventy dollars. I stayed there in Louisville two weeks waiting for the fair, doing nothing. During the fair I worked alone picking pockets and did well each day. After the fair I went to Cincinnati, but didn't work any there. Repaired to Springfield, O., where I worked a place and got some swag, but had to throw

it away to avoid getting "pinched" (arrested). I then returned to Cincinnati and went from there to Xenia, O., where I worked a private house and I got a hundred dollars in "sugar" and a lot of other stuff. Concluded to go to Cleveland, and have a little fun, and soon after was run in as a suspicious character known to the police. Here I had my first "mug" (photograph) taken, and I suppose it is still exhibited as a precious work of art in the Rogue's Gallery of that city. I had done nothing, but they arrested me as a "vag" (vagabond) holding me three or four days. At the trial they found I had sixty or seventy dollars in money about me, so gave me three hours in which to get out of the city. I got. Went to Rochester and waited some time for the races, in the meantime getting in several healthy "tricks." For a couple of days I engineered a wheel of fortune at the races, and then gave it up as altogether too slow. Going back on the draft again I did first-rate. After the Rochester races went to Buffalo, but couldn't get in any work there, on account of the cops. Attended the Cleveland races, but "stood in the dark" through fear of being run in again. Went to Toledo and "showed up" on the first day of the races, working alone and doing well. From Toledo I followed the racers to Kalamazoo, Mich., and here I fell in with Edward Barry, alias "Tax Barry," alias "Charley Woods," one of the most noted and successful safe-blowers of this country. This man and myself have within the last twelve months blown twenty-seven safes, in New York and Pennsylvania. I understand there is now thirty-two hundred dollars in rewards offered for his apprehension, but he knows his business. Woods took to me, somehow, and wanted me to travel with him as a "kid" (boy). I accepted the situation. Between us we had, at this time, several hundred dollars. It was getting well along toward winter, and we were anxious to lay out a number of jobs for winter work. Up to this time I didn't know Woods' "racket" (branch of business), but soon ascertained that he was a "gopher" (safe-blower). He had a job laid at Binghamton, N. Y., and

proposed that we go there from Kalamazoo. We went, and in connection with another fellow, whose name I never learned, opened a safe in a large wholesale grocery store, securing something over a thousand dollars in money. We shook the third party after this job, through fear that he would "beef on us" (give us away). He was one of those fellows who show a hundred dollars in spending a nickel. He wouldn't do for us at all. In order to "shake him" we concluded to go to New York, he to purchase his ticket and ride in the front car, we to do the same and go in the rear. Instead of doing this, though, Woods and I took the next train for St. Louis.

CAGED AT LAST.

While prospecting at St. Louis we went up the river and worked a couple of towns, but got nothing worth mentioning. We then went eastward. I stopped off at Indianapolis and Woods went on. I hadn't been in the city long before an opportunity to "sneak a safe" (steal its contents without breaking it) was presented. Being in the line of my business, of course I could not do otherwise than embrace it. I did the job, securing something over one hundred and fifty dollars in "sugar." It wasn't of much benefit to me, however, for the cops smoked me out, and I was arrested, tried, convicted of grand larceny, and sentenced to three years in the penitentiary at Michigan City. This was in the last of 1872. A portion of the time of my residence there I occupied a cell with the celebrated "Hoosier Bill," a fellow who has kicked up considerable racket in his day. He's a dare-devil, and no mistake. After I had been in prison about a year my mother moved back to Indianapolis and set herself about trying to secure a pardon for her unworthy son. I was then but sixteen years old, and bad at that. She circulated a petition—got some signers; I don't know how many—and submitted it to Governor Baker, who refused

to entertain it, and the disheartened woman had to give up the job for the time being, and I to continue in the service of the State. Time ran along in its usual way until last summer, when mother circulated another petition, in which she met with much better success than before. Armed with this document, she appeared before Governor Hendricks, and eventually obtained a pardon for me. I had been in prison, at hard labor, two years and five months, having seven months more to serve when the pardon came. The fact that I had been a good boy while a convict had much to do with procuring this favor. I had been flogged but seldom, and made as little trouble to the prison authorities as any of my fellow-convicts. But the punishment was severe; for had I not been a freebooter for seven years, making this confinement terrible to endure? At the time of my release there was fifteen dollars of gate money due me, which the warden paid. With six dollars I purchased a suit of summer clothes, and took a train for Indianapolis.

FUTILE ATTEMPT AT REFORM.

Cogitating upon the subject of rewards and punishments, I arrived at the conclusion that it didn't pay to run such risks for the compensation received. I was young and could learn some trade by which a respectable living, perhaps a competence, might be obtained. Of the thousands of dollars which had become mine solely by the right of possession, not a dollar remained, all having been fooled away at the gaming table and at houses of prostitution. In the aggregate, then, a few brief hours of animal pleasure was really all I had to show for taking my life in my hand a hundred times. No, it didn't pay, and I'd quit the business. Friends who cared for my welfare did all they could to encourage me to keep this resolution to reform; but, alas, the word "convict" was burned into my forehead and heart. At the end of a couple of weeks the old demon of restlessness came upon me, and I concluded to visit my sister, who had married and was settled

at St. Louis. While there I fell in with some of my old associates in sin, and was prevailed upon to undertake a little job, which resulted in my being compelled to leave town without much preparation, to avoid getting pinched again. Returned to Indianapolis, and soon after took it into my head to revisit old chums in New York city.

I TURN UP A TRUMP.

Somehow I gravitated towards Buffalo; or rather, stopped off there, though what could have been the inducement I never could imagine, for I had no uncommon love for the place, and had no expectation of meeting any one there. 'Twas in the afternoon. I was sauntering along leisurely on Canal street, when I heard some one cry out:

"Hello, Kid!"

The voice sounded familiar. I looked up and around, across the street, and everywhere, but failed to see any person whom I thought would address me thus familiarly. Finally came to the conclusion that it must be some other "Kid" who was hailed by a friend, and went on with my walk, forgetting the affair, in a minute or two. I had gone perhaps a square when the same voice said:

"Hell, Kid, don't you know me? Are you putting on scollops?"

I looked up, when thus emphatically and familiarly addressed. There was no mistake this time; for before me stood Charley Woods, my old pal, whom I had parted with at Indianapolis two years and seven months previously.

"Well, yes, I think I do know you, Woo!"

"Tut, tut, boy! strangers call me Brown. That's the name I go by on the street nowadays."

"All right, Brown, how are you, any way?"

"Physically, Kid, never was better; but you see I had a little tussle down the road here with a gopher. I left it a corpse, with 'flies' just swarming about it. I don't want to

come in contact with those flies, and for the present am haunting dark places. You understand?"

"Perfectly."

"Got any sugar, kid?"

"Not more than I can carry comfortably."

"Well, never mind. I've got just dead loads of it. Let's step into this saloon and have a talk."

We did step in, retired to a quiet corner and spent an hour or more in talking over old times and adventures. Each was somewhat astonished to meet the other, for he knew I had an urgent engagement of three years duration in Indiana and that my time was not yet up; and I had heard he was in limbo for ten years, consequently Woods was the last man in the world I had expected to meet in Buffalo. Well, the outcome of that conversation was an arrangement, an agreement rather, by which he and I were to again take to the jimmy and glim as pals. He had spotted several gophers in different sections of New York State, and we would dig them up together. I do not intend to follow our meanderings from that time to the date of my arrest in June last, for they were many and very crooked at times. Besides, several of the most stirring scenes in which Woods and I played interesting parts are detailed further along, some of which my readers, if they peruse them, may become somewhat interested in. My advice would be for you to glance over them, because possibly you may have, upon a time, had a safe blown open; perhaps 'twas your father's store, bank or office, which was robbed; or you may perchance be acquainted with some of the victims mentioned. There may be long-sought clues in some of the pages that follow.

NEARING THE END.

Enough has now been written to give the reader a pretty clear idea of the kind of life those of my profession lead—a life varied enough, God knows, and full of peril to body and soul. The gradations of crime through which I have passed

have here been sketched rudely, hurriedly it is true, but faithfully. I have not exaggerated or mislead the reader in a single instance. Before God every line is true to the letter. Few boys of eighteen have had such an experience. Pity there are any. But I am in the vortex and don't expect to get out of it until I get knocked in the head or some charitable judge gives me a life sentence. So far I have committed no crime which will warrant any State in demanding such endless service at my hands. What I may do will depend entirely upon circumstances. If digging for a gopher, or making a midnight invoice of merchandise not my own, some man should appear and personally object to my proceedings I might kill him. Should such a sad occurrence happen, in some States the law might kill me in five or ten minutes, while in others it might take five, ten, fifteen or fifty long years to accomplish the same end. I perfectly realize this, and sincerely hope no man may be found so foolish as to tempt me to run such a risk.

GOOD-BY, READER.

Since the notes from which this autobiography and the chapters which follow were written, were put into the writer's hands, the subject of them all has been "collared," to use his own expression, and is now in chancery, with the probability of going up for a long term. After operating almost daily and nightly for a year, with such noted desperadoes as Charley Woods, Gail Ryan, Paddy Cody, Mike Farley alias Red Tim, Charles Richmond alias Minnie Marks and many others—after "working" half a dozen States during that time, enduring countless hardships and running a thousand hazardous risks, our hero has been caught and cribbed, and in all human probability by the time this book leaves the press the fellow will be immured within prison walls. Since he has chosen, undoubtedly for personal and prudential reasons, to withhold his name from publication, together with whatever else he deemed might lead to his identification

in the foregoing and what follows, it would be unjust in me to detail this last exploit of his, even if I were acquainted with such details, which I am not. In closing this sketch of a career wonderful in many respects, it is proper for me to declare solemnly, that this is no work of fiction, something drawn, like a romance, from the depths of imagination. The truth of this assertion is attested in the fact that names of persons and streets are given, and dates, which are matters of record, and therefore may be verified by parties sufficiently interested to take the trouble.

THE WRITER.

GOPHERS IN GENERAL.

A CHAPTER ON BURGLAR-PROOF SAFES—THOSE MOST EASILY OPENED—ONE ONLY THAT CAN'T BE BLOWED—AN APPEAL TO THE PROFESSION.

As a large portion of the chapters which follow refer particularly to the subject of safe-blowing, it may not be amiss to briefly record the opinion of the profession regarding the different kinds of gophers now being manufactured in this country. Be it remembered that I here state the acknowledged views of the best men of the profession. There is as much difference in the build of safes as there is in boats. Some of them can be opened with comparative ease in five or ten minutes, while as many hours of hard work will not crack others. One kind is easily opened with wedges—as the Lilly, the Marvin, and two or three other inferior manufactures. It is never necessary to go to the trouble of drilling such as these, because a few wedges skillfully inserted will bring them every time. It pleases the midnight operator to find that he has one of these boxes before him, for he knows perfectly well that he can open it almost as easily and readily as he can a match box. The Herring and the McNeal & Urban are a degree or two more difficult to crack; but with

a fair chance any good blower will work into either of them in twenty minutes or half an hour.

There is one kind, however, which gives a fellow the blind staggers every time—one he dreads to tackle, as a physician dreads the cholera. I refer to that manufactured by the Hall Company, and “may the devil fly away wid ’em” In the course of my experience as a gopher-blower I have worked and talked with scores of the best men of the profession—those who have followed the business successfully for years—and I have yet to find the man who boasts of having ever cracked a Hall. Of course we can “sneak” one of these as easily as any other, for then the doors are open, and anybody can steal from a safe when the doors are ajar. But lock the animal up and the devil’s own blacksmith can’t open him unless furnished with the combination. Several times in my experience have we swooped down upon a Hall, and every time quit it with disgust, for no cracksman who knows his business will fool away time on this kind of a gopher. Neither do they fool around one if they know it. We never “pipe off” a Hall if we know it is a Hall. A safe is seldom blown without being first “piped,” or spotted, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the job is abandoned when the spotter finds he has a Hall to deal with. The doors are so constructed that you can’t wedge them open, for the tighter you drive the wedge the more obstinate the concern becomes. There is no other aperture through which you can insert powder, as in many of the old make, and the material of which the doors are made is so confounded hard, and has so many thicknesses of hardened iron and steel plates, that you can’t get a drill through them, no matter how hard an one it is. I know a case in Chicago where eleven drills were smashed, and even then we didn’t get at the sugar. It’s just as impossible to pick a Hall lock as it is to drill through one of their doors. I don’t charge the manufacturers of these gophers anything for this free puff, my principal object being to urge the profession to invent some plan for outwitting these men,

whom we as a class owe a grudge. It is humiliating, I admit, to be compelled to make these admissions, but nevertheless they are true as gospel. If I were a banker or merchant I'd have a safe with the word "Hall" covering its whole front, whether it was a Hall or not, for the name itself is an effectual scare-crow to the burglar.

TWO NIGHTS OF TOIL.

THE MYSTERY OF "GOPHER" HUNTING—TROUBLE ATTENDING THE WORKING UP OF A JOB—HOW 'TIS DONE—FIRST EXPERIENCE—"IT'S A FOUL, BY GOD."

Details are generally disgusting, but not always. If they deal with ideas and things new, or valuable to the reader as knowledge, they are apt to be read with interest. In narrating the few of my adventures in a business way noted in the remaining pages of this book, I have sometimes gone into details at the risk of making the narrative tedious. Burglars and safe-blowers often accomplish feats which those in ignorance of their modes pronounce wonderful—miraculous indeed. Now I, a burglar and safe-blower, have to inform the reader that we never perform miracles, since such performance, as I understand the subject, requires divine interposition. It is generally taught, I believe that God Almighty don't smile on cracksmen or their doings, to any great extent. I give Him credit for saving my life, though, more than once, and in this respect vie with my Christian brethren in faith. Theology aside, however, it is easy to explain the mystery. To become a successful criminal a man must possess three qualifications—pluck, ingenuity, and perseverance. Failing to possess any one of these to a high degree he had better embark in some other business, for he is sure to fail if he tries, and thus disgrace the profession. With these sterling qualifications properly employed he may

perform things that to the timid and unintelligent bear the semblance of miracles. This much by way of explanation; now to business.

THE SKIRMISH LINE.

Meeting Charley Woods unexpectedly one day last summer, the following conversation occurred:

"Kid, you're just the man I want. I knew your time was short, or I should have been down there and done something for you before you got out. What are you doing, and how are you fixed?"

"Doing nothing, and might be a damned sight better fixed."

"Is anybody working with you?"

"No, I'm working alone."

Kid (he always called me Kid), I want you to take a train to-night and go to Rochester. I've got a job near there. From Rochester take a train to Cayuga Lake. If you start at four o'clock this afternoon you will reach the lake by nine in the evening. As soon as you get there leave the train on the sly and lay away until it leaves the station. Then walk back quick along the track about two squares, when you will come to a watchman's shanty, at the end of a long trestle. Spot that man, and after seeing exactly what he does come back here and tell me."

I took the train as directed, paid my respects to the old watchman unobserved, and returned to Woods, at Buffalo, arriving at three o'clock the next afternoon. I saw the watchman get out a little four-wheel hand car, something like a velocipede, and start out on the trestle, soon after the train left the depot, the object being to see if the train had endangered the trestle by fire or otherwise. The structure was about a mile long, and the watchman was gone about half an hour, then entered his lodge. I waited there until after a midnight train passed, when he again went through the same operation. Then I walked out to a small station about four miles east of Cayuga, where I boarded a train and

started back to Buffalo, arriving as above stated. It was nearly four o'clock when I met Woods at the United States Hotel.

"Well, Kid, what you got to say?"

"Simply this; if you've got a job there it's a soft thing. That watchman is the only bloat up at night in the whole town. But I didn't see anything to work there, unless it is the depot or that old mill."

"Come, we'll catch the same train you had," and off we started. We caught the train, and I had not been in Buffalo an hour, when I was whirling along the same road I had traversed twenty-four hours earlier.

ON THE FIELD OF ACTION.

Arriving at Cayuga between nine and ten o'clock we walked about half a mile away from the depot and laid off in a grove to await the hour of action. After a while Woods looked at his watch and said:

"It is about midnight. We must get this job done before one o'clock. That mill is the spot."

"My God, man, the watchman's house is close to it!"

"You forget, kid, that the watchman must cross that trestle. A freight train passes at twelve-forty-five. Come on, it's time to go."

We started for the mill, reaching it at a quarter past twelve. Three minutes later a window of the mill office had been thrown open and both of us were inside. The light of a dark lantern was thrown on the safe. Woods seized a drill and went to work to make a hole in the door. I, all this time, was in mortal terror through fear that the watchman, whose booth stood only a few rods from where we were at work, would hear the racket and give the alarm. The first drill broke, rendering it necessary to begin anew in a different place. The second one did its work in short order.

"Get out your powder and hose. Give me your knife till I fill her up. Don't need much powder, for this gopher is a 'Marvin.'"

Woods took the powder and knife. People sometimes wonder how blowers introduce powder into a safe, which is a very simple process indeed. In the first place a quantity of powder is poured out of its receptacle into the operator's hand, or what is better, upon a piece of pasteboard, or a chip. The hand, pasteboard or chip is then held up to the hole, which is a small aperture, and with a knife or a stick the powder is poked in until enough has been introduced to make sure work. In this manner Woods soon "filled her up" with about four ounces.

"Hand me a piece of fuse about a foot and a half long and then pick up the tools."

The fuse used upon such expeditions is that commonly employed in blasting rock. Woods inserted the piece I had cut, and said:

"Put the kit back in the bag. Give me the 'darkey' (lantern) a minute," and he carefully examined his work. Finding it satisfactory:

"Got all the tools?"

"Yes."

"Douse the glim. Now let's 'sherry' till the train comes."

The light was turned off, and we climbed out of the window, having been inside not to exceed twenty minutes. After getting behind the mill, out of sight, and yet in sight of the watchman's tenement, Woods opened a conversation with:

"Kid, I'm working on chances here. If there's a 'tumble' you'll have to look out for yourself, because I shan't be with you. Here's a 'pop' (revolver.) If it's necessary, use it."

"But what are you going to do?"

"I'm going to follow that bloat out on the bridge. I shall go about a quarter of the way across, and if he attempts to come back on you I'll put him out of the way. At the proper time I'll strike a match and hold it for a second under the trestle. As soon as you see the signal jump in through the window, fire the fuse, and get out again as quick as God will let you. When she blows you get away under that other

bridge over there and wait till I come. Look sharp to the signal, boy!"

"All right! There comes your train."

Just then the sound of a locomotive whistle startled the air, coming in from the west. The train reached the trestle, which is stretched across Cayuga lake, sounded the usual warning, and snorted on across. The watchman yanked out his hand car and followed up the train, while Woods started out to shadow the watchman. Just before leaving me he said:

"If you get a tumble don't forget to use your gun, but only in case you are cornered," and with this parting injunction Woods started for the trestle.

"THERE SHE BLOWS."

It was probably ten minutes before I saw the light under the bridge, though it seemed to me at least three times that number. Woods told me afterwards that he struck half a dozen matches, waiting each time for the blast, but I saw only one light. The minutes I waited breathlessly were very long ones. This was really my first actual experience in gopher-blowing, which naturally made me somewhat apprehensive. A cold sweat stood upon my forehead. I was uncomfortable. But as at that stage of the game a retreat was out of the question, I could not do otherwise than act according to my pal's instructions, knowing that treachery to Woods meant death sooner or later. I awaited the signal, and when it came jumped through the window into the office, struck a match, applied it to the fuse and sprung out through the window again. In about ten seconds there was a flash and an explosion of gunpowder. I ran under the canal bridge and waited for Woods, expecting every minute that the town would be raised the next, and be after us. Shortly after the report Woods came to my hiding place, with a "pop" (revolver) in his hand, anxious but not excited. I was glad to see him.

"Now come, let's do this thing quiet," said he a moment after arriving.

We went back to the safe; found the door hinges smashed; removed the door and proceeded to "gut" the gopher. Among the first things found was a tin box, which looked encouraging.

"Give me the jimmy, this damned box is 'sloughed' (locked). Light that darkey."

With the jimmy he tore the box from its mooring, then "frisked" the books, which means that he looked carefully through them for bonds, as he had previously found such swag placed between the leaves of account books for safer keeping.

"Put up the tools, kid, and douse the glim. You take the box and I'll carry the bag. Now, let's go.

We walked about a quarter of a mile when Woods took the jimmy and cracked the box. We found in it a "slang leather" (large pocket-book) but no "sugar"—nothing but a lot of worthless papers.

"It's a foul, by God," says Woods, "but I've got a job at Canandagua. We'll go there."

"Woods, I'm disgusted and want to quit. Here I've been up two nights, spent some 'sugar,' been scared like the devil, and not a cent to show for it. We might strike a dozen gophers and get nothing. I want to quit. The business don't quite agree with me."

"Kid, where's your pluck? Want to give it up with one trial? Thought you had stuff in you! What if this is a foul?"

"Yes, but the next may be, and the next."

"We might dig a dozen right along now and not strike a foul. Here's a hundred dollars, take it and come along."

It was about two o'clock in the morning when we started on foot toward Canandagua. The job just completed had been admirably worked up and successfully carried out, but it hadn't paid—was a waste of powder. Besides, considerable wear and tear had been expended. All things considered, I

was sick, and it was a lucky (?) thing that Woods administered the medicine he did. The hundred dollars in greenbacks had settled my boyish stomach, and we set out for Canandagua.

A MIDDAY BANK ROBBERY.

HOW THE BANK OF CANANDAGUA, NEW YORK, WAS ROBBED OF TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS, BY CRUSHING THE FACE OF THE CASHIER.

It was necessary for us to go to Rochester for gunpowder. Having secured this necessary aid, we arrived at Canandagua at about three o'clock in the afternoon succeeding the "blow" at Cayuga lake. We went to a hotel and registered false names, of course. Being transits, and having no visible baggage, we paid for supper and lodging in advance. This done, Woods whispered:

"Kid, you take to our room until I come back. I want to go and look at this job, and won't be back before six o'clock."

He hadn't been gone more than half an hour when he came rushing into the room:

"Boy, take that bag and sink it in the lake. There's been a 'jug beat' up here of ten thousand 'cases,' and we're put down for it."

There was a slight tendency on the part of my hair to assume the perpendicular, but I grabbed the bag of tools from under the head of our bed, concealed it about my person, and carelessly sauntered out toward the lake. It wasn't long before I had the satisfaction of knowing that they would have to search a long time if they ever found the irons. We took the next train, which happened to be going to Auburn, glad enough to get out of Canandagua. On the road Woods told me what was the matter, as he had picked the circumstances up along the street. Between

twelve and one o'clock on the day we arrived in Canandagua two men and a boy had entered a bank. The cashier was the only occupant of the premises. These men represented to him that they had several thousand dollars in gold which they desired to exchange for currency. They produced ten or fifteen pieces, telling the cashier the remainder was at their hotel room, as they didn't feel quite safe in carrying it about. The banker, it seems, fancied he smelt a rat, and was engaged at the counter in examining the pieces, which, in truth, were bogus. While engaged in the examination, one of the men suddenly passed both his hands behind the cashier's head and in an instant drew his head forcibly down upon the counter. The attack was so unexpected, and the thump so forcible, that the fellow never grunted. The other man sprang over the counter, gagged and bound the unfortunate man of money in less than no time. As the man mounted the counter the boy found his way to the safe behind the counter, the door of which was not locked, seized handfull of greenbacks, then scampered out, passing the money to the men. The whole transaction had not occupied more than five minutes; no noise had been made, nor the sneaks molested, but a bank had been robbed at midday of ten thousand dollars, or thereabouts. I know that neither Woods nor myself knew anything about this transaction, and to this time I have never learned who the robbers were.

AT SALAMANCA.

SPOTTING A GOPHER—A WILDWOOD TOILET—HOW BURGLARS' AND SAFE-BLOWERS' TOOLS ARE OBTAINED—A MODEL BANKER.

Nothing was done at Auburn, nor Syracuse, although Woods and I both stopped there a short time and then went to Salamanca, N. Y. We had then but two dollars and

seventy-five cents between us, yet didn't intend to work there. After supper we went out on the street. Passing a large general merchandise store Woods told me to go in and get some cigars. I went in, got the cigars, giving the clerk a dollar bill to change. In making the change the fool displayed a till well stocked with currency, of which I made a mental note. On rejoining Woods I said to him:

"Woods can you find out whether any one 'kips' (sleeps) in that back room?"

"Of course I can, why?"

"Because, if there is no one 'kipping' there then there is sugar for us, for I saw it myself."

"How much do you think there is?"

"Two hundred dollars at least."

"Good enough. I'll see about it."

We moved up the first street corner, when Woods turned about and walked back toward the store, I remaining in the neighborhood of the corner. He was gone but a few minutes when he returned.

"Well, how did you find things?"

"Bully. The coast is clear."

"But how did you find out so easily?"

"Easy enough. I was a business man and a stranger hereabouts. As I was about passing that store it suddenly occurred to me that I had use just then for a small though private apartment. I very naturally hurried into the store and asked to be directed to a water closet. The bloat handed me a key and pointed toward the back way. Do you discover now how it was done, my boy?"

"Yes, I comprehend. What's to be done next?"

"You go somewhere and get a razor and a pair of scissors. Pay for them, remember, then we'll go out in the bush and I'll tell you what to do with them."

I procured the articles mentioned and we repaired to a friendly grove in the suburbs of the city.

"Go to that house out there, beg a piece of soap and bring it here."

I did so.

A WILDWOOD TOILET.

"Now take these scissors and trim my whiskers just as close as you can without pinching, and I'll finish the job with the razor."

He did finish it, and when done his devoted mother would not have recognized her son. It was then about nine o'clock in the evening. It should be stated here that at Auburn we had replaced the tools sunk at Canandagua. The drills and dark lantern there was no difficulty in procuring, but you can't buy jimmies at hardware stores. Woods had a way of getting them, though, in such a manner that he was sure to be suited. He would buy a piece of eight-sided steel about an inch thick and eighteen or twenty inches in length. Then he would go to a blacksmith and pay a dollar for the privilege of making a "box-opener;" on these occasions he would be a merchant who had worked at blacksmithing earlier in life; his clerk had just broken his only box-opener, which he desired to replace without unnecessary delay. With the forge and hammer he'd make a tool that could always be depended upon. The toilet completed, Woods says:

"Now Kid, you go down opposite the store and watch the bloat 'slough up' (close up) his place, then follow him home or wherever he goes. If he goes into a private house which you think is his home watch until you are satisfied he is in his bed."

"Where shall we meet?"

"Near the store."

I went and established a point of observation on the opposite side of the street; saw the clerk or proprietor, whichever he was, lock the store and leave the premises. I followed him to a drug store, where he talked some time, and then went away. I shadowed him into a dwelling house, hovering around the same about an hour to make sure that he lived there, and then made tracks back to the store. Woods was on the lookout for me. It was then about eleven o'clock at

night. We went to the place and looked at it. Woods threw in the front door while I walked around a minute to see if anybody was "piping" (watching) us. We then went in and looked at the gopher.

"Kid, this is Salamanca and the safe is a Salamanca. The bloat won't have to send far for an agent to come here in the morning and fix it, will he? Out with the tools."

"It's no use, she's got a key-hole."

This saved us the trouble of drilling a hole in her. We filled her up with powder.

HOW 'TIS DONE.

"When you strike a gopher like this, Kid, if you go by yourself, I'll show you how to fix her."

He then inserted the fuse, and we proceeded to plug up the key-hole with chewed paper, packing it in as solid as wood, almost. This done, we fired the fuse and stepped around to the sides of the safe. A few seconds later she exploded, blowing the door open. I saw a tin-box open with money in it, and made a grab for it. Woods looked at me and very quietly said:

"Who's a doing this work?"

I said nothing. He opened the drawers and put their contents in his pockets. On "frisking" the bottom of the gopher we found two gold watches and a gold chain, which were appropriated. We left the safe as it was, went out and walked about half a mile, when we lit the "darkey" and commenced counting the "sugar." Woods counted it over once, and I saw there was over five hundred dollars. Without announcing the result he remarked:

"It's too close here; let's get further off," and he put the money back in his pocket. This didn't seem fair dealing, but I said nothing. A little while after a recount was made, when he informed me that there was three hundred and forty dollars. Counting off one hundred and seventy dollars, he handed them to me, and I knew he was "holing" (cheating)

me—really robbing a robber. But I made no complaint. We walked eastward that night about twenty-one miles, arriving at a small station, where I took a train for New York, leaving my companion in crime behind. I didn't think Woods had used me well. About a week later he came to New York and enquired for me of Reddy the Blacksmith, who sent him to Howard's faro bank in Eighth street, where he found me moneyless. I was half angry, and twitted him of cheating me at Salamanca. He replied by saying:

"You were in too big a hurry. I didn't want to give it all to you for you'd run off and spend it foolishly."

"What business is that to you? Didn't I do my part, and wasn't I fairly entitled to half of that swag!"

"Yes, you did, and here's the balance of it. I only acted as your banker, you see."

He then drew from an inside pocket a roll of greenbacks, which he said amounted to two hundred and eighty dollars, and counted out one hundred and forty, handing the same to me. There was then six hundred and twenty dollars in "sugar" secured by the adventure. I wanted to know what had become of the gold watches and chain, but concluded it would be rather small business, so made no reference to them. This affair occurred in August of last year (1874). Woods and I remained in New York a few days, and then again went off together.

A ROUGH ENCOUNTER.

SURPRISED WHILE CRACKING A SAFE AT MOHAWK, NEW YORK—A PERILOUS RETREAT—A SHERIFF SHOT WHILE SWIMMING AFTER US—FINAL ESCAPE—WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

Woods had spotted this place months before, and it was now October, 1874. The establishment was a large, handsome store at Mohawk, New York, from which we anticipated

something generous. Arriving in the town, Woods assumed command, as usual.

"Kid, go and 'pipe it off,' and see if anybody 'kips' there."

I made the reconnoiter and reported everything all right. It was now ten o'clock.

"Now, let's get to business," says Woods.

"Woods, its risky going into that building so early in the night. The people are not all in bed yet, and besides, I've seen a man I believe to be a guard or night watchman of the town."

"Oh, pshaw, Kid, you're afraid. There's no danger; besides I've got a job out here at Illion, four miles away, that we can work to-night also, and then skip the region."

"Well, you're the oldest and I'm a passenger. Go ahead if you think best."

We went in to the safe and fixed for blowing her open. By eleven o'clock the fuse was lighted. The explosion followed, as a matter of course, we remaining near the safe. A moment later we saw through the window a man running across the street. He tried the front door, but finding it locked, ran around to the back door.

"I'm going through that show window,"

"No," says Woods, "I'll collar that bloat. He's alone."

By this time the fellow began smelling smoke, and set up an unearthly yell, of

"Fire, fire! Thieves! Murder!"

He seized a scantling and commenced battering in the door. All the time hallooing like a blarsted Mohawk, as he was.

"Its time for us to git, Kid, but I'll settle that son of a bitch first," says Woods.

Just then the door flew open and Woods fired upon the intruder. I don't think the bloat was hit; at least, he wasn't hurt. We kicked through the front show window and ran, the watchman right after us, still hallooing at the top of his voice,

"Murder, murder! Thieves! Robbers!" etc.

Several shots had been fired at us, and Woods had emptied his revolver at the pursuer, though without winging him. I had also shot several times at him with similar effect. The hubbub had raised the town. Lights were springing up all around us. Some half-dressed men were running up the street towards us. It began to get somewhat interesting. Finally Woods said, as he ran:

"I'm going to stop and see what that man means."

He did stop, and the bloat stopped also, but kept up his infernal yelping of

"Thieves, robbers, murderers!"

Woods was going to reload his revolver, but found we had left everything behind, as had Louis XIII when he left the Louvre in the French revolution of '48.

"Where's your pop, Kid?"

"Here 'tis, but there's only one shot left."

"Give it to me."

But he didn't fire, probably intending to reserve his last shot for better game. We ran as though the devil was after us, and appearances warranted this assertion, for by this time there were at least a dozen men, each with a dozen voices, after us. After running about a mile, I should think, we came to a river, reaching the bank about a block and a half ahead of our pursuers.

"Jerk your boots and coat, Kid, and swim across."

Woods did likewise, took the revolver in his mouth, and we both plunged in. Just as we landed on the opposite bank a man plunged into the river from the spot we had just left, and swam after us. I started to run.

A SHERIFF SHOT.

"Don't run, Kid."

"Yes, there's a bloat in the water."

"I'll settle that son of a bitch this time, sure."

Woods turned toward the man in the river and shouted:

(4)

"You man in the water, turn round and go back, or I'll blow the top of your head off."

"I'm Sheriff of this county," and he kept on toward our bank.

"I don't give a damn who you are. Take that."

And he fired at him. The bullet struck him in the shoulder, and he hallooed lustily for help. Woods picked up a stone and threw it at him, though without hitting him. We then ran. At the railroad near by we ran upon half a dozen Irishmen, who showed a disposition to intercept our flight.

"The first man of you who attempts to stop us will get his brains blown out," said Woods, displaying his empty revolver. They stood aside and we passed without molestation, running on down the railroad. We hurried on to Hackelmeier, a little station three or four miles from the scene of our late fiasco. Remember it was late in October and we had neither coat, hat nor boots to protect us from the frost. A freight train came along slowly and we boarded a box car, in which we rode to Utica, a distance of about twenty miles, where we left the train, forgetting to settle our fare with the conductor. Here we went to the "crooked" establishment of a woman who knew us, where we warmed and dried ourselves. In the morning she went out and purchased some clothing for us. That day we went to Hartford, connected with Utica by street car, spotted a gopher, and that night wedged a Lilly, but didn't get anything. From accounts of the Mohawk robbery, published in the newspapers, we learned that eleven hundred dollars was left uncovered when we broke through that window. It was a wonder to us that the watchman hadn't gobbled up the money, as he might easily have done, and then said we got it. They ought to have given him a leather medal. We left the Sheriff struggling in the water with a bullet in his shoulder. I never knew how he got out, or whether he did. It was a pretty close rub for us, though, and I am not apt to forget the incidents.

A PERILOUS TRIP.

CROSSING THE MONTEZUMA MARSH IN A MIDNIGHT STORM—
A TUSSEL WITH THE ELEMENTS—AN EIGHTEEN HUNDRED HAUL—HOW THE MONEY IS SQUANDERED.

In the course of nine years of crime a fellow meets with a good many rough jaunts—perilous trips, in fact—some of which impress one more lastingly than others. I had one of these in October, 1874, and am not particularly anxious to do it over again. After having been twice prevented from getting in our work at Savannah, N. Y., we resolved upon trying once more, and to this end left Syracuse at nine o'clock P. M. one dark October night. There were three of us, Woods, myself and another. This time we left the train at Port Byron, while on the other expeditions we had rode into town to regret it afterward. Between Port Byron and Savannah there is the Montezuma marsh—a damnable area of weeds, water and mire—about three-quarters of a mile wide at the point where the railroad company has slung a bridge, or trestle. Despite the fact that the company has conspicuously erected a sign with words to this effect:

"Not for Pedestrians, to whom the Company will not be Responsible for Accidents,"

we resolved to cross this trestle rather than attempt the marsh. It was one of the darkest, stormiest nights I ever saw, without a single exception. The rain dropped down upon us as a deluge falls. The wind blew a hurricane, almost pushing us off into the marsh. The lightning played about our head in an astounding manner. Each was afraid to carry the ever present jimmy, dreading that it might attract a thunder bolt and make things unpleasant for the bearer. We took turns in carrying it. The wind and rain blew out our dark lantern perhaps a thousand times—or less—and yet it was necessary to have it lighted in order to

travel at all. Add to these adverse circumstances the fact that at any moment a train of cars was liable to dash upon us and the reader will form some idea of the condition we were in. Had there been any superstition in the crowd it is probable we should have concluded that Savannah was under the protection of a kind Providence who engineered the elements to prevent a depredation. We crossed at last, however, and reconnoitered the building. It was a large one and contained a post-office, an express office and a store, all on one floor. We had walked eight miles through the storm, but the cracksman is never so fatigued that he can't work. In a jiffy the door was heaved in with a jimmy, when Woods and I went in, the other party going on the watch. The gopher was a Herring, and these Herrings are hard ones to handle, the Hall being the most difficult of all. There is a piece of tempered steel around the lock and all blowers don't know just how to drill without striking this impenetrable substance. Woods understood the business, though, for he had once bought and dissected a Herring as the medical student would a "stiff." In half an hour the fuse was adjusted, and while a train was passing on the Central road we blew her open. We found about eighteen hundred dollars in sugar, but Woods "put us in the hole" again; made out only nine hundred, which was whacked up among the three. We didn't try that trestle again, but got out of the town by wading across the marsh, at times sinking into the mud and water up to the body. It was a cold trip, all through, one I'd rather not take again. We went to Montezuma, then to Cayuga, where we took a train for New York. Remained in the city till all my money had vanished, and started out on the draft with Woods again in the latter part of November. It may be a matter of curiosity to moral readers to know how the fellows of my kind manage to fool away so much money. It's about the easiest thing in the world. We go in gangs in New York, and each gang has its principal lounging places, aside from the general resorts known to the profession all over the country. We gamble

faro and poker being the favorite games. We don't always win; in fact, oftener lose. Then there are the "girls" and they are the most important sources of expenditure of all. For example, if you take one riding in Central Park in an open barouche it costs you fifteen dollars. If you spend a night at Molly Dennison's, a panel house on Green street, you spend from twenty-five to fifty dollars. Then these girls are dreadful beggars; they're always begging for money to pay doctor bills, etc., and we often give them money. And so it goes.

A PAL IN THE TOOMBS.

HOW WE WENT FOR "SUGAR" WITH WHICH TO RESURRECT HIM—THE ROBBERY OF OLD STEINER'S TEA STORE IN SECOND STREET, NEW YORK, IN JULY, 1874.

One day I was down in Jack Wheelhouse's saloon, in a basement on avenue B, New York, looking over the Police Gazette, when a couple of pals, Pete Dullahan and Flecky, came in. They had both "done a term up the river" (Sing Sing) of ten and two years respectively.

"Pat, did you hear about Red's getting tripped?"

"No. What for?"

"Cutting the molly (woman) that give you away."

"Where is he?"

"In the Toombs. Here's a note he sent by his girl to give to you."

I read the note, which was an urgent request for me to do what I could to get a lawyer for him; to see the molly and try to "square her off" (buy her off); failing in this, to try and raise twenty-five dollars, which was to be given to Price, our old lawyer, with directions to him to see Red in the Toombs. Now, Red was a particular chum of mine. Together we had racketed around New York for years.

I thought more of him than of any other pal, and something must be done for him.

"Boys, how in hell can I send Red 'sugar' when I haven't got any myself?"

We set our heads together to raise money to help Red out of the Toombs. One says:

"I'll tell you what we'll do pals. We'll crack old Steiner's place to-night and get them coppers."

"We can't do that, for a 'sheeny' (Jew) kips in there."

"I have a plan, pals," said I. "Just before that sheeny 'sloughs up' to-night one of you fellows go and knock down that pile of boxes in front of the store and then run. Sheeny will be alone then, but will come to the front to see what the racket is. Be sure to send them whirling, so he'll have to pick them up. While he's at that me and Flecky will sneak into the store and stow away."

"Good enough."

The programme was carried out to the letter, and at ten o'clock that night Flecky and I found ourselves stowed away under the counter, in a coffee box half full of cocoanut shells and other truck, in Steiner's big tea store, at the corner of Second street and avenue B, New York city. More than that, we were locked in. We lay there quite a while before the Jew shut up, half dead with dust and a desire to laugh and sneeze. After a while the Jew locked up, leaving the key in the door, entered a back room and went to bed. We waited a while longer, that he might get sound in sleep, then crept out of the rubbish, crawled back, closed the door to the Jew's room which he had left open, then began the ransack. We searched the money drawers and scooped in about twenty dollars in shinplasters. The coppers we were in search of were found in the rear of the store in a tin tea chest, which was nearly full, and about as heavy as a man could carry comfortably. This we placed on the counter near the front door. In looking about I had noticed that the safe had a key hole.

GOING FOR BIGGER GAME.

"Flecky, I'll bet that bloat has the key to this gopher in his 'kick' (pocket). Let's get it away from him and go through the gopher. If we get that we'll have a fortune. This is Friday night and every cent taken in this week is in that gopher. To-morrow afternoon it will be taken out by the cashier and put in a bank."

"If we do that we might get a tumble and lose everything."

"I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll take this sugar out to Pete and let him 'plant' (hide) it. Then you and I will get ten cents worth of Scotch snuff at a cigar store, come back here and frisk the bloat for his 'screws' (keys). If he wakes up we'll pepper him with snuff; if he don't we'll find the key in his clothes."

"All right!"

We carried the swag out to Pete, who was piping outside, got the snuff, and returned to the store. Just as we were unlocking the front door—for we carried the key away with us—the Jew struck a light in his room, and our cake was dough. We "moped" (run away). The next day there was a big squeal around that tea store. We let the pennies lay for a week, to avoid stirring up the dust, and then took them to my room, at No. 31 Barnes street. On counting them we found there were fifty-two dollars in one and two cent pieces. To convert this stuff into money that could be used we would each take a couple of dollars and go to a pawnbroker, who would give us currency for it. In this manner the change was made in a short time and no suspicion aroused. Of this seventy-two dollars, Red received forty-five dollars—twenty-five to his attorney, Price, fifteen for himself, and five to his "girl," with instructions to the latter to visit him as often as possible. She pretending to be Red's sister, could get a pass at almost any time, while none of us could get into his place of confinement. Through her we kept up

a constant communication with our imprisoned pal. Red stood a trial, getting a year and a half on Blackwell's Island. Reflective readers will glean from this depredation the fact that clerks, porters and janitors are often charged with conniving with thieves and burglars, when in fact they are perfectly innocent. I doubt to this day whether that Jew imagines how that front door came open, for he had not only locked, but barred it inside when he retired. By investing a quarter for this book he will be able to get at the exact particulars.

ANOTHER "FOUL."

WE GO FOR A BIG PILE AND GET SHOT AT—A HASTY BUT MASTERLY RETREAT—CHLOROFORM AS A PERSUADER—AN AFFAIR AT LITTLE FALLS, NEW YORK.

"Here's a job I was going to put by for winter, but if I can trust you we'll do it now. There's a place here that has got lots of sugar—immense pile o' sugar. There are four or five in the firm, and they all deposit in this gopher instead of a bank."

"But how does the land lay?"

"As usual in such cases, a bloater kips there and we'll have to run on risky chances. But I believe there's fifty thousand in it."

"How is them risky chances?"

"Come to think of it, we can't do the job to-night, anyhow."

"Why not?"

"Because we have no chloroform. If we heave that place in and the bloater wakes up he's got the first pull (shot) at us."

"Well, how are we going to get the chloroform?"

"I'll go to Albany for it."

"What shall I do?"

"Go down to Amsterdam and stay till I come."

This conversation occurred between Woods and I at Little Falls, New York, in October last, 1874, and pretty fully "states the case," as the shysters say. The besieged premises was a large wholesale dry goods house. At the close of the conference we took a train, I stopping off at Amsterdam and he going on to Albany. He didn't return to Amsterdam until the next day. We laid over there until dark, then took a train and went down to Little Falls, where we laid away until midnight. It was a ticklish engagement, and we didn't propose to run any unnecessary risks. By going at work too early at Mohawk trouble came. It wouldn't do to repeat the error. On reconnoitering about the place, and finding everything quiet, we cut a glass in the office window, where a man was known to sleep, and was just about pushing in a large sponge saturated with chloroform when there was a noise on the street, and we walked away. After waiting a few minutes we went back, got into the yard, and was again about to put the sponge into the bloater's room, when a shot was fired at us from the corner of the building outside. Of course we jumped the yard fence and run. The assault was too close, and from an unseen assailant, too. We ran down the railroad tracks and stopped behind an unoccupied watchman's booth. A man was running after us, and not far behind. As he came up Woods jumped out, clutched the fellow's throat, and cocked his revolver.

"Oh, don't shoot me," said he.

"Hush! Do you belong to that store?"

Before the frightened fellow could give an intelligent answer I saw a crowd of men bearing down upon us.

"They're after us; run!"

Woods struck the fellow on the head with the butt of his revolver and he dropped. Without any more fooling we ran down the railroad and got away from our pursuers. That night and the following forenoon we walked to Utica, twenty-two miles. It wasn't a cheerful tramp either, for we had been shot at, had shed blood ourselves, and had no sugar to show for the trouble and risk. The path of a cracksman is not strewn with flowers all the way.

CORNERED BUT NOT CAUGHT.

FULL ACCOUNT OF A MIGHTY HARD JOB—BLOWING A GOPHER AT WYALOSIA, PA.—HOW WE SERVED A POOR OLD WATCHMAN—A DARING ADVENTURE AND NARROW ESCAPE,

"Kid, we're going over into Pennsylvania to do a job. Do you want to go along?"

"When did you ever find me backward in such expeditions?"

"We shall be off at two o'clock this afternoon."

Woods had just entered a room he and I were temporarily occupying in a hotel at Elmira, N. Y., followed by three strangers to me, when this conversation passed.

"Where are we going to?"

"Wyalosia, on the Lehigh Valley Railroad."

We left Elmira and arrived at Frenchtown at about six o'clock P. M., where we laid off till eight o'clock, getting supper at a hotel in the meantime. They put me on a train to carry the tools because they were too heavy to carry on foot, and the other four walked to Wyalosia by way of the railroad track. The distance from Frenchtown is six miles. The place is small, having perhaps twelve hundred inhabitants. I got there in a few minutes after starting, hid the tools under the depot platform, and went to a field of high grass, or hay, out back of the depot, where, according to previous arrangements, I waited until they should arrive. At about ten o'clock they came. Two of the men went and looked at the store we were to rob, came back to us and we all waited there in the grass until about midnight. In spotting the place it had been ascertained that there was an old watchman kept inside at night, and also that two young men slept immediately over the store, up stairs. The difficulty was to deal with the old man in such a manner as not to disturb the repose of the two young men, a problem which

was considered while we were waiting for the hour of action to arrive. One of the men moved to "croak" (kill) the old fellow, and Woods supported the motion; but after maturer reflection the conclusion was reached that we couldn't do that without disturbing the men overhead, a thing not desirable. The plan of decoying the old watcher out of the building was suggested and adopted. There was known to be two gophers in the store—one large and the other small—but it was not known which held the most "sugar." As the party could be divided into two gangs it was resolved to blow both of them simultaneously. All preliminaries settled, and the hour having arrived, we started for the store, taking the bag of tools on the way. In order to

HANG THE OLD MAN UP,

That is, tie him up, it was necessary to get our hands upon him first. In bringing about this desired object I was designated to play an important part. Two of the men were to place themselves on either side of the front door; then I was to rap and call the old man out upon the pretext that there was a murder going on up the street. If he asked how I knew he was in there I was to answer that in running past I saw a light in the store. The two men, one of whom was Woods, took their station, when I came running up to the door and rapped.

"Who's there? What do you want?"

"Please come out here."

"What for?"

"There's a man out here getting murdered. Come quick, sir."

"Can't help it; I musn't leave the store."

"You're a Christian!"

During this confab, the old man, who was smoking, with his lantern in front of him when I first saw him, had moved up toward the front door. I ran obliquely across the street, that he might see me leave the store. Seeing this he opened

the door, and, without a thought of danger, stepped out upon the sidewalk. He had no more than crossed the threshold when something hit him and he fell all in a heap. Woods had struck the unsuspecting old fellow with the butt of a heavy pistol, and so effectually that he fell and made no noise. They stuffed a handkerchief in his mouth and dragging the body into the store, closed and locked the door again. I was charged with guarding the inanimate form to keep it from making a noise when consciousness returned, while the others went to work on the safes.

"How is the bloat?"

"Dead, I guess."

"Fling a pail of water on him."

The old man had not moved since being carried in. I hunted around and found the water pail of the store and flung its contents in his face, at the same time removing the "wipe" (handkerchief) from his mouth. He opened his terror-stricken eyes and asked, in a feeble voice:

"Where am I?"

"Shut up, or these men will hurt you."

"Kid, you got wipe out?"

"Yes, you don't want to smother the bloat, do you?"

"Put it back, or I'll blow the top of your head off. Do you want that bloat to squeal?"

I had the wipe in one hand and a pistol in the other. Rather than lose the top of my head I replaced the handkerchief. Felt sorry for the poor old fellow. While on the watch, I heard the men swearing audibly in the rear of the store, but didn't know what was the matter. Pretty soon I heard one say:

"Here goes the last one. If this breaks will croak that old son of a bitch."

A moment later I heard a click and the last drill snapped in twain. They had broken thirteen drills in trying to get holes in the safes, and being angry felt like venting their spite upon something.

THEY PITCH HER OUT OF DOORS.

Having picked up the broken drills they all came-out where I was guarding our prisoner, sweating like troopers after a summer battle. Their hands were hard as those of a blacksmith.

"How's the bloat?"

"Kicking yet."

"We'll have to get out of town," says one.

Woods answered:

"No; our only way is to throw that small Lilly out the back door. We can't roll the large one without waking those hounds up stairs."

"We can't get even the little one out without a noise, Woods."

"Yes, we can. I'll fix it. Kid, take that bloat's coat, vest and pants off. Then take this darkey and find all the paper you can about the concern."

I did as directed, and luckily found several bundles of heavy wrapping paper. This, with the clothing, was placed on the floor from the safe to the door. The store was erected on a steep hillside, the front door being on the level of the street, while the back door was probably eighteen feet from the ground, with no stairs leading up to it. I went back to guard the old man, and the others took hold of the safe, rolled it noiselessly to the door and dumped it out. It fell in the ditch, fortunately with the front upward. Woods said to two of the men:

"You watch the gopher while I send the kid to a blacksmith shop for a sledge and something for wedges."

To the third he said:

"You come and watch the bloat while the kid is gone."

I went out and hunted up a smithy, found the things we needed and returned, having been gone probably twenty minutes. While I was gone the fellow who was watching, noticing symptoms of uneasiness, had hit the old man another

whelt on the head, and was going to throw him out of the door after the safe. Not wishing to kill him outright, we tied him and carried him around to where the gopher rested in the soft soil. Here the wipe was taken from his mouth and a gag substituted, which was drawn clear back to his ears. Meanwhile, the old man was bleeding like a stuck hog. The projecting wings of the safe were knocked off; the wedges inserted, and in twenty minutes we had her open. Got the "sugar" out, which amounted to a little less than two hundred dollars. Besides this, we found five or six one thousand dollar government bonds. These we "split" (destroyed), as they could be made of no use to us, and the money found was not sufficient compensation for the trouble we had encountered.

FLIGHT—DETECTION—ESCAPE.

We left the old man silently guarding the stranded safe. The three men, whom Woods told me were the O'Brien brothers' gopher mob, went in one direction from the town, while Woods and I took another along the railroad. Just as we were leaving town we met a man and tried our best not to be seen, but he must have spotted Woods, as the stirring events of the next few hours fully demonstrated. We went about a mile from Wyalosia and climbed up on a bluff through which the railroad had cut its way. In securing this eminence we had a decidedly rough time. The rocks were flat, loose and projecting. Often we'd slip back ten feet for an advance of five. Our hands and knees were bleeding from contact with the sharp rugged rocks. After an hour or two of hard toil we gained the haven sought, and there wasn't much time to spare, either. It was then about five o'clock in the morning. The depredation had been discovered; the old man, I suppose, had told his story, and the man we met had evidently told his. From our elevated position we could see the commotion in the town as the news spread. Pretty soon gangs of men were seen coming in our direction, much

excited and gesticulating wildly. Some of them carried guns. They swarmed along the road and filled up the cut through the bluff. We were anxious through fear that some one had seen us climb the bluff. They passed on, however, and it didn't require much attention on our part to discover the topic of their conversation. They seemed to think the thing done was an outrage. Perhaps it was. Finally night came. We had been up there all day without a mouthful to eat since supper the evening before. In the darkness we ventured out and footed it to a small station about seven miles from Wyalosia, where we bought tickets for Waverley, intending to go from there to New York, via the Erie Railroad. At ten o'clock that night we were about half way to Waverley. Woods was sitting at the forward end of the coach and I toward the rear, when I heard one of a group of four or five men standing near the rear door say:

"It's a dead sure thing. That fellow answers the description exactly."

A SURPRISE.

I saw that they looked at Woods, who was all unconscious that he was the subject of conversation between a Sheriff and four deputies not twenty feet away. These men had come in from another car. There was no wax in my ears, though my eyes were looking out of the window. They were debating as to what station they had better make the arrest.

"Better wait till we get to Atkins," said one, which settled the business. The water-closet was in the end of the car in which Woods sat. Appearing to be half asleep I got up and stumbled along to the closet. On passing Woods I managed to whisper,

"Larry, Charley! There's a tumble. Jump the train."

After having visited the closet I went back to my seat and raised the window. In ransacking the safe I had come across a bag of coin which I subsequently ascertained to

consist of about thirty dollars in silver. This I had appropriated and had in my pocket at the time the officers were talking. Taking it out I put it into my handkerchief and held the whole carelessly in my hand on the window stool, calculating, in case of a "tumble," to drop it out of the window. I saw Woods remove his revolver from an inside pocket to that of the right side of his coat, a place where he always carried it in action, shooting if necessary without removing it. He then got up and walked out on the platform. After having been gone a short time the officers went out to see what had become of him and found he was not where they expected to find him.

They searched the train, and concluding he must have jumped the train, insisted upon having the train stopped. The conductor refused, telling them that if he had jumped he was a dead man, as no man could spring from a train going thirty-five miles an hour and live. The officers concluded to wait until the first station was reached, then take a hand car and go back for the corpse. Tonawanda was the next stopping place, upon reaching which I stampeded, while the officers hurried back after the corpse of the robber. They didn't find it. On reaching the platform Woods had climbed up on the roof of the car and walked cautiously back to the sleeping car in the rear. The train was a night express, and the station an unimportant one. The train therefore stopped with the express car abreast the depot platform. As she began "slowing up" Woods jumped down from his hiding place and escaped, without the officers having obtained an inkling of his whereabouts. I went to Waverly by the next train, and arrived in New York Sunday morning. The next evening Woods came and we met again, to talk over the event.

THE END.