

CROOKS and THEIR WAYS

By AN OLD THIEF
EDWARD W. DUNLAP, alias "Split-the-Wind"

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EDITED BY J. CHALMERS DA COSTA, M. D., LL. D.

Samuel D. Gross Professor of Surgery, of the Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia.

Edward W. Dunlap came of a fine southern family and received a good education. Little more than a boy when the civil war broke out, he enlisted in the Union ranks and served with credit. Toward the close he entered the engineering service, and his career began to flourish at \$1,000 for which a protest marshal was unjustly convicted and sentenced.

(CONCLUDED FROM LAST SUNDAY)

CHAPTER XXX

Hotel Thieves and Boarding House Thieves

IN THIS business, the risk of getting caught is great, and to follow it a man must be noted for his coolness and nerve. Some men are noted for their work at night when the victim is sleeping; others, in the daytime, when the room is empty. Some labor haphazard, going into a room after room, others become guests at a hotel, where they may remain for days, waiting for a good mark. When they find him they study his habits, and go into his room at just the right time.

A common course of procedure is for one of a gang to register and become a guest at a hotel, and for the others to come in later and use his room as a base of operations from which to work and to which to go after committing a robbery.

Sometimes rooms are prepared in the daytime, so that they may be easily opened at night. The screws are taken out of the lock plate and afterward loosely reinserted, so that a mere push will open the door. In many cases the door is opened without previous preparation. If the guest has locked his door and removed the key from the lock, the lock is opened with a skeleton key. If he has locked the door and left the key in the lock, it is usually opened with a pair of key-nippers. The bolt is drawn by inserting through the keyhole a piece of wire to which is fastened a string. In a very few minutes the bolt ceases to give trouble. There are many means of obtaining access to boarding houses. A thief may come under the pretense of examining the rooms, or he may pretend to be a telephone man, a piano tuner, or some other workman. When a boarding house thief has succeeded in securing a room in a respectable house, he usually waits until a good time, and at that time cleans out the various apartments.

Old Jack Cannon used to practice a method that I believe was original with himself. He would watch the newspapers until he found, for instance, that Colonel Simons was going to the city, and would work at the fashionable boarding house of Mrs. Simons. He would then keep a careful eye to find out when he came.

Two or three weeks after that officers' departure

Long John pursued his course for many years without any serious mishap. At last, he was collared in Kentucky and sent to jail. He died in the Frankfort Penitentiary.

One of the best workers after John was Theophilus George, who was commonly called Old Theophilus. He was a workman, and nothing but a workman, and he was very persistent. He was as mean as they made them, trusted no one, spent nothing except what he was obliged to, never drank a drop of anything, and usually kept aloof from the mob; hence he was extremely unpopular. He always had plenty of money, but would not lend his nearest friend a cent, yet when he died at St. Louis, nothing was found.

A sad incident in my experience as a hotel man was the shooting to death of Jimmie Sullivan, which took place in the Gayoso House, at Memphis, Tenn. The shooting was done by the night watchman of the hotel. On the evening of this unfortunate affair, Tommie Mason of Philadelphia, registered, and Sullivan was to work out of his room. Mason, although he did not know it, was recognized by one of the guests, who tipped it off to the office. A watch was placed, and Mason and Sullivan were seen to enter the room. The room assigned to Mason was near the end of the corridor, at the extreme end of which there was a retiring room for men. Directly in front was a screen running across the corridor. About midnight Sullivan came out to graze. He went to the retiring room, but saw no one. The watchman was hidden in the room directly across from the one Sullivan had just left.

Sullivan stepped at a room a few doors away from his own, and put the key-nippers into the lock. The watchman had cautiously opened his door on a crack. Seeing Sullivan at work, he drew his pistol and fired at him. The bullet struck the thief in the left side, and being a No. 45, it inflicted a fearful wound. The report of the revolver brought out all the guests, and there was great excitement. A doctor, who was one of the guests, examined the wounded man and said that the injury was mortal. Sullivan was taken to a hospital, where he soon died. At the time of his death, he was engaged to be married to Long John's stepdaughter, and Long John was holding some \$2000 of Sullivan's money.

In less than six months after the shooting, the girl married Bob Wright, a hotel man who had worked with John for a while. I have told earlier in my memoirs how I used to work with Bob at that time. He was a crank and hard to get along with, and when he had drunk, he was a bit dangerous. He always carried a gun, and he had used it on several occasions. We gave him a wide berth when he had liquor in him—not through fear, but to avoid trouble.

In many of the big hotels, the rooms are dead easy to enter, there being only a lock and a bolt. The bolt we would usually fix in advance by removing the pin, making a bit of inch under it, and screwing it back into position. This would keep the lock from going in, and the lock would be easily beaten with the key-nippers.

During my career as a hotel thief, I beat most of the leading hotels in the country. One of the Cleveland hotels was an easy mark, and in Philadelphia, the Girard House, La Pierre (afterwards the Lafayette) were particularly easy. The Continental Hotel was very hard. It was beaten only by the morning streak, or when so crowded that mattresses were put down in the parlors.

On all the robin doors in this hotel there were double locks on the inside and one outside, and two keyholes that did not communicate. Between the two keyholes was a thin iron plate, which prevented the door from being opened from the outside when it had been locked on the inside. The bolts were absolutely useless, and neither bolt could be reached through the door. In New York, the Hotel Hotel, the Hotel de Nicolaas and the Metropolitan were all easy. In New Orleans, there were a number of smaller houses—notably the Hotel de la Ville and the Hotel de la France.

Speaking of the Continental Hotel, in Philadelphia, reminds me of a happening there that was of the most general interest here. The thief actors in the affair were General Boulanger, who was on duty about 2 P. M., a French gentleman at the Yorktown Centennial, and Bill Connolly, a noted hotel thief.

General Boulanger and a certain amount of Lafayette were the representatives of France. On returning from Yorktown, the Frenchman came to Philadelphia and registered at the hotel. A suite containing the most celebrated room in the house—Paris, La France, was assigned to them. A banquet was tendered the following day in another section of the city, and they did not return to the hotel until about 2 P. M. About an hour after this, Connolly, by some unexplained method, the door having probably been left unlocked, succeeded in entering the room. He was "frisking" a pair of pants, when he got a rank tumble and tried to run away. The nimble Frenchman was quick on his feet, and he was a great competitor. A great commotion was raised, and many of the guests came out of their rooms to learn the cause of the noise.

The full was called on the next hour, and was brought up to General Boulanger, who on duty about 2 P. M. happened, tried to shoot him. He would, perhaps, have succeeded had he not been restrained.

Connolly was taken immediately to the station house, and the next day was railroaded in a surprising manner. The grand jury was in session at that time. A French bill was introduced and assigned in court. He pleaded guilty, was sentenced to the penitentiary, and landed there in time for supper. A Philadelphia paper said that if Connolly had made an attempt to rob any one else, he would have been given him, but that the celebrity with which he was connected was the outcome of a desire to show the Frenchman how quick the money in the United States. Connolly, like most of the mob, has passed away.

Billy Jackson was by far the best educated man of the mob, and with the possible exception of J. Edgar, he was the best dressed. It was perfectly obvious to every one that he was by nature a man of culture and refinement. He was a graduate of the College, Dublin. He played every one in a hotel, from the proprietor down to the bootblack, and it was a rare thing to see him without a book in his hand. He was in a hotel by the fact that every water was being two gallons instead of one.

Jack once showed me a check over taken from a hotel in the United States. The sum was \$1000. Sixty thousand of this amount was in United States bonds, and the notes of the Bank of France and the remainder in diamonds.

The check was taken from a room in the West End Hotel, Long Branch, N. J. The owner of the property was a Frenchman, and the Frenchman, who loved Irish whiskey, had changed his suit several times a day. Jewels, Johnson had discovered, also changed his suit, and in a few days had become certain that he was in the hotel in this room. He was left very much surprised at the time, and he was very much surprised at the time, and he was very much surprised at the time.

The old gentleman bathed in the ocean daily, and because the water was so warm, he was very much surprised at the time, and he was very much surprised at the time, and he was very much surprised at the time.

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And now there happened the strangest part of this peculiar affair. The morning after Jackson had been sentenced, the jailer, as usual, went to unlock his cell, but found the door open and Jackson gone. It was absolutely impossible for him to have unlocked this door from the inside; so some unknown person had unquestionably opened it from the outside.

The big iron door that led from the jail into the yard had also been opened. The most important question was who had done this, but it went unanswered. The time of the sheriff then in office was to expire within a few days, and this caused some ugly rumors, but nothing came of them.

Jackson struck out from the jail and walked to Gloucester, across the barren pine stretch of New Jersey; and he arrived there a veritable Weary Willie. He crossed to Philadelphia, cleaned up, went immediately to Boston, secured a furnished room, and dressed in some shabby attire. He got his money, determining to make another plant, after the manner of Captain Kidd. Purchasing a trowel, he went out to the Botanical Garden and selected what seemed to be a sure spot, and one not likely to be disturbed for many years. Here he planted the bottle, which was securely wrapped up and placed in a tin box. He then returned to his room, a bit easier in his mind than when he was walking around with the stuff on him.

Jackson remained in Boston only a few days. He then raised the plant, assumed the garb of a common seaman and, with a canvas dunnage bag under his arm, and carrying a pair of sea boots, went on board a steamer bound for Liverpool. His objective point was London, where he arrived without further adventure, and at once assumed the dress and belongings of a man of means and leisure. In London he sold all the diamonds and exchanged all the paper for Bank of England notes. Then he started off on a grand tour.

In Wiesbaden, staying at the same hotel with him was an Austrian nobleman. This scion of blue blood often got drunk, and when in this agreeable condition, his valet would put him to bed and then go off to enjoy himself. Jackson, seeing that the nobleman was a dead-sure thing, and he could not resist the temptation to appropriate his property, easily adding 4000 francs and several fine stones to his already plethoric wallet. The next day, he and the Austrian nobleman met, and the latter told Jackson all about how he had been robbed the night before. Then the thief bought his supposed friend a bottle of wine, paying for it with some of the stolen money.

This he did to Jackson, who, after leading a life of luxurious ease, at last, and he could not resist the temptation to appropriate his property, easily adding 4000 francs and several fine stones to his already plethoric wallet. The next day, he and the Austrian nobleman met, and the latter told Jackson all about how he had been robbed the night before. Then the thief bought his supposed friend a bottle of wine, paying for it with some of the stolen money.

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"Seeing Sullivan at work, he drew his pistol and fired at him"



"He was surprised to see her so far from home"

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