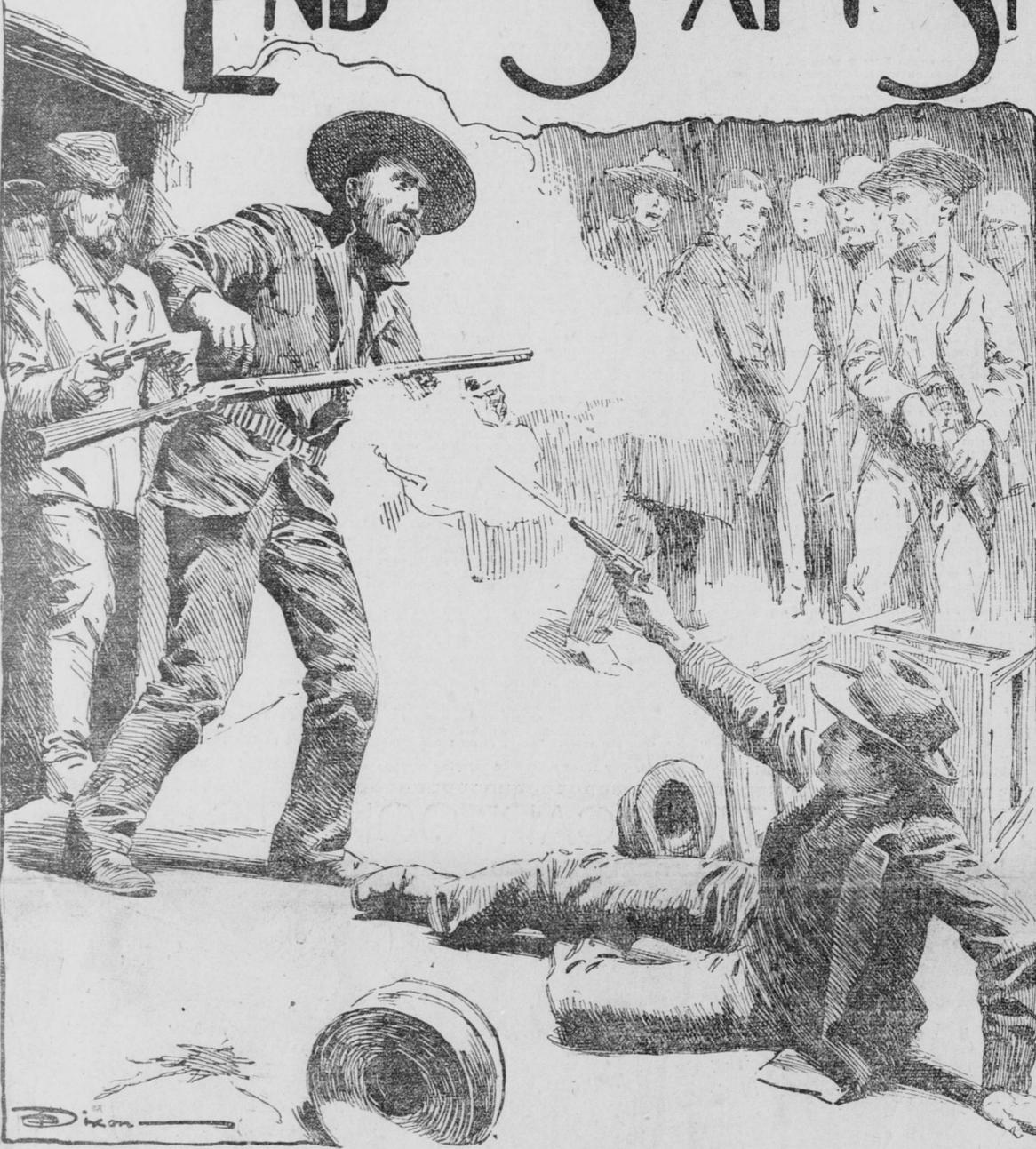


END OF "SOAPY" SMITH, BAD MAN.

"HE DIED WITH HIS BOOTS ON!"



THE KILLING OF "SOAPY" SMITH AT THE HEAD OF HIS GANG WHILE TRYING TO BREAK UP THE MEETING OF THE LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS AT SKAGUAY, ALASKA.

SKAGUAY, July 9.—The five thousand people of this place were yesterday thrown into the greatest excitement by one of the most terrible outbreaks of lawlessness in the history of the Coast.

For some time past the notorious lawless adventurer, Soapy Smith, of Alaska fame, with a band of "twenty heeled, rounders and cappers," have been running the shell and other sure thing games, and robbing the Klondikers on the trail to the Lakes. Of late they have been holding the high hand in Skaguay and terrorizing everybody.

Soapy Smith's methods were many. Among his recent operations was to have cabins fixed up for his business at different locations around town. Regular business signs over the doors deceived strangers, for members of his gang stood over all these traps. On the arrival of the passenger vessels Soapy would detail his men at the wharf to hoodwink strangers and bring them to these dens. Some of the places would ostensibly be information bureaus; others were conducted as pack train offices, and others as cut rate ticket offices for Dawson.

The office for the pack train service was the most successful, as most every one coming here has more or less pack to do. Soapy's rates for work were always a little better than those in the actual business houses.

After getting a victim's promise to carry an outfit, Soapy would ask for a deposit; just a guarantee, as he said, that the freight would not be given to any one else. When the victim would take out his wallet to make the payment some member of the gang would grab the sack from his hand. Then some one else in the gang would pretend to get indignant and swear he would not stand by and see a man robbed in that way. The whole gang would then make a rush for the thief. In the scuffle some one would knock down the victim. By the time he was straightened up the gang would be gone.

These robberies were openly practiced by day as well as by night. The gang was bold and indifferent to all law and order, and did pretty much as they pleased.

To-day the first lot of miners came in from Dawson City on their way to their homes, with their winter's clean-up of gold dust. So much dust in transit about town was too good a thing for Soapy's gang to let pass. So one of his men was detailed to cultivate the friendship of some of the returned Klondikers. This fellow readily made the acquaintance of one J. D. Stewart, and induced him to exhibit his gold dust to the gang. They had cajoled him into believing that their sole de-

sire in life was to see the appearance of real Klondike gold dust; they said they wanted to see if it differed in appearance from the dust of other mining localities.

Stewart unwittingly went to the merchant's safe, where he had deposited his clean-up on arriving in town, and returned with the bag, containing \$3,000.

The gang circled around him asking questions. Suddenly one fellow from behind reached over and grabbed the sack; another struck him a blow for trying to rob Stewart, and knocked him out of the door. The gang then began fighting among themselves, and in the scrimmage one of them made away with the sack.

This deed brought the Skaguay citizens to a realization of their position and duty in the protection of life and property.

The merchants at once called a meeting to organize a vigilance committee to order Soapy Smith and all such characters out of town.

The City Marshal is said to have stood in on the "divvy" with the gang, and would not interfere or serve papers for their arrest.

While this mass meeting of law-abiding citizens was in progress, Smith got word of it. Winchester rifle in hand, and with his followers, which he called "The Skaguay Militia," at his heels, he marched down the street to the place of meeting. Soapy was swearing as he went along that he would scatter that crowd, and teach them not to interfere in his business.

Hundreds of the terror stricken people rushed to their homes to arm themselves.

The first man Soapy met at the door of the meeting was Mr. Reid, City Surveyor. Smith struck him over the head with his rifle and then fired at him.

Reid fell to the ground wounded. He wrenched his pistol from his belt and fired two shots at Smith. Both bullets took effect and he died instantly.

Reid was dangerously wounded. Inside of ten minutes all the lights in town were turned out. Everybody thought it was going to be a fight to a finish. The law abiding people grabbed their guns and gathered in the middle of the street. They appointed a new City Marshal. Then in squads and with guns cocked they encircled the town to round up the outlaws.

An armed committee of twenty-five citizens commenced their work on the inside to take the balance of the criminals dead or alive.

When Soapy's gang saw the determination of the people they quit, and all were captured but one. He was the thief who stole Stewart's gold dust. A special squad was detailed to root him out of his hiding place. He will have hard work to escape.

The gang has promised to tell where he is and to give up the dust provid-

ing the committee will not hang him. The law and order party feels highly elated over the success of its night's work. Assurances of protection have been made to the miners and traveling public.

Soapy Smith, the dead leader of this terrorizing gang, was born at Canilla, Georgia, 48 years ago. He has a brother in Washington, D. C.

J. P. COX.

SKAGUAY, July 21.—The citizens' committee has held daily sessions since the killing of "Soapy" Smith, and up to the time the Farallon left had succeeded in ridding Skaguay of nearly all of its objectionable characters. A number of suspects are still in charge of the committee. United States Deputy Marshal Taylor has been charged with neglect of duty and attempting to extort money, and is under \$5000 bonds to appear before the Grand Jury in Sitka next November. Nine others have also been committed and taken to Sitka on the steamer.

Captain Yeatman of the United States army, with a detachment of soldiers, is in Skaguay and was contemplating putting the town under military rule, fearing that summary punishment would be administered, but they finally accepted the assurance of the committee that all persons in their charge would be given an impartial hearing. The town still remains in the control of the citizens' committee.

After the burial of "Soapy" Smith the committee took charge of his premises and effects and a search of the former resulted in the finding of the sack of dust stolen from Stewart. The sack was found in a trunk in a building at the rear of Smith's saloon. Nearly all of the \$2775 stolen was recovered. It was rumored that other evidences of foul play and robbery were found, but the committee will not make anything public until it has finished its work.

When the Farallon left everything was quiet. Saloons were closed day and night. The committee has been petitioned by saloon keepers to reopen and were willing to give a guarantee that their houses would be kept in first-class order, but their request has not yet been granted.

As to the antecedents of Soapy Smith, upon whose grave the earth of Skaguay's cemetery is yet fresh, little is generally known, and that little is not important. He first reached fame while operating in Denver, where he combined with rare skill the vocations of thief, gambler and politician. From the last he derived the pull whereby he was enabled safely to pursue the others.

At one time he was a power in the Colorado city, and no crime in which he engaged could keep him in jail for

more than a few moments. He would be arrested at midnight for a serious offense, and after an early breakfast be on the street as gay as a lark superintending a primary with a view to purifying municipal government, chatting with policemen, his air being that of condescension, or with a visitor from the country the inutility of guessing which walnut shell had a pea under it. Nothing could embarrass him. His equality of cheek has never been equalled, and this same quality on occasions became a reckless courage. His death at Skaguay was a fitting end, but tardy, very tardy.

To be truthful it becomes necessary to dispel one illusion concerning Smith. He was not an educated man. On the contrary, he was ignorant. Far from being a master of French and Spanish, he never more than half conquered plain English. He was a plausible talker, as many learned by an experience which cost them all the coin they had available when his dulcet tones wooed them to his den, but his grammar was hardly up to the gambling room average. However, had he possessed a moral nature which would have kept his talents from going awry he might have been a leader of men for wherever he happened to be there gathered about him ruffians and scoundrels who looked upon him as master and faithfully brought to him the spoil of their raids on the unwary. For these seamy chaps he was always ready to fight with pistols or to put up bail. For in his peculiar way Soapy was always true to his friends. His selection of friends was bad.

There is not a trick known to confidence men in which Soapy was not expert. He had practiced them all, had thousands, and, unless he acquired new habits in Alaska, frittered it all away. His delight in spending money was as great as his joy in stealing it to expend. Not only was he generous, but having won a large estate he invariably made straight for a faro game and, as he expressed it, blew it all in. Sometimes he was lucky, and then he would say gleefully: "Boys, I win a thousand last night off old Bell. Have a drink with me." What was not exhausted in treating the crowd, in loans to others who hadn't "win out," was sure to get to Bell's sooner or later.

In his earlier Denver days Soapy was not flush. When he did not have the means to play bank he would buy a bar of laundry soap, borrow a few twenty dollar bills and proceed to recoup. It was by this he got the name which has outlasted him. He would cut the soap into miniature squares, wrap the pieces in tissue paper, and standing on the street corner display the lot in an open satchel held on a tripod. The public would be invited to purchase Dental soap, the finest preparation for the teeth ever compounded; good also to soften the skin, polish the nails and warranted not to harm a child. Three pieces of this invaluable adjunct to the toilet could be

had for half a dollar. Soapy's keen gray eyes would scan the throng for a buyer.

At first there would be no response. Then he would take from his pocket one of the borrowed twenties, unwrap a piece of the soap, enclose it in the satchel. Sometimes he would repeat this several times, at last inviting the spectators to pick out the pieces they thought contained the bills. Of course there was no difficulty in doing this. Then cupidly would be aroused, and at the point where buyers were tumbling over each other to get to the satchel, the trick came in.

It's an old trick, but nobody ever did it so well as Soapy. The packages which should have had the money simply didn't have it. Nobody ever captured a single piece of money, and yet the crowd would not stop trying as long as the soap lasted. By this time Soapy would have enough to keep him amused at faro for a night.

But this scheme seemed to him petty, and as a rule he held himself above it. He much preferred quicker returns. It was more to his taste to work a rustic for a purse of money. He started a gambling room with every robbing device known to the craft. The games appeared as fair as other games, but they were all crooked. Nobody had a chance of winning, for cards were

They ascertained that the boast was well founded, and they kept hold of the miner. When they had him workably drunk they accused him of lying, declaring a disbelief in the allegation that he had a cent on deposit. The miner becoming indignant offered to bet that his word and his paper were good. So a wager was made and the stakes together with a check for \$5000 placed in the safe. The miner kept on drinking until he had reached the stage of being paralyzed, when he was tucked in bed. The sun was high in the heavens before he awoke, but it had not been very high before Soapy or some of his pals were at the bank. The first check presented was the one for \$5000 and it was promptly cashed. When the miner awoke he was indignant, but he gained nothing by this beyond a compromise. Soapy and the gang divided the booty.

But this man Soapy was known to be generous. He would give money to a beggar and delighted to shower it upon friends. One time he met a newspaper man on the streets of Denver. The journalist in his pursuit of his calling had frequent occasion to call the confidence man a thief, but Soapy viewed this in a strictly professional light and never manifested the slightest hard feeling.

"Hello, Dick," he remarked. "Come in and have a hat with me."

dressed carelessly, spoke quietly. It was only when there was a victim in sight that he became interesting. He had a keen but wandering eye. He was continually on the lookout lest one of his numerous dupes might be inclined to take a shot at him. But he had all the honor of the gambler, a strange quality hard to define. A thief by instinct and training, his I O U was good for its face. If he borrowed \$100, saying he would pay it at 11 o'clock next day, at the hour he would be at the appointed spot with the money, even if he had to rob somebody to obtain it. In fact, from the time Soapy reached the years of manhood there is no probability that he ever earned honestly so much as a cent.

Pictures of Smith show that at the time of his death he wore a beard. When the star bank artist of Denver he had only a mustache, and the face revealed had every appearance of frankness. This first impression was heightened by the smoothness of his tongue. Nobody ever accused Soapy of being a coward. He had shot and been shot at many times before a bullet reached the proper spot. He did not hesitate to face heavy odds, and with unruffled men, he took a gambler's chances. Anybody who had known him could easily imagine him as riding against the throng gathered to rebuke him and his kind, and if he knew the



"Soapy" Smith on His Way to Round Up His Gang and Break Up the Meeting of the Vigilance Committee.

From a Photograph Taken for The Sunday Call.

stacked and the most ingenious devices used for skinning patrons. If any visitor showed a disinclination to play he was sold a gold mine which never existed, induced to invest in fictitious stock. As a last resort he was quietly "touched" and thrown without unnecessary violence into the street.

But one day Denver had a spasm of virtue, and concluding that Soapy had flourished too long began to insist that the police drive him away. He went to a suburb, but the city extended so as to embrace the suburb, and Soapy had to look for other fields. He found one, and is buried in it.

Once the Smith gang got hold of a miner who had boasted of being able to write an acceptable check for \$5000.

They happened to have met in front of a hat and furnishing store.

"You don't owe me any hats," Dick responded, but Soapy insisted. The hat was purchased, and then Smith remarked that the reporter was wearing a rather shabby overcoat. As before, he was insistent, and Dick asked an explanation.

"It's just this way," said Soapy. "I win out a couple of hundred selling soap. It's in my clothes right now. I'm on my way to Cliff Bell's to play bank and tryin' to spend it before I get there, for that old son-of-a-gun will get every cent I don't manage to drop between here and his game."

Soapy's personality was not attractive. He was hardly up to medium size,

shots he himself fired had touched the mark, no doubt he felt a gleam of joy just as he passed over.

Then he went to Alaska, and from the moment of his arrival there his record was one of crime and violence. He even went so far as to organize his chosen thugs into a military company and offer their services to the country. The Government thanked him, but did not accept, and the company stayed in the far north to plunder until the leader was killed and the subordinates scattered before the wrath of the populace.

It will be long before the world shall see another like Soapy, one so unscrupulous, so brazen, so despicable, yet brave and loyal to his "friends." H. J.



Gathering of the Vigilance Committee at Skaguay on the Day Stewart Was Robbed and "Soapy" Smith Was Killed at the Head of His Gang.

From a Photograph Taken for The Sunday Call.