

Moffett Cleveland

True Detective Stories from the Archives of the Pinkertons



Cleveland Moffett

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The Northampton Bank Robbery

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

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

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

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

"Is this the key to the bank?" he asked.

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

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

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

"I will," answered Mr. Whittelsey.

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

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

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

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

"Will you tell us now?" he asked.

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

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

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

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

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

"Dear Sirs: When you are satisfied with detective skill you can make a proposition to us, the holders, and if you are liberal we may be able to do business with you. If you entertain any such ideas, please insert a personal in the New York 'Herald.' Address to XXX, and sign 'Rufus,' to which due attention will be paid. To satisfy you that we hold papers, we send you a couple of pieces."

[No signature.]

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

"Gentlemen: Since you have seen fit to recognize the receipt of our letter, we will now send you our price for the return of the goods. The United States coupon bonds and money taken cannot be returned; but everything else – bonds, letters,

and papers, to the smallest document – will be returned for one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. If these figures suit you, we will make arrangements, according to our promise, and you may have the goods as soon as preliminaries can be arranged for the safe conduct of the business. If you agree to this price, insert in the New York 'Herald' personal column the simple word 'Agatha.'

*"Respectfully, etc.,
"Rufus."*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The first large operation of Dunlap's band occurred in 1872, when they plundered the Falls City Bank in Louisville, Kentucky, of about two hundred thousand dollars, escaping with their booty. This was satisfactory as a beginning, but Dunlap and Scott dreamed of achievements beside which this was insignificant. They began a careful investigation through many States, to learn of banks of weak structure containing large treasure. One of the gang finally found precisely what they were in

search of in the Second National Bank of Elmira, New York, which institution, being a government depository, contained, as they learned on good authority, two hundred thousand dollars in greenbacks and six millions in bonds.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Evans asked him what he meant.

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

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

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

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

"How?"

"We'll talk that over some day."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

thin layer of brick, when Scott accidentally forced the jimmy with which he was working through the roof of the vault and let it fall inside. As it was too late to complete the work that night, and as the presence of the jimmy inside the vault would inevitably start an alarm the next day, they were obliged to abandon the attempt entirely.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Returning to New York, he at once communicated with Scott and Dunlap by means of "Herald" personals, and had several interviews with them in the city during the month of February. While they

were anxious to dispose of the securities, it was plain from the first that they distrusted Evans and proposed to lessen his share of the profits. While pretending to approve the steps he was taking for a compromise with the bank, they were really, without his knowledge, carrying on secret negotiations with the same object. The suspicion on either side grew until finally it could no longer be concealed. Meeting Scott in Prospect Park some time after the robbery, Evans said, "When are you going to settle and give me my share?"

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

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

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

Evans said that for several weeks preceding the Northampton robbery the gang had concealed themselves in the attic of a school-house which stood four or five rods from the highway and apart from other houses. His statement was substantiated by the discovery in this attic, after the robbery, of blankets, satchels, ropes, bits, pulleys, and provisions, including a bottle of whisky bearing the label of a New York firm.

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

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

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

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

It happened as Mr. Pinkerton foresaw. Brought into confinement, Dunlap and Scott were compelled, in the conduct of their affairs, to reveal the hiding-place of the booty to some other member of the gang. They chose for their confidant "Red" Leary. The securities, as subsequently

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

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

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

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

On the afternoon of May 7 Mrs. Leary called at about five o'clock with "Butch" McCarthy, and the three were alone in Leary's room until nearly eight o'clock. After that Leary strolled about in the prison inclosure, and at about a quarter past ten keeper Wendell, who had charge of the first tier, in which Leary's room was located, saw him going up-stairs from the second to the third tier. Although in this Leary was going directly away from his own room, there was nothing to excite surprise, for Leary had been accustomed to use the bath-room on the third tier. A quarter of an hour later Wendell started on his rounds, according to the prison rule, to see that each one of the men in his tier was securely locked up for the night. When he came to Leary's room he was a little surprised to find him still absent, but supposed he would be there shortly. But after waiting a few minutes and finding Leary still absent, the keeper became alarmed, and began a search. He first went to the bath-room, and not finding Leary there, searched in other places, high and low. Then he returned to the bath-room, and there made a discovery which filled him with consternation. He saw in the brick wall, what at first had escaped his attention, a gaping hole, large enough to allow the passage of a man's body. The hole opened into a tunnel that seemed to lead downward. The alarm was at once given, and it soon appeared that the keeper's fears were only too well founded. "Red" Leary had escaped.

It was found that the tunnel from the bath-room led into a room on the fifth floor of a tenement-house at No. 76 Ludlow Street, adjoining the jail. The wall of the house added to the wall of the jail made a thickness of four feet and a half of solid masonry, which had been cut through. In the

three rooms that had been rented in the house by Leary's friends were found abundant evidences of the work.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Susquehanna Express Robbery

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

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

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

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

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

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