

His Last Job At Burglary.

[Original.]

Before I went to make an entrance into the vault of the Tenth National bank Ellen gave me a long talk. She said that our way of gettin' a livin' was killin' her and I'd soon have our kide on my hands to take care o' till I got caught and put in prison; then they'd have no one to look after them. The boys would soon be in jail, too, and a worse fate was in store for the girls. But what was I to do? Not an honest job was open to me. But I needed all my nerve, and after a kiss for her and the kids I threw off the depression and in an hour was in the bank before the vault.

I had set my dark lantern so that the bullseye shone on the spot I wanted to perforate and was about to apply my drill when I heard a voice behind me say:

"Do you think you can do it?"

The words were spoken in the coolest possible tone, and coolness begets coolness. I couldn't see behind me without takin' up my lamp and bringin' it to bear on the speaker, and before I could do that and shoot I felt reasonably sure a bullet would come crashin' through me somewhere. So I never turns around at all, but begins to work my drill, remarkin' at the same time:

"It won't be any trouble at all. I've done it often before."

"Hold on," said the voice, a man's.

"Are you artist enough to do the job without injurin' the door?"

"In course," says I. "If you wanted it done that way, why didn't you say so? But it'll take longer."

"Pick the lock," said the voice, "between now and daylight, and I'll give you a new crisp \$50 bill."

"Couldn't you make it a hundred?" I asks.

I reckon my impudence must 'a' took him flat aback, 'cause he didn't answer for a small while; then he says:

"Fifty is all and more than I can spare. I'm only a clerk in the bank, and I'm sufferin' under an attack o' honesty just now."

I puts away my drill and begins to work with my fingers and my ears, talkin' with the feller sociable-like. It was very kind o' him to treat me so polite, for I knowed he wouldn't be that a-way unless he had me covered and ready to enforce orders. Referrin' to his last remark, I says:

"I had that disease myself once, but a wife and a couple o' kids cryin' for bread tuk it clean out o' me. Diseases require medicine, and sometimes the cure's worse than the disease. I gave myself a dose o' dishonesty for an antidote, and the habit got fixed on me like takin' a drug."

"But you kept the kids from starvin' I suppose."

"That's what I've done so far, but if my work gits a check for the matter o' ten years or so they're still liable to starvation. If I could 'a' got through a few years more they'd be old enough to fill their own mouths."

He didn't make any answer to this, and I kep' on monkeyin' with the tumblers, listenin' to how they fell and makin' up my mind what was the combination.

"What's the time?" I asked.

"Two twenty-five," he said. "It doesn't begin to get light now till 5

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o'clock. Can you do it in that time?"

"If I can do it at all."

I heard somethin' between a sigh and a grunt.

"Is it very important?" I says.

"Yes, it is. I'm responsible for the vault bein' shut without any one knowin' the combination. If we can't get in there by 9 o'clock tomorrow mornin' there'll be no end o' trouble. I'll get fired, of course."

"Don't worry," I says. "I wouldn't have such a perlitte young gentleman fired for all there is inside. Just you stop talkin' to me for awhile—it bothers me—and I reckon I can do the job."

I worked till near 4 o'clock before I got on to the problem; then I heard the last tumbler drop into place, and, turnin' the knob, I opened the vault door.

"Keep your face to the vault and lay your weapon on the floor behind you," said the clerk.

I lay not only one revolver on the floor, but two, and a knife and a billy besides. I reckon this gave him confidence, for he told me I might go and stand by a desk some ten feet away. I did so, and he went to my light, took it up and turned it on me.

"Go in there and bring me a tin box on a shelf to the right."

I did as he said. He opened the box, took out a fifty dollar bill and tossed it to me. I picked it up and handed it back to him. Somehow I felt ashamed o' takin' money from a man who would keep faith with me under the circumstances.

"I don't make any charge for this small service," I remarked. "You can make it hot for me if you like."

"And it would have been hot for me today if it hadn't been for you. Can you give me the combination?"

I called it off, and he wrote it down.

"Now you can get out the way you came in, and I hope you'll do it safely. It wouldn't do for me to risk bein' seen lettin' you out. If you think you'd like to break the dishonest habit, come and see me here about half past 5 this afternoon."

I got out just as the dawn was beginnin' to break and went home.

"Ellen," I said to my wife, "I haven't got any swag, but mebbe I got an honest job."

"Oh, Tom!" she gasped. "God grant that it may be true!"

I told her the story, and we both

went to sleep feelin' better than any mornin'." he said, "about half awake when I heard a key rattling in the door. Much to my horror, the door opened, and the maid came in to make up the room, or at least so it seemed to me. I called out to her to leave, and she did so. All this happened in a minute or less, and I fell asleep again. When I woke up I remembered the incident clearly. When I came to look at the door, however, I found that it was not only locked from the inside with the key still in, but that a bolt also was shot. I was sure that I had seen the maid enter, but when I asked her later about it she said that she had tried the door from the outside and, hearing me call out, had departed. As far as I can make out, it must have been a very complete hallucination about seeing her, called up in my mind in my sleepy condition by my fear that she might enter. I wonder if that has happened to many persons."—New York Sun.

A Hallucination.

"I was lying in a hotel bedroom one morning," he said, "about half awake when I heard a key rattling in the door. Much to my horror, the door opened, and the maid came in to make up the room, or at least so it seemed to me. I called out to her to leave, and she did so. All this happened in a minute or less, and I fell asleep again. When I woke up I remembered the incident clearly. When I came to look at the door, however, I found that it was not only locked from the inside with the key still in, but that a bolt also was shot. I was sure that I had seen the maid enter, but when I asked her later about it she said that she had tried the door from the outside and, hearing me call out, had departed. As far as I can make out, it must have been a very complete hallucination about seeing her, called up in my mind in my sleepy condition by my fear that she might enter. I wonder if that has happened to many persons."—New York Sun.

Spiders That Hunt Fish.

There are certain large sea spiders two feet from toe to toe, called Colossendeis gigas, that live in the water and feed entirely upon mollusks and worms.

The carnivorous wolf spider, an amphibious inhabitant of the tropical regions of South America, is said to prefer a fish diet, though it is not averse to eating mice, young birds and even snakes, resembling in this respect the theraphosidae, or bird catching spiders, of India and Queensland, some of which equal a rat in size.

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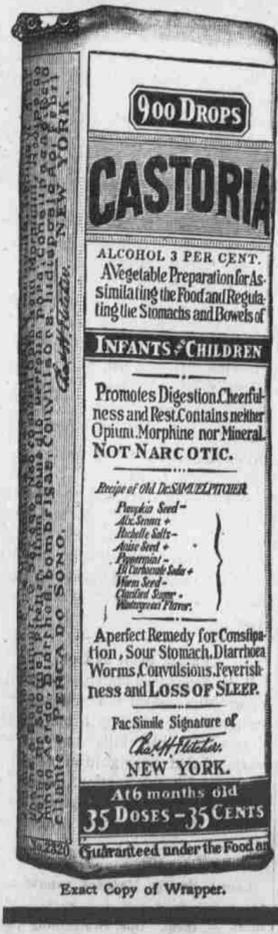
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