

# PRODIGY IN CRIME

## School Boy Confesses to Almost Incredible Series of Robberies.

### SKILFUL PORCH CLIMBER

Earnest Lane, 17 Years of Age, Arrested After a Four Months Career of Lawlessness That is Without Parallel.

Unhesitatingly and almost boastfully Ernest Lane, alias Ernest Lewis, the 17-year-old school boy who was arrested by detectives yesterday afternoon on the charge of burglary, told the story of his crimes in detail last night. He stood leaning against the bars of his cell in the city jail as he talked. He declared that he would plead guilty.

"But say, old man," he said to Detective Day as he told his story, "I plead guilty, won't you have me sent to the penitentiary without my mother knowing anything about it?"

Shortly after a woman, heavily veiled and dressed in black, rushed into the central station and demanded to see the boy. She was escorted through the narrow corridors of the jail and brought face to face with the lad who still stood leaning against the bars of his cell. There, in the presence of police officers and detectives and subjected to the starling gaze of scores of curious eyes which peered from behind their steel gratings, she moaned and sobbed and said she could not understand. The boy was apparently unaffected.

His mother is Mrs. O. J. Fraser, wife of an employe of the City & Suburban Railway company. For an hour the woman wept piteously. Finally she was told that she could remain no longer in the place, but she refused to leave. She was gently but firmly taken from the jail.

Young Lane, his mother says, is only 17 years of age. He declares that he is 17. He came to this city from Eugene in February and has been attending the Chapman school at Twenty-fifth and Wilson streets. He has large blue eyes and light-brown hair. He has none of the usual criminal characteristics in appearance.

In four brief months he has developed into one of the most cunning and at the same time one of the most daring burglars that ever operated in the city. Detectives declare that he is the most nimble porch-climber they have ever encountered. Since his arrest, operations three of the most astute detectives on the coast have pursued him, but until yesterday he has succeeded in eluding their efforts.

The victims of his numerous crimes have invariably described the burglar as wearing a celluloid collar and a straw hat with an odd diamond-shaped ribbon. It was the celluloid collar and the straw hat with the odd diamond-shaped ribbon that attracted the attention of the officers to the young man as he walked leisurely down Third street yesterday afternoon. They took a chance and he confessed his guilt as soon as arrested.

**Stole a Watch Twice.**  
His first crime, so far as known, was committed March 18, when he entered the residence of Hans Rasmussen, 411 North Twenty-fourth street. He gained entrance through a rear window. Through windows of the second floor was his favorite mode of entrance. He reached the second floor by climbing water-pipes or porches. At the Rasmussen home he secured a small sum of money, a silver watch bearing the owner's initials, and other articles. He carefully scratched off the initials and carved his own upon the watch.

He pawned it at a shop on Third street and read in the papers next day that it had been recovered by detectives and returned to its owner. Accordingly he went back to the Rasmussen home that night, gained entrance in exactly the same manner as on his previous visit, stole the watch again, and in addition secured \$2.50 in money. The watch was found in his possession when arrested yesterday.

He chose for the scene of his next operation the residence of George L. Storey, 201 Irving street. There he secured \$15 in money, a razor and a silver watch which also was found on him when arrested. It bore the initials of Miss Storey. He gained entrance through a second story window.

The home of Mrs. E. W. Everett, 299 Everett street, was the next place he selected. As a precaution against visitors of his propensities, Mr. Crichton had Fort Arthur's home with a vicious bull-dog, which he kept in the yard to make friends with any strangers. The animal was said to be one of the most vicious of his kind and accordingly the home was left in his care when the occupants desired to go out. The youthful burglar leaped at the window and the dog and went to the residence early one night.

**Friendly with Watchdog.**  
It was nearly 11 o'clock before he succeeded in winning the good will of the dog, he says, and gaining entrance into the house. There he secured a large gold chain, valued at \$75, a stick-pin, various articles of wearing apparel and a few trinkets.

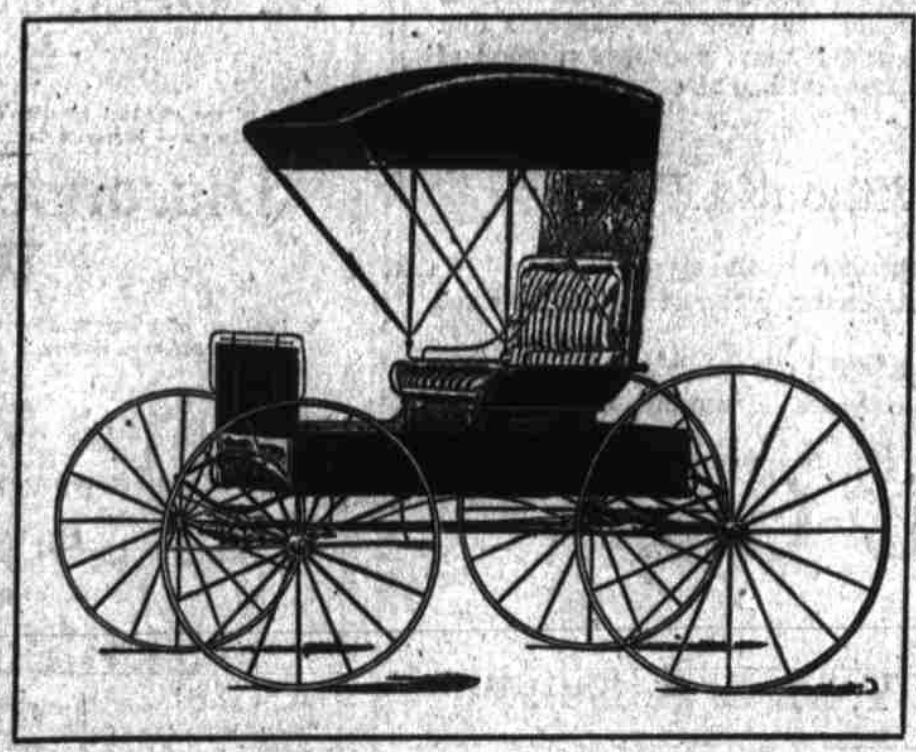
At the next place he visited he had the closest shave of his experience. It was nearly midnight when he visited the home of Mrs. O. C. Bruns, 741 Johnson street. He climbed the porch and was going through the various rooms of the second floor when Mrs. Bruns jumped into him in the hallway. She had heard a noise and rising from her bed proceeded to investigate. She thought it was her husband, she said, who is quite deaf. As soon as she reached the man in the hallway she seized his arm. Immediately he threw the brilliant rays of a pocket search-light in her face and she staggered backwards. "Why, you old young man," she said when she had recovered somewhat and by means of the light was able to distinguish that he was a young man. "I am old enough to be your grand-mother and you dare to come here to rob me. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" "Cut out the talk, lady," he said, as he held a long, dangerous looking revolver at her head with one hand and the light with the other. "I didn't come

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IMPLEMENTS VEHICLES BICYCLES HARNESS

here to hear a lecture, but to get the coin. So dig, and be quick about it."

She dug, as she was bid, and gave him a gold watch and all the money she had in the house. It was a trifling sum, so he gathered all the trinkets and pieces of jewelry he could find. Still keeping the weapon upon her, he backed to the window and retreated in the same way he had entered the house.

**Wore Stolen Garments.**  
Then he robbed the residence of J. Prediaux, 587 Flanders street. There he secured a valuable stick-pin, various articles of clothing and a pair of shoes. When arrested he wore a pair of Mr. Prediaux's trousers and a hat bearing the initials of the owner. A number of women in the rear of the residence saw him as he lighted a lamp and went through the house. Police headquarters were notified but he escaped before the arrival of the officers.

The next residence he visited was that of the wife of the late Police Commissioner Riley, on Gilliam street. He secured five silver spoons with the letter "R" inscribed upon them. At the home of Dr. H. A. Hoffman, 806 Thurman street, he stole a shotgun, 300 loaded shells, a suit of clothing and a grip. He entered through a second story window and neighbors who saw him at work by the light of a lamp which he lighted, were able to distinguish a young man with a celluloid collar and a straw hat with an odd, diamond-shaped ribbon. A few nights ago he entered the home of J. W. Belcher, 529 Taylor street, and secured a pair of shoes, besides a number of other articles of small value. This was the last of his crimes, so far as the officers have been able to learn. At any rate, it is the last to which he has confessed.

Now were constantly on the trail of the bold young burglar. Few days passed without bringing a report to police headquarters of the daring operations of a very young man who wore a celluloid collar and a straw hat with an odd, diamond-shaped ribbon. Frequently the officers reached a pawn-shop just after the young man had left. Baffled by the cleverness of the boy, the officers renewed their efforts and at last succeeded in capturing him. It is considered one of the best pieces of detective work that has ever been accomplished in this city. The boy showed remarkable and almost incredible daring and adroitness until arrested, when he freely confessed the complete story of his brief criminal career.

"I just needed the money," he said at the city jail last night. "I went after the coin and usually got it. I don't know what started me; I never read dime-novels, nor did I ever associate with crooks. I just took a notion that I wanted some money and didn't know how to get it until the idea of being a burglar struck me. I never hurt anyone while I was doing the job, but I have had some close calls. That bull-dog was about the worst I ever tackled and it took me a long time to get him squawking."

"Wouldn't be a quitter," he said. "When the old lady bumped into me, I wasn't a bit scared, though I felt something come in my throat. Then I thought, 'Why, you're a kid and a quitter. If you let an old woman throw a scare into you,' and I flashed the gim on her. But the way she did roast me, it almost made me laugh. But I kept my nerve and finished the job with her tacking right onto me."

"I never told any of my chums at school what I did but they often wondered how I got so much spending money. I never went into any flashy-looking pawn shops to soak the goods. Usually those kind of places have a bunch of wise guys around them who give a quiet tip to the cops. But I didn't take any chances with the flashy places. I always chose a little shop where the man didn't look like he was onto much."

"I don't want my mother to ever learn about this. I am willing to plead guilty and go to the penitentiary, but she mustn't know. It would break her all up for she thinks I'm all right and I don't want her to take a tumble to me."

### OIL WAS USED TO START THE FLAMES

#### ORIGIN OF A FIRE WHICH BROKE OUT LAST EVENING ON NORTH THIRD STREET IS INVOLVED IN MYSTERY AND POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING.

Flames burst from Nudelman's second-hand store, 83 North Third street, at 10:15 o'clock last night and shot outward and upward, quickly enveloping the entire building above and on either side. To the top of the Superior lodging-house the blaze quickly ran, and when the firemen arrived the structure was a mass of fire and smoke. Men, women and children, scantily clad, rushed pell-mell down the stairs from the second and third stories, some dragging trunks and valises after them, but more leaving every possession behind. Fortunately no one was injured. The damage was not more than \$2,500. The origin of the fire is not known, but a rigid investigation has been started, as it is believed oil was used to give the flames a better start. When the firemen and police arrived the odor of oil was nearly suffocating. Nudelman, proprietor of the store in which the fire started, left an hour before and could not be found. His loss is small and is said to have been fully covered by insurance. The block, aside from the lodging-

house, was occupied by the Seattle bar at 81 North Third, Nudelman's at 83, a Japanese restaurant at 85, and a clothing store at 87. John Spitzer's fruit and confectionery store was south of the second-hand store of Nudelman. From smoke and water the places were damaged to the extent of several hundred dollars, but none could give correct estimates. All were partially insured. J. J. Trimble owned the buildings and his wife conducts the lodging-house. He was unable to estimate his loss. The fire was confined to the front of the structure. There were 30 rooms in the house, a few of which were damaged by smoke, water and fire.

### SALMON HATCHERY ON FRASER RIVER

(Special Dispatch to The Journal.) Seattle, Wash., June 25.—Establishment of a salmon hatchery for sockeye salmon on the Fraser river seems now likely of fulfillment, for the cannery-men and packers on both sides of the international boundary line are taking an interest in the movement themselves irrespective of government aid. An association has been formed at Bellingham of all interests and next week the ground on the Fraser river will be visited by the commission. It is hoped to accomplish something this year, for it is generally conceded that the salmon industry must be fostered artificially.

Superlatively Arrogant. From the Philadelphia Press. Ratsull is as lordly in his demands as a cook or an apartment-house janitor.



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The generous gentleman who broke the back of the 100-per-cent profit clothing men of Portland, and recently subscribed \$100 to the Federated Trades Carnival, all other clothing men combined contributing but \$154. This shows who's the friend of the laboring man.

The Carnival opens on Tuesday, June 28th, continuing eleven days, and will be the biggest show on earth! There is a continuous Carnival at

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Shoes, Furnishing Goods, Underwear, etc., in proportion.

THE BARGAINS WE ARE OFFERING NOW WERE NEVER EQUALED ON EARTH BEFORE.

When you come to the Carnival make The Hub your headquarters. We like to behold the genial faces of these good Oregonians.