FAMOUS DETECTIVE CASES

By Cleveland Moffett

How Five Masked Bandits Forced Cashier to Reveal Combination to Vault in the Northampton National Bank and Escaped With Loot Valued at Over a Million Dollars.

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lay, January 25, 1876, five masked men entered the house of John Whittelsey Northampton. Massachusetts. Mr. Whittelsey was the cashier of the and the combination to

the bank vault. The five men entered ments, 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 Mattle 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 | tically cleared up the whole mystery; nearly to his knees, also gloves and surmised) that the robbery had been overshoes; the other wore a jacket and overalls. Both men had their faces concealed behind masks, and one of them carried a darklantern. On was true) and could arrest them at entering the room the two men went any moment; that there was no doubt directly to the bed, one standing on that the gang had been trying to play either side, and handcuffed Mr. Whit- Evans false (a very shrewd guess), telsey 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 they had done so, they were roped 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 was then taken downstairs, and commanded to sur-

render the keys, but he refused. Mr. Whittelsey kept silent. Then both men came at him, wringing his him to the floor and pounding their this torture was continued. More than 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.

the true combination of the vault. e robbers went away, leavbefore 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 is was impossible at the moment to determine the extent of the robbery, or, indeed, whether there had been any robbery. for an expert before the vault could be opened, which was not accomplished after the attack had been made. Then whole property.

merous evidences of their presence, bonds, such as dark-lanterns, masks, sledge-

possession the missing securities.

interest in the case, and apparent fa- sonry, some of the stones in it weigh

the First National bank of Pittston. a business custom with safe men to

BOUT midnight on Tues- ining 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 Northampton National know that was impossible. The air bank, and was known to pump was, he declared, of precisely have in his possession the his company's model, one that had been keys of the bank building recently devised for a special purpose. At the time Mr. Pinkerton regarded this as merely a coincidence, but now the house noiselessly, with the aid of the memory came to him as a flash false keys, previously prepared. Pass, of inspiration that the man who had ing upstairs to the sleeping apart- remarked the similarity in the air pump represented the same company that employed Evans.

In November, George H. Bangs, supertendent 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 pracwore a long linen duster buttoned that they knew (whereas they still only committed by the Dunlap and Scott gang; that for weeks they had been shadowing Scott and Dunlap (which 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 five women to get up and dress. When prospect of twenty years in prison, or save himself, and at the same time together by ankles and wrists, and 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 four years ears, shaking him by the throat, hurling before. The leader of the gang was James Dunlap, allas James Barton, knees into his chest. For three hours who, before he became a bank robber, had been a brakeman on the Chicago, once the ruffians placed their revolvers Alton & 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's right-hand man was Robert C. Scott, alias "Hustling Bob," orighe surrendered the keys, and revealed | inally a deckhand on a Mississippi steamboat and afterward a hotel thief. Scott was a big powerful man, with ing two of their associates to watch a determination equal to anything. over the prisoners. One of the band, 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 Green, 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 mes-

The first large operation of Dunlap's band was the plundering of the Falls City bank in Louisville, Ken-It was necessary to send to New York | tucky, of about two hundred thousand dollars, escaping with their booty. This was satisfactory as a beginning, but until late that night, twenty hours Dunlap and Scot dreamed of achievements beside which this was insigit was found that the robbers had nificant. They began a careful investibeen only too successful, having se- gation through many states, to learn cured money and securities estimated of banks of weak structure containing at a million and a quarter dollars. large treasure. One of the gang finally Much of this sum was safe-deposits, found precisely what they were in and the loss fell on the depositors; search of in the Second National bank and to some it was the loss of their of Elmira, New York, which institution, being a government depository, At this time the authorities had no contained, as they learned on good auclue to the identity of the robbers, thority, two hundred thousand dollars though they had left behind them nu- in greenbacks and six millions in

A survey of the premises satisfied hammers, overshoes, and the like. the gang that, massive though it ap-When several months had elapsed, peared, with its ponderous iron walls the Pinkertons were called into the and complicated locks, the vault of case. They began by carefully study- this bank was by no means imposing certain communications that had sible of access. The floor above the been received by the bank directors bank was occupied by the Young Men's from persons claiming to have in their | Christian association, one of the assoclation's rooms being directly over the A fact of much significance to the vault. There was the floor between, Pinkertons was the rather remarkable and under that four feet of solid mamiliarity with it, shown by one J. G. ing a ton. And under the masonry Evans, an expert in safes and vaults was a layer of railroad iron, resting on and the representative of one of the a plate of hardened steel an inch and largest safe manufactories in the a half thick. All this, however, so far the vault, to find the floor sprinkled from discouraging the conspirators. As he studied the case, Mr. Pinker- gave them greater confidence in the ton recalled a circumstance that had success of their plans, once under way, happened in the fall of the previous | since the very security of the vault, by year. On the night of November 4, structure, from overhead attack lessened the strictness of the surveillance. Pennsylvania, had been robbed of sixty Indeed, the most serious difficulty, in and sent to the Auburn prison for five But Dunlap was somewhat of an electhousand dollars, and Mr. Pinkerton the estimation of the robbers, was to years. had gone there to investigate the case. gain easy and unsuspected admission to He met a number of safe men, it being the quarters of the Young Men's Christian Association, on the second floor. flock to the scene of an important The secretary, a very prudent man, had bank robbery in order to supply new | put on the outside door of the associa-

lock-picker. Neither Dunlap, Scott, attack on the Quincy bank was made nor any of their associates had skill in very much the same way as the enough to open this lock without break- attack on the bank at Elmira. A ing it, which would, of course, have Baltimore woman rented an old house been fatal to their plan. For days, therefore, after all the other details to the men; access was obtained to of the robbery had been arranged, the whole scheme seemed to be blocked by | before; the flooring was taken up and a troublesome lock on an ordinary wooden door.

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 ac-

ompany. 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 overshrewd practice connected ne compromised with his creditors on basis advantageous to himself.

took up his residence in New York work. 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 upown street.

Before long Evans found himself nuch cramped financially. Being unable to pay Ryan the money he owed im 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 ore 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," sald 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," an-

"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.

The result was that Evans, in consid eration of fifty thousand dollars, finally agreed to provide some means of opening the Yale lock which barred he robbers from the coveted treasure

at Elmira. Perry, in great delight, hurrled 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' 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.

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. One day the president of the bank, Mr. Pratt, was surprised, on entering 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

Undisturbed by the fallure, Scott and Dunlap proceeded to scour the boards so as to render it of little or no country again in search of another danger. They experienced much diffibank suited to their operations, and culty, though, in blowing open the the next February notified the gang, safe.

attack on the Quincy bank was made which afforded shelter and concealment rooms over the vault by false keys, as 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 moneyroom beneath.

It now remained to force open the quaintance of Evans, then a salesman safes inside the vault; and to accomin the employ of a prominent safe pilsh 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' employers were at this time introducing a padding designed to make dealings through the South, with ex- safes more secure; and Evans had hit tensive credits; but the outbreak of upon the idea of introducing powder the war had forced him into bank- into the seams of a safe door by an ruptcy. It was hinted that there was air-pump, in the presence of a possible customer, in order to impress him with with his failure, and his subsequent his need of the new padding. Evans sudden departure for Canada gave himself was not present at the breakcolor to the insinuation. At any rate, ing open of the Quincy bank, and he had nothing to do with the robbery beyond furnishing instruction and the On his return from Canada, Evans air-pump. Scott and Dunlap did the

At first step, all the seams of the safes formed by the doors were carefully puttled 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 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 swered Evans—"that would take too in the same way, and the gang were long; but there is a way of getting one | in high feather over their success. During the following summer Scott and Dunlap lived in princely style in New York.

> 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 nad furnished them. Now, however, they called upon him again, and, partby threats, partly by generous offers, duced him to assist them again. A series of unsuccessful attempts at obbery were made on banks in Saraoga, Nantucket, Covington, Kentucky, the case of the Covington bank, for instance, nitroglycerin was used in blowing open the safe, and the explosion frightened and fled in a panic, leaving and provisions. chind untouched, although exposed to greenbacks and one million five hunonds. In the case of the Rockville ank their plans had worked out perfectly, and they had removed everyhing from the top of the vault but a thin layer of brick, when Scott accilentally forced the jimmy through the goof 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 ilmmy inside the vault would inevitaly start an alarm the next day, they were obliged to abandon the attempt

The gang's most desperate adventure efell in connection with the attempt on the First National bank of Pittston. Pennsylvania. 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 at any time after they had begun operations, waer might soak through the openings they had made and betray them. Dunlap's ingenuity, however, was equal to this emergency; and each night, taken to Northampton, and committed after finishing their excavation, they arefully relaid the sheets of tin that ad been disturbed, protecting the oints 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 lecided to finish the work and do the obbery that night. Two hours' hard labor with drag and tack-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. trical expert, and was able to so surround the burglar alarm with heavy

and offered unusual obstacles to the to work at" in Quincy, Illinois. The 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 assoclates, 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 breathe. On coming out, their spiration, and they were so weak that their comrades had to almost carry 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 airpump which Robert Pinkerton afterward recalled so shrewdly to Evans' disadvantage.

Coming, in his confession, to the Northampton bank robbery, Evans said attempt there for several months before the robbery was actually executed.

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 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 Leary had escaped. the city during the month of February. While they were anxious to dispose of the securities, it was plain from the fifth floor of a tenement house at No. 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,

me my share?" Scott; "you've given the whole gang and put in jail there.

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 Pinkertons had also arrested Thomas d Rockville, Connecticut. In several the gang had concealed themselves in Doty, another member of the band. instances failure came at the very the attic of a schoolhouse which stood and lodged him in the Northampton time when success seemed sure. In four of five rods from the highway and jail. apart from other houses. His statement was substantiated by the discov-

After hearing Evans' story, the quesunless 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, both men were arrested in Philadelphia, as they were on the point of taking a train for the Dunlap, having been pardoned sev-

Despite the large sum of securities in their possession, the men had run honest living. As far as is known, short of ready money, and, while awaiting a compromise, were starting out to commit another robbery. They were to jail to await trial.

lap and Scott were compelled, in the Sixth avenue, between Twenty-seventh hiding place of the booty to some other party was "Billy" Train, an old bunko member of the gang. They chose for securities, as subsequently transpired, Sixth avenue, near Thirty-third street, New York. The precise spot was indi cated to Leary by Mrs. Scott, who, in doing so, reminded Leary of an agree ment entered into by the members of the gang before the robbery, that any of their number who might get into after much suffering. trouble could, if he saw a necessity, call upon his confederates to dispose of all the securities on whatever terms The first one attempted yielded was perfectly willing, even eager, to bers in the communities where they re-

was himself arrested on the charge of complicity in the memorable Manhattan bank robbery, which had occurred some time before.

While much of Leary's life had been spent in deeds of violence, he had shown on occasions such splendid bravery, even heroism, as almost atoned for his crimes. 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 for nearly two years. Meanwhile Leary reposed in Ludlow street jail, where he enjoyed all the privileges ever accorded to prisoners. 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 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, clothes were wringing wet with per- in which Leary's room was located, saw him going upstairs from the second their legs tottered under them, and to the third tier. Although in this Leary was going directly away from them for a time. But, nevertheless, his own room, there was nothing to they managed to walk thirty miles excite surprise, for Leary had been accustomed to use the bathroom 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 shortthat the gang considered making an ly. But after waiting a few minutes and finding Leary still absent, the keeper became alarmed, and began a search. He first went to the bathroom, and not finding Leary there, searched in other places, high and low. Then he returned to the bathroom, 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, it was this that had prompted him in 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"

It was found that the tunnel from the bathroom led into a room on the

76 Ludlow street, adjoining the fail, 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 Twentyseventh 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 "When are you going to settle and give standstill, and Leary was dragged out of the sleigh and handcuffed. He was "You'll never get a cent," answered taken immediately to Northampton,

> 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 North ampton.

Some months previous to this the

In the meantime, Scott and Dunlap, now in state prison, had made a conery in this attic, after the robbery, of fession as against Leary, the holder of was so violent that the men became blankets, satchels, ropes, bits, pulleys, the securities; and when Leary was brought to Northampton, they wrote him a letter, notifying him that unless lew, two hundred thousand dollars in tion foremost in Mr. Pinkerton's mind the securities were handed over to was where the stolen securities had their proper owners, they would take dred thousand dollars in negotiable been concealed. From what Evans the witness stand against him and said, and from what he knew himself | convict him, but that if he did turn about the methods of the gang, he was over the necessary securities they satisfied that Dunlap possessed this would refuse to take the stand. This secret, and would intrust it to no one resulted in the recovery by the Norths ampton 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. The trial of Stott and Dunlap took place at Northampton 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 eral years later, went to live in a Western city, a reformed man earning an since leaving the penitentiary he never returned to his evil ways. Conroy also

took to new ways, and became honest. "Red" Leary came to his death in a curious way. One night he had been It happened as Mr. Pinkerton fore- drinking with some friends at a wellsaw. Brought into confinement, Dun- known sporting resort in New York, on conduct of their affairs, to reveal the and Twenty-eighth streets. In the man. They were all somewhat intoxitheir confidant "Red" Leary. The cated and inclined to be uproarlous. As they came out on the street, "Billy" were at this time buried in a cellar on 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,

As for the safe-expert, Evans, he is engaged in legitimate business, and is were possible and use the proceeds in from the records, the writer has, by prospering. In compiling this chapter getting him and others—if others were request, changed some of the names of in trouble also-free. At the time the parties, who since that time have Leary scoffed at this agreement, but reformed, and are now respected membank robbery in order to supply new put on the outside door of the association rooms an improved Yale lock, which now contained some new mem on the second explosion, and they see have it enforced a little later, when, side, and the author has no desire to

