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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BOUT midnight on Tues day, January 25, 1876, five masked men entered the house of John Whittelsey in Northampton, Massa chusetts. 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 upstairs to the sleeping apart ments, they overpowered seven in mates of the house, gagging and binding them so that resistance or alarm was impossible. These were Mr. Whit telsey 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 eemed to be leaders of the band. One wore a long linen duster buttoned nearly to his 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 darklantern. 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 lend ers 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 un less 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 ears, shaking him by the throat, burling 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 Whittelsey's head declaring they would blow his brains out unless he vielded. Finally he did vield: the suffering was too great; the supreme instinct of self-preservation asserted 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 vanit.

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 mained 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 It was necessary to send to New York for an expert before the vault could be opened, which was not accomplished 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. 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, sledgehammers, overshoes, and the like

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.

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. As he studied the case, Mr. Pinker ton recalled a circumstance that had happened in the fall of the previous year. On the night of November 4, 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 exam-

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 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 November, George H. Bangs, super-tendent 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; 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 nir 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 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 before. 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 & 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.

Dunian's right-hand man was Robert C. Scott, allas "Hustling Bob," originally a deckhand 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, "Eddle" Goody, John Perry. James Green, a professional burglar originally from Canada, 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 Dun lap's band was the plundering of the Falls City bank in Louisville, Kentucky, of about two bundred thousand dollars, escaping with their booty. This was satisfactory as a beginning, but until late that night, twenty hours Dunian and Scot dreamed of achievements beside which this was insignificant. They began a careful investi gation through many states, to learn of banks of weak structure containing large treasure. One of the gang finally Much of this sum was safe-deposits, I found precisely what they were in search of in the Second National bank of Eimira, 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

> 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 bank was occupied by the Young Men's Christian association, one of the assoclation's rooms being directly over the vault. There was the floor between and under that four feet of solld 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 th success of their plans, once under way, since the very security of the vault, by structure, from overhead attack less ened 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 Dunian, 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

The Yale lock still continuing an in soluble 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, be made the acquaintance of Evans, then a salesman in the employ of a prominent safe

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 bank ruptcy. It was binted that there was overshrewd 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 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 uptown street.

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 sald, "If I had your posttion 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 subseque 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," an-

swered Evans-"that would take too long; but there is a way of getting one "How?"

"We'll talk that over some day." Having once nibbled, Evans was not ong in biting at the balt 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

money, without danger to himself. The result was that Evans, in consideration of fifty thousand dollars, finally agreed to provide some means of pening the Yale lock which barred the robbers from the coveted treasure

weak hanks, to make a great deal of

Perry, in great delight, burried back o Elmira, and reported his success to Duniap and Scott. In order to bring Evans to Elmira in a way not to excite suspicion, a letter was written to the ompany he served, containing a temp ing proposition regarding the purchase of sufes. 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 of the Young Men's Christian Association after the young men had gone home, using their fulse keys to obtain admission; and they remained there hours at a time, doing what would ordinarily be the noislest 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 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 fallure, Scott and Dunlap proceeded to scour the country again in search of another bank suited to their operations, and the next February notified the gang, which now contained some new members, that they had "found something

to work at" in Quincy, Illinois. The and sixty thousand dollars in bonds. attack on the Quincy bank was made in very much the same way as the Baltimore woman rented an old 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 pene trated, and, finally, one night Scott and Dunian were able to lower themselves through a jagged hole into the money

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-wreck ing in America, what is known as the air-pump method, which had been de vised by Evans, and carefully explained by him to Scott and Dunlap. Evans' employers were at this time in troducing 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 ar air-pump, in the presence of a possible customer, in order to impress him with his need of the new padding. Evans ing 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

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 i 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 pow der, 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 bundred 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 bank. 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 gung were in high feather over their success. Dur ing 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 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 Sara toga, Nantucket, Covington, Kentucky, and Rockville, Connecticut. In several instances failure came at the very time when success seemed sure. 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 every thing from the top of the vault but s thin layer of brick, when Scott accidentally forced the Jimmy 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 flmmy 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. 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, wa ter 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 spherica safes protected by a burglar alarm But Dunlap was somewhat of an elec trical expert, and was able to so sur round the burgiar alarm with heavy boards so as to render it of little or no danger. They experienced much difficulty, though, in blowing open the safe. The first one attempted yielded on the second explosion, and they secured five hundred dollars in currency The next one was far more trouble some, 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 selzing 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 asso clates, they were found scarcely able to run. During all the twelve exploalons 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 explo sions were the noxious gases generated by them, which Scott and Duniap 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 after ward recalled so shrewdly to Evans' disadvantage.

Coming, in his confession, to the Northampton bank robbery, Evans said that the gang considered making an attempt there for several months be fore 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 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 se cret 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 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. 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 he gang had concealed themselves in the attic of a schoolhouse which stood and four of five rods from the highway and jall. apart from other houses. His statement was substantiated by the discov- now in state prison, had made a conery in this attic, after the robbery, of blankets, satchels, ropes, bits, pulleys, the securities; and when Leary was

and provisions. After hearing Evans' 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 Evens 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 flying 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

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 fail to await trial. It happened as Mr. Pinkerton fore-

saw. 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 confident "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 indi cated 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 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 siso-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.

While much of Leary's life had been spent in deeds of violence, he had shown on occasions such splendid bravery, even herolsm, 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 jall, where he enjoyed all the privileges ever necorded 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, in which Leary's room was located, saw him going upstairs 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 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 se curely 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 short-ly. But after walting 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. 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. Leary had escaped.

It was found that the tunnel from the bathroom led into a room on the fifth floor of a tenement house at No. 76 Ludlow street, adjoining the jall,

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 standstill, and Leary was dragged out of the sleigh and handcuffed. He was 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 Northampton.

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

In the meantime, Scott and Dunlap, fession as against Leary, the holder of 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 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,

The trial of Scott 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 Dunlap, having been pardoned several 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 curious way. One night he had been drinking with some friends at a wellknown sporting resort in New York, on Sixth avenue, between Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth streets. party was "Billy" Train, an old bunko man. They were all somewhat intoxicated and inclined to be uproarlous. 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. 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 re side, and the author has no desire to injure them.