

spirit, and feeling able to take care of himself in the world, he did what thousands of boys did before him with various results—he “ran away” from home to seek his fortunes in the then brilliant and fascinating city of St. Louis.

Here he secured employment; but, being without a home and its healthful influences, soon fell into bad company. He was a bright pleasant-faced fellow; but he was “too independent” to return to his friends or accept their advice, little tricks were soon resorted to, and the boy readily saw that it was an easy matter to win the confidence of those with whom he came in contact, and before he had become eighteen years of age he was an adept in the art of living genteelly from forced public contributions of a varied character.

His first crime, or rather the first crime for which he was tried, was for horse stealing at St. Louis, in 1858. He was convicted, and, while awaiting sentence, broke jail and escaped to Chicago.

Being a dashing, rosy-cheeked fellow of elegant address, after he had been in that city for a time, he became the pupil of Joe Moran, a noted confidence man and hotel thief, the couple doing a neat and thrifty business from the beginning.

Sheridan proved so pat about everything he did, and exhibited such aptness and delicate judgment in everything he undertook, that the pair continued in partnership nearly three years, working the hotels in Chicago and neighbouring cities, but in the early part of 1861, were arrested in the act of robbing the guests' rooms at the old Adams' House in that city. They were both convicted, and given three years each at the Illinois Penitentiary, then located at Alton.

The two men, after serving this term, returned to Chicago together, Moran soon dying of some disease brought on by prison exposure, while Sheridan resumed the same class of operation with the then notorious men of the same ilk, Emmett Lytle, Matt Duffy, and John Supple.

But Sheridan, being a young man of good mind, somewhat cultivated tastes, and large ambition, notwithstanding his reprehensible calling, soon tired of the low associations necessary to this standard of villainy, broke with his old companions, and took a step higher in the profession, becoming the “brains” and leader of “bank-sneaks,” consisting of the notorious Joe