

Burglar's Ethics

"Yes, I've been a 'crook' pretty nearly all my life, but I never went in for physical violence, and I can say today that I don't think I have ever really wronged another man."

It was somewhat disconcerting to hear this avowal spoken, not without a smack of conscious rectitude by the lips of "Joe" Killoran, alias Howard, accomplished burglar, bank thief and swindler in general, of whom Inspector McClusky recently said that during some thirty years of activity in America and Europe he had stolen and squandered not less than five ample fortunes, says the New York Herald.

Killoran and a reporter had been sitting in the visitors' corridor of the Ludlow street jail, on the very spot where "Joe" stood eight years ago when he had the happy inspiration to take the jail keys away from the keepers and lock those officials in limbo as hostages for his friends "Charlie" Allen and "Harry" Russell, and himself. He had been telling his visitor with rare candor how he and Allen had made the capitals of Europe pay tribute to their nimble genius after they had shaken from their feet the dust of Ludlow street. With much wealth of detail he had described the several methods of "making a touch" and of "turning a sucker" of removing \$40,000 worth of government bonds from a bank or a safe deposit vault at one stroke, or of "holding up" a miserably bank messenger and lightening his burden.

It was after all this that the "gentleman thief's" face lighted up with something like true pride as he said: "No, I don't think I have ever really wronged another man."

"Joe" Killoran's guest probably betrayed his astonishment. Here was a rare opportunity to gain some insight into that strangely anomalous thing, a thief's moral and ethical code. So "Joe's" visitor said: "And pray, what would you call those little diversions you have been describing? Did you wrong none of those persons of whom you preyed so successfully?"

Killoran looked frankly disgusted. "Why no; I don't think so. They were strangers to me."

They were strangers to me, and I regarded them as fair game. You ought to know what I mean. When I say I never wronged a man, I mean that I never betrayed a man who had trusted me and that I never was faithless with a friend. To do that I should call a sin. The kind of work "Charlie" Allen and I did in Paris, Brussels and London was simply in the line of our business. It involved deception, of course, but not treachery, not betrayal. We had to set our wits against the wits of the police and of the bank officials every time we made a strike. To us their personality was nothing. They were mere obstacles to be surmounted in a crafty game. We played for high stakes and we took desperate chances.

"Now, I never could understand why it is that nearly everybody loathes an out and out professional 'crook,' such as I have been, while the same persons will habitually lavish maudlin sympathy upon the trusted bank cashier who defaults or misappropriates funds entrusted to his care, deliberately betraying his trust and betraying the employer who has befriended him. According to my code, I am a better man than that man. I may prey upon the public, but those whom I deceive are at least strangers to me—men to whom I owe nothing personally.

"No sympathy is squandered upon fellows like us when the 'oops' or the 'pinks' take us, and we don't look for any. But for the defunct bank cashier there are sympathy and excuses. 'Poor old chap, he was tempted and he fell, they say. Bah! Tempted? Yes, but they always do it deliberately. They weigh the chances of discovery. I have talked to such fellows behind the bars when they have been doing time. More than one of them has told me how long he hesitated before he made the first 'touch,' planning how he could fool the people he was paid to serve. The second time it was not so hard for him, and after that it became easy."

"Now, that kind of a thing I call a sin, as well as a crime. I never did anything in my life so bad as that, and, God knows, crippled and broken down and 61 years old, as I am now, I am not trying to assume any false virtues at this late day. I

never been any missionary, but I never yet betrayed a trust. "Joe" Killoran was evidently sincere. It was genuine disgust that was written on his face—a face lined and seamed now by the wrinkling touch of disease and age, but a face, withal, that amid other surroundings might yet be dangerously seductive, a personality, a suave complacency and assurance that, clothed in the garb and the manners of the man of affairs might well inspire misplaced confidence of a hard-headed financier and lure him to a disaster by the almost hypnotic magnetism of those deep blue eyes.

Broken and crippled as he is, could one take "Joe" Killoran today and dress him for the part, his grizzled white mustache, neatly trimmed over his florid cheeks, a sash across his shoulder, a medal and a ribbon on his breast, he might pass, for a marshal of the empire crippled by an honorable wound or for a chancellor of the exchequer lame from rheumatism or the gout. And this accomplished cavalier d'industrie, the consort of "Jimmy" Hope and of others who were the most notorious cracksmen of their day, the admitted prince of "bank sneaks" and of confidence games conducted on a large scale, from the dignity of a wooden bench in the Ludlow street jail, from which he had once contemptuously walked out to freedom, was voicing his sincere contempt for the man who, in the livery of virtue, could fall so low as to abuse a trust.

"Men in our line of business have to trust one another," "Joe" went on, "and I haven't often known their trust to be misplaced. In most of our little operations two or more are usually engaged. One does the 'stalling,' you understand—that is, he engages the attention of the bank officials or of the bank messenger or whoever the party may be who is the object of our contemporary interest. The other or others at the proper time do the rest. Then the forces, usually separate, and sometimes circumstances make it necessary that they should scatter rather suddenly. It happens not infrequently that one man will have in his custody for days the whole proceeds of the operation; because there is no immediate opportunity for a safe meeting and a division of the partnership profits, but the division is properly made in time.

The man who happens to hold the goods does not 'wetch' on his pals. "It is not so very many years ago since I lost a little matter of \$20,000 through just such circumstances, but I am satisfied today that it wasn't because the other fellow wanted to cheat me out of that sum. It was my legitimate share of one of our joint enterprises, but unfortunately my friend died rather suddenly before we had a chance to get together. The nature of the transaction was such that I had no documentary proof of my claim which I could lay before his heirs and assigns, and so I just had to let it go to the account of profit and loss. Perhaps it is just as well. If I had recovered it at the time, it is not likely I would have it now. I suppose it would have gone, like all the rest has gone, to State Street in the account of wine, wig and cash in Paris. 'Easy come, easy go,' you know. That has always been my way. I have always liked to live well when I've been in luck."

"But speaking of New York, time was when it was the best seed cup in the world for birds of my feather. Wealthy old chaps used to deposit their government bonds at their banker's in an ordinary safe that had to be opened and closed a dozen times in the course of a day's business. That opened up all sorts of easy chances. But now, it is different. Safe deposit companies, with all their precautions of steel bars, fire and burglar proof vaults and guarded floors, have practically spoiled all those games for us here."

"In Paris they have not yet grown so wise. No end of business is done there carelessly in thousands of franc notes or notes of larger denomination, instead of in checks, and you may find it hard to believe, but the same men, if they are clever, can go right on operating there in the same district where they have succeeded time and again before. Why, when Allen and I were busy in Paris, we did not attempt to do anything except on the so-called settlement days, usually the first and second, the fifteenth and the last days of each month. Those were the days naturally when there was the most money going about. I suppose there are not less than 1,500 bank messengers and collection agents on such days going about the streets of Paris, and toward the close of business hours they get their leather pouches or dossiers pretty well filled up."

As often as not these messengers are either callow youngsters or feeble old men. It is comparatively easy to 'touch' them and to get away before they know what has happened, though often days must be spent in advance learning the habits of the chap you are after, 'seeing him home' at night, determining where his heavy collections are likely to be made and otherwise making ready for the final coup. Sometimes the messenger has carelessly neglected to fasten to his clothing the chain attached to the dossier in which his money is carried. In such a case the task is almost too easy. There is more true art, of course, in the game when you have to interest him in some way while either yourself or your friend empties the dossier so deftly that the innocent does not discover his loss until some time afterward.

"When the operation is directed, not against the street messenger, but against the inner sanctuary of some financial institution itself, the affair naturally becomes more intricate and plans must be so laid as to meet the conditions prevailing in each particular case. You can't always go on fooling them by the same old stall, not even in Paris, though, as I have said, Paris is the easiest place I know and I have been pretty much everywhere in Europe and America in my time."

Highbinder War.

San Francisco, June 27.—The Russ house is surrounded by Chinese pickets today, and it looks as though a highbinder war might break out at any moment right in the heart of the business section of the city. As a matter of fact, it did break out for a little while, but Charlie Newman, the proprietor of the Russ house, threw himself against a phalanx of twenty pig-tailed warriors and put them all to flight. Newman has a reputation for punching ability that many boxers might be proud of, and he put one of his adversaries to sleep for ten minutes.

Newman has had in his employ for nine years a Chinese boy named Joe Ha Phon. The boy is an excellent cook and a bright youngster. Newman thinks a great deal of him. Phon is Christianized and does not

believe in mixing up in highbinder rows. He has been pestered for a day or two by a number of Chinatown rowdies, who are endeavoring to force him to appear as a witness in a "murder" case. He has refused to accede to their demands, and from their actions today he believes they will try to take his life. Some twenty-five or thirty of the hatchet man came down out of Chinatown today and stationed themselves about the Russ house. About twenty of them went into the court back of the hotel, and whenever they caught sight of Phon they shouted menacing words to him. He declares they told him they would kill him unless he consented to be a witness.

Mr. Newman was apprised of the existing state of affairs. He went out into the court and ordered the highbinders away. One of them became insolent, and that was too much for Newman. A tight hook laid the pig-tailed picket low. Then Newman went for the others, and before he had finished he had five of them stretched on the ground. The rest of the crowd left as fast as they could get away, and those who had been thrashed did likewise. One of them, however, was "out" in earnest. He did not recover consciousness for ten minutes. Then Newman poured a bucket of ice water on him and he opened his eyes. With a scream of terror he scrambled to his feet and wobbled away.

Since that time the hotel has been surrounded. Fifteen Chinese, some of them murderous looking fellows, were counted in little groups this evening. One of them, when questioned, said that Phon was a necessary witness in a prosecution for conspiracy. "We want to secure his attendance in court," said the fellow, who was dapper and who spoke English quite well. "He is trying to escape service of a subpoena. If he does not come out, we will have him arrested."

"Kitty—Fred thinks the world of me," he says. "I'm the only girl he ever loved."

Bertha—That probably accounts for it, dear. But we mustn't blame his inexperience, you know. Boston Transcript.

Klondike Souvenirs, Getzman's, 200 photos, \$1.00. 125 Second ave.

BY HIS OWN HAND

Was Jury's Verdict Yesterday's Suicide

Geo. Weeks Shot Himself Because of Despondency—Charges Prove Foundationless

The coroner's jury called yesterday afternoon for the purpose of an inquest over the body of a man who had committed suicide, returned a verdict to the effect that the deceased came to his death by a bullet wound inflicted on his hand. The jury first viewed the body of the deceased, and then proceeded to the residence of the deceased, where they viewed the apartment and the room in which the tragedy was disclosed by the coroner's jury. The deceased was a man of about 40 years of age, and was a resident of the Yukon city on Bonanza street. He was a very reticent man, and there was no exchange of ideas relative to their business relations between them. Neither was his father's affairs. The deceased was a man of business, and was dependent over some of his affairs. He was not a man of knowledge interested in any of the business of the city, but he was interested in some farm in Vancouver island and he had practically come to the understanding that his father was to take care of the business of the farm. This father had hinted at taking his life saying that he was tired of this kind of life and he had never considered that he would do anything of the kind. When his father returned the deceased had taken him to the place where he had stayed. They were always pleasant and never been any angry words between them as far as he could remember. Vincent Nitigale, a partner in the business, was the next called and stated that the deceased was not a man of business affairs. There were always angry words between them, but they were never serious. The deceased seemed a grievance against the deceased which consisted of five months' wages that they were owed him out of some money which the deceased had taken to Australia. As the deceased was formed to do business in the country they decided not to deal but said that if assignment was provided they would keep him up. The deceased was not a man of business, but he was a man of business. He was the driver and the deceased was the driver of the business. He was the driver of the business. He was the driver of the business. He was the driver of the business.

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