

A CRIME-HARDENED WOMAN

Is Laura Hilton, Known to the World as Annie Miller.

Daughter of an Old Southern Family, She Married a Scamp and Became Wicked.

Laura Hilton, alias Annie Miller, is, so far as the police are aware, the only woman burglar who works solely by herself known in the annals of crime in this country. She is now in Moyamensing prison awaiting trial. Her story, so far as it has yet been traced, or she can be induced to tell it, is an amazing mixture of romance, mystery and crime. A few nights ago, says the Philadelphia North American, a woman was found apparently freezing in an out-house in the rear of a West Philadelphia dwelling. She was taken to the sixteenth district station, where she gave the name of Laura Hilton. Here she entertained the policemen with marvelous tales of her experiences as a tramp in every part of the United States. Her stories were told with so much verisimilitude and circumstance and displayed such evident knowledge of the numerous states described that they would have deceived the very elect. There seemed to be nothing suspicious about the woman, and she would have been discharged on Monday, as she doubtless had been many times before, but for Special Officer George A. Martin of the Manayunk district.

The residents of this district last fall were harassed and plundered for weeks by a mysterious burglar, who carried away dozens of small articles of more or less value, usually women's clothing or jewelry. Martin investigated these cases carefully and came to the conclusion that the burglar was a woman, but he could not convince any one else of this apparently improbable theory. When he heard, however, of the woman found in the outhouse in West Philadelphia, he remembered the burglaries in his district and had her transferred to Manayunk. Then he visited some of the families who were robbed last fall, and they called at the station and examined Laura and her belongings.

There was a hearing before Magistrate Stratton afterward, and Laura was committed without bail to Moyamensing prison for trial on a charge of burglary. Special Officer Martin took her first to the central station, where she was photographed, and thence to the prison. Laura Hilton, or Annie Miller, which is probably her real name, is 33 years of age and is very prepossessing. She is about the medium height, with a slender, graceful, girlish figure. Her hair is intensely black, and she has the big, melting black eyes of the creole type, a long oval face and very regular features, on which there are no marks of dissipation.

Her method of working, from which she seldom varied, was to enter a shed or outhouse in the rear of a residence and remain there until a favorable opportunity offered for entering the house. She was not a really expert burglar, because she could not pick a lock or open a fastened window, though in one known case in Manayunk she drew back a kitchen bolt with a baton and so gained entrance. She took desperate chances at this sort of business until her last arrest, but her sex and her quick wit always saved her. In some cases she was repeatedly seen peering about by the very people she afterward robbed, but they never suspected that she was the guilty one.

She has made Philadelphia her headquarters for at least three years, but where she has lived during that time is not yet known, for all the several addresses she gave to the police proved false. She was in the habit of making trips to surrounding towns and always returned with plunder. There is circumstantial evidence that she visited Newark, Patterson and Camden within a year past, and there is no doubt that her excursions extended to many other towns also. The police expect that the seizure of the two trunks now at Manayunk station will solve the mystery of at least a score of burglaries which have puzzled them for a long time.

Laura Hilton, or Annie Miller, has a history which, if fully written, would read like a three volume novel. Young, beautiful, refined, she fell in love with a fascinating scamp, and, against the wishes of her parents, who are of a good old southern family, eloped with him. Probably there was a marriage, certainly there were trouble and disgrace and finally crime. It was the old story—the man sinking lower and lower in crime,

and the woman clinging to him through all and in spite of all. Finally he became a professional criminal and the woman his "pal." Then came arrest and conviction for the man, and the woman was left to fight the world alone. She followed only too well the plan of battle that had been taught her.

Alaska's Stream of Gold.

It is now estimated, by mining engineers and experts, that the gold product of the Cape Nome district in Alaska will amount this year to \$20,000,000 and next year to \$30,000,000. This is not the estimate of prospectors, or of men working in the interest of railway and steamship companies, but of mining engineers of the largest experience and highest reputation. A great many seemingly, extravagant stories come from the prospectors in the Cape Nome district, but the figures given by these enthusiasts do not go beyond the reports of product or of the estimates of those who have made careful investigation.

It is believed that the auriferous strip in which gold is found has a width of not less than thirty miles, stretching back from high-water mark, and a length of 300 miles. Even if there should be no discovery of quartz or gold-bearing rock there will be enough of placer mining to yield at least \$30,000,000 a year. But the engineers believe that the ledge from which this gold, held in the sands, has been washed will be found, and that then the United States and Alaska will add to the valuable gold of the world from eighty to one hundred million dollars a year.

This stream of gold coming into the country will be of benefit to all the people. It will reach the poor man as well as the capitalist. It will help the farmer as well as the manufacturer. And yet, when Alaska was annexed in 1868, there was as much opposition from anti-expansionists of that day as there is now from the same class to the annexation of the Philippines. It has been demonstrated that Alaska is rich in other minerals besides gold; that its fishing industry will be greater than that of any other part of the United States, and that in fifteen or twenty years there may be such development of agricultural and other resources as will present Alaska as one of our most valuable possessions.

When California was annexed it produced less than \$1,000,000 annually in gold. Two years after the state was admitted it produced \$50,000,000 a year, in four years \$60,000,000 a year, and in five years \$65,000,000 a year. The effect of this enormous production of gold in American territory, a total in fifty years of about \$1,200,000,000, was almost revolutionary in its character. Senators and congressmen who had for years fought against the extension of the United States to the Pacific coast were dumb in the face of the tremendous development. It is now believed that Alaska will play a part not unlike that played by California as a gold-producing district. This will carry a great population to the territory. It will stimulate the development of all its resources. It will greatly increase our influence in the North Pacific.

Taken in connection with our possession in Hawaii in the mid-Pacific, with our control of an island of the Samoan group in the South Pacific, and the Philippines in the Asiatic Pacific, the development of Alaska will more than fulfill the prophecy of Secretary Seward as to the new era of commercial activity on the great ocean between America and Asia, with the United States as the dominant power. All this will happen unless at the turning point in the destiny of the nation the Republicans in congress turn their backs on the expansion policy. —Chicago Inter-Ocean.

The Bursting Shell.

A common shell for a field gun is in shape and size very like an ordinary pint-bottle; the head, however, is dome-shaped, so that if the neck of the bottle be knocked off the similarity is greater. The metal of the shell may be either cast-iron or steel. If the former is used, there is less room for powder, because the weakness of the cast iron necessitates thicker sides to the shell than if it was made of steel. Cast iron, however, breaks up well. What is required in a shell is that it should stand a heavy pressure from outside safely, and yet burst readily into a large number of pieces.

When a shell bursts the action is by no means instantaneous. After the ignition of the fuse the bursting charge of the shell takes some little time to develop sufficient pressure to burst the shell. This is owing to the comparatively deliberate way in which gunpowder behaves on being ignited. There are many explosives that detonate in one-millionth of a second or thereabouts, but a shell charged with gunpowder will take some five-thousandths of a second to burst. The time does not appear long; but if the shell be traveling

at 1000 foot-seconds, it will have moved five feet from the point of impact before it bursts. If the velocity be as much as 2000 foot-seconds, the shell will not burst until it has gone ten feet from the point struck.

"The bursting of a shell will not in itself drive the fragments very far or very fast. The injuries caused by the pieces of a shell are mainly due to the velocity with which it was traveling before it burst. Thus a 'spent' shell from a field-gun bursting on the surface, though it throws a good many fragments along the ground, does not give them much energy, and only the large pieces are likely to cause serious wounds. Larger shells are more formidable because the fragments are larger; they do not travel with much more velocity than those from a small shell." —Ex.

A Little too Sensitive.

This cold, hard world has few souls as sensitive as a young man who killed himself in Paris the other day. His home was in Lyons, and his father had given to him 30,000 francs, or \$6000, to establish a branch office of their business in Paris. After he had been in Paris for several days his letters home ceased, and he disappeared from the little circle of friends that he had made. He had seemed a quiet, steady fellow, and he had chosen his new associates with discretion. When they missed him, they wrote to his father, supposing that he knew where his son was. The father, however, was ignorant of the young man's whereabouts, and the police were summoned and a search made of his apartments. On the bed in his room was found his dead body, with a note by his side, which said:

"I have lost 25,000 francs of the sum that my father intrusted to me, and as I would not have it believed that I have squandered the money I am killing myself." This furnished a clue, but nothing more could be learned for several days. Finally, when searching the rooms for the young man's property, his pocketbook, with the 25,000 francs, was found in a corner of the bureau drawer, where he had put it and then forgotten.

Kruger's Pegged Boots.

This is a story of Mrs. Ellis, the wife of a shoemaker-sometime resident in Pretoria. President Kruger once went to their shop for a pair of boots. "The old man (meaning Mr. Kruger) understood English well enough," said Mrs. Ellis, "but he did not choose to speak it, and while my husband was taking the measurement he would not say a word except through his secretary. 'Now, what will you have?' asked my husband, hand-sewn or rivetted?" Mr. Kruger said something in Dutch, and the secretary interpreted, "his honor will have which ever kind wears longest." And so," adds Mrs. Ellis, "Jack pegged them, because that was the simplest and the easiest thing to do." Apparently Mr. Ellis had adapted his handiwork nicely to the peculiar requirements of his august employer; for when, some time later, he won three gold medals for boot making at a Transvaal exhibition, Oom Paul sent him a bottle of whisky and a box of cigars.

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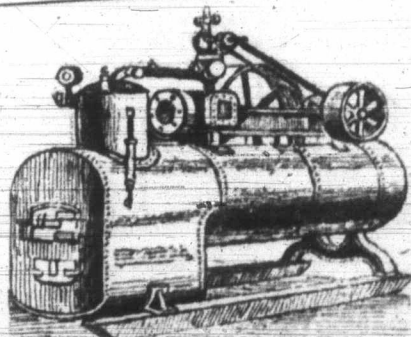
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