

Burglar Experiences

It is a mistake and a "professional" to us the other day, to suppose that we have any difficulty in getting into houses we wish to "visit."

Burglars can get into any ordinary house with ease. In many cases it is only necessary to break a pane of glass and thrust a head in and turn the knob of a door or move the fastening of a window. An ordinary jimmy will open any wooden door or window. To force open any of the ordinary iron fastenings that are placed outside of dwellings is but the work of a few moments with modern burglar tools. Bars are pulled apart with slow and powerful Jack screws that are almost strong enough to raise buildings. The iron framework of an ordinary iron gate is easily displaced with a jimmy.

Ordinary locks are not the slightest protection against burglars. Simple skeleton keys will open common locks. If a key is left in a door it is the easiest thing for a burglar to put a wire through the keyhole and, working from the outside of a door, turn the key on the inside. This is a common practice with hotel thieves, and to guard against it bolts have come into general use. But even bolts can be pushed back by expert burglars. The latest plan of doing this is by working through a keyhole with a piece of steel wire and a strong cord. The location of the bolt is obtained either by observation in the daytime or by exploration at night. The skillful use of this steel wire and cord makes a strong bow, the string of which is used to shove back a bolt. This instrument is sometimes called "The Widdle," which is the burglar's way of saying widow. It is one of the various methods of working at the door locks through a keyhole. The modern chain bolt is easily opened by a burglar using a twisted wire. Of course, the chain bolt is not essentially a night fastening. It is mainly intended to hold a door while the person inside opens it to see who is outside, and as a precaution against being taken by surprise by having a door suddenly pushed inward by an intruder.

Burglars can push back an ordinary window catch by inserting a thin case knife. The newest window catches are arranged so as to prevent this. Fastenings on wooden window shutters or blinds are easily burglarized by means of boring and sawing. The professional burglars have an old-time method of breaking window panes without noise. They first paste over the pane to be cracked a complete covering of paper. Then when the pane is cracked by a slow, steady pressure, which is quite as effective as a blow, there is only a sort of runching noise and no falling of glass. This is really an old method, and particularly applicable to most of the front doors in present use. It seems to be the universal custom to light front halls with side lights, every one of which is a constant invitation to the burglar to come at his leisure, break one side light, thrust his hand in the opening, and turn the knob or key. This is easily done, so as not to alarm a sleeping household, by taking advantage of the noise of a passing vehicle. It is tacitly admitted that no ordinary door under a front step is safe, because a burglar once there can work without observation at his leisure. Therefore most houses have iron gates to their basement doors.

A good deal of burglars' work is done by means of inside confederates, dishonest servants, or employees, whose part of the work consists in furnishing easy access to the skilled burglar, who does not wish to run the risk of detection while breaking into a household, but is able, once in, to break into a safe or a strong box. In such cases care is taken to remove suspicion from the inside confederate by making some marks on a door or window to look as if entrance had been forced that way.

In city houses the burglars often receive material aid to obtain entrance by upper-story windows by means of architectural adornments. In many cases the rough stones, the corbels, the carvings, the projections, and other ornaments of house fronts from convenient ladders by which burglars climb to upper floors and enter easily at points which are always less guarded than the entrances to lower floors. Once inside, the burglar makes his way first to the front door and prepares for easy access in case of detection.

It might be supposed that a very efficient protection to a closed door or shutter would be a cross bar inside of wood or iron. Burglars, however, have a simple method of removing such an obstruction. They first locate the bar by boring, and then either lift it out of its socket or saw it apart.

The plan most generally adopted now to

prevent burglary of houses that contain large amounts of valuable property is to place them in full light where watchmen or policemen passing may have a full view from the outside day and night by means of eye-balls in the shutters, or where there are not, in use, through a certain part of the shop window. Another protection is by means of electric alarms. But the burglars have begun to study electricity, too, and one of their latest devices is a method of firing the wires so that no alarm will be sounded. The principal of the alarm is generally the breaking of a connecting wire. In some cases the burglar has managed to get along without even starting the electric alarm.

The general field for bank burglars is now in country towns, and the most successful bank burglars are in country residences, where interference from the outside is less likely. But one way and another, the best known burglars have come to much grief. They may succeed for a time, but they invariably fall over a trifling error of judgment and meet with their deserts.

In Canada and the States it is both a presumption of law and the experience of fact that burglars work with the intention to commit murder if necessary to enable them to escape. There, a burglar caught in the act may be justifiably killed, and there are occasional instances of sturdy householders taking burglars with success. Police authorities are unanimous that the best way to tackle a burglar is to shoot him before he knows you have seen him, or to give an alarm so that assistance may come and help to catch him. Generally the burglar will drop his plunder and run if he can.

Noise is the best protection against burglars. A barking dog, a crying child, a stumble in the dark, a heavy walk, a late comer into a house, and occasionally a burglar alarm, will make a burglar drop his awag and ran. The trouble with burglar alarms is that they often go off without apparent provocation when there are no burglars about the premises, and thus unnecessarily terrorize people at unseasonable hours of the night. There have been some sad cases where honest people have been mistaken and shot for burglars.

Do Not be Anxious.

It is very hard to carry one's self easily and happily through such a period of sickness and such an increase in mortality as the present, taking careful precautions, yet keeping free from anxiety. The reason why it is difficult is, that we do not realize for what we are to trust God. We are apt to trust him to do for us what we wish; and then, as soon as it seems likely that he is about to do something different, all our trust, and all the happiness and comfort we draw from our trust, fail us. Instead, we ought to trust him to do what is best. If one can truly realize that our own desires and instinctive hopes and wishes cover only a fraction of what is really best for us, and that the other and more important portion is secured by our Father's ordering and disposing our affairs as he sees to be best, against our hopes and wishes, there is no longer any anxiety. There is suffering and disappointment in life, but no anxiousness.

If one can fully feel, day by day: Life and death are both good in their time and place; the blessing of life, while it ought to last, is to be secured and protected to me by my inherent and instinctive love of life, and my natural care and caution to preserve it; the blessing of death is to be secured to me, when it is time; by the wisdom and love of God; which is to bring it upon me in spite of my reluctance—then there is no longer any anxiety as to life or death. So, if we can feel that health and sickness are both good in their time—health as an enjoyment and means of labor, sickness as a discipline and means of growth; the blessing of health, while it ought to last, to be secured to me by my love of it and care for it, by my precautions in health and the remedies I employ when sick; the blessing of sickness to be secured to me by the love and power of God, pledged to bring sickness upon me whenever I need it, notwithstanding all my care and precautions—there is no longer any anxiety about sickness.

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