

He was an inveterate gambler, reckless in his wagers, and facing the tiger of fortune with a courage that would have been worthy of a better cause. Frequently, when his "luck," as he called it, was upon him, he would win large sums of money, which he would afterwards squander with the liberality and abandon of a prince.

During the years of the war he became quite noted as a pick-pocket, confining his operations principally to the cities of Philadelphia, New York and Washington, and it was during this time that, in company with a "pal" of his, he entered the service of the Provost Guard then on duty in the capital. Acting in this capacity, and dressed in the uniform of United States soldiers, they would be detailed for duty at the theatres and various places of amusement in the city. Washington being very much crowded during this important period of the country's existence, the theatres were largely patronized, and during the opening hours, when the vast crowds were pushing and jostling each other in their eager efforts to gain admission, these soldier pickpockets reaped a plentiful harvest and invariably escaped detection.

Tiring of the confinements of a soldier life, he left the service by deserting from his regiment and came to Philadelphia. While in that city he became an actor in a very peculiar episode. Watching for the arrival of the trains at the Baltimore Depot, and selecting an individual from the number of disembarking passengers, as a victim, he soon relieved him of a rather portentous-looking wallet, which he congratulated himself would prove a very valuable addition to his income.

Upon reaching a place of safety, he examined his booty and found that, instead of being filled with money, as he had confidently expected, the pocket-book contained voluminous papers, which proved conclusively that the gentleman whom he had relieved was an accredited agent of the Southern Confederacy. He also found that many of the documents, while compromising the individual himself, would prove of incalculable value to the United States. As for money, all that he found was a trifling sum scarcely worth mentioning.

Determining, however, to turn this pocket-book to advantage, he traced the gentleman whom he had relieved, to the La Pierre House, where he had engaged quarters.