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HE GOT AHEAD.

I am Beset by Three Desperate Burglars, but Luck Helps Me.

In the fall of 1886 I was employed as a clerk in a general store at a cross-roads in southern Indiana. The store, a church, and a blacksmith shop, with two residences, made up the buildings, and the families of the merchant, and the blacksmith were the only residents. The country about was thickly settled of the however, and trade was always good. Before the merchant engaged me he announced that I would have to sleep in the store's nights, and that unless I had pluck enough to defend the place against marauders he did not want me at any price. He showed me a shotgun, a revolver, and a spring gun, which were used, or on hand to be used, to defend the place, and the windows were protected with stout blinds and the doors by double locks. The close of the war had drifted a bad population into Indiana. The highways were full of tramps and there were hundreds of men who had determined to make a living by some other means than labor. Several attempts had been made to rob the store, and it had come to that pass that no clerk wanted to sleep there alone.

The merchant seemed satisfied with the answers I gave him, and on a certain Monday morning I went to work. That same night a store about four miles away was broken into and robbed and the clerk seriously wounded. Two nights later three horses were stolen in our neighborhood. At the end of the week a farmer who was on his way home from our store was robbed on the highway. If I had not been a light sleeper from habit, these occurrences would have tended to prevent too lengthy dreams as I lay in my little bedroom at the front of the second story. The revolver was always placed under my pillow and the shotgun stood with reach. The spring gun was set about midway of the lower floor. It was a double-barrelled shotgun, each barrel containing a big charge of buckshot, and the man who kicked the string and discharged the weapon would never know what hurt him.

It did not seem possible that any one could break into the store without arousing me. There was no door to my room, and after the people in the neighborhood had gone to bed I could hear the slightest noise in the store. I had looked the place over for a week spot, and had failed to find it, but my own confidence came near proving my destruction. I should have told you, in describing the store, that just over the spot where we set the spring gun was an opening through which we hoisted and lowered such goods as were stored for a time on the second floor. When not in use this opening was covered by a trap door. Toward evening, on the tenth day of my clerkship, I hoisted up a lot of pairs and tubs, and had just finished when trade became so brisk that I was called to wait upon customers. Later on I saw that I had left the trap door open, and I said to myself that I would let it go until I went to bed.

The store had the only burglar-proof safe for miles around, and it was customary for the farmer who had a hundred dollars or so to leave it with us. He received an envelope in which to inclose it, and he could take out and put in as he liked. On this evening four or five farmers came in to deposit, and, as I afterward figured up, we had about \$1,500 in the safe.

There were two strange faces in the crowd that evening. One belonged to a roughly-dressed, evil-eyed man, who announced himself as a drover, and the other to a professional tramp. I gave the latter a piece of tobacco and some crackers and cheese and he soon went away, and we were so busy up to 9 o'clock that I did not give the drover much attention. When we came to shut up the store he had gone from my mind altogether. We counted up the cash, made some charges in the day book, and it was about 10 o'clock when the merchant left. I was tired out, and I took a candle and made the circuit of the store, set the spring gun, and went to bed. I had to pass within six feet of the trap door as I went to my bedroom, but I did not see it. It was a rather chilly night in October, and we had no fires yet, and as I got under the blankets the warmth was so grateful that I soon fell asleep. It was the first night I had gone to bed without thinking of robbers and wondering how I should act in case they came in. I did not know when I fell asleep. I suddenly found myself half upright in bed, and there was an echo in the store, as if the fall of something had aroused me. It was 1 o'clock, and I had been asleep almost three hours. Leaning on my elbow, I strained my ears to catch the slightest sound, and after a minute I heard a movement down stairs. While I could not say what it was, a sort of instinct told me that it was made by some human being.

Everything on the street was as silent as the grave. My window curtain was up, and I could see that the sky had thickened up and was very black. I did not wait for the noise to be repeated. I was just as sure that some one was in the store as if I had already seen him, and I crept softly out of bed, drew on my trousers, and moved out into the big room, having the revolver in my hand. There were no doors at the head of the stairs. I intended to go there and listen down the stairway. As I was moving across the room, which was then pretty clear of goods as far as the trap door, I suddenly recollected this opening and changed my course to reach it. It was terribly dark in the room, and one unfamiliar with the place would not have dared to move a foot. Half way to the trap I got down on hands and knees, and as I reached the opening, I settled down on my stomach. There was a dim light down stairs. That settled the fact that some one was in the store. After a minute I heard whispers, then the movement of feet, then a certain sound which located the intruders to a foot. They were at the safe in the front of the store. I drew myself forward and looked down the opening. I could see a lighted candle and two or three dark figures at the safe, and I could hear the combination being worked. My first thought was to drop my hand down and open fire in their direction, but I remembered that we had so many articles hanging up that no bullet had a chance of reaching to the safe. I was wondering what to do when I heard one of the men whisper: "It's all a— nonsense. We might work here a week and not hit it."

"But I told you to bring the tools and you wouldn't," protested another. "Oh, dry up!" put in a third voice. "What we want to do is to go up and bring that counter-topper down and make him open the box."

"I'll give the cursed thing a few mere trials," said the first man, and I heard him working away again. My eyes could not have told me the number of robbers, but my ears had. There were three of them, and they were no doubt desperate and determined men. They spoke of bringing me down to open the safe as if no resistance was anticipated or taken into account. Indeed, they might well reason that they had me at their mercy. The rain was now falling, the night was very dark, and a pistol shot in the store could not have been heard in either of the dwellings. If they had reflected that I might be armed, they would have offset it with the fact that I was a boy of eighteen with a girl's face and probably a girl's nerve. I don't deny that I was a bit rattled, and that my lip would quiver in spite of me, but I was at the same time fully determined to protect the store if it cost me my life. How to get at the fellows was what bothered me, but that trouble was soon solved.

"There," whispered the man at the combination as he let go of it, "I won't fool here another minute. That kid knows the combination, we can make him work. Come on!" They were coming up stairs. The best place for me would be at the head of the stairway. The stairs had a half turn in them, and I would fire upon the first man who came within range. I heard the men coming back at the stairway, and my nerve gave way. It wasn't from cowardice, but the knowledge that I was to kill a human being upset me. I decided to retreat to my room, and, if they persisted in coming that far, I would shoot. They had rubbed on their feet, but they came up stairs without trying very hard to prevent making a noise. The one who came first had the candle, and, as he got to the head of the stairway, I saw a knife in his other hand. They made no delay in approaching my room, and, with a great effort, I braced myself for what I saw must happen. They could not see me until within three or four feet of the door, and their first intimation that I was out of bed was when they heard me call out: "Stop, or I'll shoot!"

I had them covered with the weapon, and for fifteen seconds there was dead silence. Then they got a plan. The man with the candle dashed it on the floor, and I suppose they meant to dash in on me in the dark, but I checked them off by opening fire. They then either meant to retreat down stairs or toward the rear of the floor, for I saw the three together moving off, and fired at their dim figures. Three seconds later there was a great shout of horror, followed by a tremendous report of the double-barrelled spring gun, and then there was absolute silence, I think I stood in the door, shaking like a leaf, for fully three minutes before the silence was broken by a groan. Then it came to me that the robbers had fallen through the open door upon the cord leading to the gun. I struck a match, lighted my own candle, and, going to the opening, saw three bodies lying below. Running back to the bedroom to recharge my revolver, I then went down stairs to investigate. It was as I suspected. The three had pitched down together. The top of one's head had been blown off by the shot, a second had a hole in his chest as big as your fist, while the third, who was responsible for the groans, was severely wounded in both legs. It was three months before he could be put on trial and he then got four years in prison. The whole thing was a put-up job. The "drover" was a Chicago burglar called "Clawhammer Dick," and he had hidden himself in the store that night, and then let his pals in by the back door. They had a horse and wagon in the rear of the building, and the plan was to get at the money in goods as well as to rob the store.

A bit of carelessness on my part not only saved the store and probably my life, but wiped out a very desperate gang.

"Yes," sighed the young wife, "I married a paragon, and I wish I hadn't." "Why?" asked her friend. "Because he reads all his work to me before he puts it in the paper."

Base Ball Notes.

Bingham, the Harvard pitcher, was guilty of a most creditable act in becoming a professional and trying to conceal his identity by assuming the name of Brewster. There is nothing disgraceful or discreditable in a collegian becoming a professional ball player, but nothing could be more despicable than his attempt to conceal his actions.

Frank Bancroft is once more freed from baseball bonds, and a happy man he is. His condition at Philadelphia was indeed a most unhappy one, and he may well pity and sympathize with his successor. Frank is just now for the polo season to materialize just now. He would have been a good man for Indianapolis.

If the Chicago don't win that piece of hunting they call a pennant, it won't be their fault. They are in superb condition and are doing most brilliant work. There is no captain like Anson, and he has got his men into superb working order. They easily won two out of the four games in Detroit, so that out of the six games played there this season, they have won four. They are the champions of the country. Von der Ahe, and "don't you forget it."

Two professional leagues are practically defunct—the Eastern and Pennsylvania. No wonder. They could not stand large salaries and small crowds. There is every probability that the St. Louis Browns will come into the league next season. They would be a great card, and therefore the percentage system ought to be adopted. The club has grown to be too strong for the American Association, a fact that cannot be gained. While no one contends that they would be able to outdo the league clubs everyone admits that they would be in the race for the championship and make it very warm for the leaders. They would be a welcome addition and a strengthening one to the league.

Just after everyone was congratulating himself that the Boston won't go West in their full force, Joe Hornung comes back sick. Luckily, the nine has a stronger batsman than he, though not so brilliant a fielder, in Sutton; and until Joe gets well, the change won't cripple the team much.

The umpire made it very hot for the Boston in New York. There is but one league umpire who is strictly A1, and his name is Herman Doerscher. Powers is good, but is inclined to home umpiring. The others are absolutely no good.

This calls to mind the triumph of the Portland club over umpire Phinney. It is a well known fact that the fate of the New England umpire whom Phinney cannot control is sealed. Phinney was a first class, impartial, level-headed umpire, and his dismissal by the league showed but too plainly the animus that controls the deliberations of this organization.

The legislation in regard to umpires is woefully weak. The lucky or rather unlucky incumbents of the position get no consideration from public, press or managers of clubs. Deals in the New England league concerning changes in the staff are frequent. The legislation is not only weak but it is corrupt.

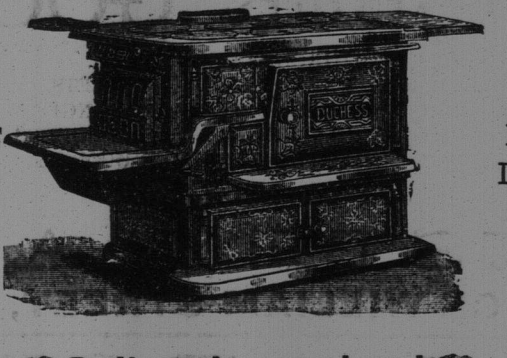
It seems strange that all the leagues find such trouble with umpires. The plan that has been repeatedly advocated in these columns is worth a trial. Appoint a man like Bob Ferguson in charge of the staff of umpires and let him be responsible for the supply of good men. The plan is worth trying. It can't result half as badly as the present one of home umpiring.

Buck Ewing is succeeding very well as captain of the New Yorks. The club seems to get along much better with him than it did with Ward, but most of the games thus far played have been on home grounds and a fairer test will be the work of the club on Western fields.

What Morrill lacks is life and vivacity, push and aggressiveness. He has excellent judgment, however, and isn't rattle-brained like Kelly, nor does he, like the latter, lose his head. At times Kelly will act wholly unreasonably and ungentlemanly. Morrill is always the gentleman. Still, if a club wants to win games of ball, a Michael Kelly captain is what is wanted.

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Advertisement for RHEUMATISM. A WONDERFUL CURE! Text includes: 'Messrs. HANINGTON BROS: Early in February, 1886, while in St. John, N. B., I had a severe attack of Rheumatism, was treated by an eminent Physician and with great care was enabled to come home in about two weeks time, after which time I grew worse and suffered dreadfully. We did everything possible to control the disease, but without success. I then had good medical advice and treatment which at times afforded temporary relief, but the disease lurked in my system, and shifted from one side to the other, in fact it permeated by whole being. For more than two months I was unable to get to my room or retire without assistance. I chanced to see an advertisement of your "Scientific" Rheumatism Cure, and I ordered a package and when I received it my limbs were much swollen, my feet four inches of the internal medicine and three applications of the ointment, the swelling had all disappeared. In five days the Rheumatism had completely gone, could walk about as well as ever I did. Have had no return of the disease since having passed through the autumn and winter to this date, January 6th, 1886, with its climate change. I can recommend your "Scientific" Rheumatism Cure, and hope that all who are affected with that most painful disease Rheumatism, will not hesitate to give "Scientific" a trial. Any person wishing to know more of the particulars, or doubting this statement given can write to Mrs. W. H. Moore, South Farmington, Annapolis Co., N. S., who will cheerfully give them all information. MRS. W. H. MOORE, South Farmington, Annapolis Co., N. S., Nova Scotia.'

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