

The boy who got it used to watch him in the afternoon, close the door, and retire into the back-room; then jump over the stall-board—there being no glass-sashes to prevent his entrance—and sneak down on his hands and knees, until he saw an opportunity of wrenching the lock; for which purpose he always carried a *prising* instrument in his pocket. The same boy three times carried off a charity-box, containing thirty pounds each time, from a house near Greenwich. He had ascertained the time it was brought, and for what purpose to a gentleman's house; and he laid his plans so well, that after they had lost two, and when every caution would have been expected on the part of the owner, he succeeded in stealing the box a third time.

"Their usual plan is to note those shops where bulks of money are kept in tills, or desks, in a front shop or parlour: next, to ascertain the movements, of the family; and if they find, by continual watching, that the people of the shop retire at certain times to meals, or in the evening to the parlour for comfort, one will softly open the door, letting in a boy, who crawls on his hands and knees round the counter, and takes the contents of the till: the persons in the parlour; probably all the time keeping their eyes on the shop, but never think of rising up to look on the ground. These are denominated lob-sneaks, and their practice has been very successful. By timing their attack, and selecting the right places, I have been assured of 200*l.* and 300*l.* in a week being obtained by one man and a boy. In this case, as in the other, the man's risk of detection is very little; he opens the door, and stands ready to favour the boy's escape, should any alarm be given, but touches no money until they are in a place of security: and it will be seen that the Old Bailey calendar abounds with the trials of the boy lob-sneaks, but no men, although in every case a man has been concerned in the robbery.

"There is a boy now in the penitentiary who was under sentence of death for stealing fifty-three pounds from a till, with which he got off. When he knew where the money was, he would be sure almost of it: such was his talent and determination. In this latter case, the money was stolen from a corn-chandler's till. The boy went into the shop, and, by asking for some article, contrived to send the master of the shop to some little distance from the counter, when he suddenly reached forth, took the money, and ran off; his confederates being near the door. The loser of the cash ran after the boy; when he

was, as it were, thrown down by accident, and the boy got off. As they were afterwards going down the Hackney-road, one of his companions called out in a joke, "Ding! Ding!" meaning, throw away! throw away! This was done to alarm him, and have a laugh at his expense. The boy, however took the call as being a serious one, and threw the bag and its contents in a garden, and ran off; finding his mistake, he went back at night to recover it, when he was taken into custody; the owner, in the interval, having been found.

"Every lodging-house is a nucleus, which would in a town of this magnitude, train up a whole nation of young sneaks and pick-pockets; yet there are our *quidnuncs* standing in the midst of the scene, inquiring for the schools where these boys are taught to steal, and talking about prison contamination."—*Schoolmaster's Experience in Newgate.*

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AND

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