

This brings me again to the main part of my story.

Just after noon of a hot July day in the year mentioned, a gentleman named H. E. Hunt, then keeping a small general store in, and now a wealthy merchant at, Dundee, sent word to my shop that he wished to see me immediately at his place.

I was busy at my work, bareheaded, barefooted, and having no other clothing on my body than a pair of blue denim overalls and a coarse hickory shirt, my then almost invariable costume; but I started down the street at once, and had hardly reached Hunt's store before the proprietor and myself were joined by a Mr. I. C. Bosworth, then another storekeeper of the village, and now a retired capitalist of Elgin, Illinois, the place previously referred to.

"Come in here, Allan," said Mr. Hunt, in a rather mysterious manner, leading the way to the rear of the store, while Bosworth and myself followed; "we want you to do a little job in the detective line."

"Detective line?" I replied, laughing; "why, my line is the cooper business. What do I know about that sort of thing?"

"Never mind now," said Mr. Bosworth, seriously, "we know you can do what you want done. You helped break up the 'coney men' and horse-thieves on 'Bogus Island,' and we are sure you can do work of this sort if you only will do it."

Now the reference to breaking up the gang of "coney men" and horse-thieves on "Bogus Island," calls for an explanation.

I was actually too poor to purchase outright a wheel-barrow load of hoop-poles, or staves, and was consequently compelled to cut my own hoop-poles and split my own staves. In the pursuit of this work I had found a little island in the Fox River, a few miles above Dundee, and but a few rods above the little post town of Algonquin, where poles were both plentiful and of the best quality; and one day while busy there I had stumbled upon some smouldering embers and other traces indicating that the little island had been made quite common use of. There was no picnicking in those days—people had more serious matters to attend to—and it required no great keenness to conclude that no honest men were in the habit of occupying the place. As the country was then infested with coin-counterfeiters and desperate horse-thieves, from the information I gave, the sheriff of that county (Kane) was able to