

Hollow Ash... Hall

BY MARGARET BLOUNT.

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)

"You will find her the greatest coward of us all," she observed. "But if you really want to hear the horrible sound, open the door."

He did so. Every one was silent; and through the hall came plainly enough the rocking of the cradle and the low sound of the mother's song.

Mr. Crowley stood for a moment at the door; then he shut it, and came back to the fireside looking just a little pale.

"I wonder if it is a hoax," he observed, after a short pause.

"That can hardly be. For we all saw the room the first night we came, and there was no one there, though the cradle rocked all the time. It is not horrible to have to live in the house with it?"

"Indeed it is; and I question if it is right for you to do so. You must make my uncle go as soon as you can."

"I am sure that it is easier said than done," sighed Mrs. Cowley.

"I know what I would do," observed Marjorie.

"What, my love?"

"Frighten him."

"But the cradle has failed to do that."

"Then I would give him something worse than a cradle. If hearing things would not scare him, I should be inclined to try what seeing things would do."

Rose clasped her hands delightedly.

"I have it, Cousin Charles. If you and Marjorie will help me, we can manage it easily."

"How?"

"You must be ghosts."

"What nonsense you do talk, Rose!" said Catharine.

"It is not nonsense. If you or I undertake to play the part, papa would see through it at once, because he would miss us. But he knows nothing of Charles' return, and he has never seen Marjorie. They would both make capital ghosts."

"There is something in it," observed Mr. Crowley. "And if you will leave it to us we will make my uncle very willing to go. But you must stow us out of sight before he comes."

"The turret-chamber is ready, and a fire is lit there," said Mrs. Cowley.

"But that is the room said to be haunted."

"Oh, never mind! But what knock is that?"

"Good gracious! It is Mr. Crowley. Run, Rose! get your cousins up into the room before we let him in. Here take the cloak or he will be sure to see it. We will send you up some supper, Charles. Rose shall come; but for mercy's sake, be quick now!"

With much suppressed merriment and laughter, the two ghosts were got out of the way, and were safe in the turret-room long before Mrs. Macarthy had let in her master, and was fuming over what he termed her "stupid Irish delay."

CHAPTER X.

Mrs. Cowley looked exceedingly guilty when her lord and master entered; but he, being full of his own business, did not observe it. He laid aside his wrappings, called for hot water and the spirit case, and sat down by the fire with an air of a man who had earned his repose and meant thoroughly to enjoy it.

"Have you been alarmed in any way since I went, Mrs. C.?" he asked when his toddy was thoroughly mixed.

"No, my dear," she replied briskly; which was a gross fib, as we know, because the unexpected arrival of her nephew and his wife had nearly sent her into a fit of hysterics. But that was only one of the white lies that are perfectly allowable, and even praiseworthy, when the head of the household is in question. If British matrons hesitated long over a "taradiddle," there would be little peace, I fear, in many a British home.

"Not alarmed, eh?" said Mr. Crowley, sipping at his glass. "Well, I'm glad you are getting so brave. I have been to see the agent, and there is no reason why we should not rent the house for another year. Mr. Vernon will not want it, and the agent evidently looks upon it as one of the best speculations he ever made."

"Another year! Mercy preserve us!" said Mrs. Cowley, holding up her hands in horror.

"And why not, pray?" was the sharp reply. "If we go sooner we shall have done no good. People will think we are frightened away, after all; whereas if we stay for fifteen or sixteen months they cannot have the face to hint at such a thing."

Mrs. Cowley groaned.

"Besides, I have been talking with the agent about the drains, and he has given me leave to have them set to rights. A capital dodge that, isn't it, my dear?"

Mrs. Cowley only sighed.

"Don't you see? While the men are at work, I'll make them take up the floor of that pantry. Depend on it, there is nothing there but rats."

"Can rats rock a cradle, Mr. Crowley?" asked his better half, severely.

"I dare say they could if they tried."

"And sing?"

"There are plenty of singing mice in the world; perhaps ours belongs to that breed, my dear. However, what I mean to say is this: That the house being old, is in all probability swarming with the brutes; and that, in some of their antics in the pantry, they contrive to imitate the rocking of a cradle and to make a sound which will

pass muster as a human voice. So I'll have the floor up, and we'll put a stop to their fun at once."

"It was a human voice!" said Mrs. Cowley, indignantly. "The idea of trying to explain it in that way! I never heard of anything so absurd in all my life! Did the agent offer you any refreshment, my dear?"

Mr. Crowley wagged his head good humoredly.

"I see what you are driving at; but I was never more sober in my life, Mrs. C. And we'll have the floor up tomorrow, and you shall see if, during the rest of the year, we hear anything more of the cradle."

Mrs. Cowley held her peace. Experience had taught her that argument in a case like this would be of no use. But if in her heart she had harbored any little sweet scruple as to the propriety of the plan by which the young people intended to dislodge her lord and master from the strange home he had chosen, it vanished from that hour and she stood as deeply committed to the ghost scheme as any one among them all.

"Where is Rose?" asked Mr. Crowley, looking up suddenly.

Mrs. Cowley blushed up to the eyes.

"She—she is upstairs, I think. Do you want her?"

"Yes; I have brought her a book. As she is so very fond of ghost stories I bought her the most horrible thing I could find in that way. It will serve to pass away her evenings very pleasantly this winter."

At that moment Rose entered, looking peculiarly well satisfied with herself, and everything in general.

"A book for me, papa? Now that is kind."

Mr. Crowley grinned to himself over his toddy.

"You'll be charmed with it. There is a picture on the first page, enough to turn any one's hair white."

"I'll look at it directly," said Rose, laying it down upon the table. "But papa, how could you leave us so long alone this evening? That cradle has been rocking so dreadfully all the time!"

"Rats, my dear. Nothing in the world but rats."

"I wonder what you would do if you saw a ghost, papa—a real ghost!"

"What I told you once before—I would pinch his nose with the tongs."

"I should like to see you tried!"

"Pah! It is all nonsense, my dear. Ghosts are an exploded theory. For my part, I have so little faith in them that I would not in the least mind staying here in the old house by myself all night long."

As he spoke the hall clock struck twelve, and Rose gave her mother a peculiar glance.

"Oh, how dreadful! This is just the time when ghosts go their rounds. Do let us all go to bed or we shall be sure to see one."

"Yes, let us go to bed at once," said Mrs. Cowley, rising from her chair.

As a matter of course, their end was gained, for Mr. Crowley was seized with a fit of obstinacy upon the spot. They knew well that nothing would induce him to stir from the spot till he had finished his gin and water and smoked his cigar.

"Go to bed, all of you," he said benignantly. "I'm not afraid to stop here by myself, and I shall come up before you are fairly asleep."

Mrs. Cowley and her two daughters left the room. The bright face of Rose was sparkling with mischief and laughter; and the instant the door shut behind her she caught her mother's hand and whispered joyously, "Mamma, you need be under no concern. He will not want to stop here long after tonight. You never saw two such horrible objects as Charles and Marjorie have made of themselves with my help and Mrs. Macarthy's. Come and see them before you go into your own room to wait for him."

Mrs. Cowley and Catharine followed her into the turret-chamber. Though they had been warned to expect a ghastly sight, neither of them could help staring and well-nigh crying out when they saw the figures that stood in the center of the room.

One was a nun dressed in the flowing black robes of a Sister of Mercy, with her hands bound tightly together, and clasped above her breast. Her face was white as death—and from the right temple a deep crimson strain ran down toward the chin. The contrast between the pallor of her face and the bright blood stain were ghastly in the extreme. On her left hand stood a stalwart black man, clad in flowing robes of the purest white. Mrs. Cowley's best dressing gown had been pressed into this service, and about his swarthy brow was folded a turban, consisting of several yards of India muslin, on which she set great store. In his hands he held a rusted dagger, which Rose had hunted up in her exploring tours through the house. His height seemed almost terrific, a circumstance soon explained when she showed the false soles and heels he had managed to affix to his boots. His air stern and menacing; and, altogether the pair were by no means the most pleasant visitants that could be imagined to the gentleman sitting alone over his toddy in a haunted house.

"Shall we do, aunt?" exclaimed Mr. Crowley, as she entered.

"Do? You are perfectly dreadful! Who dressed you like that?"

"Rose."

"And where on earth could she have

got such dreadful ideas from? You never saw a ghost, child?"

"No, mamma; but I have read about them often enough; and papa says book knowledge is not of the slightest use to us, unless we can apply it to real life. I hope he will be pleased with my application tonight."

"You are a saucy girl, Rose," said her mother, still eyeing the apparitions with some apprehension. "I wonder, now, what he will say to you? If it was me, I should go into a fit the moment you opened the door."

"My uncle is made of sterner stuff. Still, I hope we shall give him a start. One don't want to take all this trouble in dressing for nothing."

"Shall you go down to him, or let him meet you on the stairs?" asked Catharine.

"Oh, we will go down; we shall be seen to much more advantage in a room."

"Besides, he has threatened to pinch your nose with the tongs, and he cannot do it if he is on the staircase when he sees you," added Rose.

"That is a consideration," replied Mr. Crowley. "Now, will you ladies betake yourselves to bed? It is nearly half-past twelve—the very hour when two orthodox ghosts would be most likely to set out upon their travels. Good-night, aunt; we will send him up to you in a very short space of time."

The ladies retreated. Mrs. Cowley, in order that she might not be suspected of any complicity in the plot, if by any means it should be discovered, undressed and retired to bed as usual. But Rose and Catharine sat down beside their chamber door and waited the result of their operations with great impatience.

Meanwhile, Mr. Crowley, sitting over his cigar below, little dreamed how his nearest and dearest were conspiring ruthlessly against his peace of mind. The ghostly cradle was silent at last; his cigar was a fine one, and his toddy was grateful to the taste. Sitting here, monarch of all he surveyed, he thought over the events of his visit to the agent, and the promise which he had drawn from him about the drains.

"A clever dodge that!" he mused approvingly to himself. "Nothing can be easier than to set the men at work among the pipes in the cellar, and to take them on till they are under the pantry, and be hanged to it! I'll stop that noise or my name isn't Cowley! People shall not have it to say that after laughing at every one else for the belief in ghosts, I went to get frightened at one myself! Ghosts, indeed! Suppose there actually is one about the premises; of course, the poor thing cannot rest in his grave till something he's got or omitted to do on earth, has been done for him. Very well! What could be easier than to say to the troubled spirit, 'Make yourself quite easy; I will attend to it at once! Don't stay out of your grave a moment longer, for fear that you should take cold, my dear sir?' Of course, any sensible ghost, being addressed in such a sensible manner, would immediately return to his grave and stay there. That is what I call common sense kind of dealing with the citizens of another world. They would appreciate it—I am sure they would—Oh, Lord, what's that?"

He might as well ask the question; for his flow of self-congratulation was suddenly checked by a low, hollow groan outside the door. He listened intently. The groan came again, but louder than before.

"There is a noise!—I'm not dreaming!" he mused, while his hair stood on his head "like quills upon the fretful porcupine." "What on earth can it be? Mrs. Macarthy walking in her sleep, I suppose!" he said, with trembling lips, and a face white with the fear he was ashamed of, which he could not control.

The door swung open—a gigantic black man entered, leading by the hand a bleeding nun.

(To be continued.)

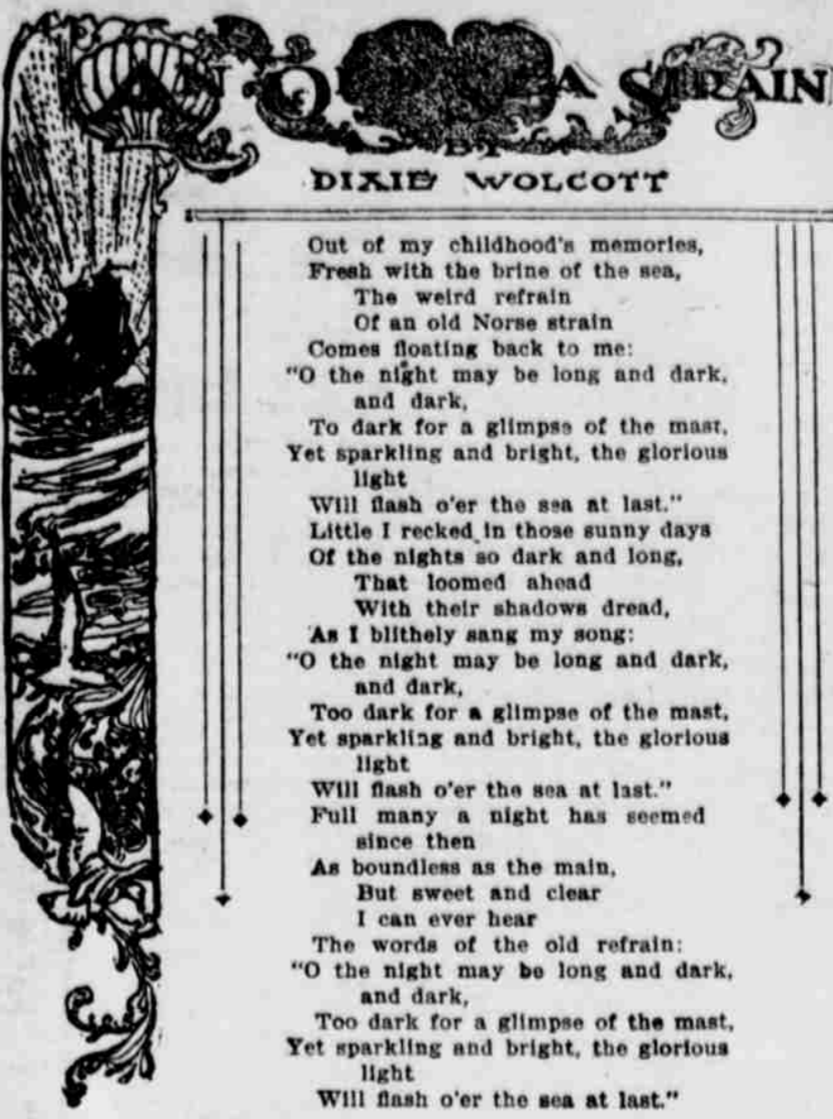
Randall's Island Slang.

The boys in the Randall's Island Institution for the reformation of juvenile delinquents have a slang of their own. A "scort" is a boy who is a big eater of all kinds of food as distinguished from a "chuck scort," which means a boy who eats quantities of bread. "Snitch" is a tattler, a boy who breaks the unwritten law of all schools not to split on a schoolmate under any circumstances. If one boy refers to another as an "Up" it means that he is a captain or a lieutenant, for the school is military in its training. By the same token a "kid" is a captain or lieutenant who is of small stature. "Hard guy" means a particularly tough boy and is a title commanding more or less respect. As distinguished from "kid" a "Spud Up" means a captain or lieutenant who is of large size, "spud" meaning either a big boy or a potato as the case may be. Shoes that are made outside of the institution are called "cities," and "whiffing" and a match is a "striker." When it is said of a boy that he has "got a goat," it means that he is angry. If he has "a fierce goat," it means that he is very angry, in a towering rage, in fact. A "girk" is a second-hand dried chew of tobacco, and is in the list of juvenile delinquent treasures. A "rakes" is a boy's chum or closest friend.

Boer Colonies in Russia.

In the Grodno and Volin districts of Russia there are about ten small boer farm colonies, numbering from 400 to 500 inhabitants all told. They were founded in 1820 by emigrants from Holland, and the method of living is exactly the same as that of their relatives in South Africa.

The amateur violinist is continually bowing and scraping.



THE OLDEST MARRIED WOMAN IN AMERICA

Mrs. Ferdinand Reese, who resides near Laporte, Ind., enjoys the distinction of having not only lived in three centuries but of being the oldest married person in America. Mrs. Reese



MRS. FERDINAND REESE.

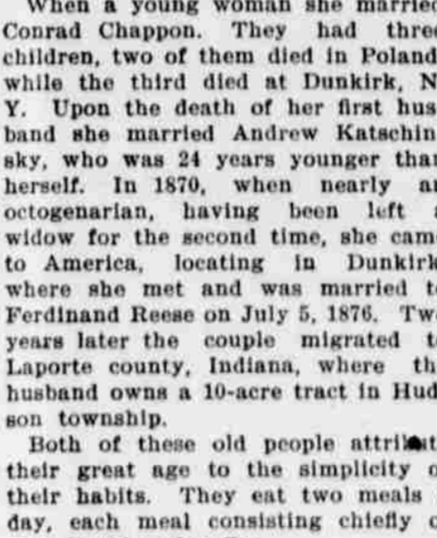
is 107 years old, and there is nothing problematical about her age, for she has documents in her possession which the parish priest has examined and pronounced genuine, and which substantiate everything she has said of herself. She was born in Volgrawitz, Poland, in 1794. Her parents were of the poorest class, and as soon as she was 4 years old she was sent into the forests to pick up bark for the charcoal burners. Her maiden name was Maria Pavlovichinsky. When the French invaded Volgrawitz the inhabitants fled. Mrs. Reese then a young woman, remained behind in the town trying to save some of the wretched belongings of her family from pillage. The French soldiers had entered the place before she could get out, and one of her neighbors pointed out to her a stocky little man on horseback as the emperor of the French.

When a young woman she married Conrad Chappon. They had three children, two of them died in Poland, while the third died at Dunkirk, N. Y. Upon the death of her first husband she married Andrew Katschinsky, who was 24 years younger than herself. In 1870, when nearly an octogenarian, having been left a widow for the second time, she came to America, locating in Dunkirk, where she met and was married to Ferdinand Reese on July 5, 1876. Two years later the couple migrated to Laporte county, Indiana, where the husband owns a 10-acre tract in Hudson township.

Both of these old people attribute their great age to the simplicity of their habits. They eat two meals a day, each meal consisting chiefly of corn bread and coffee.

NEW AUTOMATIC REVOLVER

Evidently the inventor of the firearm illustrated herewith has come to the conclusion that the double-acting



COILED SPRING OPERATES THE GUN.

revolver in common use is not rapid enough in discharging its bullets. At any rate, he has designed a gun which

is almost automatic in its action, needing but one pull on the trigger to empty the chambers in short order. The gun shows a breakdown barrel and cylinder, and it will be seen that the action of opening and closing this mechanism operates a lever located underneath the cylinder. The rear end of this lever is slotted and toothed internally to rotate the shaft in the body of the revolver. On this shaft is mounted a toothed disk, which is locked against backward revolution by engaging the trigger. When the gun is opened for reloading and also as it is closed the lever winds up a spring on the shaft, and the revolver is ready for use the instant the barrel is in place. A pull on the trigger releases the disk and allows the shaft to rotate, which not only turns the cylinder containing the cartridges but also operates the firing mechanism.

Pictures Sent by Telegraph

A curious and remarkable invention, described in the April number of Frank Leslie's Monthly, is the tediagraph, which has been in quiet operation for two years, the inventor having seen fit to give the exclusive use of the apparatus to a syndicate of six American newspapers for that period. By means of the tediagraph you can send your photograph from New York city to your friend in San Francisco and get his letter of thanks within the space of a single hour. Nor will the letter you receive be a mysterious series of dots and dashes, but it will look exactly as your friend has written it. It will be in his personal handwriting; not in the handwriting of a telegrapher.

Notwithstanding the wonderful feats performed by the tediagraph, its principle is so simple that a schoolboy readily comprehends it.

On the 19th of April the agreement with the papers that have had exclusive use of the tediagraph will have expired, and then it will be available for various uses, such as the quick apprehension of criminals.

Singularly enough, E. A. Hummel, the inventor of the tediagraph, is not a telegrapher, but merely a clockmaker. He never paid any attention to telegraphy until after he had drawn a sketch of the machine he had in mind, and his knowledge of the subject before that time was derived from such meager sources as the newspapers and his school text-books.

One of Brown's Young Men.

Some years ago there was a man who was a figure in the upper social life of New York. He was the sexton of Grace church and his name was Brown. He was a sort of grand chamberlain to New York society of that day and employed in every social function from the christening of the babe of aristocracy to the marriage of the damsel. Dancing men then, as now, were scarce, but Brown was equal to the occasion. He organized a band of presentable young fellows, who knew how to dress, how to dance and how to behave themselves, whom he marshaled at houses where they were needed. These were known as "Brown's Young Men," and not a few of them danced themselves into good positions. One of these young men was Hubert O. Thompson, who, in later life, became so prominent a politician as leader of the city democracy. He used to say that when he was young he led the Irish; when he grew old he led the German.—Brooklyn Eagle.

The rain falls—but it gets up again in a dew time.

THE LIVE STOCK MARKET.

Latest Quotations from South Omaha and Kansas City.

SOUTH OMAHA.

Cattle—There was another liberal run of cattle, but packers took hold in good shape and the market did not show much change from yesterday. Trade was active and the bulk of the supply was out of first hands in good season. The market could be quoted just about steady, though in some cases sellers thought they had to take a shade lower prices than they did yesterday. The weaker feeling was, of course, more noticeable on the medium kinds of cattle. There were only a few cows and heifers on sale. Fifteen cars would about cover the receipts. In spite of the light supply buyers did not take hold with quite as much life as they have been doing, and the trade did not have the snap to it that has been noticed of late. Bulls sold in about yesterday's notches, but they were not any too active. Veal calves and stags brought steady prices also. The few stockers and feeders of good quality that were offered today were picked up at fully steady prices. Stockers weighing 400 pounds sold at \$5.10. The demand from the country is not what might be called heavy, but still it is large enough to take all that is coming at good, strong prices.

Hogs—There was a big run of hogs, making the supply for the four days this week the heaviest in some time past. Packers started out and tried to buy their droves at steady prices, but sellers were holding for higher prices, and for that reason the market was slow in getting started, and not very many sold at the early bids. Finally, however, packers raised their hands a little and the hogs began moving toward the scales at a shade stronger prices than were paid yesterday. The bulk of the hogs today sold from \$5.75 to \$5.80, with the long strong at \$5.77.

Sheep—There were only about a dozen loads of sheep and lambs on sale and the quality of the offerings as a whole was common. The market opened up about steady on the better grades. Clipped lambs brought \$4.45, which looked about steady, and woolled sheep sold at \$4.00, which was about as much as the same kind would have brought yesterday. The last end of the market, however, was very slow and weak, as packers did not seem to want the common stuff that was offered.

KANSAS CITY MARKET.

Cattle—Medium weight native and Texas steers, steady; other cattle, easier; choice dressed beef cattle, \$5.20 to \$5.50; fair to good, \$4.70 to \$5.10; stockers and feeders, \$4.10 to \$5.05; western-fed steers, \$4.20 to \$5.25; Texans and Indians, \$4.25 to \$5.15; cows, \$3.50 to \$4.50; heifers, \$3.50 to \$4.50; canners, \$2.50 to \$3.25; bulls, \$3.50 to \$5.00; calves, \$4.50 to \$5.00.

Sheep and Lambs—Market steady; western lambs, \$4.75 to \$5.00; western wethers, \$4.50 to \$5.00; western yearlings, \$4.50 to \$5.00; ewes, \$4.10 to \$4.50; bulls, \$3.50 to \$5.00; western lambs, \$5.00 to \$5.50.

CABINET MEMBERS SANGUINE.

Hopeful that the Platt Amendment Will Be Accepted.

WASHINGTON, April 27.—The cabinet meeting today, the last one before the president's departure for the coast, was occupied almost exclusively with the discussion of the visit of the Cuban commission. Secretary Root, who has been conducting the conferences with the commission, submitted rather exhaustively an account of the interviews he had with them.

He told the president and the cabinet of the objections which the commissioners raised to the Platt amendment and of some of the misunderstandings regarding it.

There was a general exchange of opinion among the members of the cabinet regarding the situation and in light of the views expressed, Secretary Root will hold another conference with the commissioners before their departure. The president will not see them again, except to formally bid them farewell. While there are one or two points upon which some of the members of the commission are insistent the general feeling of the cabinet, as reflected in their exchange of views today, was that the result of the commission's visit could not but be beneficial in relieving erroneous impressions which it is expected are entertained in the constitutional convention regarding the purposes of the United States.

Altogether it would not be too much to say that the cabinet generally is hopeful that the convention, after hearing the report of the commission, will be much more disposed to accept our terms than it has been heretofore.

ADELBERT HAY QUILTS POST.

Son of the Secretary of State Resigns Consular Post at Pretoria.

WASHINGTON, April 27.—Adelbert Hay, son of the secretary of state, has resigned his post as United States consul general at Pretoria. The resignation takes effect tomorrow. His successor has not been selected.

In view of the great expense of living at Pretoria, it is possible that the offices will be left vacant until congress can have an opportunity to act upon a recommendation from the executive looking to an increase in the salary of the office of consul general at Pretoria.

Robbers Torn Hold Trick.

ANACONDA, Mont., April 27.—A most audacious robbery was committed here early by two burglars, who secured \$10,000 in gold. The burglars entered the Alaska saloon by forcing the main street door. Bodily picking up a 300-pound safe they loaded it onto an express wagon. Driving outside the city limits, they broke the safe open and secured \$10,000 in gold. Putting the broken safe back into the wagon, they made good their escape.