

MAKERS AND SAFE-BREAKERS

Long Dramatic Duel Between Forces of Construction and Destruction.

SUCCESS AND FAILURE ALTERNATE Content Extending Over Entire Period of Modern Business—Status of Contending Forces at Present.

The international rivalry between armor plate and the big guns, in which each of the great world powers is hopefully seeking to revive a species of the former that will beat a species of the latter, and vice versa, has its analogy in the world of business, where there is being fought, and for a century has been fought, the battle between the makers of safes and the breakers of safes.

There is nothing made by the hand of man that cannot be unmade by the hand of man. It is this familiar quotation that the makers of safes, since the first safe was made, have sought to prove fallacious; and it is this same quotation that the safe-breakers, since one of their number broke open the first safe, have sought to prove correct.

First Plan of Skill. The first safe, as we know safes, was invented about a century ago by a man named Fittsgerald, and opened by a man named Reim. Or, to be more exact, a duplicate of the initial safe, serving its purpose in a financial establishment, succeeded to the coming of the initial safe-breaker.

After fighting ineffectually with their tools against the walls of these newer safes, the safe-breakers—about sixty-five years ago—figured it out that the makers, in their effort to perfect the walls of the safe, had failed to keep pace in the matter of improving the door of the safe.

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Beginning of Explosives. This brings us to about fifty years ago and to the melodramatic beginning of the more modern phase of the conflict: to the introduction into the battle of explosives on the part of the criminals. In the period of ten years during which the Criminal Brain did not stop working, planning, experimenting and scheming, and the result of all its scheming took the form of nitroglycerin: Here, again, was an element that took into consideration and for many a year subsequently the battle between the two sides became fiercer and more complex than ever.

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By means of a suction pump, to draw it down into the safe. Cracksman Outgeneraled. If the safe-makers believed that they had outwitted the safe-makers in turn for any length of time, however, they were doomed to disappointment, for here again, as before, the Scientific Brain outgeneraled them. Paint was entirely eliminated from the surfaces of the safes and, in addition, the walls were made, not of one species of steel, but of two. Soft and hard steel, in alternate layers, that have come to the five-ply point and will break the strongest drill, were tested and put into effective use. Thus was the drill beaten. There the door was further protected by making it, when closed, a part of the solid, even safe surface. Every possible suspicion of crack was thus covered. The air-tight safe, against which the use of nitroglycerin is practically impossible, is finally finished in this particular direction. Further protective measures in safe construction were the gradual thickening of the walls; the invention of a safe constructed of one continuous plate with round corners and concealed lock, resembling in its exterior a big boiler; the general use of chrome steel; an increasingly complex system of interior arrangement that provides a double, sometimes triple, protection, even if the outer door of the safe has been opened; a locking device and handle, worked with a plate with a key lock, so that the combination lock is hidden, the lock in addition having a slip dial which may be removed and kept separate; spindles built with offsets, so that they can neither be driven in nor pulled out; and, finally, a big bellows, interlocking door-jamba that defy explosives.

ORIGIN OF "BLACK HAND"

Phrase, Coined by a Reporter, is Adopted by Criminals From Abroad.

Black hand outrages, murders kidnaping and bomb throwing now of frequent occurrence in Chicago, have led many persons to believe that the "Black Hand" is a closely associated secret society, similar to the Mafia and Camorra. That is not so, according to those best informed. Mono Nera, or "Black Hand," has been adopted as the common name by the gangs of assassins and blackmailers in different parts of the country in the last seven years. The phrase was coined by a New York reporter who wanted to get a "beat" while covering a kidnaping case. He got the beat, his paper and finally other papers took up the name in designating crimes among the Italians and Sicilians and the blackmailers themselves then adopted it.

Today the name is known throughout the country, and even in Italy, it is said, the signature Mono Nera is frequently a potent factor in bringing tributes from a victim as the sign of the dreaded Camorra in Naples and southern Italy or the Mafia in Sicily.

The story of the "Black Hand" is interesting as showing what a simple suggestion will do and what lengths it may go. It is a real man who was familiar with the origin of the "society." Following the murder of the chief of police in New Orleans and the lynching of his murderers, few Italian crimes came to the public notice until about nine years ago. Of course, the Mafia and the Camorra were secretly blackmailing wealthy residents of the growing Latin colonies in this country, and occasionally there was a murder. These, however, escaped more than casual mention in the papers.

It was in the fall of 1909 that the carnival of crime among the Italians began to say in plain and getting broke out in the various departments. And time murders, robberies, bomb explosions and instances of incendiarism there have been. The murder of Giuseppe Cantania, a grocer in the Red Hook section of Brooklyn, New York, was the first of the series of crimes that has continued with increasing force. His body was found in sections along the Bay Ridge shore. Investigation by the police and secret service agents showed that his grocery store had been a "blind" for the more profitable business of "showing the queer" or passing counterfeit coin. Suspected members of the gang that did him to death were rounded up, but no evidence that would warrant a conviction being secured they were released.

Spotters on Guard. As an illustration of the thoroughness with which this is done, there may be cited the case of a former superintendent of one of the principal companies, who was discharged eight years ago for intoxication. Who subsequently sought and obtained a position as superintendent of an iron foundry in the middle west, who has now held that position for the last seven years, who has done his work well and who is yet kept under the eye of a detective in the safe company's pay. There is not the slightest reason to doubt the man's integrity, but as has been suggested by the man's employer, who knows his superintendent is being watched, the safe company seems unwilling to take the slightest chance.

These, then, are the main points thus far in the tournament of wit between the men who make the safes and the men who have tried to unmake them. In a lesser way, and not marking definite steps in the struggle between the forces of protection and the forces of assault, there have been resorts to such tricky devices as evidence in the case of the famous robbery of the vault safe of the National bank of Northampton, Mass., thirty-four years ago, which the safe-breakers accomplished principally through a set of duplicate keys that had been made from impressions taken of the original keys. But robberies such as these are in reality only other forms of "inside" jobs, such as already have been referred to, and are not a part of the chronic of definite steps in the survey of the general safe-maker-breaker struggle.—George Jean Nathan in Harper's Weekly.

HE IS A WALKING CALENDAR Seven-Year-Old Wonder from Tobacco, Mex., Knows All About Dates. Ask Manuel Alberto Mantilla, aged 7 years, what day of the week was September 1, 1908, and he instantly will reply in Spanish, "Tuesday."

"How I do this I truly do not know," said the wonderful "Nino," as they call him down in Tobacco, Mex., from which this fervid young lightning calculator comes. "I see a great black ball go around and around in my head, and then I read the numbers and answers."

Prof. James H. Hyslop, secretary of the American Society for Psychical Research, has noticed the child's wonderful facility in scribbling, although the Nino does not yet read and write words, while he can jot down figures at a bewildering rate. Prof. Hyslop has given Senor Mantilla a letter of introduction to Dr. Mehet of Paris, with the suggestion that there be thorough investigation of the powers of this young prodigy.—New York Herald.

REUNION ON HISTORICAL SPOT

Proposed Ceremony of Planting Apple Tree Sapling at Appomattox.

Forty-six years with their vicissitudes have obliterated from the tablet of memory many of the tragic scenes enacted on the battlefield of Appomattox on April 9, 1865, when two of the grandest armies of the world were confronting each other, awaiting the action of the chief commanders of the United States and the Confederate States of America, U. S. Grant and Robert E. Lee.

Those battle-scarred, weakened, half-naked, half-starved fighters under Lee did not want to give up, but General Lee knew it would be a hopeless task to hold out longer against the army led by General Grant, and on April 9, 1865, the southern leader agreed to Grant's terms of submission.

The leaders of the two armies met under an old apple tree near Appomattox to talk over the terms of the surrender. That apple tree is gone, but if the plans of Colonel George A. Armes, U. S. A., retired, owner of that historical battlefield of Appomattox, are materialized, Appomattox will have an apple tree, a young one, to be planted in the exact spot where those rugged fighters of forty-six years ago stood and debated on the practical end of the war.

"The chance has come now," continued Colonel Armes, "and with Wilson, Harmon, and many other prominent democrats present, I am sure there will be nothing lacking. I had a talk with Senator Martine of New Jersey the other day, and he informed me that he would be present." Colonel Armes has planned to have those who will go to Appomattox meet at the Arlington hotel in Washington, on the morning of April 8. The party will board a special train and go to Appomattox on the morning of the 9th. Those who have already been invited are, the governors of the several states, with their military staffs, the Grand Army of the Republic, the Virginia state militia, and others. The party will return to this city after the ceremonies, and a banquet will be held at the Arlington hotel on the night of April 8. Colonel Armes took possession of Appomattox, twenty years ago. Shortly after the close of the civil war, Governor Campbell of Ohio and many residents of the Buckeye state, organized a company for the purpose of purchasing Appomattox, turning it into a national park. The scheme fell through, and Colonel Armes purchased the property. He had the land surveyed and subdivided, and established a village with the idea of making it a historical town. His dream has yet to be realized, but there are many patriotic persons living in the town at present.

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