

it from one. If a Chinese doesn't like you he will keep away from you; if he does like you he will go the route. By signs and a few words I conveyed to my cellmate that our only hope was to beat the jail. There was a barred window in our cell, the outside was not guarded. All we needed was a hack saw. He was for it. His "cousins" visited him regularly every week and if they could be made to understand what we needed they would get it.

There was but one hardware store in the town and to buy the saws there might cause talk. I had him tell his "cousins" to send to Vancouver to their company for them. After weeks of anxiety and uncertainty and much negotiating with their friends at Vancouver the precious saws were put into my cellmate's hands under the drunken jailer's nose. My plan was simple. Wait till spring when, if we got out and failed to get a train we could take a chance on foot in the country away from the railroad. Night after night we listened to the trains arriving and departing, checking the time. A freight train departed immediately after the one o'clock passenger. If I could "spring" into a box car, we could make Vancouver in safety. I secreted the saws and we settled down to wait for softer weather.

SEVENTEEN

WHEN spring came, my Chinese "tillicum," which is Chinook for friend, and I were the only felony prisoners in the "skookum house," or jail. The two half-breeds had finished their time and a couple of others had been brought in to take their places, four prisoners in all. The Indians watched us and we watched them. The tough end of our job was not to beat the jail or the drunken jailer, but the watchful trusties, our fellow prisoners.

I decided to cut the bars in the daytime and have my cellmate keep a lookout at the door against the appearance of our jailer or the Indians. The saws were dug up out of a crack and day after day, slowly, noiselessly, they bit into the thick bars. At night I put them away safely in their hiding place, and we slept as usual. Our jailer drank more and more, and we were searched oftener, but never once did he or his Indians look at the bars in our window. We were so closely watched and the jail was so tight the thought of our getting anything to "crush out" with never entered his foggy mind.

Strangely enough the China boy's "cousins" never appeared at the jail after the day they brought him the saws. Whether they were afraid or thought they had done enough for him I never knew. To all my queries about them he "no sabied." At the start I had figured on help in the way of money and food from them. Now I had to dismiss this. I determined not to go near the Chinese if we got out, but to get into a train and stay in it till hunger forced me out.

After weary weeks the work was done; the bars cut so nearly through I was afraid they would fall out every time the cell door was slammed shut. I hid the worn saws, and waited patiently till our jailer got drunk and gave us our searching. On those nights he never made a second appearance. Satisfied, he always went direct to bed and we could hear his alcoholic snores in another part of the building. The Indian trusties went to sleep and I rolled our blankets into dummies that looked passable. At twelve o'clock the freight train pulled in and went on a side track to get a fresh engine and allow the passenger train to go by at one o'clock. I broke the bars out and hid them under the blankets. The China boy's knees were shaking as he crawled out and dropped to the ground. I followed him, not any too calm and cool myself. He had no hat, otherwise

he was dressed as I was – duck pants and a thin shirt.

There was no time to try to steal clothing, food, or money. As we hurried toward the freight yards where the train stood I had but one comforting thought – we wouldn't be missed till seven in the morning.

The Chinaman was helpless. At the side track I ran frantically about in search of something to spring a car door with. At last I found a pile of scrap iron and dug a fishplate out of it. The train was an all-through freight, billed to Vancouver, the terminus. I soon discovered a battered box car that suited, and sprang a side door away from its bearings. Then I showed the Chinaman the end door and tried to explain to him, mostly by signs, that he should get in the side door while I pulled it out, and then unfasten the end door from the inside to admit me after I put the side door back in place. He refused to budge. At last I made him pull the door out while I got into the car. When I got the end door open I had to get out, go down, and get him and put him in. Then I sprang the side door back in position, went to the end door, crawled in, and fastened it on the inside the way I found it.

We didn't have a pocketknife, not a dime, not a match; but we were safe, and I wouldn't have exchanged the security of that box car for a soft berth in the sleeper on the departing passenger train. We were barely settled inside when there was a bumping and jolting of cars and our train slowly got under way. We were in a car loaded with barrels of lime. They stood on end and it was painful to stretch out on them. The ride was a nightmare. Hungry, thirsty, cold, racked with fear and suspense, we got into Vancouver after twenty-four hours.

Clothes were the first problem, any kind of rags to cover our jail uniforms. I got out of the car with the half-dead China boy at once, and went directly back to the caboose on the train we rode. The conductor and brakeman were already gone. The caboose was deserted. The boy hid between box cars while I went to the top of the caboose, through the cupola, and down inside. In a locker were greasy coats and pants, and a cap for the Chink. The clothes were too big for him and the cap too small. He knew Vancouver and wanted to take me to his "cousins" in Chinatown, but I was afraid we couldn't get by a copper together, so he struck out alone after making me promise to hunt him up at his company's headquarters. I crawled into an empty car to wait for daylight, when it would be safer to go through the streets.

It was Sunday morning. I heard a church bell ring and knew it was somewhere around six o'clock. When I looked out of the car I saw that a heavy fog had settled over the city like a blessed benediction. I melted into it, making my way out of the freight yards and into the streets. The

fog was so dense that I couldn't have found my way if I had known the town. After walking blocks along a street I saw that the stores were getting smaller and farther apart. Vacant lots became more numerous and everything indicated that I was going in the wrong direction. A few doors ahead of me an old, rheumatic, mongrel dog appeared out of a hallway. He was the only living thing in sight, and when I got abreast of him I stopped and looked at him idly. He came over to me, gave me a rather doubtful look, and sat back on his haunches. After balancing himself carefully, he lifted a stiff hind leg and made a futile effort to dislodge the hungry fleas from under his collar. Failing at this, he got up slowly, gave me another looking-over, and limped back to his doorway. As he went in he glanced at me out of the tail of his eye.

It sounds strange to say that I was suspicious of a mangy, old cur dog; but it's true. There was something so human in his glance that I followed him into the doorway to see what he was up to.

In the entrance behind the door, with his head on the lower step, a man was sprawled. A second look convinced me that he was a Saturday night drunk who had got that far and no farther. He was lying on his back, open-mouthed, and breathing heavily. The old dog stood beside him watching me.

I could see he was a workingman and ordinarily wouldn't have given him a look, but I was now broke, hungry, wolfish. The dog growled a feeble protest as I began exploring his master's clothes. He had money in every pocket. I left some silver in his vest for him to get a drink with when he woke up. The devoted old mongrel stood in the door as if to bar me from going out, and eyed me reproachfully when I gently pushed him aside.

Out in the street I cleansed my conscience by repeating the Sanctimonious Kid's favorite parody: "Oh, room rent, what crimes are committed in thy name!"

Turning the nearest corner, a glance over my shoulder showed me the loyal dog out on the sidewalk, still accusing me with his tired old eyes. The town was awake now and I soon found a sailor's boarding house where I got a couple of bracing drinks and sat at a long table where sailors and stevedores were breakfasting in free-for-all, family style. I didn't join in the conversation, didn't have to. The quantity of food I put away convinced them I belonged on the water front. Paying for a room in the place, I got into it and took stock. There was enough money to get an outfit of clothes and feed me for a couple of weeks. I made a bundle of the jail pants and threw it off a wharf at once. The next day I bought new clothes, shoes, and hat, got cleaned up, and, dismissing the burglary

charge and broken jail from my mind, proceeded to look about me.

I had not been photographed or measured in the small town I escaped from; it didn't look reasonable that the authorities would travel five hundred miles on the chance of finding me in Vancouver, so I decided to stay there till I could get hold of something worth while. Moreover I was curious to know how my Chinese cellmate had fared, and being young and somewhat fond of myself, perhaps I wanted to meet his "cousins" and be admired by them.

After looking over the town, my experience told me the police were not to be feared and I went into Chinatown in search of my friend. Finding the company store he described, I went in and bought a small package of ginger candy. About a dozen Chinese were sitting around, talking or playing dominos, but the minute I appeared the dominos quit rattling and the Chinese stopped talking. I looked as mysterious as I could without making it too strong and surveyed them one by one. Not one uttered a syllable till I went out; then they all fell to talking and gesticulating at once. The following night I went back and bought more candy. A smart-looking, middle-aged Chinaman in European clothes was behind the counter.

"What you come here for?" he asked in very good English.

"I look for Chew Chee, China boy, my friend. We come Vancouver Sunday morning in box car. Before - we stop skookum house. Skookum house not very 'skookum' we come Vancouver - very cold, very hungry. Chew Chee tell me come this house. All right come. Now I go. Good-by!"

He remained silent, his face expressionless to me. I knew the Chinese mistrust of white men, and many of their good reasons for it, and was not offended or discouraged. He was protecting his countryman; I admired him for it. At the door I gave him a final dig. "My friend tell me come your house; I come. You think me 'luc zhe.' You very smart man. You think me policeman. All right. Good-by!"

This was too much for the stoical Chinaman. He followed me out and, catching up, said in a low voice:

"You no 'luc zhe'; you good man. You come 'fi fi' (quickly)."

I followed him into the next block, then down a narrow, dark lane between buildings and up shaky stairs where he knocked on a door. An old man admitted us and barred the door. The place was a big loft. The foggy air was hot, stifling, and laden with every Chinese smell - opium, tobacco, fish, and damp clothes drying. Chinamen were cooking, eating, smoking hop, gambling, or sleeping in curtained bunks that lined the walls. My conductor was evidently a considerable person. Silence fell on

the room, and many Chinamen stood still in submissive attitudes.

He threw a mangy old cat out of a broken chair near the big stove in the middle of the room and told me to sit. After a few jerky gutturals to the old man that let us in, he disappeared in the haze of smoke. The gambling and chatter started again. Some of the younger Chinese passed and looked at me curiously.

I sat by the stove and watched the scene with interest. An old Chinaman - he must have been sixty - shuffled by me hastily with a hop layout and spread it in a near-by bunk. He was shaking with the "yen yen," the hop habit. His withered, clawlike hands trembled as he feverishly rolled the first "pill," a large one. His burning eyes devoured it. Half cooked, he stuck the pill in its place and turning his pipe to the lamp greedily sucked the smoke into his lungs. Now, with a long, grateful exhalation, the smoke is discharged, the cramped limbs relax and straighten out, the smoker heaves a sigh of satisfaction, and the hands, no longer shaking, turn with surer touch to another "pill." This is smaller, rolled and shaped with more care, better cooked, and inhaled with a slow "long draw." Each succeeding pill is smaller, more carefully browned over the lamp, and smoked with increased pleasure. At last the little horn container, the "hop toy," is empty. The last pill is finished with perfect stroke and flourish, the bamboo pipe is put aside with caressing touch, the lamp blown out with gentle breath, and the devotee, sighing softly, curls himself up for pleasant dreams.

I was so intent on watching the old man's magic transformation from a shattered wreck into a sleeping cherub that the boss Chinaman's return escaped me. He touched my shoulder and I followed him into a small room in a rear corner of the loft, where I found Chew Chee. He shook my hand awkwardly. His English was almost forgotten. All he could say was, "You good man, you good man."

The boss Chinaman was full of business. He drew out some American gold pieces. "I pay you. Chew Chee pay me some time."

I explained to him that I had not come for money; that I was there to see Chew Chee and make friends of his friends, and that if I ever needed money or help I would ask for it and expect it.

"Well, then," he said, returning the gold to his pocket, "I give you China letter to my company man. You come my store to-morrow night."

He went away and Chew Chee insisted that I go with him and meet his "cousins." We walked across the city to a laundry where I was royally received. Chew Chee was the only Chinese that had a word of English, but the party was a success anyway. They produced their finest liquor, their lichee nuts, their daintiest cakes, and choicest tea. The hop layout

buildings. A storeroom in front with its long counter, and shelves on both sides filled with merchandise, a small room directly back of it where the storekeeper slept on his pallet. I made sure of that by rousing him early one morning to make a purchase. The big rear room accommodated the Chinese laundry hands.

My friend's wife delivered the chloroform and a clean handkerchief. I rehearsed the whole business in my mind, and, feeling reasonably safe, put it to the touch. An open window let me into the bunk room, where I unfastened the back door, for a getaway.

On a long table in the center of the room a metal lamp in a dish burned dimly. The tired laundrymen snored or breathed heavily. Here a muscular brown arm hung limply over the side of a bunk below the curtain, and there a foot protruded. The door to the old man's room was open, and I stood there a long time till I could pick out his gentle, regular breathing from the chorus of wheezes, grunts, and snores in the bunk room. I had hoped to find him lying on his back. I don't know just why, but that was the way I had him in my rehearsals. Sure enough he was in that position, sleeping like a baby.

Holding the handkerchief at arm's length, I saturated it liberally with the chloroform and returned the bottle to my pocket. Then I knelt beside him and held the handkerchief above his nostrils. With the first breath of it he stirred uneasily, and slowly turned over, facing the wall. Here was something I hadn't anticipated. I was sure he hadn't enough; he breathed regularly again. I must give him more. Reaching over him, I held the stuff near his nose as before. One whiff, and he floundered away from it, turning over, facing me, but still asleep.

I grew alarmed. This tossing from side to side would soon wake him. I thought of giving it up and going away quietly. My heart was pounding with the suspense. It seemed to grow and expand till it filled my chest and almost stopped my breath. I must go through with it. Carefully this time, I held the handkerchief near his face with both hands. His body twitched nervously now. His breathing was labored. I was sure of him, and held it closer.

With a scream that woke every Chinaman in the bunk room, he sat bolt upright, and throwing his arms out fastened his clawlike fingers in my clothes.

Believing he was about to be murdered, the old man fought and screamed in a frenzy of fear. I saw red-handed capture in front of me, and tried desperately to throttle him. The noise of our struggle had roused the sleepers in the back room and I could hear their startled cries as they dropped out of their bunks. I had no thought of the money now; it was

a question of getting away. Just when the old man was exhausted and I was in a fair way to get out of his clutches, some of the more daring Chinamen from the back room rushed in. I got a blow on the head that knocked me half out, and they fell on me like a pack of wolves, smothering me with kicks, cuffs, digs, and scratches. The whole thing was over quicker than I can write it. I was stretched out on my back on the floor with two Chinamen holding each of my arms down, two sitting on each leg, and another with both hands in my hair. They all chattered at once. Then one came with a lamp, and I was inspected curiously, like some strange, fearsome monster that had been trapped.

The old man, now recovered from the battle, gave a sharp order. A short, muscular, knotty-legged China boy went to the back room and returned with a rope. I was carefully raised to a sitting position and my arms held to my sides while the boy threw a couple of half hitches around my body, pinioning me safely. The rope was then run to my ankles, where he deftly tied some more strange and wonderful Chinese knots, and I was secured; scratched, bruised, bleeding, and asking myself if they were going to send for the police or execute me on the spot.

Another order from the boss and they lifted me bodily and sat me on a box in the corner of the little room. They stood by, eyeing me in silence now. The old man sat on his pallet. There was an odor of chloroform in the room, but he did not appear to be any the worse for what he had inhaled. Our struggle had probably worn it off. He picked the handkerchief from the floor where it had fallen and sniffed it.

Holding it out toward me, he asked in fair English:

"What for, him?"

Something told me I had a chance yet. I decided to tell the old man the truth. "Him medicine," I answered.

"What for medicine?"

"Make you sleep."

"What for sleep?"

"I think maybe take your money."

"How you know me money?"

"I come you store; I look see."

He got up, rolled his blankets away, and, raising up the small trapdoor in the floor, opened his box and made sure that it had not been disturbed. They all began talking again. I heard the fatal words "luc zhe," "luc zhe," which means policeman.

In desperation I cried, "No, no, no luc zhe. Him no good. I got plenty good China friends. Me good friend Chew Chee, China boy. Before —

Chew Chee stop 'skookum house' I bring him Vancouver. Me good man." I remembered my Chinese letter and cried out desperately: "You look my pocket; you see China letter; him good letter. You look my pocket."

The name of Chew Chee was like magic on them. They became silent and listened closely to my talk. I was tied up so that I couldn't reach the vest pocket the letter was in, but I managed to touch it with a finger. "You look my pocket," I cried frantically to the old man.

He came over to where I sat on the box and gingerly put his fingers into the pocket, bringing out the letter. By the lamplight he studied it long and carefully. Others then read it, and the powwowing started again, while I sat listening for the fatal "luc zhe," and picturing myself back in the jail I had so lately escaped from. The boss now got a box and sat opposite me with the letter in his hand and a thoughtful, puzzled look on his leathery, wrinkled old face. The other Chinamen stood behind him, silent again. I saw I was going to be tried or examined, and hoping for an out, I began to figure some kind of a defense.

His accusing words bit into me like an acid. They were laden with scorn. I turned hot with shame and confusion. Tapping the letter with a long, bony finger, he said: "Him letter talk you good man. What for, you good man?"

These were short, plain words and called for a plain answer. No use trying to deceive this old man after trying to rob him. No use putting up a crying talk for mercy. I could see he scorned me as a robber, a thief in the night, and made up my mind not to bring more contempt upon myself by pleading weakly and in fear. I answered him as I imagined he would have answered me if by any chance our positions had been reversed.

"Maybe me good man," I said. "Maybe bad man, I no know. Long time policeman make me plenty trouble. Long time I stop jail house. Then I come Vancouver. No more money, no more eat. I look see your money, I come your house steal your money. No can do; you catch me. You send me jail house, long time me no come home. More better you kill me now. Policeman talk me bad man; plenty Chinaman talk me good man. Maybe good man, maybe bad man; I no know."

I spoke firmly, looking him in the eyes frankly, and finished my argument for the defense with as much force and feeling as any barrister ever put into a plea for a client's life. His face was blank as a board. His little brownish-black eyes were fastened on mine but I saw no hope in them. I couldn't even tell whether he had understood what I said. After studying me for a long time he turned and said something to one of his boys. The

boy went into the bunk room and came back with a heavy meat cleaver that the Chinese use to chop pork and fowl. Another order and I was lifted, box and all, out of the corner and placed in the middle of the room. The China boy with the cleaver stepped behind me.

Something in the pit of my stomach seemed to collapse. I tried to say something to the old boss, but the words wouldn't come; they just rattled around in my throat. The old man bored into me with his eyes like a blacksnake "charming" a bird. Suddenly he uttered a short, sharp exclamation that sounded like "Chut." I snatched my eyes away from his and closed them, prepared for the fatal blow that my guilty mind told me was about to fall on my head from behind. The blow did not fall, but I was almost dead anyway and swayed on my box till the China boys had to support me. I felt a fumbling at my ankles and opened my eyes to find the knotty-legged boy kneeling at my feet, untying his knots. When the rope was taken off me, I turned my head and saw the boy standing behind me, holding his cleaver at "ready," prepared to strike me down only if I started anything rough. One of them handed me my hat. I put it on, and stood up slowly and with an effort. The old man waved his arm toward the back room.

"You go ou'," he ordered sternly.

"My letter?" I asked meekly and respectfully.

"No more letter," he said, crumpling it in his hand.

The Chinese boys stood aside as I started into the bunk room to go out the back door. I was shamed, humiliated, covered with confusion. Turning back, I took off my hat, and facing the old man held up my right hand.

"If I ever rob another Chink I hope I rot in the gutter." I was so intent on expressing my gratitude that I forgot my Chinese lingo.

He understood no word of it, I'm sure, but pointed again to the back. "You go ou'."

I went out, humble and crestfallen. In the alley I threw the bottle of chloroform against a building, and its crash somewhat relieved my feelings. That was my first and last experience with chloroform as an aid to burglary. As an agent for stupefying a sleeping person without waking him, I maintain, in spite of the opinions of fiction writers and romancing thieves, "it can't be done." Making my way to the cottage of my Salt Lake friends who had promoted me, I reported my disastrous and humiliating failure. Had they been inclined to entertain any doubts about my story, my appearance would have set them at rest. I was scratched, clawed, bruised, and had a big lump on my head.

They were very sympathetic. I was invited to "stick around a few

days" till they could look up something else for me. I excused myself as tactfully as possible, resolving to locate my own work from there on. I went to my room and to bed, and stayed there several days because of the terrible mauling the Chinamen had given me. Yet, with all this, I couldn't but respect them for letting me go free, heaping coals of fire on my guilty head. I remembered Smiler and our resolve never to pester another Mormon when we had been captured in the Temple yard and released. I vowed never to molest another Chinaman, and never since have I imposed upon one except on one occasion, and that was under great necessity.

Years after, I got out of a train at Cheyenne, racked with the opium habit, after an all-day ride to escape the Denver police. Making a hasty survey of the gambling houses and joints I failed to find anybody I knew who could direct me to a place to "smoke." It was almost midnight, cold and storming, and I set out to find a laundry. There was one near by, the laundrymen were resting after the day's toil, and through the glass door I saw one lying in his bunk, smoking his day's ration of hop. The door was locked, and they refused to open up for me.

No hop fiend's wits ever fail to work when the "yen yen" arrives. In desperation I hastened to one of the gambling houses, and going into a rear room took off my vest and wrapped it in a newspaper. Hurrying out, I got a messenger and gave him fifty cents to take the bundle to the Chinese laundry. I was at his heels. The Chinamen seeing what they thought was a parcel of laundry opened the door and I shouldered myself in behind the boy. Once inside, I took my vest away from him and going directly to the bunk where the smoker lay threw down some silver, explaining what I wanted. The smoker turned out to be the boss laundryman. The sight of my money mollified him somewhat, and after much protesting and objecting he let me lie down on his bunk and smoke my fill. In an hour we were friends. He explained that he refused to open the door because he thought I was a "ketchum money man" — a robber.

In the days of my sad experience at the Chinese store, Vancouver was a much smaller town than it is now. There were few opportunities worth while, and I decided to leave. Moreover every Chinese store, laundry, and business house reminded me of that disastrous night. I was afraid of bumping into Chew Chee or the boss Chinaman that had given me the letter. I was sure they had heard about it, and didn't want to face them. I was nearly broke again, and had to bestir myself.

The American side seemed the only place to go, and not having enough money to buy a ticket, I went down to the railroad yards to get

a train. The blind baggage, or "stormy end" as the bums call it, was so crowded when the train pulled out that I saw they would all be thrown off at the first stop. I didn't want to get underneath on the rods and ruin my clothes for a short jump of fifty miles to the junction, so I got on top of a coach. Something must have been wrong with the engine, for there was one continual shower of red-hot cinders falling on me that burned holes in my clothes, ruining them and blistering my skin.

At the first stop I got down, intending to go in a coach and steal a hat check, or crawl under a seat out of sight. Looking about I saw that the last coach was in darkness, and thinking it was a dead, empty car, I waited till it came along and boarded the front end, hoping to find the door unlocked. The door opened to my touch, but when I went inside I found myself in a luxuriously furnished private car instead of a dead coach.

There are only three degrees of tough luck — bad, worse, and worst. When you reach the worst you have the satisfaction of knowing that if your luck changes it has to change for the better. I considered my Waterloo at the Chinese store the direst degree of bad luck. Not only had I lost a big bunch of money; I was hurt somewhere else.

At that time I thought it was my professional pride that suffered because of failure. Now I know I was hurt because the old Chinaman had shown himself so superior to me. If he had sent me to jail I would have done my time and forgotten him, but to this day thinking about him and writing about him make me feel uneasy. I wonder what I would have done had he made me promise to quit stealing?

But I was in this private car, feeling that my luck was due for a change, and with a chance to heal my wounded pride. The air inside the car was warm, live, vibrating. I sensed an occupant. Making my way along the aisle toward a stateroom at the far end, I looked about closely for an attendant but there was none in sight. The stateroom door was open, with a chair against it, probably for better ventilation. A heavily shaded lamp was burning, and by its soft light I saw the form of a big man rolled in the blankets on a broad berth. His back was toward the door, and nothing but a shock of coarse gray hair showed above the covers. A glance told me I was in the presence of power, wealth, affluence. I hadn't enough money to pay for that man's breakfast.

On a small table at the head of the sleeper's berth there was a large silver pitcher, a glass, two books, a fat leather pocketbook, a thick bill fold, a pocket purse, and a heavy gold watch, with a small, black ribbon guard. I took all the articles except the pitcher, glass, and books, and started for the door I entered, praying that the attendant wouldn't appear.

I saw nothing of him, and concluded he was somewhere forward, gossiping or shooting dice with the porters.

It was but a minute's work to get back upon the top of a coach, where I lay and let the cinders do their worst. The next stop was a junction, where I intended to get off and cross the line into Washington. The only train in sight was a westbound passenger waiting on a sidetrack. I was afraid to hang around, and when it pulled out I went underneath on the rods and got back into Vancouver after an absence of five hours. I planted the watch in the railroad yards, and never saw it again.

On my way uptown to get a room, I emptied the bill fold and purse, throwing them away. In the room I looked over the money, and found I had enough to keep me six months, if I kept away from the faro tables.

The fat pocketbook held no money, but was bulging with valuable personal papers. Looking through them I saw that their owner was one of the higher officials of the Canadian Pacific Railway. I realized there would be a terrific roar in the morning, and was on the point of burning the papers and destroying the pocketbook when the thought came to me that I could gain nothing by that, while I would be causing the owner an immense loss and no end of inconvenience. I secreted the pocketbook in the rear of the hotel, and went to bed trying to think up some safe way of returning it to the owner. No use in inflicting a profitless injury on him; and its return might take the sharp edge off his resentment.

EIGHTEEN

DISCARDING my cinder-burnt clothes for a new outfit the next day, I bought a ticket for Victoria, B.C. On my way to the boat that evening I dropped the fat pocketbook into a mail box, where I knew it would be found, then examined, and returned to the loser.

When I first began stealing I had but a dim realization of its wrong. I accepted it as the thing to do because it was done by the people I was with; besides, it was adventurous and thrilling. Later it became an everyday, cold-blooded business, and while I went about it methodically, accepting the dangers and privations it entailed, I was fully aware of the gravity of my offenses. Every time I stole a dollar I knew I was breaking a law and working a hardship on the loser. Yet for years I kept on doing it. I wonder how many of us quit wronging others for the best reason of all — because it is wrong, and we know it. Any thief that can't or doesn't put himself in his victim's place, in the place of the copper that pinches him, or in the place of the judge who sentences him, is not a complete thief. His narrow-mindedness will prevent him from doing his best work and also shut him off from opportunities to help and protect himself when he is laid by the heels.

Nobody wants to live and die a criminal. They all hope to quit some day, usually when it's almost too late. I will say right here to any thief who thinks of quitting that if he can put himself in the other fellow's place he has something substantial to start on; and if he can't do it, he'll never get anywhere.

I always figured that when I had a man's money or valuables he had suffered enough. What sense in destroying his personal papers, or keeping heirlooms of no value except to him, or subjecting him to any loss that would be profitless to me? In the case of this sleeper in his private car, I saw the money and watch meant little to him. The papers meant much. On top of that, his peace of mind was disturbed, and his sense of safety and security shattered. He would probably lock his doors and sleep in a stuffy room the balance of his life, another great hardship. I had his valuables and intended to keep them. I could not restore his peace of mind or his sense of safety and security. I could restore his papers, and, at some small risk, did. Had I been chased or suspected I would have thrown them away, or in the fire without a thought. I took his property