John Ainsley, Master Thief

BY

Arthur Somers Roche

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BUTTON, BUTTON

BEGIN HERE TODAY

John Ainsley, a man of education and breeding, becomes a master crook preying upon other thieves. His first venture into theft was at the expense of Daragon, a Fifth Ave. jeweler.

Now, in a resort hotel, Ainsley is recovering the strength which he lost in months of near-starvation before he turned to dishonesty. At the resort he unfairly loses $500 in a golf bet with Ernest Vantine, chief owner of a detective agency—a coarse, boorish individual. Vantine is engaged to a Miss Kernochan, daughter of a wealthy retired broker. As proof of his great wealth, Kernochan shows Ainsley a ring—an enormous ruby—which he gave to his daughter upon her engagement to Vantine.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

He was not loath to do so, and I learned that the jewel had a history. It had been owned by a Russian grand duke who had fled to Italy when Kerenski came into power. He had disposed of it to an American millionaire by the name of Adams, who had died shortly afterward, leaving his affairs much involved.

"I had a claim against his estate, and I took this stone in settlement from his widow," said Kenochan.

I wondered, looking at his smug face, with the pious sidewhiskers and the mean, hard mouth, how just had been his claim against the estate. Idly I questioned him—yet not too idly, for the stone attracted me. I learned that Adams had left a widow, who now resided in Boston and who was in rather straitened circumstances. Thinking of how comfortably that widow might live upon the proceeds of the sale of the ruby, I felt my distaste for Kernochan increasing. I made up my mind that I would have that ruby.

The next morning, starting for the seaside, where the professional was assisting me to correct a nasty slice, I, after long absence from the game had finished in my drive, I came upon the Kernochans and Vantine in the lobby. They were dressed for travel, and porters were laden with bags. I stopped beside them.

"Yes, we're leaving," Kernochan told me in reply to my polite question. "A telegram came last night—sudden death of a former partner of mine; inconsiderate of him to die just now, when I am enjoying the golf, but it can't be helped."

His callous brutality should not have affected me, but I marked it up against him. I, too, felt that his partner was inconsiderate; I wanted the ruby, and it was going away. I murmured an insincere condolence. I urged to Vantine

"Mr. Ainsley, with a little practice, to take you on again," I told him.

"Well, there are other gold-courses," he leered.

"I live at Greenwich, Mr. Ainsley," said Kernochan. "In a few weeks the courses around there will be in good condition. If you're in New York—"

"Thank you very much," I told him warmly.

And the next day I, too, left Pinehurst. Two evenings later I was in Boston; and twenty-four hours after my arrival I had read and digested, in newspaper files, the life and death of the Henry Adams, whose widow had surrendered the great ruby to Benjamin Kernochan. For, you see, when I make up my mind, I am very much in earnest.

I had read of supercrooks; I had met one in the flesh, and almost under his eyes had abstracted a jewel for the possession of which he had made his supercrook plans. I had told myself then that the so-called supercrooks succeeded merely because of the low intelligence of the police opposed to them. If low cunning—which was all my supercrook possessed—could achieve success, what would the intelligence of a gentleman achieve?

I had answered that question satisfactorily. By one bit of sleight-of-hand I had made more money than honest drudgery would have earned me in a lifetime. For I had no profession. Born to expectations which had not been fulfilled, I found myself, at thirty, possessed of an aristocratic birth, a cosmopolitan education—and nothing else. I was a living sermon of the futility of the gentleman. For the day when the mere being a gentleman entitled one to a decent and honorable living has passed forever. The world has no respect for fine instincts; it pays its tributes to fine gold.

I had intelligence; that I knew. But in addition to a good mind—which had never been used—I had only a gift for sleight-of-hand, assiduously cultivated during my youth. That contemptible accomplishment, however, had been sufficient, coupled with a quick wit, to enable me to do what a supercrook had failed to achieve.

Yet, with all my contempt for the intelligence of the police, I had vowed that I would; if possible, confine my efforts to fields in which the police had no concern. I would rob thieves. But here, at the very outset of my new career, I found myself planning to steal from one who was not a thief. Pride entered into the affair. Kernochan and Vantine thought me a wealthy fool who could be rooked with impunity. I would endeavor to show them that they had been mistaken. And in furtherance of that endeavor, I made a call upon Mrs. Henry Adams.

I found her in a modest boarding-house on Beacon Hill. I introduced myself as one who planned writing a book on historic jewels. Two days of hasty reading in the Public Library had qualified me to speak learnedly upon the subject of precious stones—wisely enough, at least, to deceive any but a jeweler. Furthermore, as I explained to Mrs. Adams, my book was to deal with the romance of jewels, rather than with technicalities.

"But why come to me, Mr. Ainsley?" she asked.

"You are the owner of the Grand Duke's ruby," I replied.

"Not any longer," she told me, shaking her white head.

I assumed an expression of surprise. "I understood that your husband had acquired it," said I.

"That is true; but since my husband's death, the stone has passed from my possession," she informed me. Then, in response to my questioning look, she told me the things that I wished to know. "My husband and I, Mr. Ainsley, have always been simple people. We never expected to own such a thing as the Grand Duke's ruby, and we acquired it almost accidentally. My husband was a broker. He was in Italy, arranging for the flotation of some Italian bank-stock in this country. While there, he met the Duke, who was in great need of money. He wished to sell the ruby, and experts assured my husband that the price, one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, was hardly half the jewel's real value. My husband had considerable cash available at the time. It looked like a good investment, and so he bought it. But neither of us ever intended that I should wear it. I am afraid,"—and she smiled whimsically—"that I am not the type of woman who could successfully wear such a ring."

I agreed with her, although I protested otherwise. But she laughed at me.

"I am a simple countrywoman, Mr. Ainsley. I never could be a grand lady, and never wanted to be one. And Henry, my husband, was a countryman. In search of a living, Henry came to Boston when he was

"I could not wear such a ring."

a boy; he always hoped to save enough to buy a farm. You know how those things are. By the time Henry had ten thousand dollars, he was involved in business. By the time he possessed one hundred thousand, he was more deeply involved in affairs. Then, when his fortune amounted to more than a million, his entanglements were so great that his withdrawal from business might have injured scores of other people. We bought the farm, but how seldom we saw it! And then, just before he died, he determined definitely to get out of the city. I don't understand business, Mr. Ainsley, and so I cannot tell you just how it was that Henry's estate, which I had thought to be worth at least three million dollars, amounted, when all the claims were settled, to less than twenty thousand.

"But he had entered into some sort of an arrangement with another broker named Kernochan; and Kernochan had papers that seemed to prove that Henry was entirely responsible for certain vast debts incurred under that arrangement." Her gray eyes blanched. I sensed the fire within this sweet and simple lady.

"You say those papers seemed to prove certain things," I commented.

"I was wrong," she corrected herself. "I understand law no more than I understand business. And the courts decided that Mr. Kernochan's claim was just. So it is not becoming in me to discuss the matter. But"—and she smiled again—"you see that I no longer own the ruby."

(To be continued.)

Trees Draw Birds

Trees are the houses of the birds where they nest and live. Aside from their beauty and their song, the presence of birds is of incalculable value in assisting to maintain the balance of nature. Their consumption of destructive insects and slugs saves Canadian farmers and fruit-growers thousands of dollars a year.

Value of Forest Products

The value of the annual harvest of Canada's forests is not far short of $500,000,000 even with the present somewhat wasteful methods of exploitation. It has been estimated that by proper protection and management the accessible forest land of Canada can be made to produce at least three times the present annual cut in perpetuity.

A certain contractor, who had always professed to be fond of children, became very angry because some little fellow stepped on a new pavement before it was dry. In the midst of his tirade, a bystander broke in: "I thought you loved children," he said. "I do in the abstract, but not in the concrete," he replied.

Wife (on the telephone, disguising her voice)—"Guess who this is?" Husband—"Is it—ah—Phyllis?" Wife (furiously) — "Phyllis!" Husband (disguising his voice)—"Guess who this is?"

A Fair Canadian

Alys Pacaud, noted film star, the daughter of the assistant high commissioner for Canada in London.

The Years Before School

By Mrs. Nestor Noel

One day I was on a visit with my four-year-old daughter. There were no other children in the house, and she was getting lonely.

"Lend her a book," I said.

They could not find a picture book. "Any book, with large print will do," I told them.

A book with good plain letters was brought. To their astonishment, the little girl was quite happy, reading words here and there.

"She should not know how to read at her age," objected a woman.

"Why not?" I asked.

"It's bad for her health," was the reply.

This child had not been urged to read. At an early age, I had given her alphabet blocks with which to play. As she wanted to know what the blocks meant, I told her the names of the letters. From that, it was not long before she knew the words under the pictures on the blocks and was picking them out of every book she came across. It afforded her much amusement for a rainy day. Knowing something about books, she was, later, less timid at the idea of going to school.

There are other things, however, more important. Before reaching the school age a child should be taught to speak good English and should understand and practice pleasing manners. Some children are entirely untrained in the little courtesies before they enter school, and often school does not improve them in the least in this respect.

"I do not know what kind of manners the children are taught," remarked a woman to me once. "They seem ever so much rougher than before they went to school."

If the home influence does not keep children as polite as they should be, it is unreasonable to expect the school to do so. It is the home life which has the most influence. If very largely determines the future. Before school age, when we think our children are learning nothing, they are really learning a great deal. It rests with us to see what they learn. In the bright sayings of children we often get an insight into their daily home life.

The years before seven are the most impressionable, and their influences continue throughout life.

A child comes into the world knowing nothing. It does not know how to walk, to eat, to speak. Why not teach it to do all these things correctly, to save learning them twice?

These lessons should not be made difficult; all of us remember best the experiences most enjoyed.

We spoke in the beginning of reading. If your little one learns to recognize the letters and some of our common words it should be as an amusement, a game. Do not commit the mistake of aking it a lesson.

All life is a lesson if you want to make and call it such. Accept as much as possible of it in the highest spirit of play and it will bring more joy. Especially, do this with those first few years of a child's life at home when all work should be play.

Can't Explain It

Cape Town.—White people were admitted to the Hindu temple at Durban for the first time to watch the fire-walking ceremony which has just been held there.

An enormous bonfire was lit, and when many tons of firewood had been reduced to a wide carpet of glowing charcoal an orchestra of reed pipes and tomtoms began playing weird Indian music.

The "Soutris," or fire walkers, had silver pins stuck into their flesh and skewers pierced their tongues. They carried heavy burdens and some of them walked on nails which had been driven through the soles of their wooden sandals. A wild outburst of music arose, and they stepped fearlessly into the pit and walked across the fire.

Many of them crossed the red-hot layer of embers several times and seemed to feel no pain. Major Richards, Chief of Police, and two doctors then examined them. Not a burn or blsiter was to be found on the feet of the fire walkers. When the pins were withdrawn from their bodies there was no bleeding.

Major Richards and the doctors were garlanded and welcomed by the Hindu priest, who said that although the ceremony would never be understood by Europeans it was an age-old custom among the Hindus.

One of the doctors afterwards stated that he could not explain how the fire walkers escaped unhurt. They appeared to be in a sort of trance during the ceremony.

Seek Mine Riches With Aeroplanes

Method in Vogue this Spring Saves Weeks of Time for Prospectors

NEW IDEAS WORKING

Hudson Bay Country North of The Pas New Eldorado

Winnipeg—Prospecting by aeroplane has passed the experimental stage and is now at the point where it is by way of becoming ahumdrum operation.

Just now prospectors are being sent into the north in large numbers by planes. In fact, this summer, prospecting will actually be done by planes, that is, pictures will be made from the air, developed, and prospectors landed at points selected from the aeroplanes with their camp equipment and supplies. For the remote camps where wireless is not available for rapid communication, one company has secured a number of carrier pigeons for emergent connections.

Records Broken

All records for improved prospecting of a mining region are being broken in the north country just now. There has been nothing like it in the hectic search for precious metals anywhere in the world at any time. Prospectors are being sought by men of means everywhere. Instead of old miners seeking "grub stakes" to-day as of old, the money is being literally "thrown at the prospector" to-day. Advertisements are appearing in the daily papers as far west as Vancouver seeking "men of experience who desire a grub stake—liberal terms as complete equipment for an unlimited period."

Where a grub stake in the old days of development in the Cobalt, British Columbia and California meant a meagre supply of beans, bacon and flour, the prospectors being grub staked for the Hudson Bay Country, have a selection of food that ought to produce a first class case of gout, the best tools money will buy, a small wireless receiving machine, a victrola, clothes, tents, blankets and, in fact, all the luxuries of civilization.

Must Know What's What

But, the prospector must know more than his counterpart of old. The "desert rat" and the "mountain vagrant" that masqueraded as a prospector in the old days has no part in the army of alert men now doing the world's work in these remote spaces to-day. Most of them are college graduates, chemists and able to construct a passable retort from an old kettle and a few pots. He works under better conditions, but he must have a better mental equipment. And his rewards are proportionately greater.

One thing is certain, the Hudson Bay mining region will be more rapidly and more thoroughly explored in a year than most other mining sections of the world have received in ten, yes, fifty years. When a favorable claim is located, there will be the diamond drill brought to the spot by plane and efficient men transported to handle it. In a few weeks an approximate idea of the "find" will be pretty definitely known. And the money is available for the development as soon as the engineers have given a favorable decision. That is one interesting feature of the present rush into the north. Money is seeking the mine that is worth developing.

Spectacular interest, of course, surrounds the aeroplane rush into the north. Trips of one thousand to fifteen hundred miles, continuous flight, are so common out of Winnipeg into the mining region and hydro and railway construction camps, of that section that they are no longer "first page" features for the local dailies.

Machines that carry five tons of freight and three or four passengers are in use by three different companies operating out of Winnipeg from as many fields. From The Pas, five hundred miles north the Western Aeroplane company has a fleet of six machines, constantly in use for remote points north, even as far as Forts Churchill and Nelson, on Hudson Bay.

Dog Train is Passe.

Routes that were matters of weeks to negotiate with loads but a year ago are now traversed in a few hours. Dog trains and snow autos have proven too slow in the mad rush for development over a region a thousand miles square. Bundles of rich furs that have come down by the slow process of canoe and dog sled from the Hudson Bay company for a century are now being shipped into Winnipeg by these returning planes.

Daily wireless orders are received by merchants in the cities for supplies to be rushed out the same day by this or that plane. In several cases this winter injured men have been transported to the local hospitals by the air route from remote points and recently a wireless was received from the Central Mining region requesting a plane to bring a doctor and return with an injured man.

So much competition has been introduced that passenger fares by plane, per mile, are not more than four times the railway tariff for similar distances. For freight the charges are proportionately heavier than other means of transportation, but not so high that fur companies, mining enterprises and kindred industries in the north can't afford to pay the increased price.

Daily, engineers and investors from Toronto, Montreal, New York and Chicago arrive in Winnipeg, having wired in davance for their plane reservations and within an hour after their arrival, are on their way by the air route northward.

James Stanley and Marcus Parr, engineers from Chicago representing Minneapolis interests, came north in such a hurry that they wired for a plane to be chartered for their exclusive use into the White Mud Falls district, 700 miles away. They were out of the city in two hours after their arrival.

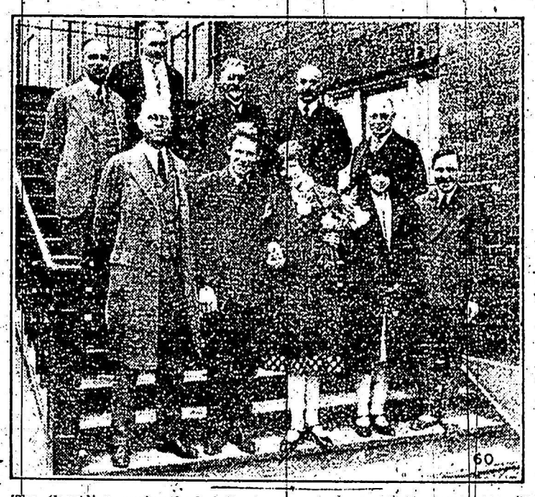
Brings Home the Bacon

Recently an order for delivery of a thousand pounds of beans, a ton of miscellaneous canned goods and five hundred pounds of bacon was received for delivery by plane to Cold Lake, 500 miles north in the Hudson Bay section. The jobber that filled the order had difficulty in finding a plane without a full charter to make the journey. Before the ship left another order for an electric drill and other machinery, weighing a ton, had been received for shipment by the same plane.

Soft weather of the last few days has interfered somewhat with the companies operating in the air. The planes have found no difficulty during the winter landing on the ice of lakes and rivis, when no other open space were available, but the ice has become dangerous of late. Except in special cases where camps have landing fields prepared there will be some delay for a few weeks in the operation of planes northward.

This new method of filling emergency orders is responsible for the rapid advance made in the construction of the first 50 miles of the 100 mile line from the Hudson Bay road into the Flin Flon this winter. This piece of road constitutes a record for rapid construction in the history of northern railway building in winter. The right of way was cleared in zero weather, while the surveyors worked ahead and rails laid behind them regardless of cold and snow. The ballast will have to be completed this spring, but the entire 100 miles will be in operation before next winter. A mile a day has been considered pretty good speed in railway construction under favorable conditions and the job from Mile 6 on the Hudson Bay to Cranberry Portage, en route to the Flin Flon, 52 miles away, has beaten this record in sub-zero weather.

Romance on C.P.R. Route



The Canadian spring had early influence upon Andrea Hansen, 21, and Neils Christian Nielsen, 23, handsome young Danish immigrant couple who, on arriving at Winnipeg, decided to marry and, with the assistance of the Canadian Pacific Railway Colonization Department officials, did so forthwith.

They had known each other in their homeland, Denmark, for many years and had even been sweethearts, but on departing for Canada they had harboured no romantic ideas of thoughts of marriage. Travelling as strangers in a strange land, they met and found happiness in each other's company during the journey and furthermore discovered their destinations to be close together. On reaching Winnipeg on their west-bound trip they decided to marry, and the C.P.R. Colonization department officials did the rest.

Rev. N. Damskov, immigration chaplain, aided the groom in securing a special marriage license. His son Victor, a member of the colonization staff, hurriedly procured a fine bouquet from the florists as a gift to the bride from the company. An office adjacent to the Winnipeg immigration hall was cleared and prepared for the occasion. C. A. Van Scoy, head of the colonization department of the railway for Western Canada, volunteered to act as groomsman, and R. G. McNeillie, general passenger agent, to give the bride away; a group of twenty immigration and company officials gathered— and the stage was set for the ceremony, the first among newcomers for this season.

"Vil du have Andrea for din ekta husfra?" asked Rev. N. Damskov.

"Ja!" responded Nielsen.

The chaplain pronounced a special prayer for their guidance as strangers in the new land, charged them to continue faithful to one another, repeated the Lord's prayer, gave the benediction, made the sign of the cross,—and Andrea and Neils Christian were declared man and wife.

They continued their journey westward that afternoon, two out of four hundred settlers,—Danes, Dutch, and English,—who were travelling at that time with the Canadian Pacific.

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Bat Caves of Haiti Yield Strange Bones

Remnants of Animals and Birds Now Extinct Brought Back by Smithsonian Expedition

How rapidly races of animals may die out is illustrated by a large collection of extinct animal bones gathered in the limestone caves of Hayti and brought back to this country by a Smithsonian expedition under Arthur J. Poole of the National Museum.

The caves, which are near the western edge of the great central plain of Hayti, near San Michel, are infested by bats. The floors are six or seven feet deep in guano and refuse. Sifted through this guano the Smithsonian expedition found quantities of animal and bird bones, many of them representative of species which no longer inhabit the island, though the period of their deposit probably does not extend back more than 1,000 years and many bones are of recent origin.

Though the bones have not yet been worked over, Mr. Poole has been able to identify the skull and skeleton of a ground sloth, which is believed to be the most complete recorded from the island. Several rodents resembling in size the muskrat and beaver are represented among the bones, and there is at least one insectivore. There are a great number of bat skulls and bizarre jaws.

In some caves, the Smithsonian scientist found skeletal remains of man, but whether they belonged to the present natives of the island or to the Indian aborigines who have been extinct for a long period, has not yet been determined. Incidentally, Mr. Poole reports that the caves have been used by superstitious natives as places of worship. In some cases they carved heads on the stalagmite and stalactite pillars in the caves to represent saints or gods. Offerings of eggs, fruit and even coins were made to these objects of worship.

How the bones got into the caves is not clear in all cases. Most of the smaller bird and mammal bones undoubtedly represent prey eaten by owls. Bones of the larger creatures probably represent individuals who entered these caverns by chance.

As is well known, owls in feeding swallow their prey of birds and mammals entire or in large fragments. The flesh is digested and the bones, fur and feathers formed into pellets which are later regurgitated, leaving the stomach empty to receive another meal. The great deposits of small bones in the San Michel caves represent the remains of owl pellets accumulated about nests and roosting places.

The owls responsible for the deposit are now themselves extinct. In form they resembled the living barn owl, but were nearly three times as large. They were first described by Dr. Alexander Wetmore, Assistant Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, who christened the species by the peculiarly appropriate name of Tyto ostologa; this signifying one who watches in a graveyard.

The Smithsonian expedition received hearty co-operation from the United States marines, which offer the local police of this isolated section of the island; from the United West Indies Corporation, on whose tobacco plantation the expedition was a guest, and from the officials of the Insular Department of Agriculture, who assisted in transportation and in other ways.

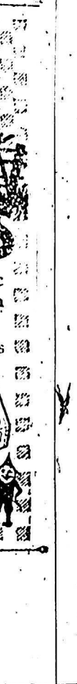
A Deplorable Verdict

The acquittal of Harry F. Sinclair is a failure of justice which every honest man will deplore. It is to be added to the long list of escapes from deserved punishment which the excessive tenderness and grotesque intricacies of American criminal law have permitted in recent years. The prosecutors plainly did their best, and the verdict of the jury may well have been justified by the evidence presented and admitted. Conviction for conspiracy is always difficult to obtain. The criticism falls not upon individuals but upon the system which entangles justice in legalistic red tape.

But no clearing of the defendant's moral responsibility is involved in the verdict. That question was settled by the decision of the Supreme Court in the civil action. The country will not forget and should not forget the disgraceful fraud practiced upon the nation by Sinclair and Fall in the Teapot Dome lease. It is greatly to be hoped that the conviction for contempt of court found against Sinclair will be sustained. This punishment would fitly express the sentiment of the nation toward a colossal despoiler of the nation.—New York Herald-Tribune.

Great minds react on the society which has made them what they are; but they only pay with the interest what they have received.—Lord Macaulay.

We should never create by law what can be accomplished by morality.—Montesquieu.



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After Every Meal

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