

ed man of about fifty. He has been connected with the department for years. He is rather reserved in his manner, and, like all good detectives, he has learned the policy of keeping his mouth shut as to the cases he has in hand. His department is thoroughly organized, however, and the wires are hot with the cases which are sent into it for him to settle. All complaints are classified. Those which relate to the registered mail are marked "A." Those which refer to the ordinary mail go into division "B." All charges against postmasters and postal employees and improper use of the mails are assigned to another division, marked "C." The "D" cases are those which relate to the robberies of post offices, and the "F" cases are complaints as to the foreign mail. There are daring crimes connected with all these cases. The registered mail is said to carry about two hundred million dollars a year. It handles about fifteen million letters and packages annually, and last year it was alleged that over twenty-five hundred of these were opened and their contents stolen. There were several thousand other cases, some of which embraced the entire loss of the letter or package. Of the case investigated, it was found that losses actually occurred in only eighteen hundred instances, and that in half of these the money was recovered by the inspectors. As to the annual ordinary mail it is impossible to estimate its value. At the rate of twenty-five cents per letter it would be worth \$500,000,000. Complaints in this division amounted last year to about fifty-seven thousand, and the loss was comparatively small. The chief increase in crime has been in post office burglaries, and connected with them the numerous defalcations in the territories of the west.

The action of Killoran, Russell and Allen in holding up the jailers at New York is nothing new in the records of post office crimes. The men who rob Uncle Sam's post offices are among the most dangerous of our criminal classes. They are usually men of more than ordinary intelligence, and they seem to be adepts in the art of getting out of Uncle Sam's jails. There is a man now in the penitentiary at Joliet, Ill., who held up five men, and succeeded in making his escape after he had been arrested by the post office inspectors. The man's name was Le Roy Harris. He was formerly in the employ of the New York post office. About a year ago he got in possession of some money orders and postal note blanks of a Connecticut post office. With these, by means of forgery, he succeeded in obtaining about \$3,000 from the post office funds. He sent his bogus money orders all over the country. The inspectors soon discovered his fraud, and within six weeks after the theft of the blanks they had arrested him. He was taken at Buffalo, New York, and was brought before a United States commissioner. While that office was issuing the necessary papers Harris drew his revolver, made the five men in the room hold up their hands, and escaped. He was captured, however, the same night at a little town in Canada, and sent to jail.

Last year the department had great trouble with a gang of letter box thieves, a number of whom escaped after being arrested. This gang made

a specialty of breaking open street letter boxes. They carried on their work in different parts of the country. About a year ago the inspectors got on their track and arrested the three who were considered the chiefs of the gang. One of them was a man named Stratton, who was caught in Colorado, and who is serving twenty-one years' sentence in the penitentiary at Canyon City. He escaped four months after he was captured, but was retaken, and is again in prison. Two others of this gang who were arrested also escaped, but they were both retaken.

Of all the desperate post office robbers who have broken jail, however, the department has no more remarkable case than that of Rube Burrows. This man was a famous train robber and burglar. He has been engaged in a number of post office robberies and he ended his career through an attempt to rob a mail train in Mississippi in 1889. He had two confederates, and the three men entered the train by way of the engine. They covered the engineer and fireman with their pistols and then made their way back to the mail car. They took all the registered packages and succeeded in making their escape. The Post Office Department offered a \$1,000 for the arrest of Burrows. The railroads also offered rewards, and a man named Carter finally captured him. He was taken to Alabama and was put into a village jail. Carter had gone off to sleep at the hotel. He left a white man and two negroes to guard Burrows. During the night the white man went off into a cabin to sleep, leaving the two negroes alone. Burrows had a little canvas bag with him at the time of his capture. He asked these negroes to get this for him, saying that it contained some crackers and he was hungry. They got this. Burrows at once put his two hands into the bag, and, notwithstanding the handcuffs on his wrists pulled out two pistols. With these he covered the negroes. He made them go and bind and gag the white man, and then made one of the negroes bind the other. The unbound negro he compelled to lead him to the room in the hotel where Carter was sleeping. He made him knock at the door and say to Carter that he was wanted at the jail. The result was Carter opened the door and found himself facing the cold steel of Burrows' revolvers. He did not flinch, however, but pulled his pistol and began firing. A number of shot were exchanged, and Burrows was killed. Carter received several wounds, but he recovered and got his reward.

One of the biggest robberies of stamps that the department has ever known was that which occurred here last fall at the bureau of engraving and printing. The government up until within a short time has been having the stamps made by the American Bank Note Company of New York. It cost the government seven cents a thousand. Now Uncle Sam makes his own stamps, and saves \$200,000 a year by doing so. Last October, however, it was found that two of the employees of the bureau had been stealing stamps by the thousand. The officers woke up one morning to find 90,000 two cent stamps missing, and it was discovered that these men had sent out short packages to the various post offices and had sold the stamps they stole. There were two women mixed

up in the case, and just before discovery the men took a satchel filled with stamps and ran off with the girls to New York. They returned within a day or so and went back to work. They denied their crime upon being arrested, but were convicted, and are now serving out their sentences in the penitentiary.

A big stamp robbery occurred at Minneapolis nine years ago. The thieves stole 800,000 stamps. They did it at night, breaking into the post office and crawling through the stamp window. The stamps were locked up in the safe, but the burglars opened it with a diamond drill. The value of their steal was about fourteen thousand dollars. They took their booty to Chicago and tried to dispose of it there through some men who acted as postage stamp fences. They had still four thousand dollars' worth of stamps left when they were discovered, arrested and sent to prison. The gang of burglars in New York do not seem to have this trouble in disposing of their stamps. A vast amount of stamps come into the big cities in the transmission of small sums through the mails. The merchants sell them through brokers at a small discount, and millions of stamps are disposed of in this way. It is estimated that New York uses \$3,000,000 worth of postage which she does not buy of the government. There is no way of detecting a stolen stamp, and the postage stamp fences thus have little trouble in getting rid of the amounts they buy from the robbers.

The officials of the Post Office Department tell me that robberies and defalcations are most common during hard times. Just about the time of the panic there were a great many post office burglaries, and the robberies were most in those sections where the times were the hardest. A number of arrests were lately made in South Carolina, and not a few in Texas. It is now about a year since Gen. Maxwell got a telegram describing the robbery of the mail stage on its way from Robert Lee to Ballinger, Tex. The stage was stopped by two masked men, and the registered mail stolen. In this mail it was stated that there was a letter containing \$3,100 of money order funds, which had been sent from the post office at Robert Lee. Gen. Maxwell handed the case over to Mr. Wheeler. An inspector was at once put to work, and it was found that the assistant postmaster, one of the postal clerks and the stage driver had conspired with W. F. Buchanan the president of a bank at Robert Lee, to steal this \$3,100 from Uncle Sam. The postal clerk and the stage driver, the night before the robbery, slipped out of town with the three registered letters in their hands. Two of these they had taken from the mails. One contained \$5 and the other \$2. The third letter contained nothing, but it was labeled to contain \$3,100 and the register account at the post office was manipulated to show that it had been received. These two men took these letters to the point where they decided that they would swear the robbery occurred. They tore up the two bona fide registered letters, and took the money, leaving the envelopes on the ground. They tore also the bogus \$3,100 envelope, which contained nothing, and then went back to town. The next morning the stage driver left with the mail. As soon as he got to this point he cut open the mail pouch,