

and Blumer proposed that they should rob houses for money, food and clothing, but the other two objected. This difference of opinion was the commencement of a serious quarrel, which finally resulted in their capture.

Wilson and Blumer made midnight raids on summer kitchens, and then commenced to rob clothing stores of wearing apparel, especially underwear, of which they at first stood in great need. Kohler discouraged the men from these robberies, which created great excitement in the town, and finally became so disgusted with his companions that he took the money he had earned to a dram-shop and became drunk. While in this condition he attempted to garrote a leading citizen and was arrested. When the chief of police searched him he found on his person two photographs of himself in convict garb, as well as discharge papers from the regular army, and a copy of a San Francisco paper containing an account of the escape at the Folsom prison. When asked where he obtained the newspaper Kohler said he found it in a Nevada squawshed. After reading the description of the men in the newspaper the chief of police and posse arrested the other three convicts, flinging them asleep in a haystack near the outskirts of the city.

The four prisoners were returned to Folsom a few days ago. The warden had offered a reward of \$200 for the capture of each man, and the chief of police of Ogden was paid the reward offered. The convicts are ill and emaciated from their terrible experiences while making their escape.—*San Francisco Chronicle*.

### THE AMERICAN FAGIN.

"Speaking of criminals," says Detective Carter, in response to a suggestion made by a Washington *Star* reporter, there is one of the light-fingered gentry who has figured in more than one criminal case in this city. He has spent almost a lifetime in the business of teaching boys from 11 to 15 years old how to operate as burglars. His mode of operations is nothing new, although he is generally pretty successful in making good hauls. Most of his criminal operations are conducted during the winter months, when thieves generally find it better to work or are compelled to do it as a matter of necessity. This man is now nearing 50 years old, but he looks much older.

"His racket is to teach the boys at first to rob the hallways and parlors. They seldom venture farther into a dwelling house. For this work small boys are needed, because the transom is used in case the front door is found locked, and if the boy is too large he can't manage to squeeze through the transom.

"The old criminal seldom goes nearer to the house than across the street, for if anybody gets caught, it must be one of the boys, for it won't go so hard with him. Of course, the trainer selects the house to be robbed, and explains to the boys

how to operate, and occasionally, if it is absolutely necessary he will go as far as the door to lend a helping hand. The boys are told what to do if they should get caught, and above all things they are instructed not to converse with the officer or tell him how they fell from grace, or who their companions are. He always remains at a safe distance, so that should a copper arrive he can walk away and escape detection.

"The first appearance of this criminal in the courts," continued the detective, was about the year 1870, when he appeared before Judge Olin on eight charges of burglary. The old jail in the City Hall was then used as the place of confinement of prisoners, and he occupied a cell in that prison. He was arraigned, tried and convicted. Then he was sent back to jail to await the imposition of sentence.

"One morning his case was called for sentence, and in care of a jail guard he was walked across the square and required to face the judge. The usual questions were asked the prisoner and he was commanded to stand up and receive the sentence of the Court.

"Judge Olin delivered to the convicted burglar a severe lecture as to the enormity of his crime, and gave him the usual good advice as to what life he had better lead in the future. Then in due form of law the judge passed sentence, which was eleven years at hard labor in the penitentiary. The prisoner gave a laugh almost as long as the sentence imposed and he said: 'You old —, I can stand on my head that long.' At the same time he made a motion as though to draw a weapon of some sort to inflict bodily injury upon the court, but no one imagined for a moment that he had a weapon about him. In that, however, they were mistaken, for when searched a large part of a brick was found concealed about him, and it was evident that he intended striking the judge with it. Where he got the brick from could not be ascertained, but it was thought he picked it up while walking across the lot.

"His long sentence did not have the effect of reforming him, and he returned probably a more hardened criminal than when he was sent away. Instead of leading a different life he fell back in the old track and begun operations anew. How many places he has really robbed will probably never be known. The next burglary in which he figured was done with the assistance of boys, and he escaped the penitentiary in a remarkable manner. This was, so far as known, his beginning in the line of training boys. He selected as the place to rob a file factory in the First Ward. He got together his little mob of boys and succeeded in having them carry out the plans which he laid for them. About \$40 worth of the files were stolen and I arrested him soon afterward.

"He took the stolen files to a saloon and in the rear room there was hole in the wall. In this he placed the files and covered them

with an ordinary piece of wall paper. During the day he went out and sold the files, and was so engaged when I arrested him. The case was brought to trial and his connection with the burglary was not disputed, but as he had remained so far away from the scene of the robbery he got off and was again set at liberty.

"It was only a question of time before he would again get caught," continued the detective. "Sure enough he again fell into our hands. No one ever knew him to do the work himself, because he always found boys to do it for him. There was one thing about him that was always sure to give him away. Just prior to his engagement with his young pupils he invariably came around police headquarters and would spend hours either about the corner or on one of the settees in the park opposite to throw off suspicion, but it had the opposite effect, for when he appeared the officers watched him more closely than at other times.

"Well, he came around, and by and by there was another robbery, the circumstances of which indicated that the burglar and his boys had again been at work. Investigation of the case proved that they had, but it was another set of boys. It was the robbery of a showcase. The case was in front of a store, and it was carried by his boys to an alley, where pistols, knives and other articles were taken from it. The case was there abandoned and the plunder was carried to the Smithsonian ground, where the 'old bird' got his share of it. His next appearance with the boys was at a hardware store in South Washington. There the plans were again made by the tutor and carried into effect by those under his instructions. The door was fastened with a heavy padlock, and the young burglars were not strong enough to break the hasp from over the staple, and their teacher found it necessary to run across the street from where he was stationed to assist them. The hasp being once broken, he returned to his position to watch for the appearance of anyone who might disturb their work. The boys, five in number, entered, and while in there two policemen stepped in front of the door. They did not remain long, however, and soon moved away, so that the work of securing what plunder they could was not long delayed. Acting under instructions, the boys gathered together all the case goods, such as penknives, razors and pistols. They went across the street and put up the plunder in five bundles, each one taking a bundle to carry away. In all there was nearly \$500 worth of goods taken.

"The half-dozen daring burglars separated, and later in the night they met at a colored cook shop not far from the Capitol. Lodgings were secured for the party, and the next morning some of them started out to dispose of the plunder.

"By the merest accident my partner, the late Detective Cox, and myself learned of the presence of the crowd at the cook shop, and