

"THE BEST LAID PLANS..."

Frank Kelly, '48

Sloan had thought it out to the last detail. Just to be certain, though, he began to turn the whole plan over again in his mind.....

It was Fair Week in Maryville and today, Tuesday, the town was having a horse-and-buggy cavalcade. Even the best families were turning out in old-fashioned clothes and parading around Hutton Square in some form of pre-auto carriage. All this, as the deep thinkers realized, was just a sly way of getting them to preserve gas and tires. To insure success of the childish scheme the mayor (who invented it) had issued an order forbidding automobiles to drive inside the town limits. What next?, thought the townspeople.

In fact James Sloan was the only person completely satisfied with the novel idea. What better time than this, thought he, to hold up the local bank? Already he had parked his car in the alley behind this, the town's largest building. With this expectancy of a fast getaway he felt success was certain. Only the Sheriff's car was authorized to remain on the streets and not ten minutes ago Sloan had punctured its gasoline tank. By the time any of the citizens had their cars started in pursuit, Sloan would be five miles out in the desert. The setup was perfect, absolutely perfect.

Now Sloan sauntered towards the bank, nervous but confident. He pushed open the door and strolled across to the teller's cage. To the few people in the bank that drowsy afternoon he appeared to be only a dapper young business man about to deposit the day's cash. Halting before the cage he thrust the empty satchel between the bars. When the teller looked up inquiringly Sloan said, "A stick-up, chum! Set off that alarm and it's curtains!" The terrified eyes of the teller travelled down the crook's right arm to where it disappeared in his coat pocket. Sloan allowed the now parchment-countenanced youth to eye the meaning bulge there several seconds before he continued, "Fill 'er up with hundred dollar bills and make sure they're old ones." Recent currency, he knew, could easily be traced.

A few moments later with the satchel crammed full he backed towards the door. This suspicious movement gave

the other people in the bank the first inkling of what was happening. But the robber was all confidence now. His was a sure-fire crime!

Once outside he ran down the alley to where his car was parked in the early evening shadows. He laughed as he heard the insistent note of the alarm ringing inside. Car vs. Horse and Buggy! The race of the century was about to start. He fumbled for the door handle in the gloom of the bank shadows, and then, finding the grip, quickly slid into the seat. What an age! Wars like these were made for men like him. A rubber shortage and out go gas buggies and in comes Sloan—with a roar the motor came to life—wouldn't know what to do without 'em. There'd be no unsuspecting suckers to fleece.

Already he could hear the usual frantic blundering of good citizens as they attempted to attempt at least something—no time to waste! Easing out the clutch and chuckling at the thought of such a smooth getaway, he gave her the gun. With a sickening lurch accompanied by a grating, metallic clatter the car lurched ahead and into one of the beautifully ornamented stone posts guarding the mouth of the bank alley, even as the ironic truth filtered into the bewildered thief's mind—Someone had stolen his tires.



Be thou the first true merit to befriend;
His praise is lost who stays till all commend.

—Pope.

Virtue, the great strength and beauty of the soul,
Is the best gift of Heaven.

—Armstrong.

Be wise,
Soar not too high to fall, but stoop to rise.

—Massinger.