

THEFT OF THE BODY OF A. T. STEWART, FIRST MERCHANT PRINCE WAS NEVER SOLVED

(New York Sun.)

Half a century has passed today since a startled assistant sexton at St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie discovered that the body of Alexander T. Stewart, America's first great merchant prince, had been stolen from its protected vault in St. Mark's historic churchyard, but the long succession of years has brought the real solution of the mystery no nearer.

In fact, since all the persons most intimately concerned with the strange happenings associated with that weird event are dead, it is probable that the questions which it raised never will be answered.

In vain have been all searchings for complete solutions for these riddles. How did the daring ghouls manage to break into the strong vault at the very time when a special guard over it had just been relaxed? Who were they? Why did they want the body? Most fantastic of all, can any one be sure that the remains now guarded by an alarm device in the crypt of the cathedral which Alexander T. Stewart built at Garden City are really his? Helped a Friend.

Immigrating to America from Ireland in 1822 at the age of 20 years Mr. Stewart erected for his growing a year, started a little dry goods store at 283 Broadway because a friend to whom he had lent some money for the project found himself unable to carry it through. In 1848 Mr. Stewart erected for his growing business the building at Broadway and Chambers street, now occupied by The Sun and long regarded as one of the show places of the city. Later he built a still larger store at Ninth and Broadway, now a part of Wana-maker's. At his death his fortune was estimated at from \$40,000,000 to \$70,000,000.

Despite a frugality which caused him to pick up pins dropped on the floor of his great store and once to discharge a carpenter he caught throwing away a nail, Mr. Stewart spent money lavishly on a marble mansion at Thirty-fourth street and Fifth avenue, where he and his wife lived childless. Rumors of a son who was reported to have died in an asylum were revived in the whirlwind of gossip created later by the desecration of Mr. Stewart's grave, but it seems certain there were no children alive when Mr. Stewart died.

Mr. Stewart's will left \$1,000,000 to his friend, Judge Henry Hilton, and made him executor of the estate. For years Judge Hilton had been the great merchant's adviser, not only in legal affairs but in other things.

Mysterious Stipulations.

All of the estate except that \$1,000,000 was left to the widow, but those who wondered at the size of the fortune the friend received found another cause for comment when it was learned within a few weeks after Mr. Stewart's magnificent funeral that Judge Hilton had come into possession of the enormous mercantile business. How and for what price was never disclosed. There were whispers of mysterious stipulations made by the eccentric millionaire which did not appear in the will.

Those whispers and a contest of the will by various persons claiming relationship seemed far removed from the sheltered churchyard at Stuyvesant and Eleventh streets, where Mr. Stewart rested with those who had been members of many of New York's most famous old families. In the two uneventful years that had passed before the morning of November 7, 1878, when Francis Parker, the assistant sexton, went into that yard as usual the buzz of conversation about Mr. Stewart and his affairs had abated. This was just another humdrum day to Francis Parker, as the gate clicked behind him promptly at 8 o'clock. The next minute he saw something which put his name on the front page of hundreds of newspapers as a minor participant in an event which startled the nation.

There was a mound of fresh earth beside the Stewart vault. A glance showed the fifteen inches of sod which formed the roof of the vault, entirely underground, had been removed, and that one of the three heavy slabs had been raised and replaced again. A rope used in handling the slab was still tied to it. Nearby

was a small shovel. It was obvious that the tomb had been violated. Parker was so excited that it took him half an hour to decide what to do—a circumstance commented on unfavorably afterward. At last he ran to the home of George W. Hammill, the sexton, who lived near by.

Previous Attempt.

Hammill and Parker lifted the stone and Hammill swung himself down into the tomb. He found that the coffin of Mr. Stewart had been opened and that the body was gone. The screws of a heavy cedar outer coffin had been removed and its lead lining cut away, apparently with a chisel. The lid of the ponderous, velvet covered inner coffin of English oak had been unscrewed. The thieves had taken the solid silver nameplate but had not touched the handles, which were only plated. A dark lantern had been left beside the coffin.

The sexton hurried to tell Judge Hilton, who was always consulted instead of Mrs. Stewart on important question. The Judge was aghast. In his immediate report to the police he revealed a secret which annoyed them exceedingly—one of many things which annoyed the police in their efforts to trace the guilty ones.

On October 8, Judge Hilton said, Hammill had found marks which seemed to have been made with a crowbar around the edge of the marker over the tomb. When Judge Hilton heard of it he decided not to tell the police, but instructed Hammill to hire a trustworthy guard, a man named Michael Burton, whose headquarters was a livery stable just around the corner from the church, was employed. Once an hour he was told to walk around the yard, protected then as now by a spiked iron fence, to look closely to see that everything was all right and the gate tightly locked. He was not told even what grave he was guarding.

Marker Was Moved.

To deceive any possible robbers Judge Hilton and the sexton agreed that the marker over Mr. Stewart's vault should be lifted and erected again at a place several yards away, so that anyone digging under it would find no vault at all.

Judge Hilton expressed amazement when Hammill admitted after the robbery that he had dismissed the guard a few days before because he understood Judge Hilton to say to "hire him for about a month" and the month was up.

The robbers, however, had dug exactly at the right spot and not one unnecessary spadeful of earth was turned. Not one of the three slabs over the vault had been touched except the one directly over the foot of the steep stairs leading down into it. If the robbers had blundered into taking off the slab at the head of the stairs there would not have been space enough to admit a man.

Other clues were more definite. Several persons remembered seeing mysterious wagons, hacks and cabs in the neighborhood on nights before the robbery.

A private watchman of the neighborhood saw a hack standing for some time that night near the graveyard and took pains to notice what livery stable it came from. His tip led the police to discover that the driver was one Michael Kelly, generally known as Bull Kelly. Kelly had shown a \$300 roll of bills to acquaintances on the day after the grave robbery, but from that moment he was never seen again in New York. Detectives trailed him to San Francisco, then back to Arizona, catching up with him there a day or so after he had been killed in a street fight.

The police knew that the robbery must have been perpetrated after 3 A. M. because a newspaper beside the vault on which the robbers had wiped their hands was dry, and it had rained at 3 o'clock.

Two Men Arrested.

Judge Hilton offered \$25,000 for the recovery of the body and information which would lead to the conviction of the ghouls or a "liberal reward" for the information alone.

Clews poured in. Covered wagons, mysterious hacks and buggies, manned by evil-looking men, had been seen rolling at night through Jersey City, Hoboken, Union Hill and other places. Tips came from afar. The

Montreal police reported that four days after the robbery a canal boat towed by a tug arrived with no cargo except a little pile of coal, and it was rumored that late at night a coffin-like box was taken from under that coal and hauled away in a wagon.

Within ten hours after the robbery the New York police arrested two men, who confessed, the police exultantly announced, adding that the body would be recovered from the Weehawken cemetery within a few hours. Judge Hilton's reaction was to increase the reward to \$50,000 on November 20, and as the days passed without the police producing their men it became clear that the confessions didn't hold up.

Gallaher's Account.

Countless new leads toward the solution of the robbery were brought forward as the years passed, some of them being offers from various persons who said that they represented the robbers and would return the body for ransom, if immunity were guaranteed. Judge Hilton announced openly that he would have no dealings with any of these agents.

Did he recover the body by a secret deal? That was a question which began to be asked as the zeal of the detectives abated. There is no proof. One rumor was that a representative of Judge Hilton, carrying \$25,000 cash, met a man in an alley in downtown Manhattan. If so, who could know it was the right body? Gossips said that Judge Hilton knew as well as any one that it was probably a substitute, but was eager to do something to assuage Mrs. Stewart's grief.

Judge Hilton died in 1899, but twice in the years since then, in 1905 and 1908, the chimes in the Garden City Cathedral, to which the Stewart tomb is connected by an elaborate device, have tolled an alarm. Both times the ringing was accidental, caused by electricians making repairs. The last alarm was set off while men were working overtime to get the chimes ready for Sunday. It was in the dead of night and many citizens rushed half clad and fully armed into the street to protect the tomb.

Are those bells really guarding what was stolen from St. Mark's churchyard fifty years ago today, the mortal remains of a famous man, or only some paupers' field fragment so humble that those who sold it knew it would never be missed?

CADDIE'S THIRD TRY SORTA STOPPED HER

A girl golfer, whose refined vocabulary was limited to "darn it!" and "hang it!" when she dubbed a shot, was attended one day by a caddie with plenty of more emphatic words, such as her game demanded.

At least the caddie thought so. At the first green the fair golfer, playing eight, took a vigorous swipe at the ball, which was in a trap, and missed. She uttered a ladylike "darn!" and was startled to hear the caddie exclaim loudly, "damn!"

Flustered, she swung and missed again. The sympathetic caddie exclaimed, "hell!"

For the third time she swung her niblick and missed.

"Jee—," began the caddie.

"Never mind, Joe," interrupted the young lady. "I'll pick up."

THIS CAT STORY RATHER HARD TO PUT ACROSS

New York, Nov. 20—Benjamin H. Serkovich, publicity manager for the Paramount Theatre, now under construction in Brooklyn, says that while nobody will believe this story, he can prove it by Director General J. L. McCurdy and a score of bricklayers, masons and other workmen, that it is true.

A cooling system has just been completed. It consisted of frosted coils of pipe, water jets and an immense blower. It was sealed up and tested. There then started a series of unearthly howls emanating from the air exits of the system. This continued for four days when it was necessary to tear down \$4,000 worth of masonry. A cat was discovered inside the pipes and with her a litter of six kittens.

MEAL TIME IN AN AIRSHIP IS HIGH LIVING IN ITS LITERAL SENSE, SAYS AIRMAN

(New York Sun.)

What kind of life is led by officers and men of such a vast gas bag as the German Graf Zeppelin or the American Los Angeles? What do they eat, and how do they manage to do their cooking floating around above the clouds? Do they like the service?

The truth is that the whole routine of existence, including the pleasant routine of eating three times a day—always an extremely important matter to a sailor, whether of the air or of the sea—is carried on in ways astonishingly like the routine of a cruiser or submarine. If anything, differences in comfort are entirely in favor of the air sailors.

Herbert H. Gable is a chief yeoman of the United States Navy attached to the navy dirigible Los Angeles. The "L. A.," as the navy men call her, is a sister ship of the Graf Zeppelin, though about two thirds the size of the Teutonic visitor. Arrangements on board are pretty much the same. Gable is attached to the Los Angeles as press representative, among other duties, and it's his business to tell the people, through the newspapers and magazines, everything they want to know about the airship.

Talking for The Sun's Rays about the preparation and consumption of meals while the airship was on voyage, and about other items of life as an air sailor, the chief yeoman said:

"Pages have been written about the flights of the Los Angeles, but very little has been written about an extremely important feature of all flights, namely, how, when and where does the ship's crew eat? Perhaps no other single element of the life on board an airship plays as important a part in the contentment and health of those on board. It is essential that the crew eat regularly and that the food be well prepared, sufficient and agreeable. It is all of those things.

A Regular Kitchen.

"Aboard the Los Angeles there are complete cooking facilities. These consist of a small galley in which there

is running water, a large sink, numerous shelves and drawers for the storage of provisions, mess gear and cooking utensils and a four-burner gas range. This range uses a fuel which burns in much the same manner as natural gas. It comes in a liquefied state in ten-gallon drums. One drum of gas will last for 300 burner hours and weighs eighty-two pounds. A portable oven is used when it is necessary to bake bread or meats.

"After the meals are cooked, and this is done just as smoothly and conveniently as if the ship were sailing along on top of the Atlantic instead of driving through the clouds, the meals are issued to the crew in portable containers, which are carried from the galley to the crew's mess in the keel. A member of the crew acts as waiter and serves the food, piping hot, upon the little mess tables of the crew's messroom. In order to save weight, for every ounce and fraction of an ounce counts in the air service, the dishes are made of aluminum, and paper cups are used. Ordinary knives and forks are carried. To show exactly what officers and men eat in airship service let me quote the menu for September 5, 1928, while we were in flight:

DINNER.

Roast Veal, Gravy.
Fried Potatoes. Green Peas in Butter.
Coffee or Cocoa. Bread and Butter.

September 6, 1928.

BREAKFAST.

Stewed Prunes. Bacon and Eggs.
Coffee or Cocoa. Bread and Butter.

LUNCH.

Fried Pork Chops. Buttered Rice.
Baked Corn. Bread and Butter.
Coffee or Cocoa. Applesauce.

DINNER.

Cold Sliced Ox Tongue. Baked Beans.
Tomato and Cucumber Salad.
Pickled Beets. Coffee or Cocoa.
Bread, Butter and Jam.

"In addition to these regular menus, hot coffee and sandwiches are served to the watch at midnight and chocolate bars are issued between meals. Ice is sometimes in the galley,

particularly in summer, for the purpose of preserving the food and for serving lemonade, limeade, iced tea or ice water.

"The officers and crew of a great airship like the Los Angeles stand 'watch and watch' (four hours on watch and four hours off watch) throughout each flight, and it is therefore necessary to feed only half of the crew at one time, the off-watch section eating first and then relieving the on-watch section, so that it will have a chance to eat. Meal times are arranged in general so that the messing interferes as little as possible with other activities on board.

"Officers receive their meals in much the same manner as the crew receive theirs. They eat at a small table, which is set up in a passenger compartment forward. The commanding officer is served in his own compartment. This arrangement compares very closely to the method used for messing officers and men on board a surface vessel of the navy, where the men eat in a general mess, the officers have a ward room mess and the commanding officer has his own cabin mess. The chief difference is of course that on board an airship officers and men all eat the same food, which is prepared in one galley. The men fare just as well as the officers in quantity and quality.

"The ship's cook is a mighty busy man aboard a great dirigible in flight. The preparation of three meals a day, together with coffee and sandwiches at night, for sixty or more people is no light task. Menus are decided upon before a flight is undertaken, and then the food is assembled and stored aboard ship. Not only must the menus be prepared from the point of view of serving the proper kind of food but also the factors of possible spoilage and the weight of the provisions must be closely watched. The ship's cook performs this work under the supervision of one of the ship's officers."

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Mere wealth can't make us glad
But we'll always take a chance, I guess
At being rich and sad.

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