CLEVER TRICKS OF PICKPOCKETS

Many Schemes Used by Light-Fingered Gentry to Get Valuables.

PROFESSIONAL TELLS HOW EASY IT ALL IS

Criminal Who Wants to Reform Gives Away the Secrets of "de Gang."

Every one who travels frequently in our crowded elevated subway or surface cars is apt to arrive home some day minus his pocketbook or "roll." There is little the railway companies can do to protect its passengers against the professional pickpocket. It is largely a case of everyone for himself.

For this reason everyone should be familiar with the working methods of the light-fingered gentry and know how to protect himself against them.

To ascertain these methods I obtained the following confession from one of the cleverest pickpockets in the business. His name is known from the Cafe Monico of London to the Poodle Dog restaurant in San Francisco. He professes to have turned square, and for that reason shall be nameless.

When the proposition of a confession was submitted to him, he said:

"Sure, I'll go with you and pose, but you'll have to agree not to have my face shown in the pictures. I've been mugged many times in this burg, and so I don't care about the cops. They all know me, anyway. But I don't want the public to know me, because I have just served three years, and I want now to make an honest living."

Confession of Pickpocket.

This man's confession, with the professional slang eliminated as far as possible, follows:

"The professional dip is usually the most innocent-looking man in the car. He wears a $50 suit, a $5 derby and accessories to match. There is nothing suspicious looking about him. We usually work in threes, called a 'mob.'

"How do we get a mob together? That's simple enough. We generally make up our mobs in August—just before the county fairs begin. Three is a 'small mob,' one 'mob' to turn the trick, one 'stall' to frame up the victim—push him, shove him, get his attention away from the 'tool'—and one 'carrier' to make the getaway with the swag. Five and over is a 'swell mob.' They have two 'stalls' and a 'fixer' to carry the 'fall money'—emergency fund—and look after the outside work.

"If the victim prosecutes, the mouthpiece has still got a chance to beat the case. If this can't be done, we appeal to a higher court, fix up bail and beat it out of the state. The first four years I 'dipped' I got grabbed eleven times and beat every case. The twelfth time they 'got me right,' and the victim couldn't be fixed. I was slipping a repeatin' watch on a platinum chain to the carrier. It was my first conviction, and they only gave me a year. The carrier was an oldtimer. He got a 'fnif'—five years.

Method of Gang.

"The way a mob works a touch is something like this: Three of us get on a surface car durin' the rush hour. We're not supposed to know each other. Suppose I'm the tool. I push through the crowd, lookin' for a prosperous lookin' passenger, and when I've found him I stand behind him. The stall comes along and grabs at a strap at the side of the victim. The stall steps on his toes, breathes in his face and begs his pardon until he forgets all about his watch and pocketbook.

"Durin' this time I'm fannin' the victim—that is, every time the car stops or goes around a curve I feelin' him over to find out where he carries his roll or his poke—we used to call pocketbooks 'leathers,' but it's gone out of fashion.

"As soon as I locate the poke I look at the carrier and the stall, twistin' my mouth in a certain way or turnin' my newspaper—we call a newspaper a 'stiff.' That's the 'office'—or signal—that I'm ready to make the touch. If I have two stalls one gets on each side of the victim, so that the other passengers can't see what is going on. Then I fold my arms under the newspaper, pull my right hand under my left arm—and get my first two fingers into the victim's pocket.

"If I can touch his poke I pull it out easy. If it's in his inside pocket and it happens to be in the winter time I have to raise the tail of the 'bony'—overcoat—in back, the tail isn't split up far enough. If it's one of these long ulsters, and I think it's worth while, I get out the blade of my safety razor and slit the coat when the car stops.

"Durin' all this time the stall is bumpin' up against his victim and annoyin' him. As soon as I've got the roll or poke I give a little cough or suck my tooth. That's the signal for the completion of the touch, and he gets off of the car as quick as he can. If the victim gets wise about that time that his roll is gone he generally suspects the stall.

Deep Pockets Hard Problem.

"When a victim has a long, deep pocket with his money at the bottom of it, we have to 'reef' it. That's delicate operation—one of the hardest things to do in the business. As soon as I've located the roll, I put in my first two fingers. If I get 'em all the way down I can't touch the roll. I begin to 'reef the kicks.' That is to say, with my fingers about one inch into the pocket I take hold of the lining—the part away from the body. I pull it out a little bit as the car sways, and then pull it up very gently an inch at a time. When I feel the roll or the poke, I suck my tooth and get ready for the blow-off or getaway.

"There's only one pocket that can't be reefed, and that's the little fob pocket near the waistband of the trousers. These pockets are always tight, and if a man carried around four or five bills folded into the bottom of the fob pocket—take it from me, there's no dip livin' can get near to 'em. A woman's stockin' is a safe place, too, as long as she shoves the roll well down and the stockin' has no hole for the money to fall out of.

"Any guy that wears a pin that's worth anything is an easy mark, unless he keeps his wife about him. If he's standin' up in a car the stall annoys him first. Then he shoves a newspaper under the victim's chin as the car goes around a curve, and the trick is done.

"A safety catch on the end of the pin may keep it from fallin' out, but they never bothered me. I practiced for months loosenin' safeties with my thumb and then, the larger while I copped the pin with my first two fingers until I could get any stone I ever wanted. I don't say that I could do it today, even if I would, because I had to work on the rack pile during my last bit, and my fingers are a bit stiff yet, and the nails all wore down.

"It's the same way with the safety chains on the watches. As soon as I feel two snaffles on the end of a watch I know there's a safety. My fingers slide into the vest pocket and unfasten the safety from the pocket. They're all on the same pattern, and dead easy. If people were only wise enough to sew one of the links of the safety chain into the lining of the vest pocket we'd never be able to lift a set, but I hope you won't print that because I might have to go dippin' again if I don't land a steady job.

"Fobs? They're what we call 'easy pullups.' Any man that wears a watch on the end of a fob ought to get robbed. There ought to be a law against 'em. They're a temptation for every dip that's turned straight. Why, you don't need any stall to make a pullup. You just touch by the victim and pull. Of course, once in a while there's a safety hooked on to the fob, and in that case there's a fall. Any one might wear a fob if he sewed in a link of the safety, but few are wise to that game.

"Chains a protection? Not on your life. When I see a good chain with some patent arrangement about the link I get out my nippers and cut it off close up to the link. For a dollar you can get a little pair of nippers that'll fit into your vest pocket. They'll bite through a steel chain without making any noise. That's what we call 'nippin' a slang.' Most of the dips carry nippers specially for platinum chains and lockets with stones in 'em. The swellest dips ain't botherin' with stones and watches nowadays, though.

"What's the best way for the public to protect themselves against the dips? Keep away from crowds in the first place. We often make the crowds ourselves by thinkin' some hobo to flop over on the sidewalk.

"Look out for the man who sits or stands beside you with his arms folded in such a way that the hand nearest you is out of sight. He may be 'crossin' his mitt on you ready for a touch.

"And always look out for the well-dressed man that sits near you or stands near you. That's your one best bet."—Exchange.

DUST COVERED THE WORLD

Secretary Knox has found a negro messenger in his new office who knows something of geography. Alongside the secretary's desk is a great globe, standing more than six feet. The other day Mr. Knox consulted it to see if it were really true the sun never sets on our domains nowadays, or to learn something else of equal importance. The Pennsylvania statesman is the pink of neatness and was somewhat irritated to find that the big revolving ball soiled his coat sleeve.

"William," he said sharply to the messenger and laying a finger on the globe, "there is dust a foot thick here."

"It's thickeh'n that, Mr. Secretary," replied the negro, with that familiarity that comes with mingling with greatness.

"What do you mean?" demanded Knox.

"Why, you've got yuh fingah on the desert of Saharah."

Mr. Knox did badly at trying to suppress a smile.

"You'll find some on the Atlantic ocean, too," he dryly remarked as he turned to his desk.—National Monthly.

Children Like Their Mother Best.

Denver orphans have reversed the decision of the New York supreme court.

The decision of the court of childish appeal in the Denver orphans' home is that "mammas" are more necessary to baby hearts than "papas."

Justice Marceau of the New York court ruled otherwise. "A mother is not necessary to her child," said the learned justice. "All children are selfish. Once away from the mother they quickly forget her. They grow as well without her." This judicial decision was made in turning a 9-year-old boy over to his father.

But against the lofty decree of the court comes the verdict of the little child itself. "Muvver's best, just 'cause she's muvver, and she loves me jus' so," declared one mite of a girl, with a toss of her dark brown curls as she put up her baby mouth for a kiss.

"I think mothers are best, too," said one serious little maid of 7 at the orphans' home, "'cause she can make me clothes and papa can't."

The children's verdict was unanimous in its verdict in favor of "mother," except for the timid, small voice of a soft-eyed, pensive little "Minnie," who declared in favor of "papa" for no reason whatsoever.—Denver Times.

Robs Theater; Goes to Prison.

Jackson, Mich., April 2.—Carl Le Strange and Frank Hogan, charged with larceny from the Ideal theater, were arraigned in circuit court today. Le Strange pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to Jackson prison for from one to five years. The case against Hogan was nolle prossed. La Strange having recently made a confession in which he cleared the man who was arrested with him.

EMINENT WOMAN WOULD DROP "OBEY" FROM WEDDING SERVICE

—Copyright, 1912, by George G. Bain.

ALICE STONE BLACKWELL.

Alice Stone Blackwell is the most eminent suffragist in Boston. She is the author of a revised marriage service, intended to meet the suffragette objections to the term "obey," which sticks in the throat of so many women today. Miss Blackwell not only believes in the omission of "obey" but in the insertion of some such phrase as this: "I promise to assist my husband (or wife) in every way and to help him (or her) to uphold his (or her) political views." When Miss Blackwell's father and mother were married they had the word "obey" omitted from the wedding service.

SAYS FREE SUGAR WILL WORK RUIN

Gen. Edwards Says Democratic Plan Will Mean Bankruptcy to Porto Ricans.

Special to The Free Press.

Washington, April 2.—A strong presentation of the importance of retaining existing sugar duties in behalf of Porto Rico was made by Gen. Clarence R. Edwards, chief of the insular affairs bureau of the war department before the senate finance committee today.

Free sugar, he said, would bring disaster to debtor and creditor and cheapen labor, with resulting poverty and hardship. It would bankrupt big plantation companies and ruin thousands of farmers who are raising sugar cane. Sugar is the chief industry of the island.

Senator Bristow of Kansas, progressive Republican, introduced today an amendment to the house free sugar bill designed to eliminate from the law the Dutch standard and the 7 1-2-cent differential for refined sugar, which is added to the present sugar duty. The amendment would fix the maximum duty on refined sugar at $1.32 1-2 per hundred and would retain the 20 per cent reduction on Cuban sugars under the Cuban reciprocity agreements.

New York, April 2.—Five members of the Porto Rican legislature, four members of the chamber of commerce of San Juan and three members of the Porto Rico Sugar Growers' association, making up three commissioners, arrived today on the way to Washington to protest to congress against a reduction of the sugar tariff.

EARL IS SEEKING LONG LOST HEIR

San Francisco, April 2.—The search half around the continent for a missing member of a titled family of England was soon ended in San Francisco, when Milton Carlson, Swedish vice-consul in Los Angeles, arrives here to meet Charles Clements, earl of Leitrim, who traveled from England to California looking for a lost relative. The earl was in Los Angeles recently and now is continuing his search in this city.

It is understood that the man for whom the earl of Leitrim is searching was a patient in the Los Angeles County hospital, where he died February 1, 1911, leaving a will in which he stated he was Sir Charles Clements, uncle of the present earl of Leitrim, and devising property in England valued at more than $1,000,000 and valuable ranch lands in California to Mrs. Carlson, the wife of the vice-consul, who, in her girlhood had known him as Charles Friendship.

Carlson placed the will in the hands of a trust company here for investigations, and for more than a year great efforts have been made to establish the identity of Mrs. Carlson's benefactor. Carlson now believes that his knowledge of an "affair" at which the dead man hinted to him and Mrs. Carlson, and said to be known only by them and by the present earl of Leitrim, will prove the validity of the Charles Friendship's claims to nobility and wealth.

When Mrs. Carlson was a girl, she and her father, John Charles Dutter, lived near Newall, in this county. It was there she first met an aged English recluse who called himself Charles Friendship. She took an interest in the old man and tried to make him happy in various little ways. He often hinted that she would be repaid. Finally she came to Los Angeles and heard no more of friendship until he went to the county hospital here because, though still possessed of valuable lands, they were legally entangled and he was practically penniless.

WANTS HER SON, IN LOVE, ARRESTED

New York, April 2.—Mrs. Anna Butler wanted her son's police headquarters and asked to have her 18-year-old son, John, arrested.

"My son," she said, "is staying out late nights, and I want it stopped. He has been out after 10:30 o'clock without giving any account of himself.

"Well, suppose he has," said Lieut. Congle, "he's over 16 and beyond the curfew law, so we can't stop him. Staying out late is no crime."

"Well, I put a stamp over this," continued Mrs. Butler, as she slipped a letter across the desk. The lieutenant read: "My Darling Esther," ete.

"Do you want him arrested for writing love letters?" he queried with a smile.

"Yes, that's it exactly," replied the mother. "I've supported him since he was nine months old, and I don't purpose to lose him now, when he can be of some help to me."

The lieutenant, seeking to flatter her maternal vanity, said: "Why boy who can write a letter like that is capable of taking care of himself, even if he does go out nights."

Mrs. Butler was not impressed and said she would go to court and see if the judge could do anything about the matter.

CLIPPING QUEUE SERIOUS MATTER

Habit of Wearing Pigtail Has Been a Custom of Years in China.

A CHANGE NOW IS OF TREMENDOUS IMPORT

Abolition Saves Millions of Dollars, but Disarranges Economic Conditions.

That a new style in the cut of the hair may mean, on the one hand, a saving of millions of dollars a year to a whole people, involving the destiny of a nation, and on the other hand, the most disastrous derangement of economic conditions, even to the extent of dislocating great industries to a whole nation, may not have occurred to those who have noted recently that the Chinese are cutting off their queues.

The queue and the Chinese have become synonymous. To mention the Chinese immediately suggests the queue, and to mention the queue at once reminds one of the Chinese. Indeed, the Chinese without the queue are inconceivable. It is no wonder, then, that the recent imperial edict of the Chinese emperor ordering all the Chinese diplomatic officers to cut off their queues has at once aroused world-wide interest.

Not many years ago, the cutting off of the queue would have been dealt with as a criminal act, while today members of the imperial household go without it. Before 1900 a Chinese in the United States without a queue was a rare exception, but now the reverse is the case. Not long ago the queue, if considered at all, would have been cited as an essential badge of civilization, "a sine quo non of even a moderately intellectual ascendency," while today, in the Chinese capital itself, the queue is condemned as a nuisance.

The fact that thousands upon thousands of Chinese young men have cut off their queues, without any permission from the government, clearly shows that the once severe law governing the wearing of the queue has virtually become a dead letter.

In spite of the silent change of public opinion in regard to the queue, the government, being too deeply absorbed in other reforms, did not pay much attention to the queue question. Wu Ting-Fang, the late Chinese minister to the United States, presented his memorial.

Begun by Wu Ting-Fang.

Minister Wu's experience in foreign countries and his keen observation of the conditions of the Chinese people, especially those in America, convinced him of the uselessness of the queue. So, in spite of the warning of his staff that his agitation for the abolition of the queue might prove disastrous to his official career, he did not hesitate to present to the throne, at the beginning of 1910, his memorial setting forth his convictions.

He fearlessly stated that he found that eight or nine-tenths of the Chinese in America had removed their queues, and that the remainder, while retaining them, were at pains to conceal this appendage, which they found at once inconvenient and derogatory.

He went still further. He even urged the abolition of the queue on general principles, and boldly pointed out to the throne that it had nothing to do with loyalty, and was entirely unsuited to modern conditions.

To the surprise of many, the memorial actually received considerable favorable discussion in Pekin. But, on the clever plea of the conservatives that the removal or retention of the queue did not belong to the realities of reform and had no bearing on the strength or weakness of the country, Minister Wu's memorial was shelved.

Just about this time Prince Tsai Tao, uncle of the emperor and brother of the prince regent, returned from his world tour. This young, energetic prince was so convinced of the uselessness of the queue, that he personally urged the prince regent again and again to abolish it. He even made compliance with his request a condition of his remaining in office.

Prince Joins Advocates.

The strenuous advocacy of this prince supplied the strength that had been lacking in the proposals of China's diplomatic officers. Following his lead, other princes and members of the imperial family and anti-queue officials took new courage, and for a while flooded the throne with plans and memorials advocating the change. In fact, all other reforms which rightly came up for discussion in government circles were for the time being held in abeyance, owing to the absorbing interest attached to this problem.

Moreover, the question had also become the general topic of conversation throughout the whole empire. All classes of people seemed to take a personal interest in the matter. The conservatives exerted their best efforts to maintain their last stand, while the progressives seized every opportunity to carry out their policy.

It was taken for granted that with the removal of the queue the present national costume must disappear, and that the change of costume would necessitate the abolition of the kowtow—the most sacred form of worship in China. This change will dislocate all China's ancient traditions and established principles of propriety, as well as the teachings of her sages.

Not long ago this difficulty would have proved insurmountable. Today, however, it has proved comparatively harmless. In fact, many did not hesitate to say that, after the adoption of the western costume, it might be just as well to substitute the shaking of each other's hands in greeting for the shaking of one's own, or the polite bow for the kowtow.

Change Is Costly.

But the strongest obstacle was the fear of the inevitable economic derangement. It is recognized that as Chinese goods are not suitable for the European style of dress, any sweeping change of costume would consequently necessitate the importation of enormous quantities of foreign goods.

Under such circumstances, it was suggested that China should adopt a partial change; that she should remove the queue and retain her costume. By taking this middle course the kowtow and other sacred forms of worship may be continued, and the danger of economic derangement may also be avoided.

China, however, always seems able to find a way of doing things slowly. Therefore, she thought fit to conduct the reform systematically first by ordering those in need of the change to adopt the reform, as has already been done in the case of the diplomatic officers, and at the same time to encourage those who are willing. In addition, the members of the imperial family must also set the example, by adopting the change themselves.

By so doing, within a few years the European costume may be adopted without any disturbance by those only who are willing or in need of the change, and the queue may disappear as magically as it come into service.

This is evidently what China has begun to do. Reports say that after the experiments with the diplomatic officers the government will soon impose the reform upon the army, the navy and the students, and finally will proclaim the complete abolition of the queue throughout the country and will leave the question of costume to each individual.

Millions Saved by Change.

This, however, is only the cash value of time saved. But the actual saving in useful material is also considerable. A conservative estimate of what an average man or boy spends for queue cords, etc., will be about 20 cents a year, which means $20,000,000 annually for the country.

It is also recognized that the queue shortens the life of one's coat or gown by at least 10 per cent. The removal of the queue will, therefore, mean a saving of about 20 cents a year for every man, or about $20,000,000 annually for the country.

BALTIMORE MAN IN A RAGE SHOOTS DOWN TWO WOMEN, THEN COMMITS SUICIDE

Baltimore, Md., April 2.—After shooting his wife and landlady in the boarding house at 421 North Paca street today, Wilbur Green committed suicide in the same manner.

At a late hour this afternoon the two women were thought to be dying.

Occupants of the house said Green had been abusing his wife for some time. Hearing a disturbance in their room this afternoon the landlady, Mrs. Malbrecht, entered and asked Green to desist. His reply was pistol shots directed against the women, who fell in quick succession.

Green then killed himself. He was attired in a dress suit.

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TO THE BARGAIN COUNTER

THE Bargain Counter IS FOR YOU

That part of Friday's Free Press which will be given over to the merchants who have bargains to sell will be of more than ordinary interest to every reader of that day's issue. The bargains offered are real and the great variety of articles mentioned furnishes a list which should appeal to buyers who wish to avail themselves of the saving in prices.

Realizing the importance of bargain information to its readers, The Free Press has arranged for the publication each Friday of The "Bargain Counter," which will continue to grow in favor the more its many advantages are understood.

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