

A LESSON IN CAUTION.

The New Store Detective and the Suspected Shoplifter.

"When in doubt let her alone" is our first and most important maxim in regard to shoplifters," said a New Orleans floorwalker of long experience. "It is better to let a thousand guilty people escape and carry off our property with them than to run the risk of making one mistake, and when you hear of a woman being actually taken into custody you may rest assured that she has been under surveillance for days and that the evidence against her is strong enough to convict a bishop. It doesn't do to jump at conclusions, even when they are 'caught in the act,' as the saying goes, and that reminds me of a little incident which taught me what was probably the most valuable lesson of my life.

"It happened soon after I went into the business," the floorwalker went on, "when I was holding down the job of a house detective in a department store almost as large as this. It was my first employment of the kind, and naturally I was anxious to show my efficiency; so I was a little disappointed when a month or more went by without giving me a chance to gather in a culprit. One day, when we had a big bargain sale in progress and the store was jammed with people from end to end, I had my attention attracted to a quietly dressed, middle aged woman who was wandering from department to department in a manner that struck me as suspicious. At last she stopped before a fancy goods counter, where a number of handsome silver card-cases were displayed, and a moment later I saw her pick up one of them and drop it into her pocket.

"She stepped at once into the crowd, and I rushed after her. I was a little distance away at the time, and the crush was so great I could not get to her immediately without exciting a panic. Just before I reached her side the young man who managed the fancy goods department squeezed in ahead of me and tapped her on the shoulder. 'Pardon me, madam,' he said, 'but you left this on my counter,' and he handed her a card-case, almost the facsimile of the one I saw her pick up. 'Why, that can't be mine,' she exclaimed, looking startled. 'I have mine in my pocket.' The department manager opened the case he had brought and disclosed a large roll of bills, a hundred dollar note on the outside. 'This may help you to identify it,' he said, smiling. By that time the lady had extracted the other. 'Yes, that is mine,' she said when she saw the money. 'It was an absurd mistake, but you see they look very much alike on the outside.'

"During this brief colloquy my blood ran cold. Ten seconds more and I would have had the woman under arrest, probably involving the house in a great damage suit and certainly losing my job. As the department manager turned he saw me for the first time. 'Hello, Jim!' he said. 'I suppose you were intending to call her back too.' 'Yes,' I replied slowly, but I was mighty careful not to tell him how I was intending to do it."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

MILLIONS OF SMITHS.

This Wonderful Family Penetrates Every Grade of Society.

Three thousand years ago the Hebrews were under the dominion of the Philistines. Then arose perhaps the strangest hardship ever imposed upon a subject nation by a conquering one. The Scriptures themselves tell the story in these graphic words:

"Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears; but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen every man his coulter, and his ax, and his mattock."

Thus the Hebrews were obliged to travel from 100 to 200 miles to find a smith, a hardship that is quite inconceivable today, when the country swarms with them. If there had never been any artisan smiths there could be no surname Smith today. And what would it mean to us if there were no longer Smiths (by name) in our land? It would mean vacancies in the professors' chairs and upon the judicial bench; it would thin the ranks of the lawyers, ministers and doctors, of the merchants, brokers and manufacturers, and of the railroad, commercial and financial magnates; it would diminish the number of scholars, reformers and philosophers and deplete the ranks of sailors, soldiers, farmers, mechanics and all the rest of the great laboring world; the tramps, beggars and jailbirds would be less often met with, and cranks, politicians, drunkards and criminals fewer in number. In fact, not a rank or gradation of our whole social system but would be affected. Some genius of computation has figured out that if all the males of earth were enrolled there would be an army of 7,000,000 Smiths among them. Allowing the feminine Smiths to be as numerous, the world has 14,000,000 living Smiths. Whether the number be as prodigious as this or not there is no question that it runs into the millions. A family so numerous—and so universally infiltrated through every caste and class commands at least the respect due recognized magnitude and aggregated power.

Literally smith means smiter—i. e., one who smites or hammers. And in old days when every bit of metal, copper, iron, silver, gold or brass, had to be pounded and hammered by mighty strokes into armor, tools, plate, utensils and implements, there was need of many smiths. These smiths, or smiths, were not men of brawn alone; they had to possess the ready brain and skill to sharpen alike an implement, repair an armor or shoe a horse. There was an honest and lucrative trade, and every road, street and hamlet had its smiths. Not only were there many smiths, but different branches of smithery abounded, and thus numerous compounds and derivations of Smith came into existence. Among these are Smithier, Smithkins, Smithson, Arrasmith, Arrowsmith, Goldsmith, Silversmith, Coppersmith, Steelsmith, Locksmith, Hammersmith, Hocksmith, Hockersmith, Drakesmith, Forcesmith, Bakersmith,

Wildsmith, Wintersmith, Hoffsmith, Smitham, Bowersmith, Worksmith, Watchsmith, Kleinsmith and Smithdeal.

Strangest of all these perhaps is Fewsmith. Sometimes, to distinguish several Smiths in one street or hamlet, a Christian name was incorporated with the usual name. Thus came into usage Smithpeer, Hillsmith, Helensmith and Aaronsmith.

Incidentally it may be mentioned that other languages have their Smiths. Germans have numberless Schmitz and Schmidt, the French have Le Fevres, the Spaniards Gunsulus, the Russian Smithtowskies and the Irish have Gavan and Gowan, each meaning Smith, and McGavan and McGowan, meaning the son of a smith.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

Queer Trees at Niagara.

Persons visiting Niagara falls in summer often have their attention attracted to the queer shapes taken on by the trees which grow immediately around the great cataract. A trio of sturdy old trunks which must be every bit of 50 years old, and yet are graced with a tuft of foliage which seems to belong to a sapling of a few summers, stand near the American falls.

A visit to the falls in winter will explain the reason for the grotesque appearance of the trees. The mist thrown up by the falling water settles on the trees in such quantities that they often assume the appearance of icebergs stranded high and dry on the banks. As the weight of the ice increases the weaker boughs break away under the burden, and after a very cold season the tree emerges from its plating of ice shorn entirely of its branches. The trunk alone stands, and when touched by spring's warm breath it shoots out into a very close and compact bunch of leaves, which looks ridiculous on the top of such a heavy piece of timber.

Booming Papa.

"Here is a story of a little girl, the daughter of a local physician of credit and renown," says the Cleveland Plain Dealer. "She is a bright child of 6 and has been much petted by her admiring friends. Perhaps this has spoiled her a little, but she is so sweet and entertaining that visitors can't keep their hands off her.

"One of these visitors, a new neighbor, made a call on the little maid's mother, and it wasn't but a few moments before the little maid was on her lap.

"In the chatter which followed the woman made some allusion to the little one's grandmother.

"'Why, didn't you know?' cried the child.

"'Know what, dear?' said the visitor.

"'Why,' answered the child, 'grandma is dead, and grandpa is dead, and Aunt Jane is dead, and most all of papa's patients are dead too!'"

Threescore and ten years is the psalmist's measure of life, but in Caithness, Scotland, a man of 70, unless married, is described as a lad or by his brother of 90 as a boy.

THREE COLLECTIONS.

They Puzzled a Visitor to a Country Church in Holland.

A Sunday among the staid burghers of Holland gave Mr. Clifton Johnson an opportunity to see three church collections taken up in rapid succession. He had asked to be directed to a characteristic country church in an outlying village. As a result he went by train from Leyden to a little place with an unpronounceable name, where there was a church as severe in its simplicity as the meeting houses of colonial New England.

It resembled them, too, in its chilliness, for there was no attempt at warming it, and the people were dependent upon foot stoves of the old fashioned type that was beginning to go out of vogue in America a hundred years ago. Several score of these little boxes stood in the church entry, neatly piled against the wall, ready to be filled with smoldering peat and supplied to the worshippers as they came in.

When the time for the collection arrived, a man started out from the railed off space before the pulpit, which space was occupied by the elders, and with a black pocket at the end of an eight foot pole proceeded to his task. With this accessory he could reach clear to the end of a pew, only he had to be careful not to hit some worshiper with the butt end while making his short reaches.

Everybody in the congregation put in something, and the collector made a little bow every time a coin jingled in the pocket. He had gone about half way round when another elder started out with another bag and pole. The writer wondered he had not started before. His purpose, however, was not to help his fellow collector finish the work. Instead, he started just where the other had begun and passed the bag to the same people, and every one dropped in a coin as faithfully as he had done the first time.

Nor was this the end, for the second collector had no sooner got a good start than a third stepped out from the pulpit front with bag and pole and went as industriously over the ground as the two others had done. He was just as successful as his predecessors.

Things were getting serious. The stranger had put silver in the first bag, but fearing that the collection might continue indefinitely he dropped copper coins in the second and third bags and was not a little relieved when he saw that the rest of the men in the elders' seats kept their places.

Later he learned the secret of the process. The first man collected for the minister, the second for the church, the third for the poor. As each member of the congregation contributed one Holland cent to each bag it seemed as if a little calculation might have saved much collecting. The sum of the three deposits would in our money be about one and one-fifth cents for each person.

At the moment when the bags began to pass the minister gave out a hymn, but the congregation finished singing it long before the collection was over. There did not, however, ensue one of those silences during which you can hear pins drop and flies buzz, for the minister ignored the collectors, who were still

making their halting progress through the aisles, and promptly began his sermon.—Youth's Companion.

NEWSPAPER ENGLISH.

As a Rule Simplicity and Directness Are Employed.

Newspaper English, which has been the object of so much flippant and sarcastic comment from all sorts of people, has found a champion. Professor T. R. Lounsbury, who as the author of an admirable history of the English language is qualified to speak, in a recent address opposed the hackneyed theory that newspapers are chiefly responsible for the corruption of the English language. He recognized the fact that there are newspapers and newspapers, and that much hurried writing is necessarily done. "But," he went on, "the writers connected with the more important journals are a picked body of men. They are invariably under an influence which tends to promote perspicuity and energy of expression. In education and ability newspaper men are, as a class, far superior to those who set out to be their critics and censors."

Certain newspapers, it must be admitted, have given cause for the censorious remarks about "newspaper English." Persons who read without discrimination make no distinction between these publications and others which strive conscientiously and successfully to keep their columns from trite and slipshod expressions. There are journals which do not care for facts. For the sins of these the whole press is not to be indiscriminately condemned. In all of the better newspapers simplicity and directness are constantly sought for. "Fine writing" is held as an abomination. Their dispatches do not refer to battleships as "steel thunderers of the deep" or to a dancing party as a "terpsichorean function." Such things are minor matters, but they go a long way toward good style.

In writing, as in any other line of work, practice makes perfect. It is only reasonable to expect men who make a business of writing about things they see to do it well. During a week any first class newspaper contains a dozen bits of description or narration which, in vigor and life, excel much of the composition in the popular novel of the day. The value of the newspaper as a training school for writers is shown by the careers of the men whose books are most read. Clemens, Kipling, Eugene Field, Richard Harding Davis, Stephen Crane, George W. Cable, Howells and scores of others have served their apprenticeship as reporters. Much of their anonymous work for newspapers was as good as that which later won them fame.

A newspaper is not a monthly magazine. In hurried work lapses are sure to be made. A correspondent writing a description of a national convention at the rate of 1,200 words an hour cannot stop to consider whether he has split an infinitive or put his "only" in the right place, but his account will give a vivid description of the scene. The reader will see all the life and color of an exciting moment. He will hear the confused din of the shouting and will follow the pro-

cession of the standards of the states around the hall. Yet a few persons will arise from reading such an article with the sole comment that newspapers continually use the pernicious "is being" form of the verb. To such critics as these Professor Lounsbury's remarks are addressed.

TWO RED ROSES.

Why Both Women Felt Better After an Explanation Was Made.

There is an innate satisfaction in the possession of the genuine. On the other hand, there is a grateful sense of superiority in having got the better of some one in the palming off of the artificial. So it is really rather difficult to decide offhand whether it is more pleasing to exhibit the true or the spurious. As a matter of fact, the latter is of such skillful contrivance these days as to make it almost impossible of detection.

At a recent Saturday evening "at home," a function at which the ever present chafing dish plays an important part, the appearance of the hostess was admirably set off by the delicately tinted tea rose, fragrant, modest and bewitching, which peeped out from the artistically arranged coils of copper colored hair. Wherever the hostess moved, there moved masculine admiration and feminine envy. The rose, with its unassertive scent, was just the touch necessary to the success of the Grecian toilet.

Among the guests was a young matron of classic features and raven hair. As it happened, she was the only one of the invited who wore a rose in her hair. A blood red specimen gleamed and shone in the folds of its dusky environment, and the woman was very good to look upon as she moved across the room. Others had carried bouquets in their hands, but she alone wore a rose in her hair.

Yet she was not happy. She felt that the hostess had outstripped her in the matter of hair ornament. When admiring glances were turned her way, she heeded them not, because she imagined they were comparing glances and not signs of approval; that their casters were contrasting her unfavorably with the hostess, who wore the tea rose. And so, after a time, when the hour for going home came, the young matron was moved, in spite of herself, to concede to the hostess:

"Good night, dear. And how charming you looked with that lovely rose in your hair."

"Oh, I am so glad you liked it," said the other in an embarrassed sort of way. She hesitated a minute, glanced at the red rose on the head of her guest, and then said, "Of course you know it is an imitation."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed the caller.

"Yes, and I have been embarrassed all evening thinking how unnatural it must look beside your lovely red rose."

"Oh," said the young woman, in a burst of unwonted frankness, "mine's artificial too."

And all the way home she felt better than she had felt during the evening.—New York Herald.