

Democratic Watchman

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The Satchel With a False Bottom and the Sift in the Dress Near the Belt. Some Schemes Successful Because of Their Very Simplicity.

As numerous as they are ingenious are the tricks of the modern shoplifters, declare store detectives. It keeps the detectives busy to "get on" to the devices of the men and women who live by their wits in stealing from stores. For tricks that are canny few classes of criminals, it is said, approach them.

The method of stealing by using the satchel with a false bottom is one of the cleverest of the tricks.

Well disguised, the shoplifter enters a store. Her eyes run over the counters. She perceives the object she wants—usually something small and valuable, sometimes a purse a customer has left lying on the counter.

Over the object the shoplifter places her satchel. Pretending to delve into the satchel to extract a purse or handkerchief, the thief lifts a false bottom in the bag, reaches under it, draws inside the desired article, adjusts the false bottom, closes the satchel and walks away.

"But this is only one of many clever ruses employed," declared a detective the other day. "The women especially are ingenious. Their dress, of course, helps them."

"One of the methods of stealing is for the shoplifter to have a slit in her dress near the belt. As she stands near the counter she can deftly seize the article desired, be it a piece of lace or costly fabric or a bit of jewelry, and slip it into the skirt. The folds of the skirt are voluminous and conceal the thing stolen.

"Some tricks are successful because of their simplicity. A fashionably dressed woman may walk into the clothing department, look over coat suits, pick up one, fold it neatly up, place it under her coat and walk away.

"If she is detected she will indignantly declare that she bought the suit some time before and that she has brought it back to be altered.

"Or a woman, her hands glittering with rings and dressed in the latest style, may walk into the store some winter day. She wears only a rich coat of dark fabric.

"In the coat department she will ask to see some fur lined coats. Oh, she is very particular and tries on one after another. Other customers come up, and the saleslady gets busy with them while madam is trying to suit herself.

"While the saleslady is turned she puts on one of the richest sable trimmed coats, turns on her heel and walks away. Perhaps the salesgirl may not notice the loss until there is an account of stock.

"Each month from fifty to sixty arrests are made in the average large department store. The detectives must be extremely careful, for a false charge would precipitate a suit for damages, which would mean many thousands.

"Certain departments hold especial lures for shoplifters. The jewelry department is invariably guarded. When the furs come in we have sleuths who keep their eyes open for the woman who likes to take a fur to the window to examine it, then running for the door; the woman with the false skirt and the woman who puts a fur on and audaciously walks away."

Although the sales departments and the detective departments work together, there exists between them a spirit of justifiable rivalry. If a detective perceives some one getting away with goods it casts discredit on the person behind the counter from which the goods were stolen. Therefore the sales folk keep an alert watch for shoplifters.

One might imagine that goods are dumped pell-mell on the counters of the big stores. As a matter of fact, the efficient saleslady will have everything so arranged that she will notice the disappearance of an article almost immediately.

If a saleswoman suspects a person she immediately notifies the head detective. If it is a woman, a woman detective is usually put on the job. It is said store managers usually find women more efficient than men.

Few arrests are ever made in the stores, as an arrest gives only undesirable publicity. The detective usually follows suspected persons from the store and arrests him or her outside.

It is said that arrests for shoplifting in New York exceed 3,000 a year. In that city a full description of all shoplifters caught are sent to the Retail Dry Goods association, which in turn distributes the information to the various members.

Only by concerted action and with highly organized staffs of detectives can the stores cope with the ingenious shoplifters.

The detective system of the big stores, however, is now so perfect that it is dangerous to attempt shoplifting. Even the cleverest shoplifter faces a long jail term in the pursuit of her nefarious work.

More than that, if a shoplifter for any reason should escape paying the penalty of crime in one city she may not be so fortunate in another. Descriptions of all suspected persons are sent out broadcast, and arrest in another city may mean a jail term, even though the thief may have escaped punishment previously. —Philadelphia North American.

Rare Exception.

"I rather pride myself on one thing," said the young father. "Although I have the brightest, smartest, cutest, best youngster I ever saw, I never brag about him." —Kansas City Times.

The Key Under the Door.

"It is customary for the back door key to be put halfway under the door so that I can reach it when coming off duty late at night," remarked an artist to a London T.H. Bits writer. "The other morning at breakfast my landlady said to me, 'Do you know, I had an awful fright last night. I put the key halfway under the door, as usual, when, to my horror, I saw it drawn slowly out of sight. I of course thought some one had got the key and would unlock the door and come in, so I quickly bolted it and shouted through the keyhole, 'My word, if you don't bring that key back!' Not daring to retire to rest, I sat quietly listening for a time. Then I got a table knife and pushed it under the door to see if the key had really been taken right away and to my surprise drew the key back again. So, very cautiously, I unlocked and unbolted the door, looked out and found not a burglar, but our own wicked cat, who, while sitting on the doorstep and seeing the key pushed under the door, must have drawn the key out of sight with her paws, thinking I was playing with her."

An American Joke From England.

The typical American, says a contributor to the English Illustrated Magazine, although partial to making jokes, is often quick tempered and unable to recognize a joke made by another, with results that are sometimes unpleasant.

Thus, a senator was once at a fashionable dinner party at Washington when he was asked what fish he would take.

"Waal," he said, "I reckon I'll take plaice."

A wit who chanced to be present remarked, with a twinkle in his eye, "Ah, senator, still a plaice seeker?"

"Yass," answered the senator, at the same time whipping out a revolver and shooting the wit dead, "but what's that to you, you dern'd stranger?"

Afterward, when the joke was explained to him, the senator confessed that he had acted rather hastily, and to show that he bore no grudge he went to the funeral of the inopportune wit.

A Queen Elizabeth Joke.

Queen Elizabeth liked her jokes, and, although her pleasantries were of a less sanguinary turn than her father's, she must have been even more formidable than usual when disposed to be frolicsome. A tale may be found in one of Lord Essex's letters with regard to a new dress belonging to one of her maids of honor, over the possession of which the owner had been rash enough to exhibit some elation. The young lady, it seems, was several inches taller than her majesty, hardly perhaps quite a nice or loyal thing to be. Having desired that the dress should be made over to her custody, the queen, first carefully selecting an extremely wet day, was pleased to put it on and trail it for yards behind her in the mud, the owner of the humiliated garment having to appear as delighted with the royal fun and condescension as the rest of the lookers-on. —London Tatler.

And All With Company There.

"Now, children," said the mother as a whole roomful of company had come in, "suppose you run off and play by yourselves."

"All right, mother," replied Edith. "Can we go up and play Hamlet and Ophelia?"

"Certainly," smiled the mother, while her guests looked on at the tableau.

"Goody," replied Edith. Then, turning to her sister, she said, "Now, Maude, you run up to mamma's room and get all her false hair that you can find." —Ladies' Home Journal.

Love.

Properly there is only one verb for love. It is not "amo." It is not "almer." It is not the softest Italian verb. No printed language of man knows it. But the violin knows it, and the wild bird knows it, and the sea knows it. The rose is it, and the moon is it, and the look of a man's eyes into a woman's is it, and the look of a woman's eyes back again is it. But no man or woman can say it in any language that endures. —"Love Letters of the King."

Wanted No Trimmings.

Little Ollie was much frightened at a thunder shower, and her father told her she shouldn't be, as the rain was good for the grass and her flowers. Looking up through her tears, Ollie said, "W-well, why c-cant we have j-just plain r-rain?" —Exchange.

The Intricacies of it.

"Why don't you study the time table, and then you wouldn't have missed your train?"

"That was the trouble. While I was trying to translate the time table the train pulled out." —New York Herald.

At His Best.

Blotbs—The doctor told Guzzler drinking was the very worst thing he could do. Slobbs—I guess that doctor didn't know Guzzler or he would have realized that drinking is the best thing he does. —Philadelphia Record.

Strong Proof.

"Sued for a breach of promise, eh?"

"Yep."

"Any defense?"

"Temporary insanity, and I expect to prove it by the love letters I wrote." —Washington Herald.

Utter Contempt.

"I s'pose you wouldn't marry me if I were the only man on earth?"

"I wouldn't even be engaged to you," responded the girl, "if you were the only man at a summer resort." —Kansas City Journal.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

An Incident That Seemed to Explain Joshua's Miracles.

There was an incident in our life at Brandy, connected with Gettysburg, which is worth relating. Batchelder, whose map of the battlefield of Gettysburg is authority and whom we had fallen in with while we were there, asked to join our mess at Brandy when he came to the army to verify the positions of the various commands. One night we had just sat down to dinner when he entered our big hospital tent, quite tired.

"Well," he announced after taking his place at the table, "I have been down in the Second corps today, and I believe I have discovered how Joshua made the sun stand still. I first went to — regiment and had the officers mark on the map the hour of their position at a certain point. Then I went to — regiment in the same brigade. They declared positively it was one or two hours earlier or later than that given by the other. So it went on, no two regiments or brigades agreeing, and if I hinted that some of them must certainly be mistaken they would set me down by saying with severe dignity, 'We were there, Batchelder, and we ought to know, I guess, and I made up my mind that it would take a day of at least twenty hours instead of thirteen at Gettysburg to satisfy their accounts. So when Joshua's captains got around him after the fight and they began to talk it over the only way under the heavens that he could ever harmonize their statements was to make the sun stand still and give them all a chance."

Any one who has ever tried to establish the exact position or hour when anything took place in an engagement will confirm Batchelder's experience and possibly, if not too orthodox, accept his explanation of Joshua's feat. —Morris Schaff in Atlantic.

A MONSTER SKULL.

One That Was Said to Be Bigger Than a Bushel Basket.

One of the most remarkable finds of gigantic human remains of which we have any record was that said to have been made at Palermo, Sicily, in the year 1516, when an entire skeleton of unheard of proportions was unearthed by some marble quarry men. These mammoth remains measured exactly thirty-four feet from head to foot and nine feet seven inches from point to point of the shoulders.

A stone ax buried with this old time giant may still be seen at Palermo in section "Z" of the St. Isoret museum. It is made of a bluish looking, fine grained bowlder and appears to be about two feet eight inches long by one foot broad and nine inches through in the thickest place. A rusty, rusty looking tag attached to the relic informs the visitor that it weighs fifty-two pounds, but the general verdict is that

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It could not weigh over thirty or thirty-five pounds.

The skeleton was burned by a mob in the year 1662 during the prevalence of the black death at Palermo, the ignorant, superstitious people believing that it was connected in some mysterious way with the death dealing demon. The skull of this giant, according to Abbe Ferregus, "was largely excessive of the baskets said to hold the bushel, being fitted above and below with teeth to the number of sixty-four, the each of which would have weighed two ounces."

Cavalier Scroy claimed to have found a skull on Tenerife that had sixty teeth. —Westminster Gazette.

Animal Mimicry.

Observers of nature are frequently struck with the singular resemblances of insects to leaves, dried sticks, etc. and these likenesses are supposed to have grown out of the necessity of protection against or concealment from enemies. An interesting example of this kind of resemblance was brought to the attention of the Entomological society in London by a naturalist, who exhibited a spider found inhabiting some rocks near Cannes, on which were also fastened the cases of a species of moth. When at rest the spider exhibited almost precisely the same form and color as the moth cases surrounding it.

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