

THE FASHION SPY.

About twelve months ago a man was arrested in Paris charged with bribing an accomplice to steal some of the latest millinery models just invented for the forthcoming winter season by a famous French modiste. At his trial it appeared that he represented an English firm, and had been, in fact, endeavoring to procure, for practically nothing, patterns worth a very large sum of money.

Such patterns, indeed, represent an expenditure of thought, labor and hard cash on the part of the select firms who originate new fashions of which the ordinary man has no conception. Skilled artists have to be employed and paid very high salaries; indeed, few draftsmen anywhere make such good incomes as those whose work is to design new hats and bonnets.

The models, whether of dresses or hats, are prepared long before they are required, and are guarded as jealously as a government guards the secret plans of its forts and submarines. They are shown to none but a few wealthy, well-known customers, and even these are allowed to see only the models likely to appeal to them personally.

For these precautions there are only two good reasons. Enterprising and unscrupulous firms, who cannot or will not employ fashion artists of the first class, and yet do not wish to be behind the times, will stop literally at nothing to obtain the new designs. They usually employ a spy or pirate, whom they send out with a roving commission to get hold of anything fresh, either by fair means or foul. Of these spies only a few are men; the majority are women, and amazingly clever women they are.

The outsider might imagine that the easiest method of piracy would be to watch the windows of the smart milliners and sketch the new designs there shown. This practice, common enough at one time, has now fallen completely into desuetude. Really new designs are nowadays seldom, if ever, displayed in shop windows. When they are thus exhibited it is only long after their first invention, when they have become more or less common property.

The object of the modern millinery pirate, however, is by some means to get hold of the new fashions well in advance of the coming season; and, however jealously guarded the new models are, she—I have said most pirates are women—very often succeeds, and the real owner has the mortification of seeing his novelty anticipated by some firm of infinitely less importance than his own. No later than an afternoon of last spring the proprietor of one of the smartest shops in the West End of London noticed a lady walking in the Park attired in a dress almost an exact copy of a brand new model of his own, a model which not half a dozen people had seen besides its inventor and himself. The design had been registered, but the copy was just sufficiently altered to steer clear of legal difficulties. A most searching inquiry revealed the fact that the culprit was a lady who had always been considered one of the firm's smartest and best customers. Her birth and position were less impeachable than the state of her finances, and she had accepted the offer of a Berlin firm to dress her on condition that she supplied them with the very latest 'creations' that found their way from Paris to London. Having the entree to the innermost sanctum of the London firm referred to, she had taken advantage of their confidence in her to draw their designs from memory and post them to Berlin. The London firm had no legal remedy whatever. All they could do was, when the autumn styles were due, and the lady called again, to inform her courteously that her patronage was no longer desired.

Another lady, detected in a similar trick by the manager of a Regent street firm, was very cleverly punished. Upon her next visit she was received with the same cordiality as ever, and taken into the show room, where the latest models were usually displayed. She never suspected, until too late, that the room had been specially arranged for her reception. The models exhibited were anything but new, and the too smart firm which employed her was put to vast expense to work up dresses from patterns resurrected from those of years before, which, consequently, proved absolutely unsalable.

Though the description of piracy I have been describing is chiefly confined to the dressmaking and millinery business, it is by no means exclusively for the purpose of stealing other people's original designs that 'pushing' firms enlist the services of well-dressed recruits.

For instance, last summer a lady arrived at a smart seaside hotel—the sort of place where people stay for the whole season. She was pretty, smart and perfectly turned out, so well dressed, in fact, that other women, filled with envy, did their best to find out who was her dressmaker. But though she frequently boasted that the people were perfect treasures, and that her bills amounted to next to nothing, she steadfastly refused to disclose the name. One day, however, she accidentally dropped an envelope enclosing a bill from the mysterious dressmaker, a bill artfully 'faked' so as to show prices of startling cheapness. Within a week the firm the

firm who employed this clever lady welcomed a dozen new customers.

For a large number of ladies the motor car boom of the last few years has procured small fortunes. The manufacturers have not only in many cases taught pretty women to drive and manage cars, but in some cases have even found it worth their while to make the dainty chauffeur a present of an expensive machine. This works in two ways. Not merely does the lady point out the beauties of the car to her friends and acquaintances, but her photograph, car and all, usually finds its way into one of the illustrated papers, and as the name of the maker of the car is given, the picture forms an unequalled advertisement.

Hotels, too, find the lady tout most useful. Last summer a very pretty girl arrived at a certain Scotch hydropathic establishment with her mother. She was smart, well dressed, a clever musician—just the sort of girl to be thoroughly popular with both sexes. At once she became the centre of a large coterie of admirers. Then, after a few days, her vivacious expression gave way to a look of unutterable boredom. 'I can't stand this place. It's so deadly dull,' she said, over and over again. Finally, one evening she announced that she could not support it an hour longer. She was going.

'Where?' was the question.

'Back to Blitherington,' was the decided answer. 'It may be a little dearer, but you get your money's worth there. One has such a good time there.' And she proceeded to dilate at length upon the advantages of the place.

Next day she left, and before the week was out a large proportion of her friends had followed her.—T. C. Bridges, in The Grand Magazine.

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Turf Plunger Now a Waiter.

From The New York American.

"I lost \$10,000 on that race, and my two following bets went wrong, so I was out a little more than \$30,000 on the day. It was the beginning of my bad luck and—but, beg pardon, shall I order your chops medium or well done?"

Within ear-shot of the speaker were four men widely known on the race-tracks, enjoying their supper last night in "Jack's," on Sixth-avenue. One of the men caught the speaker's words and pricked up his ears because he had heard that voice before. He turned around, surveyed the speaker an instant, and whispered to his friends:

"Well, I'll be blowed! That's Tom Sexton, the plunger and owner. And now he's a waiter!"

It was Tom Sexton, all right—Tom Sexton, who could make Sol Leichtenstein, king of bookmakers, "rub his slate"—Tom Sexton, erstwhile owner of a stable of thoroughbreds, who not long ago could count his winnings on the races up to \$300,000.

"I lost that fortune, but soon I'll win a bigger one, and that's the surest thing you know," Sexton said. "I'm out of training now and broke"—this without a trace of bitterness—"but I've had the experience which will stand me in good stead. A quitter is no good. I had to turn my hand to something until I got on my feet, so I'm a waiter now. It seems queer, to be sure. They used to wait on me, so I know how to wait on them. I'll be all right in a few months, and I am going to get together another stable; buy up some yearlings and work along to pay the feed bills until I put a winner under the wire. And then!"

Those who know Tom Sexton know what "and then!" means. He will return to the "firing line" and say, as he halts in front of "bookies": "Bet you \$2000 each way."

Up to a year ago he was the owner of Ostreich, Wickford, Massive and a few other good thoroughbreds. The local race-tracks had not seen so daring a plunger since the retirement of Pittsburg Phil Smith.

An Art Critic.

Mr. Jack London says that the successful "hobo" must be an artist. "He must create spontaneously and instantaneously—and not upon a theme selected from the plenitude of his own imagination, but upon the theme he reads in the face of the person who opens the

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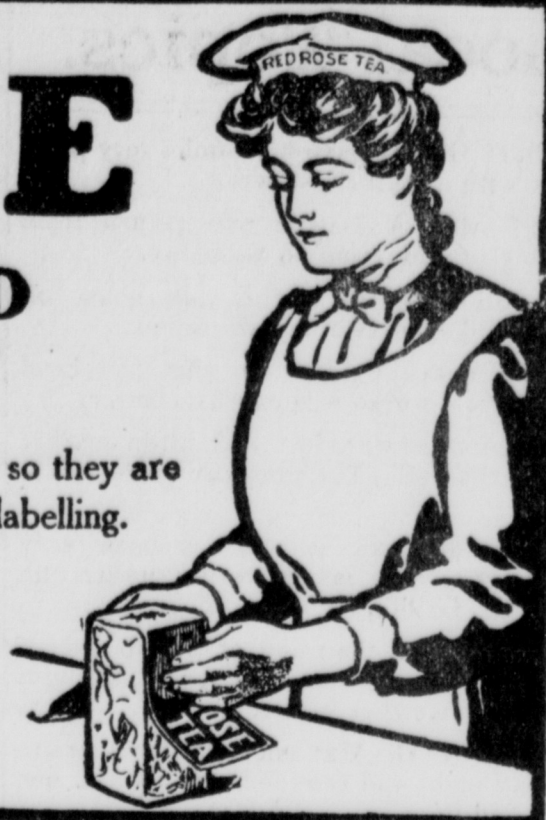
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door."

The tramp who stood before Aunt Martha Hitchcock when she opened her kitchen door regarded himself as a master in the artistic guild which Mr. London referred to. Taking as his theme what was unmistakably written on the motherly countenance regarding him, he began volubly to improvise:

"It's the first time, ma'am," swallowing conspicuously, "I've ever asked for food! What would my mother have said? She'd have been about your age, ma'am?"—another swallow, manfully got down.

"I've got a sister living in Pennsylvania—Mary'd about drop dead to see me now, her 'Brother Joey,' as she calls me, and her with loads of money!"

"Now don't you blame Mary, ma'am—Mary'd give her very life for 'Brother Joey'! But her husband's family is that proud—Why, I'd die, ma'am, before I'd disgrace Mary's children, little Joey and the twin girls!"

"No, ma'am, Mary shall never know, until I'm on my feet once more! I'm making my way to Philadelphia, where there's a splendid job waiting for me in—in—" glancing at the neat window-box—"in a florist's shop. I guess you're as fond as flowers as I am, ma'am—'stars of earth,' as the poet calls 'em! If I can just keep soul 'n' body together until—"

Here Aunt Martha, whose rapt attention had been stimulating to the artistic temperament, could hold in no longer.

"My, but that was well done, young man! It's a shame there's nothing published here at the Corners. But just you keep on down the turnpike till you git to Brusselville. Anybody'll direct you to the office o' the 'Weekly Eagle,' an' I shouldn't be one bit s'prised if the editor'd give you ez much ez two dollars for your experiences."

"No, no, 'tain't no use; you can't fool me! You just tramp along to some house where they don't subscribe for the magazines and read about all these 'experiments in sociology' and 'studies about being a hobo.' I know all about you chaps!"

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