

A FEMALE PICKPOCKET.

FUNERAL IN CHICAGO ATTENDED BY 2,000 PERSONS.

The Most Skillful Criminal in Her Line Known to Police Anxiously—Only one Conviction Against Her—Her Trip to the Queen's Jubilee.

A few days ago there was buried in Chicago a woman named Minnie Daly, whose funeral was attended by no fewer than 2,000 persons. It was a gathering in which no man's watch was safe. Most of the expert hold-up men, second-story thieves, pickpockets, confidence men, counterfeiters, shoplifters, and general crooks who inhabit Chicago were present at the final ceremonies over one who had been the peer of the best—or worst—of them in crime. Not only the police, but the fraternity of crooks themselves, say that Minnie Daly had the lightest finger and the coolest nerve of any man or woman who has ever made a living in this country by the art of the "gentle touch;" in other words, that she was the most skillful pickpocket in the American annals of crime.

From what circumstances Minnie Daly descended to her career is not clearly known, for she who was so ready to talk of her exploits maintained an unbroken silence as to her origin and life. Her first appearance upon the criminal records was in 1888, when she could not have been more than 19 years old. It was the first and last time in a career of varied risks that she was so fairly caught at her business of picking a pocket as to make a conviction possible.

"I was young at it then," she used to say of this episode. "Just as I had the ticker out my elbow turned and the guy had me by the wrist with his chain hanging from my hand."

"The guy" was a merchant of whom she had been asking directions at a railroad station. One year in Juliet Penitentiary was her sentence for this job and she came out eager to resume her shifty trade.

Where she got the money to start in life anew after her release from Juliet is another dark point, though her name was connected with that of a Chicago politician of evil repute. At any rate, she returned to Chicago, set up a quiet little establishment of her own, dressed well, went to the theatres and other places of amusement and carried herself so circumspectly that her landlord supposed her to be a well paid employee of a department store and a most respectable young person. Some knowledge of the great stores she had, for much of her work was done in them, and was not above adding to her resources by an occasional dab at shoplifting, though she always said that the returns in that line were inadequate to the risks. Every store detective in the city came to know her as a crook; not one of them ever succeeded in catching her. It was a cash girl who came nearest to getting her, but the pickpocket's ready wit saved her then as it did many times thereafter. She had substituted her pocketbook for that of a woman who had laid one on the counter while making a purchase and the little cash girl saw her do it. All in excitement she ran forward; the criminal saw her and held out the stolen purse to its owner.

"Pardon me," she said calmly, "I think I took your purse in mistake for my own."

That was all there was to it. The cash girl vehemently declared that it was a case of theft, but there was no proof and nothing could be done. Thereafter when Minnie Daly visited that store a detective followed her about everywhere, and this gave her great delight, so much so that she made a practice of doing her shopping at that place. Her presence of mind in embarrassing situations was powerfully assisted by her appearance. Of her as she looked at this time a Chicago police officer says:

"I have seldom seen a more frank expression or a more honest face than hers. It was the finest outfit imaginable for a crook. She had light brown hair, wide, clear blue eyes, a rather square but decidedly pretty face and a certain style of her own in dress and appearance. See her out on the street and you'd take her for a respectable girl of good circumstances. She never looked fast, and I guess for a woman who was on the crook she kept herself pretty particular. I don't know how many times we've arrested her, but we never could get evidence to convict her and so we finally let her alone."

In 1891 Minnie Daly took to attending public dances of a decent character, such as balls given by the political associations, and it was an off night with her when she did not bring back with her at least one diamond, usually a stud. It was her boast that she could unscrew a stud from a man's shirt front while she was talking to him and not give him a suspicion of what was going on literally under his very nose. A young sport of a somewhat prominent

family who met her at one of these dances and escorted her home afterward had her arrested on a charge of stealing a gold watch and chain, a diamond and ruby pin, and something more than \$100 in cash, but the charge was mysteriously withdrawn and the accused went free. Not long after that an ex-alderman accused her of 'touching' him for some \$400, but this also came to nothing.

Early in 1893 Minnie did form a partnership with Barney Birch, No. 2122 in the New York Rogues' Gallery, and worked with him in Chicago, Milwaukee and other Western cities. The partnership was of another kind, also. In the criminal records she appears as married to Birch, which may mean little or nothing, but she frequently claimed that she was legally married, and he has never denied it, so far as is known. They worked east as far as Philadelphia on one trip, but didn't get as far as New York. They almost invariably worked together, and a favorite trick was to go to some concert hall and get into conversation with persons there. While one of them was talking to the victim, the other would go through his pockets. Usually it was the woman who did the actual 'touching,' as Birch, who is himself one of the most skillful pickpockets in the business, cheerfully admitted his companion's superiority. A story is still told in Chicago of how the pair were standing on a street corner talking with a saloon keeper, who is also a betting man, when Birch remarked that his wife could 'pinch' anything that was in plain sight, from a man. The saloon man held that any man who permitted his pockets to be picked was either drunk or a fool, and the controversy ended in a bet of \$50 as to the woman's ability to get the watch of a friend of the saloon keeper who was standing on the next corner.

"You stand right here and watch," said Birch, "and maybe you'll see how it's done."

"What'll you give me for the ticker if I get it?" whispered Minnie Daly, leaning over to him.

"Give you a fifty and sell it back to him for a hundred," was the reply.

In a few minutes the pair were in conversation with the subject of the experiment. Presently Birch turned sharply, his elbow caught the man in the waistcoat, and the watch was gone so neatly that the end of the chain was left in the man's pocket. On their return to the bettor they demanded the \$50 and got it.

"Where's the fifty I'm to get for the watch?" asked the woman.

"At this the saloon man made some demur, whereupon she added:

"For that fifty I'll throw in another watch," and she pulled out the bettor's own chronometer which she had gently abstracted at the moment when she was whispering in his ear.

The unsuspecting subject of the bet got back his watch, for Minnie said it would be a low trick to keep it, as she had made enough out of the transaction without it.

When she returned from Europe in 1897 she had been over there two years, and incidentally taken in the Queen's Jubilee. She was interviewed by a reporter from one of the Chicago papers, to whom she said:

"You want to know what kind of a time I've had? Well, it's been great and I've done a lot of business too. You know, I believe in bringing foreign money back to America, and I brought a good bit of it after paying all my expenses and living on the fat of the land all the time. They took me for an American heiress, I guess, and I might have got an earl or something of that kind to bring back with me if I was in that line of business, but they cost too much to support. I'd heard such a lot about Scotland Yard and the sharp British bobbies that I didn't know as I'd take a chance with any work at all over in England; but, bless you it's the easiest game yet. I worked right through the jubilee, and got more rocks and sparklers and leathers from the Johnnies than I'd strike in a year here, and the leathers were stuffed too. Victoria wasn't the only one that had a diamond jubilee; look at those," and she actually untied a handkerchief and showed the reporter a number of fine diamonds which had been removed from their settings.

"The sparklers are the thing," said she. "I'd rather get them than the long geese, even."

"The last time I saw Minnie Daly," says Capt. McClusky, Chief of the Detective Bureau, "was just as she was coming out of the Empire Theatre last winter. She was with some other woman, and a very respectable looking pair they made. She recognized me the minute she saw me and hurried away, though I've no doubt she was merely out for pleasure and not on business."

Little is known of the circumstances preceding her death, which took place at St. Vincent's Hospital in this city a fortnight ago. She was brought to the hospital in a carriage by friends three weeks ago, suffering from a disease of the order of paralysis, the cause of the death of a proportion of criminals. As soon as her death was announced the body was ordered shipped to Chicago, when a big semi-public funeral was held. Her general reputation in Chicago was that of a sort of Robin Hood, who robbed the rich and gave to the poor. It is said that she did give con-

siderable amounts to charities and church work and that she never robbed a poor man or a good one.—N. Y. Sun.

A CANVASSEER'S EXPERIENCE. Suffered From Kidney Trouble and Rheumatism—Was Becoming Despondent When Aid Reached Him. From the Journal St. Catharines.

One of the most recent witnesses about Fouthill and vicinity regarding the virtues of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills is John F. Price, who is widely known in the Niagara District as he has been on the road as an advertiser and canvasser for six years, and has thousands of acquaintances. His complete cure has added fresh lustre to the reputation of this great medicine. Hearing of Mr. Price's sufferings and restoration, a history of his case was requested. His story is:—I am 26 years of age and have been afflicted with rheumatism for seven years. At times I have been unable to get my clothes on or off without assistance, and have often been compelled to have my food cut for me at table. In the winter of 1897 I was attacked with the grippe which settled in my kidneys. I then became so ill that I was compelled to abandon all employment. At that time my liver and kidneys combined in what seemed to me their last attack. I used several medicines and doctored in Buffalo and St. Catharines without getting any relief, so my confidence in medicine was about gone. I was getting no rest day or night and was becoming despondent, finally I was persuaded to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I did so and have used in all eight boxes, and am now able to state that I feel better than in the past ten years. These pills are the nearest to a specific of anything I ever used, and they are the cheapest and best medicine I ever tested, having thoroughly reached my case and effected a cure. I feel so gratified for the relief I have obtained that I think it my duty to publicly make this statement. If all who are suffering will give Dr. Williams' Pink Pills an honest trial, I am sure they will be as enthusiastic in their praise as I am.

The Indian Postal Service.

The postal service in India extends as far north as Kolghur, a village of the Himalayas. Beyond this point a letter is sent by a native runner, who carries the message for days in the split end of a stick, and delivers it at the end of his journey as clean as when he received it. These runners are so honest that money is intrusted to them, which they will carry for days, along wild mountain tracks, where they could never be traced, and then deliver it into the right hands.

Permanently So.

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Hungry Higgins—I don't know much about wide tires, but I know I've got a litelong oze.

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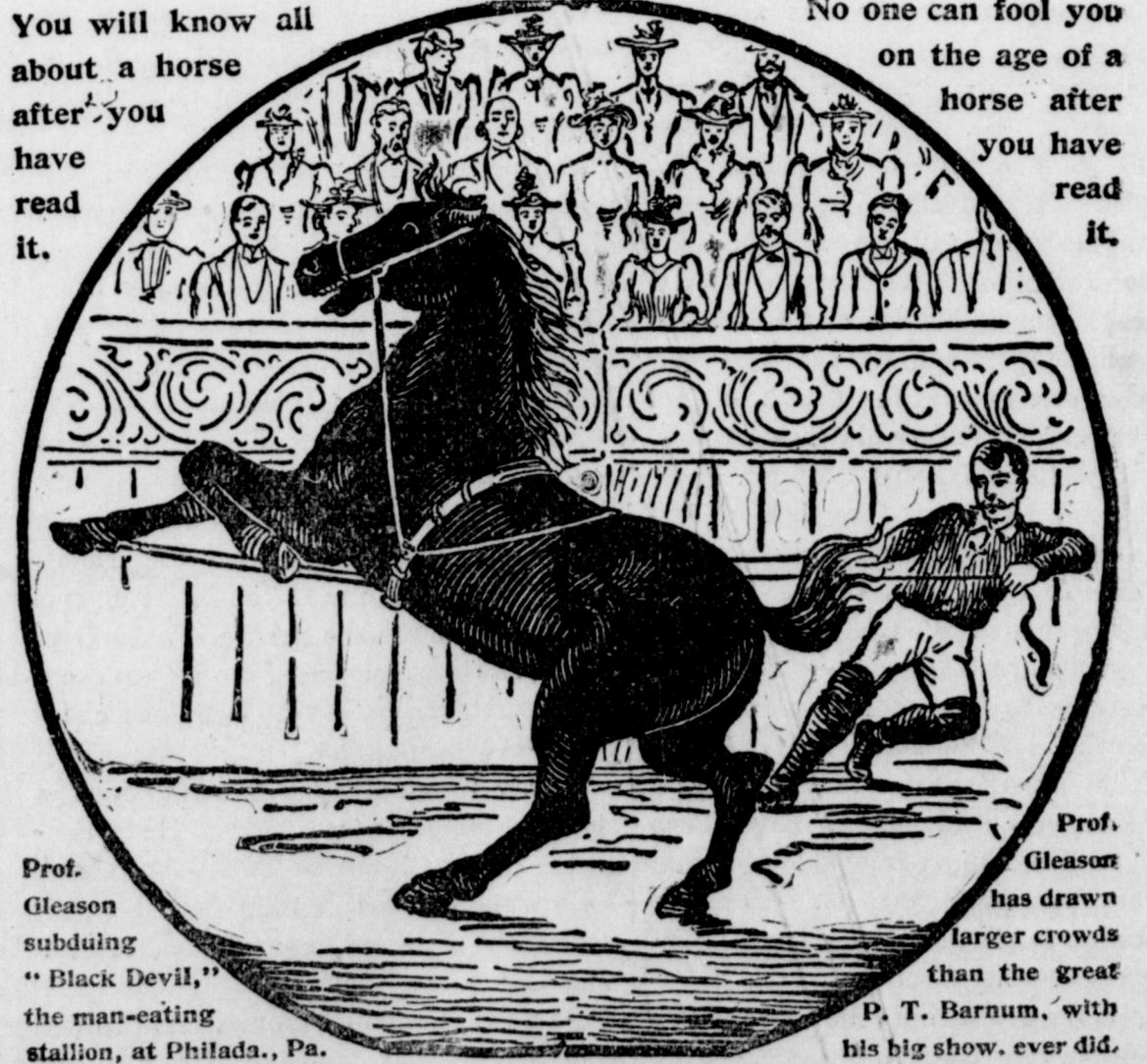
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