

The Green Goods Men Are Busy.

The United States post office inspectors are busy men. Fourteen of them do the detective work of the postal system in the state of New York, though five times that number could not satisfactorily handle all the business that legitimately belongs to the inspectors' department. Occasionally outside detectives are called in to assist the regular force, but such cases are rare, and, as a rule, the inspectors attend to the more glaring cases of fraud practiced through the mails and let the others slide.

The green goods business alone would occupy the time of double the number of inspectors on the force, if all the cases, in regard to which evidence is handed in, were followed up. Probably no one outside the post office department realizes to what proportions this swindling business has grown, and certainly the postal authorities are the only persons making a determined fight against the evil.

'This green goods octopus is really colossal,' said Chief Inspector King to a Sun reporter, 'and it is worked with practically no opposition save from us. I wish this campaign against vice could extend to the swindling business; but the trouble is that, in a green goods case, the man swindled isn't above reproach himself, and the public hasn't any sympathy with him. There is something in that view of the question; but as a matter of fact, a very large number of the hayseed victims are simple minded and ignorant rather than actually dishonest. They are worked upon cleverly, and they are in straits for money, and they are told that the passing of 'duplicates'—never 'counterfeits' you know—cannot hurt their family or neighbors or friends. The bills can be passed anywhere, they are told, and no one is the worse for them, except the government; and, anyway, the whole thing is no worse than the greenbacks or silver schemes which political parties want to establish by law. That's the way the green goods men talk to the old duffer until they persuade him that black is white, and he actually doesn't realize that he is going into a swindling game. One can't help feeling sorry for some of the victims. Others go into the thing in deliberate dishonesty.

About 85 per cent of the men who receive the green goods letters either put them in the fire or turn them over to the postal authorities. Hardly a day goes by that we do not get a big pouchful of such literature from Washington. It is sent to the postmaster general and then forwarded to us. The letters are mailed from points all over the country, but every one knows that all the big green goods deals are worked from New York. The city is a perfect hot bed for the business. Men with big money are behind the gangs, and the amount of cleverness, money and work put into the business is tremendous.

'No corporation in the country runs its affairs more shrewdly. We know the headquarters of various gangs, and are hot upon the tracks of many of the swindlers, but it takes time and patience to get evidence against them. Of course, we can attack only a small number of cases out of the thousands that come up, and the workers cover their tracks so skillfully that it is wonderfully difficult to run them down. Then, unless they are caught red handed, where is the evidence to convict them?

The man who has been duped isn't ordinarily willing to appear, because it is equivalent to confessing himself a fool or a rascal. If he does appear the opposing attorney has a fine opportunity to protest against his competency as a witness, because on his own testimony, he is a would-be thief. There you are.

'We thought we had the worst gang, a few months ago, when that Pelham case came up. All the circumstances were in our favor. The victim didn't complain, you know, but a sturdy, nery friend of his came down to get that money back. He was immense—a great big fellow with iron nerve and pluck. This friend who had been flattered believed that he could remember exactly the course over which he had been taken to meet the retired 'Treasury Official' who buried the 'government plates and acted as banker. He drew the diagram, starting from the Astor House, and we figured out that the meeting place was a road house in New Rochelle. There was a possibility of its being Mount Vernon. So we divided up forces and went to the two places. The man from up country met the green goods steers and allowed himself to be taken to the banker's. There he met the fine old gentleman. There were only two other men in the room. Things went along all right until the critical point came. Then there

was a scrap. That man of ours was great. He could have done the three fellows up without help, if he had begun shooting right away, but he grabbed the money and lost time. Two other green goods men burst in through the shell door. He made sure they were our men come to help him out, but we were fooling around over at New Rochelle, and he was at Pelham. So he was up against five, and they did him. I tell you we were sore about that failure. I don't know when we will get another such chance. There aren't many men with that chap's nerve.

'Still we have sent a number of green goods men to the penitentiary, and we will send a great many more. The government is in dead earnest. It can't stand for a party to wholesale swindling; but the municipal officials do not bother their heads about it. A sucker goes to police headquarters and tells his story, leads the police to the place where he met the gang, and there's no gang there, no tables, no money. That's the end of it. All the same, the town is full of green goods gangs, carrying on immense operations and we will clean them out before we are through. I'm not popular with the fraternity myself. They really say most impolite things about me and make inconsiderate threats, but it doesn't bother me particularly.

'We can't give all our time to the green goods business. There is a good deal of petty thieving always going on in the postal service. Sometimes it is the clerk or carrier who steals; and when complaints come in, it is a comparatively easy matter to place the thief. We give gilt-edged opportunities to the suspects, and they are likely to take them. There isn't much chance of postal thefts in a city like this, everything is so systematized and work is so thoroughly subdivided; but in smaller places postal clerks have more leeway. Money order stealing is for instance, really impossible in this office, because the application is presented to one clerk, passed on by him to another and goes through several hands before it is complete. But, in the ordinary office, there are frequently cases in which a money order clerk fills out a lot of blank orders, with vouchers payable to himself, at different places through the country, collects the money and then takes a sudden and unlimited vacation. The scheme isn't often successful, but occasionally a man gets away with the money and we have to go to California or Texas or some other out of the way place after him.

'Bogus investment schemes give us trouble, and there seem to be more of them each year. It is positively astonishing how many men make money out of the gullibility of the public. One of the swindlers about which we have the most complaints just now, is the 'light work at home' deal. You can see the advertisements anywhere, but when the mails are used for the fraud, becomes a criminal offence, so most of the cases come our way. There may be some 'light work at home' schemes that are all square and above board, but the usual thing is an offer of a liberal income for very easy work that can be done at home. Answers come in by thousands. The first requisite is that the applicant shall buy a small outfit for the work, sold of course by the promoter. When the money is paid in the next thing is to freeze out the worker. She cannot meet the requirements, transgresses rules, is dropped, with the outfit on her hands and her money gone. Sometimes the swindle is even more brazen and the deal is carried on by correspondence and the firm is altogether a bogus one, so there is no one from whom to seek redress. The scheme has been exposed often enough, yet hundreds upon hundreds of men and women keep on biting at it.

'As I said before, we have plenty to do. I only wish we could attend to half the complaints that come our way.'

GETTING A WIFE ON TIEK.

A Former Telegraph Operator's Story of His Courtship in Chicago.

'I found my wife in an odd way,' said an ex-telegraph operator, who is now a prominent officer of a Western railroad. 'It was my third year in the railroad business, but I had not forgotten the tick language, and I had a room in a hotel in Chicago which had a party wall with a boarding house adjoining. In this boarding house lived a mighty pretty girl who was attending a commercial college in the next block, where there was also a course of telegraphy taught, and I guessed by seeing the books and papers she carried that she was taking that course. You see,

I was watching her rather closely, for I was interested from the first time I ever saw her on the street.

'She was a stranger in town and of course, there wasn't any chance for my being introduced to her, and as for flirting, she showed no more signs of it than a sister of charity would, though I gave her every opportunity. I found out by a careful study of windows that her room in the boarding house was next to mine in the hotel, and that only made me feel worse—so near and yet so far, you understand. I knew she would not be in the school more than three months, and as half that time had gone by and I still had made no progress I began to grow desperate, for I couldn't bear the thought of losing her. You know a romance like that makes a deal more impression on a fellow than the real thing.

One Sunday afternoon I was in my room and she was in hers, and I could hear her driving a nail in the wall and a great thought came to me suddenly. The next minute I had caught up one of my shoes and was pounding its heel on my wall, but I wasn't driving nails. Not much I was making a telegraph call. It wasn't anything in particular, only an 'attention' call, and after repeating it till I was about to give up in despair it was answered from the other side. Then I telegraphed, 'How do you do?' and that was answered, a little bit slow, perhaps, but answered all right, and the conversation continued.

'She was not the most skilled operator I had ever taken but certainly the most interesting one, and we talked through the wall till supper time. That evening I began again, but she was not at home, and when I got in at midnight I wisely forebore sending a 'good night' to her. Next morning I bailed her with 'good morning' and got an answer, and then I asked her if I couldn't meet her after breakfast and walk to school with her, but she would not have it. You see she was shy without a brick wall between us. I was three or four days pleading with my shoe heel on that wall before she agreed to meet me, and by that time I had told her everything, and she just couldn't refuse to give me some kind of a show. After my first walk to school with her I was utterly gone, and though she staid on and was graduated in telegraphy she never had a chance to practice what she learned, for before she got a job I had made her promise to marry me and give up telegraphy.

OUT OF A FRENCH PRISON.

How a Party of Englishmen Made a Daring Escape.

During one of the wars between France and England, Mr. Midshipman Boys. R. N., placed in command of a merchant prize, with orders to proceed immediately to Catalonia and join Lord Nelson in the Victory, fell into the hands of the enemy instead, and was committed to the prison of Valenciennes.

There he remained four years. Then the time came when a scheme to get away in which he was joined by three companions, seemed practicable. They must scale a wall, ascend the parapet unseen, escape the observation of three or four sentinels and the patrols, descend two ramparts, force two locks and get over two drawbridges; but by the grace of God they expected to manage it.

In one way and another they procured ropes and picklocks, and when the night came it was dark and cloudy, while the wind blew and the leaves kept up a rustling favorable to the enterprise.

At half past eight boys and hunter, with woolen stockings over their shoes, each having a rope, a small poker, a stake and a knapsack, went into the back yard, climbed over the wall, passed through the garden and palisades, crossed the road and climbed on their hands and knees until they reached the parapet over the gateway leading to the upper citadel.

With the utmost precaution they crept upon the summit, and down the breastwork toward the outer edge of the rampart.

Both the poker and stake were then driven into the ground—by rising and falling with his full weight Boys hammered them in with his chest—and the rope made fast.

This done, they let the rope down through a groove in the ramparts, and Boys descended. About two thirds of the

way down, part of a brick fell, but he caught it between his knees, and carried it down without noise.

When Hunter had also gone down, they crossed the drawbridge and found themselves in an arched passage, ending in the door which separated them from the upper citadel. This was the moment for the picklocks to be proved, and they were tried in vain! The bolt was of cast iron; filing was useless; and the stone in which the bolt was fastened was so fortified with bars of cast iron that it could not be cut out.

'Checkmate!' murmured Hunter.

'We must undermine the gate,' said Boys. 'We have our pocket-knives.' They had worked about a quarter of an hour making little headway, for the paving stones under the gate were about ten inches square and closely bound together, when they were alarmed by a noise like the distant report of a gun. As the sound became fainter, it resembled the cautious opening of the great gate.

For a moment all seemed lost. Stories, only too true, of the barbarous treatment of fugitives had often reached Valenciennes; to be overtaken meant a horrible death. There was a faint sound of foot steps in the passage, and the two men rose to their feet and stood back to back. 'Boys!

It was Whitehurst's whisper, and instantly all was hope again! The noise had been caused by Mansell dropping his knapsack on the echoing bridge. Whitehurst had remained perfectly still while he heard the sentinel walk up and examine the inner side and then walk away. It was a narrow escape; the fugitive and the soldier were scarcely more than a yard apart.

They all began work now, and at half past ten the first stone was raised, and half an hour later there was a hole large enough to creep through. The first and second drawbridges they crossed on the iron hand-rails, and thus gained the upper citadel. They then proceeded to the northeast corner, fixed a stake and fastened a rope upon the breastwork of the fourth and last descent, feeling as if they were already embarked for England.

As Boys was getting down, with his chest against the edge of the parapet, the stake way. Whitehurst, who was sitting by it, snatched the rope, Mansel seized Whitehurst by the coat and Boys laid hold of the grass, and by all these means together he was saved from a fall of about fifty feet.

They all came down at last with their knapsacks, and this fourth descent had landed them fairly outside the fortress; in excess of joy, like true Britons, they all shook hands.

Getting out of a citadel like that of Valenciennes was one thing, and to leave the enemy's country was another, but at last, after many adventures, the young midshipmen were able to offer up their humble thanksgiving for deliverance on English soil.

A Tame Hawk.

Lady Broome possessed a novel and interesting pet, and she tells in the Cornhill Magazine how she came by it. She was staying on the little island of Rottneest, opposite the port of Freemantle, in Western Australia, a place where everything had to be brought across a stormy channel, and the carriage of birds or pets was out of the question. She therefore hailed with pleasure the offer of a little island boy to bring her a half-fledged hawk, as tame as it was in the nature of a hawk to be.

There was no question of a cage, and 'Alorzo' was established on a perch in a sheltered corner of the upper veranda. He was fed at short intervals on raw meat, and proved very voracious. All day long he sat motionless on his perch, only coming on his owner's hand for his meals.

For two or three weeks Alorzo enjoyed the attentions of his mistress. Then one morning at early daylight, she heard an unusual noise on the veranda, and came out just in time to see the little hawk spread his wings and sail off into space. He had been wise enough to devour all the meat left in readiness for his breakfast.

Deeming that a bird of so wild a nature, when once free, would remember his friends no more, she concluded him lost to her; but a few hours later, as she was standing on the veranda, she stretched out her arm beyond it as far as she could reach, when the hawk dropped like a stone out of the cloudless blue and sat on her arm as composedly as if he had never left the shelter of his home. He was ready for his dinner and received a good one.

After that it became an established custom to put every evening a saucer of chopped raw meat on a table in the veranda, together with a pan of water, that the hawk might have an early breakfast. He toraged for himself all day, coming back at night to roost in the veranda.

It was curious to watch his return. He generally made many attempts before he

could accommodate himself to the slope of the roof, so as to get beneath it. After each failure he would soar away out of sight, only to come back and circle round the house till he had determined how low to stoop. Then like a flash, he would dart beneath the projecting eaves.

Apparently it was necessary to make but one effort, for there was no popping in and out, no uncertainty, but when he came it was with one majestic swoop, and the next moment he would be on his perch as rigid and unruddled as if he had never left it.

Haunted Him.

Miss Sup Perstitions—Do you take any stock in dreams, Mr. Ledger?

Mr. Ledger—Do I? Why, sometimes after we've been taking stock at the store I don't dream of anything else for weeks.

Paris.

'See Paris and die!' as the saying is. 'Oas might as well. He'll have nothing left to live on after seeing Paris this year.'

'Do you consider her a woman of intelligence?'

'Well, she certainly is a woman of good understanding.'

'What do you mean by that?'

'She has shapely feet.'



PROGRESS.

Some time ago there was a notable automobile procession in the city of Buffalo, N. Y. It was notable for its size, and also for the fact that it was entirely composed of automobile wagons (like that in the cut above), built to distribute the advertising literature of the World's Dispensary Medical Association, proprietors and manufacturers of Dr. Pierce's medicines. In many a town and village Dr. Pierce's automobile has been the pioneer horseless vehicle. These wagons, sent to every important section of the country, are doing more than merely advertise Dr. Pierce's Remedies—they are pioneers of progress, heralds of the automobile age.

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Those who write to Dr. Pierce, chief consulting physician to the 'Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute, Buffalo, N. Y., may do so with the assurance that they will receive not only the advice of a competent physician, but the advice of a physician whose wide experience in the treatment and cure of disease, and whose sympathy with human suffering leads him to take a deep, personal interest in all those who seek his help and that of his associate staff of specialists.

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