

BIGAMIST SYNDICATE ENTRAP WOMEN.

Witzhoff, Now Sought by Police, Has a Notable Prototype in English Jail.

BROOKLYN WOMAN A VICTIM.

Brooklyn Eagle.—There have been bigamists ever since the human race established the practice of marriage and given in marriage. Men and women have entered sometimes willfully, sometimes innocently, since history began. But it has been only within recent years that marriage has been taken up and developed as a get-rich-quick scheme, and the methods employed by the exponents of this new school of crime are worth study.

Of course, the man who is foremost in the public eye because of the charges against him as a professional marrier during the present month is Dr. George A. Witzhoff, formerly of Brooklyn. He appears to hold the record for rapid-fire marrying. A number of men, who, if they are not banded together, have employed and are employing methods so similar as to suggest the existence of a gang or syndicate, which makes its headquarters large.

Those who are inclined to consider this branch of crime a native American invention are far wrong, as a glance at the records of other countries will show. Perhaps the most notable of all bigamists is an Englishman named Joe, or Joseph, now serving a long-term sentence in an English prison.

"Joseph," said the detective sergeant who last pointed him, "had his own syndicate or corps of assistants, with whom he divided his plunder. One always acted as introducer, inserting matrimonial advertisements and posing as a legitimate matrimonial agent. The second was the best man, who told confidential stories of Joseph's wonderful prospects and arranged if necessary, all the details of a secret marriage, and the third, perhaps the cleverest of the lot, played the part of Joseph's angry father."

"It was the business of the angry father to appear on the scene as soon as the marriage was completed and the pair were leaving the church surrounded by their friends. Catching sight of 'Joe' and his bride the old man would hobble up—he was always on the point of dying—and, shaking his fist, would say, 'Ah, you young rascal, so this is what you have been up to—getting married, eh? All right, my boy, not one penny of my money shall you have.'"

"To prevent further scene the best man at this point would drag the old man away to a hotel. Returning later to the wedding party, the best man pictures the rage of the old man and his efforts to pacify him, winding up with an assurance that in a little while the old man will come round all right with the parental blessings and a handsome income for 'Joe.'"

"While they were waiting for the income 'Joe' nearly always managed to realize his wife's property and abandon her."

DARING METHODS OF BIGAMY SYNDICATE.

The syndicate of professional bigamists, with headquarters in New York, which has been reaping a rich harvest from the credulity of sentimental women, employs methods simple in the extreme, yet astounding in their daring.

Well supplied with money the operator picks out for his victim a woman, preferably from the middle or poorer classes, who, has, nevertheless, either as an inheritance or the result of her industry, a little sum of money saved up.

Then first getting her affections a member of the syndicate proposes matrimony, promptly steals all the wealth his victim has, and then decamps.

All this is sometimes accomplished within the space of a week, and in some grim instances where suspicion has been aroused, poison removes the victim to a place where she can tell no tales.

The discovery that this nefarious scheme was being successfully worked, followed the arrest of Dr. Johann Hock, now making a hopeless battle for his life in Chicago.

Dr. George A. Witzhoff is being pursued by a dozen frate women whom he is accused of having deceived. Philadelphia has furnished an odd sidelight on the practice of bigamy as a business, for there the usual order is being reversed, and a woman has been arrested for making victims of men. A sort of poetic justice arrangement.

She is variously known as Mrs. Neithercott, Mrs. Quinn, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Cox, Mrs. Mitchell, Mrs. Maloney and Mrs. Hepler.

THE FIRST MODERN BLUEBIRD. The founder of the entire school may fairly be said to be H. H. Holmes. He was the first of the modern Bluebirds.

It will be recalled that Holmes was apprehended in Philadelphia something like a decade ago. The body of a man named Pitzel was found in a vacant house on Callowhill street. Ah! indications pointed to the fact that he had been killed by an explosion of chemicals while making some experiments, but an investigation disclosed that he was dead when the explosion occurred. The scenery was arranged with a view to diverting attention from the real means of his death.

Suspicion pointed to H. H. Holmes who, it was found, had an insurance policy on the life of the dead man. During that famous trial, case after case was disclosed where Holmes had committed murder for the purpose of gaining insurance on women he had married all over the country. He had put away his wives and their

children, and had reaped a rich harvest.

Holmes was convicted and hanged in Philadelphia, after pretty nearly every prominent citizen in the United States had made a demand that should he fall of conviction in Philadelphia, he should be brought on and tried for offences committed there.

WITZHOFF'S ALLEGED EXPLOIT.

The publicity given to the Holmes case was probably in part the inspiration of the operations of the present band, of whom the police say there are twenty-seven.

Never has the gang been so active and audacious, and arrest of its members seems to make no difference to those remaining.

The capture of Dr. Hock, who has married women all over the United States, some say to the number of thirty, did not force similar offenders under cover.

Dr. George A. Witzhoff lived in Brooklyn at the home of Mrs. Parkhill, afterward to become one of Witzhoff's alleged victims on Schermerhorn street.

Yet the arrest of Carleton, his former room mate, did not frighten Witzhoff into flight. Instead, it is charged, he went on marrying as many as seven women in one week, until finally those women got together and made the discovery of the wrong that had been done to them.

The methods by which all these offenders operated are identical, and can best be illustrated by a description of the alleged exploits of Witzhoff. He is a man of medium height, good looking, speaking with a foreign accent, and having a sufficient amount of good manners to be able to impress his victims with his culture.

By profession a chemist, he was employed at the Edison factory at Orange, and has lived in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

Witzhoff posed as a sort of dance hall Beau Brummel at resorts on the upper West Side New York City, five years ago. He was the sort of man that women liked, and his ready address and good appearance soon enabled him to win the hearts of any number of the hard working girls who sought an evening's diversion after the toil of the day.

The police heard that Witzhoff married young girls, but though they gathered a fair degree of evidence, were not able to close the net on him.

After leaving New York, Witzhoff went to Philadelphia, Kansas City, Chicago, St. Louis, Buffalo and Cleveland and in each of these cities women have made charges against him.

Three years ago he went to Boston, and laid his heart at the feet of Miss Etta Randall, of 123 Sumner Street. They were married, she trusted him so implicitly that even when he began to borrow considerable sums of money from her she refused to suspect him. It was not until he began absconding himself for long periods and going to New York on plea of seeing a patient, that her suspicions were full aroused. She followed him to New York, and found him living with another woman, who thought herself his wife.

The last matrimonial venture of Witzhoff was given publicly through testimony that Miss Dora Dorf, of Manhattan, gave to the District Attorney. According to her story, she was fascinated with Witzhoff from the first, and her father also fancied a man who was so traveled, so educated, refined and well dressed.

He borrowed several hundred dollars from the father before the wedding. On the wedding night he took his bride ostensibly on a honeymoon trip. They, however, only went to a questionable resort not far from her home. Once inside this place, Witzhoff pointed a revolver at her head and made her sign a check for \$810. Then he departed, and the bride made her way to her father as best she could.

Miss Dorf is relentless in her determination to run him to earth and send him to prison. The same may be said of Miss Randall of Boston, and Miss Parkhill of Brooklyn. Miss Randall has written to Miss Parkhill expressing her sympathy for the latter and declaring that the man they both married is a fiend.

Miss Randall and Miss Parkhill both say that the doctor gave them strange looking pills, which produced a nausea so terrifying that both women feared to take as many as he prescribed. It is the theory of the police that the pills contained poison.

Judging from the number of charges against Witzhoff he seems to have been married to sixty-two women.

The Philadelphia woman who is charged with having eight husbands is young and extremely pretty. She is said to have taken them in seven years. At the hearing Elmer Smith testified that he married this captivating woman in July, 1900. He lived with her nine months, and then discovered that George Neithercott, a hat finisher, was her husband. Smith swore he left her then, but that he, at least, had never been divorced from her.

Hepler's wooing was brief, but ardent, he testified. He met the variable charmer in Washington Park. After five hours' courtship she coyly consented to give herself to him fractionally. After two months he left her and went to live in Schuylkill County, Pa. There Smith found him and told him the cruel truth.

TRAVELS FREE ON L.I.R.R.

One Daily Rider Who Has No Pass and is Never Asked for His Ticket.

Glen Cove, L. I., Sept. 20.—Business men who take the 8.20 train from Nassau station to the city every morning have noticed quite frequently of late a handsome greyhound, which has on a number of occasions boarded the train at that depot. The dog did not seem to be in company with any person, and this led to some wonderment as to how he came to be travelling alone so frequently. It was noticed that the dog left the train at Roslyn, and it was learned that he took the train arriving there at 9.44, and went back alone to Glen Cove. It was noticed, also, that Conductor Alfred Jones always made the dog welcome on the train, but as he is in the habit of doing the same for every passenger, this was not strange.

These observations led to an inquiry as to why the dog took his daily journey, or almost daily journey, and some interesting facts were brought out. The dog, which answers to the name of Pete—a cognomen not at all in keeping with his beauty and dignity—is the property of Station Agent Webster of the Glen Cove station, Glen Cove. He has been a member of Mr. Webster's family about two months, and is a great pet in the household.

The dog almost invariably goes with Mr. Webster from his house to his work at the station, and has lately started to travel on his own account. His plan is generally to board Train No. 63, which goes through Glen street station at 7.04 a. m. Pete travels on this train to the terminus, at Oyster Bay. After the three-quarters of an hour in the President's town, Pete gets on Train No. 126 and goes to Nassau station, where he disembarks. There he waits for Train No. 24, which is in charge of Conductor Jones. This train makes no stop at Glen street, and Pete does not seem to worry about that. Nor does he make any attempt to get off at Sea Cliff, where the train stops. He whizzes by Glen Head, and by the time the train gets to Roslyn seems to have had enough of seeing the world, for there he alights and spends about an hour making friends indiscriminately with people and dogs in the vicinity of the station. He never strays so far afield, however, that he is not ready to get on Train No. 63, leaving Roslyn at 9.44. This time he gets off the train at Glen street and his journeying for the day are over.

Perhaps there would not be any excuse for Pete's habits of "going" were it not known that he acquired them legitimately for Pete was a circus dog until he settled down to make his home with Mr. Webster. He traveled, of course, extensively, and when he "quit the boards," so to speak, he found it hard, evidently, to settle down to a life of monotony. So he adopted the plan of seeing the world, and Conductor Jones and the other conductors with whom he travels, probably realizing how much he must miss his former jaunts, let him ride free, and he has never once been asked for a ticket not put off the train because he hadn't money enough to pay his fare. He evidently enjoys his rides on the train, but is perfectly contented all the rest of the time to stay within hearing of his master's whistle and to come when called.

Pete is a large clean-lined animal of a dark, mottled gray. His head is well shaped, and he looks like a dog that might have won laurels at the bench shows. He is evidently only a youngster, and it is quite likely that his fondness for travelling may become developed until he is as well known on the railroad as Roxy, the railroad mascot. Mr. Webster sets great store by the dog, and would hate to lose him, but gives him full liberty, believing that he has become so sincerely attached to his home that he will return to it, no matter how far afield he may roam occasionally.

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WHAT THE WEST NEEDS.

Two or Three More Bumper Crops Are Necessary.

Senator James McMillen, of Mount Forest, Ontario, who has just returned from a three weeks' trip through parts of Ontario and Manitoba, says that at Fort Frances he found rapid progress being made on the water power development works, a force of 300 to 400 men being steadily engaged.

It is expected that power will be ready for use within eighteen months from now.

Rapid development was noted along the line of the Canadian Northern Railway from Fort Frances to Rainy River. The district is being opened up quickly, and the rate of settlement is satisfactory.

In Manitoba the Senator's time was divided between the Portage Plains and the Dauphin Districts. The crop on all sides, he said, was an abundant one. He attended four different thrashings, and, besides examining the wheat for himself, made close inquiries as to the yield. The lowest estimate given him was 25

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bushels to the acre, but he was satisfied that in many places that will be considerably exceeded.

"The bumper crop in Manitoba was," he said, "an absolute necessity to that part of the country. The aggregate of liabilities carried over from former years by the banks, the wholesale and retail merchants, the implement men and those selling agricultural supplies generally, is enormous. The great crop will go very largely towards the relief of those accumulated liabilities. If the crop had not been such a good one there would unquestionably have been a disaster in the west. But to really set the country on its feet two or three such crops are required.

The construction of public and other large undertakings, such, for instance, as railways, is also a great aid to Manitoba and the west. People with limited means going into that country have the opportunity of earning upon those works enough

money to tide them over, where their crop is limited or where it is a partial failure.

The construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific will, in my humble opinion, be a great blessing to the country in that regard. The tremendous influx of population, the newcomers in many cases having very limited means, might result disastrously were it not for the opportunity of earning given by the works I have mentioned."

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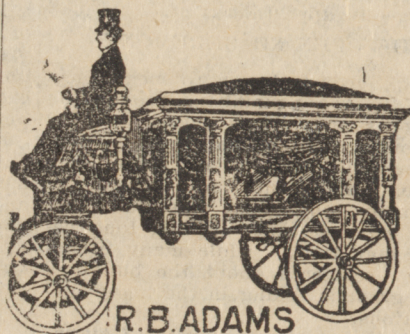
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