

CHECK WORKERS SCHEMES

Many Ways by Which the Un-suspecting are Tricked.

Farmers Have Always Been Easy Marks for the Unscrupulous—Fake Marriages.

"Check workers," said a veteran detective, "are the busiest of all the dishonest class and the hardest to keep track of. They are at it the whole year round and cause the police a lot of bother, because they vary their methods so much. These fellows get up a new scheme every day. Some of them are really men of genius who could make a good living with their brains and their tongues in almost any other line if they cared to do so.

"The most interesting perhaps of all this class are not really check workers at all. I allude to the men who make it their business to get genuine signatures to bona fide checks unknown to the signers. They are the modern development of the now almost extinct class of sharpers who used to drive through the country getting responsible farmers to sign machinery contracts, lightning rod agreements or anything, in fact, which might be torn in two and become a promissory note which could be negotiated at a bank. In spite of the fact that every farmer nowadays takes a paper of some kind in which these frauds are exposed victims are yet not hard to find.

"One scheme that was worked widely some years ago was very ingenious. The chief actor in the little financial comedy drove up to the house of a prosperous farmer and represented himself to be a circuit riding minister of the gospel. He requested shelter for the night and was hospitably received. Just about retiring time a couple drove up and asked the farmer where a minister could be found to marry them, and of course the circuit rider got the job. At the conclusion of the solemn words that made the supposed elopers man and

the farmer was delighted to sign his name as witness to an elaborate marriage certificate which the minister picked up from his little grip. In the morning that signature appeared at a bank in the neighboring town at the foot of a check for a large amount and was cashed without question.

"The certificate was printed on heavy cardboard, and wherever names or dates were to be written in the cardboard was cut away with a beveled edge, and the writing was done on smooth paper pasted on the back of the certificate and showing through the beveled holes. Between the two sheets of pasteboard, however, a blank check had been inserted, so that its signature line came right under the opening left for the witness, and in consequence the farmer was actually signing a check on his bank when he good naturedly witnessed the fake wedding.

"Extraordinary pains are taken by forgers to secure the bona fide signatures of wealthy men. A successful plan in one case was to present a petition relating to a sewer in the big man's own ward and a score of others names, given in good faith, were secured before the big man was approached. He was caught where there was no pen and ink handy and signed the petition with a hard, blunt pencil that was given him, unwittingly signing at the same time a check, through the transfer paper underneath. Over \$500 was secured on that trick.

"As a rule, however, the signature is all that is wanted. If one of the agents can secure a real check written by one of their intended victims, it is an occasion for rejoicing. One successful check worker had a method that puzzled the experts for a long time. The signatures on the checks he presented were so apparently genuine that even the men on whom the swindles were perpetrated could not swear they were forgeries, except from the fact that they could not remember ever having signed such checks. It was at last discovered that the fellow first secured a signature, had a zinc etching made from it, took a matrix of the zinc engraving and into this matrix cast a very hard rubber composition, which retained enough of its elasticity not to show any traces of embossing on the paper receiving the imprint from it. With the composition stamp he was able to produce duplicates of a signature that could not be told from the original.

"So many precautions have been shown around checks by people who deal largely in them that it is now almost impossible to make, for instance,

an \$80 check out of an \$8 one. Tinted and engraved paper that would instantly show the effect of acids or mechanical erasures began the work that the check perforator completed, and after a few unsuccessful attempts to plug up the holes and re-perforate the check raiser turned his peculiar talents in another direction.

"The genuine check worker is a man who, by plausible story and glibness of tongue, contrive to pass a worthless check. The usual course of operation is to purchase goods after banking hours and present a check calling for more than the amount purchased. Hotels and saloons seem to be particularly unfortunate in check transactions, though no line of business is free from attack.

"One smooth device, though, was that practiced by a gilded young fellow who would secure a position and hold it long enough to gain the confidence of his employers. He was often placed in positions of trust where he could have made away with large sums; but, so far as known, he never stole a cent. When the time was ripe for his coup, however, no ties would hold him. He invariably fell heir to a 'legacy' which was paid him in the form of a check, mailed him by a confederate. His employers were glad to indorse the check for so creditable an employee, and as soon as he got the money he vanished as completely as if the earth had swallowed him up. The details were exactly the same in almost a dozen cases that were reported, but the trouble was they were never reported until after the damage was done and the smoothest of all the 'check workers' was in a place of safety."—Ex.

Useful Mrs. Biggus.

A traveling preacher says that during his stay in a certain little town he had rather a curious experience while boarding, or, rather, visiting round.

On my first visit I explained that I did not drink coffee. The next time my hostess remarked, "You don't drink coffee, I believe?" "No," said I, "I do not."

On my third visit, this time to another house, there came the same question and answer. Again and again it happened on five or six different sojourns. Then I grew curious, and when my hostess remarked that I did not drink coffee I said: "No, I do not, but may I ask who told you?"

"Mrs. Biggus," was the reply.

"Who is Mrs. Biggus?"

"Well, she is the only woman in this town whom we can secure for domestic service. Everybody who has entertained you has had her while you were there. She knows what you like and has told us all."—Youth's Companion.

Royal Spanking.

Pekin, Feb. 2.—One of the strangest stories of court life in China that have come to the ears of the foreign ministers is that brought here yesterday from Singan fu concerning the royal spanking administered some time ago to the heir apparent of the Chinese throne, the younger brother of the young Emperor Kwang Hsu.

Though Kwang Hsu is a mere boy himself, he has a full sense of his imperial dignity and station. Hence, when the younger scion of the Manchus entered his imperial presence without making proper obeisance he inwardly resented the slight.

But though he is emperor, it is not for Kwang Hsu to punish within his own family while his mother, the empress dowager, lives. If his grandmother were alive she would be the one to decree punishment, so great is the authority acquired by women in China through age and successive generations of progeny.

So the young emperor told his mamma that little brother had not bumped his forehead on the ground or entering the complainant's presence.

Sometimes punishment is inflicted by the dowager empress in such cases, as well as decreed by her, but in this instance, not to overtax her strength, she directed a court official to administer 40 spanks on the royal person of the youthful offender.

It is related that the heir apparent's tutor, who is devoted to his young charge, wept as the tingling blows of the official paddle fell, though the recipient of the blows bore them without a murmur.

Mrs. Thompson has received new ladies' furnishings over the ice. Second street.

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Fine fresh meats at Murphy Bros., Third street. crt

Shoff, the Dawson Dog Doctor, Pioneer Drug Store.

Round steak 50c at P. O. Market.

If you want a first-class spring suit place your order with Robinson from Vancouver. Prices reasonable. Room 10, Hotel McDonald.

WOMEN GOOD COLLECTORS

And Are Preferred by Big Concerns to Men.

They Are More Persistent and Never Tire of Making Repeated Dunning Calls.

"And this man," said the young woman, referring to the last name on the list, "will give me a check tomorrow without fail."

The manager shook his head doubtfully. "I don't take any stock in his promises," he said. "He is tight as the bark on the tree and slippery as an eel. He never pays anything till he has to. He's been giving us that same old gag about paying tomorrow for the last six months."

"And he will keep his word this time," said the young woman confidently.

And he did. The next evening when she reported to the office the young woman turned in a check for the full amount owed by the tight individual. The situation was so extraordinary that the manager scratched his head in perplexity. "Well," he said, "you certainly are a remarkably fine collector."

And after the young woman had eaten her dinner and had taken time to digest both the meal and the compliment she came to the conclusion that she was indeed pretty good at the business. "It took me a long time to find out what I was good for," she said. "I tried my hand at teaching, stenography, amateur gardening, dressmaking and photography successively and was a failure in each. Then I turned my hand to collecting."

"My first employment was with a small publishing house up town. The owners owed everybody, and everybody owed them. They paid nobody, and nobody paid them. It took me just about two days to demonstrate to my own satisfaction that I had at last struck the level of my abilities. I began straight off to take in money, and when at the end of the first week the manager footed up his receipts and found that I had collected subscriptions and advertising bills to the amount of \$1000, which, considering the size of individual accounts was a sum as high as Pikes' Peak, he fell on my neck and called me blessed. The firm was too deep in the mire, however, to be pulled out even by the hand of a heaven born collector. Their liabilities so far exceeded their assets that their only salvation lay in bankruptcy, and this last refuge they finally sought when I had collected 99 cents on every dollar coming to them. I do not tell this in a spirit of vanity, but simply to refute the statement that a woman couldn't earn her salt at collecting. I know dozen women in this town who are so employed, and each is considered a gem of great price by her employers."

A west side furniture dealer who has employed a woman collector for several years said that if there was any one thing he could take time to talk about even in his busiest moments it was the merits of the woman collector. "There was a time," he said, "when I vowed that I wouldn't have a petticoat around my store in any capacity. My attention was first attracted to the subject by the quick way one woman collector made me pay a bill. Physically the work for this store is hard. There is much walking to be done and many stairs to be climbed. Moreover, many of the people who buy our goods on the installment plan are disagreeable to deal with when it comes to collecting. But that is where I find the woman collector invaluable. Her fund of patience is inexhaustible, and she is inventive and resourceful to a degree. If she cannot get around a creditor one way, she will another, and what is best of all, she never gives up."

It is a curious thing that it is not in the field of distinctly feminine labor, such as dressmaking, millinery and the like, that the woman collector seeks to win her laurels. When asked why this was so, one successful collector replied that it was a case of the refutation of the theory that like cures like.

"It may take a thief to catch a thief, but it doesn't take a woman to make another woman pay her debts," she said. "I am the manager of a large collecting agency. I have both men and women in my employ, and when I have a bill against a woman I invariably send a man to collect it. Women who owe money know well enough that another woman sent to collect a bill can see right through their subterfuges, no matter how flimsy or how plausible. They do not care a straw for her opin-

ion, however, but they don't want to be found out by the men."

A Nassau street lawyer employs a woman collector whom he regards as an honor to her sex and the calling. "I don't always collect the money I set out to get," she said, when complimented on her achievements and consequent reputation. "A year ago I set out to collect \$1250 from a client of my employer. 'Go up to his office every day,' were my employer's instructions. 'Don't give him a minute's peace.' Hound the very life out of him till he pays. Just walk right in, no matter who is there, and demand that \$1250. He can't turn you out, because I did for him what no other lawyer in New York could have done, and it behooves him to be humble."

"For three months I obeyed those instructions literally. I traveled up and down the elevator so often that everybody in the building came to know me as 'a dun,' and the man hated the very sight of me. One day I was sick and couldn't go down town. A second day I staid away and still a third. About 2 o'clock in the afternoon of the third day as my employer sat in his private office talking to a client the door was opened suddenly and a tow-headed little boy stepped audaciously into the room.

"Say," he said, "I'm a boy, an my boss wants to know why that woman ain't been over for that \$1250 he owes you."

"I positively refused to call after that and we never did get the money. But you don't come across many people like that."—New-York Sun.

Brewitt makes clothes fit. crt

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Notice of Dissolution.

Notice is hereby given that the partnership heretofore existing between the Morris Bros. and W. J. George has been dissolved. Morris Bros. will no longer be responsible for any sales made or debts contracted by the said W. J. George.

(Signed) MORRIS BROS.

By J. T. Morris.

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SOCIETIES.

THE REGULAR COMMUNICATION of Yukon Lodge, (U. D. A. F. & A. M.), will be held at Masonic hall, Mission street, monthly, Thursday on or before full moon at 8:00 p. m. C. H. Wells, W. M. J. A. Donald, Sec'y.

Fresh halibut at the Denver Market.

At the present rate of consumption, the white fish the Pacific Cold Storage Co. brought in for the winter season will all be gone long before Easter.

Mumm's, Pomeroy or Perinet champagne \$5 per bottle at the Regina Club hotel.

Notice.

Notice is hereby given that on and after March 1st, 1901, grants for all applications for relocation will be issued at the time the application is made, wherever the claim applied for appears open for relocation upon the records. The allowance of two weeks which has hitherto been made for holders of claims to take out a certificate of work will cease on and after March 1st. Holders of claims are warned, in order to avoid trouble with relocators, to take out a renewal of their claims on or before the expiration of their former lease.

(Signed) J. LANGLOIS BELL,

c28 Assistant Gold Commissioner.

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