

CHECK WORKERS SCHEMES

Many Ways by Which the Unscrupulous Suspecting are Tricked.

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

From Monday and Tuesday's Daily. "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 wife the farmer was delighted to sign his name as witness to an elaborate marriage certificate which the minister fished 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 other 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 \$700 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 just 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 thrown 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 gitted 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.

NEW CHURCH BUILDING

Which the Presbyterians Will Erect.

In the report of the board of managers of St. Andrew's Presbyterian church for 1900 read at the last business meeting of the year, the following recommendation was submitted:

"In view of the manifest inadequate capacity of our present church building to accommodate all who desire to avail themselves of regular gospel ordinances, we recommend that this meeting take the necessary steps towards securing a suitable house of worship, by instructing the board of managers to proceed at once with preparing plans and estimates and adopting ways and means for the early erection of a new church, with a seating capacity of 600, and if by them deemed practicable after a canvass of the situation to proceed with the work."

The recommendation was approved and the board was given full power to act with the result that Dawson is to have a modern church building with a seating capacity of 600.

Subscription papers have been in circulation for some time past and the whole sum of \$10,000 for the erection and furnishing the building has been subscribed. Bids will be called for and the contract let immediately so that work may be commenced as quickly as possible.

The present church building will be moved onto the rear of the lot which is 100x200 feet, and will be used as a lecture and social hall.

The new building will occupy the site of the present one on Mission street and from both an exterior and interior view, according to the plans adopted will be a credit not only to those who have worked so hard for its accomplishment but to the community as well.

The interior fittings will be entirely of oak and among the chief attractions will be a new pipe organ which will be ordered from the outside. Two furnaces will be installed in the basement and will radiate heat in proportion to the temperature so that the people sitting in any part of the building will be comfortable.

The Rev. Dr. Grant yesterday formally accepted the call tendered him a short time ago by the people of the church and will soon be installed as its permanent pastor.

Hurried Business Trips.

"Where is Mr. Go-Step-and-Fetch-It this morning?" "Well, he had important business on one of the creeks and has gone out to attend to it. You see, a fellow out there owes him a big bill and he has gone out to make an effort to collect it."

The above is a sample "spiel" given today in cases where fellows had gone to the creeks in order to be there and on the ground floor for locating claims tomorrow, and the stories of long hard trips that will be told the latter part of this week will outrival the lying of Tom O'Chetree of Texas in his most palmy days.

WOMEN GOOD COLLECTORS

And Are Preferred by Big Concerns to Men.

They Are More Persistent and Never Tire of Flanking 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 dog 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 Pike's 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 '—'s 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 —'s boy, and 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.

Serious Accident.

A. Pucher, day engineer at the A. E. Co.'s warm storage building, met with an accident Saturday evening about 6:30 which for a time looked to be of a very serious character.

While oiling the engine he stepped too near the flywheel shaft, which caught the bottom of his trousers leg and immediately twisted it around and bored a hole in his leg just above the ankle, until the bone was exposed. With great presence of mind he shut down the engine and averted a more serious accident. He was taken to the hospital where his wound, which proved to be only a cut in the flesh with no bones broken nor tissues cut, was sewed up and dressed, eleven stitches being found necessary to bring the flesh together. He was taken from the hospital to his cabin near the mouth of the Klondike and is expected to be around again in a few days.

WILL TRY KOYUKUK

Many Who Were There Will Return.

If current street talk can be taken as meaning anything, the Koyukuk country will this year be the scene of considerable activity, as a number of people here are getting ready to leave for that district within the coming ten days or two weeks.

McKenzie, the newly appointed recorder for the Koyukuk district, is on his way in from Skagway and is due to arrive here about the middle of this week. A number of Dawsonites are preparing to join him on his arrival here and make the trip to the district with him. McKenzie was in the Koyukuk all of the last season and is very popular with those who met him there. He is a Seattle man.

P. B. Peters who is at the head of a surveying party bound for that country is also due to arrive this week having left Skagway last Wednesday. At present there appears to be more Koyukuk than Tanana talk in Dawson.

Done Them One.

Saturday evening a man entered Clarke & Ryan's grocery store and ordered a can of syrup from Mr. Clarke. While Clarke was waiting on him he engaged Mr. Ryan in conversation in an undertone and when the syrup can was on the counter said aloud "all right," picked up the can and walked out. When Mr. Clarke asked Mr. Ryan what arrangement the man had made about paying for it, Mr. Ryan said "None at all," and could not remember what the man had said nor what he looked like. They are in hopes of seeing him again.

The "Other Fellow" Saved Him.

Wife (severely) — What does this mean, sir? Do you know the time? Husband — Yes, m'dear. I was (hic) 'tained, m'dear, by fear! 't axsherdent. Wife (alarmed and growing suddenly sympathetic) — Accident! Good gracious, George! Are you much hurt? Husband — No, m'dear, fort'nat'ly (hic) not. Axsherdent happ'n'd t' other f'lr (hic).

MORAL TIDE IS FLOODING

And in a Short Time Dawson Will Be Purged

Of a Large Amount of Sin, Iniquity and General Looseness—One-Eyed Riley Must Work or Move.

That all indications point to a "spring cleaning" such as has never before been witnessed in the broad northland is now apparent. The officers feel that the time is ripe for the advent of a moral wave which, when it recedes, will leave in its wake an air and atmosphere of a much purer quality than that which now pervades this country. The fiat has gone forth and what is more, it will be rigidly obeyed for the reason that long experience and observation have taught the residents of Dawson and the Yukon that no idle orders ever emanate from the police department of the Dominion government.

Already the vanguard orders have been issued notifying lewd women to vacate from within the confines of the city by May 1st. Open gambling has been considered with the result that by June 1st it must be discontinued, and when that is done the small army of "boosters" and hangers on around gaming tables must needs seek pastures new, go honestly to work or they will be provided with the same by the government in its wood yard.

Dave Allen—"One-Eyed Riley"—has been notified to secure honorable employment or get out of the Yukon within one week, and many others of his ilk are on the list and must work or move on. It is also said that many couples unmarried but who are now living together quietly as man and wife must either sacrifice themselves on the altar of conventionality by having the marriage ceremony performed or answer to the law which forbids the leading of such life. When this law is enforced there will be one of two things: wholesale splitting up of alleged families or a boom in the matrimonial market.

The Ingeniousness of Youth.

A man once came to the conclusion that he had gained all the knowledge that this earth had to impart so, having lost all interest in life he laid himself down to die. While lying on his couch a little girl wishing to take some live coals from one stove to build a fire in another and not finding any means at hand to carry them put a layer of ashes on the palm of her hand and carried the live coals on them to the other stove without burning herself. The man watching the operation, did not think of it himself and when he saw her carry off the coals he immediately arose from his couch convinced that his knowledge was not complete after all. The youth of Dawson remind one of that story for now that the days are beginning to lengthen and warm a little, crowds of the younger generation may be seen daily coasting on the hillsides where the snow has been packed until it has become as hard and smooth as ice. Some have sleds, some use barrel staves, while the majority have just a piece of tin or flat board, but all sliding down hill and having a "bully good time," as they express it.

ANOTHER DOG KILLED.

Had Been Bitten 21 Days Previous.

A dog said to belong to the A. C. Co. and one which has had the very best of care all winter, went violently mad Saturday and was killed that evening. The dog was muzzled, therefore he did no damage before being killed. Just three weeks previous to the development of rabies, the dog was bitten by another dog known to be mad. In this case 21 days were required for the disease to develop, the shortest time noted since its outbreak being 17 days. In a few cases it has been 30 days before the disease appears after a dog has been bitten.

Accident on Chechako.

Tom McNamara and a man called Little Mike met with a serious accident on Williams and Stafford's claim on Chechako Hill yesterday. While being lowered into the drift, the cable which holds the cage slipped, dropping it a considerable distance. The extent of the injuries received could not be learned this afternoon, but it is understood that McNamara's back was injured, while Little Mike was very badly hurt.