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LONDON SHOPLIFTERS.

Elaborate Means for Watching Customers Who Are Light of Hand—How They Are Treated When Discovered.

Though there is every appearance on all the great London shops that the public is to be trusted implicitly, says the London Daily Mail, an elaborate and carefully organized system of espionage prevails to circumvent the designs of the peripatetic thief and the marauding kleptomaniac.

The invisible detective, whose office is some unsuspected gallery in the ceiling, whence from artfully designed peep holes in the molding he can survey the whole establishment, is the most successful foil to the shoplifter. But there are only a few shops so structurally designed that surveillance of this kind is possible. Some of the jewellers' treasure palaces are guarded in this manner, and the make assurance doubly sure, no attendant is without his satellite, who keeps a wary eye on the cases of gems exposed to the customers' inspection standing at the salesmen's elbow while he is showing them.

At all periods a careful watch is kept on those dress establishments that are pervaded by women, but more especially at sale time, for it is then that covetousness overwhelms morality most easily, and the crowded state of the shops favors the pick-up of unconsidered trifles. A manager of one of the largest establishments in the metropolis says it is in those departments that are not suspicious that pilfering principally occurs, and that in them detective supervision is always most acute.

By Pre-Arranged Signs. Every shopwalker and counter attendant is in effect a detective, but there are some professionals who assume the guise to hide their real position. It is the duty of every attendant when he is suspicious of a customer to call the attention of the detective to her, not haphazardly, but by prearranged sign. The detective then keeps the suspect under her immediate eye. In the large emporiums where women chiefly congregate the most efficient, because least conspicuous, detectives are women, either employed as shopwalkers or as customers.

When an attendant misses or thinks she misses something, or notices disturbing signs of thievery, he speaks to the detective, who, as an elegant, garbed customer, seats herself in a position commanding a good view of the suspect and makes her purchases like any other woman, all the while gathering data upon which to proceed. The disguise assumed by the shop detective differs day by day. There are one result less desired by the shop proprietor than another, it is to convict a kleptomaniac. The proprietor's policy is to prevent thievery by every conceivable means. A blind eye is turned to what is theft in embryo, and the wretched shoplifter caught in the act of purchasing a blouse under cover of her waterproof is asked whether the article may not be sent home for her. The bulging umbrella or the gaping handbag, the detective alludes with an apology, fearing that madam has inadvertently incommoded herself with something that fell from the counter.

First offenders are often cured by narrow escapes such as this from falling into the abyss that leads to the dock, and gladly pays for the experience in the coin of the realm as if they had all the while meant to purchase instead of to purloin the goods. Leniency of such a kind seldom fails to lead the trespasser back into the paths of rectitude, but when the manager's office is made the scene of more serious negotiations, on which it is well to draw the veil.

Considering the immense population of London and the ease with which beautiful objects can be appropriated, the great shops, the detectives find their talents called but seldom into play, probably because their system of surveillance is so carefully organized and carried out.

God does not measure our sanctity by our sighs.

A small door may lead to a large room.

HAVE YOU CHRONIC AILMENT?

In the course of his practice as specialist in the treatment of chronic ailments, Dr. Goldberg has evolved a system of his own, which is a positive cure. His method differs widely from the old-fashioned system as taught in colleges, and yet it is along the strict scientific principles, with this exception, that where the old methods took months and sometimes years to bring about a cure, his latest method does it in a few weeks and cures are thorough, permanent and reliable. The curing of chronic diseases has been his specialty for years.

He will cure you quicker than any other specialist in the world. There are thousands in this broad land today who are healthy and happy, who once suffered as you perhaps now suffer, and who owe their present well-being to Dr. Goldberg's Latest Method Treatment. If you are sick, it is only natural for you to want to be well. Before you decide definitely on the doctor to intrust your case, call or write to Dr. Goldberg and find out all about his Latest Method of curing chronic diseases without pain, and most reliable. It will cost you nothing to learn the particulars and it will in no way put you under obligations to him. Each Time You Call You See Dr. Goldberg Personally or each time you write it receives his personal attention, and remember he is the only specialist who allows the patient to pay when cured. You need pay nothing until a complete cure has been made.

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WAR OFFICE INSIDE

ENGLISH INSTITUTION BY ONE WHO WAS IN IT AND WELL POSTED.

Subdued Hostility Between Different Departments—Always Friction Between the Civil and the Military Staffs—No Pride in the Work Done Obtains—Terrible Waste of Stationery—Officers Who Were Laughing Stocks to Humble Clerks.

A London correspondent, who was formerly in the War Office, writes: The report of the Royal Commission on the conduct of the recent war has undoubtedly caused an immense sensation—outside the War Office; inside the air is as undisturbed as ever. The employees are as nonchalant and as indifferent to affairs, interior or exterior, as ever. In fact, there is no apparent change. War Office officials always did act as if they conferred an honor upon the country in drawing their salaries. They act in exactly the same old way still. The same old jealousies exist between the departments. If, indeed, the house is any index to the individual, then, of course, our War Office is not organic—not a whole, but a series of almost disconnected parts. It has grown with the national needs, no doubt, but it has not kept pace with them, and it retains many marks of its various origins upon it. It is full of useless survivals and absurd anachronisms. I fear that the more it changes the more it remains the same thing, and that what it was 25 years ago it is now, in spite of Lord Roberts and his newer methods. As a matter of fact, I have entered its sacred precincts a hundred times since I left the civil service, and little that I have seen in the departments where my work lay makes me imagine any very radical changes for the better have taken place.

Hole and Corner Intrigue. One may imagine any form of hole-and-corner intrigue flourishing in its dark caverns. In peculiar and sombre obscurity, any reforms might struggle to the light as uselessly as a neglected potato in a cellar. It lacks homogeneity; there is an old conflict within its walls. The civic staff still sneers at the military staff, and relates stories of the A. G. or the A. A. G., or the D. A. G., having spelt "accommodation" with a "m," or of some soldierly stylist suggesting the use of two teams of oxen "to surmount a ford." And the military staff still regrets that it cannot on passing occasions give the civil head of a department "sells," and decorate the Permanent Under Secretary with that C. B. which remains "confined to barracks." As long as the W. O. exists in its present form, such friction is likely to continue. The best one can say for it is that it represents a reasonable equality between the two elements which may prevent either getting absolutely on top as the military element has done in France. But it is sad business after all.

Over and Under-Manned Departments. In my times (and even now I discern no great difference), some departments were overmanned and some were undermanned. The entire staff of some rooms idled and played for days, while another room was overwhelmed with work, half of which need never have been done at all. Evolution in its course might be studied to advantage by eminent naturalists in Pall Mall, for the W. O. is full of rudimentary appendages which die very slowly of disuse. The members employed were supposed to compose a staff sufficient for emergencies, but when wars and rumors of wars arose, some gentlemen still continued, doing nothing with dignity, while others slaved at the unnecessary from 11 till 5, or perhaps later.

Even when the office was in the midst of delivering half a brigade (with half its transport), a staff officer could still be found to write "No remarks" on papers with which his branch had ceased to have anything actual to do for half a century. The "writers," or copyists, who alone were paid for their overtime, continued with a trained intelligence in appearing busy, to put off working which die very slowly of disuse. The members employed were supposed to compose a staff sufficient for emergencies, but when wars and rumors of wars arose, some gentlemen still continued, doing nothing with dignity, while others slaved at the unnecessary from 11 till 5, or perhaps later.

The Ascent Worries. Cassidy—What rind do they charge for a house like yours? Cassidy—My, that's high! Don't you trouble in getting it together? Cassidy—Faith, O! don't, but the agent does.

No Temptation. Mrs. Farmer—Wouldn't you like to do a little work just to see how it feels? Wreny Willy—No, lady; de morbid and horrible bez no fascination for me wotever.

After all, happiness isn't a question of riches, pie, a good complexion or love and power, but of contentment—Aitchison Globe.

Where Friction Exists.

If there was always friction between the civil and military staffs, there was forever some subdued hostility between the different departments. A. G. 1, for instance, might be jealous of A. G. 2, and its members would explain to all and sundry that half the work done there was the merest surplus account and marking time. The ordinance people were at loggerheads with every one. Business which should have been worked together was done through third parties. We went round the world to get from Pall Mall to Piccadilly. Rooms next door were alien; a man sometimes sat a quarter of a mile from those who were doing like work. Papers were missing and were then described as "on transit," which meant that Messenger A was having a quiet smoke with Messenger B, or that Orderly X said the job was Orderly Y's. A room upstairs, which has something to do with the surveying department, was a smoking

room for a score of us who wanted to light our pipes before 1 o'clock.

No Pride in their Work. Pride in work or pride in smartness there was little. No real encouragement was afforded to a worker. The general scheme of the warlike operations was that of a badly managed school; men ended in trying to do as little as possible. The smartest staff officer was the most disliked—it was thought a good joke to hoodwink or puzzle him. Not a room in the whole office but was distinguished by some special dunces, who probably drew £500 a year for doing nothing, and doing it badly.

It was notorious that one man could not write out an original telegram with reference to the patriot detail of the movement of troops without taking half an hour and half a dozen forms to do it on. Another's chief claim to consideration in his branch was that he could take longer to prepare any given return than any other clerk there, and yet keep up a sweetly dignified appearance of being enveloped in necessary national business. When I was a new-comer in my own room, the absence through illness of one man threw the preparation for a certain return on my shoulders, and not having been posted in tradition, I did it in three hours and took it to the chief clerk's door. So little did this gentleman know of the work of his own rooms that he positively declined to receive it on the ground that it could not be done under four days. This let me into the secret, and not wishing to be disloyal to the sick man, I withdrew the return and kept it for a week. "Ah!" said my patient chief, "I told you that it took time to do it properly."

Terrible Stationery Waste.

The waste of His Majesty's stationery is an old story, but in the War Office it probably reached its maximum. Few men in the place ever dreamed of writing private letters on anything but the best War Office paper. Some men used it who did journalistic work during office hours, in the intervals of arduous toil; one man who wrote books used it. Nobody esteemed it wrong to screw up a sheet of extra-supernumerary foolscap to throw across the room at a friend. Any firm that wanted a square yard of expensive paper over every paltry memorandum would probably go into the bankruptcy court, but such waste is only a symptom of the general disease which affects all Government offices.

A real business man going into the War Office (as it was) would have torn his hair. I can imagine the clearance which would have been made by a real organizer if he had to do what the War Office did on what it gets, provided he was to receive the surplus as wages of superintendence.

Lost a Regiment for a Week.

Though the military staff was in many ways superior to the civil staff, there were some officers holding responsible positions who were laughing-stocks to the humblest clerks. One staff officer, who was pleasant, amiable and incapable, touched nothing that he did not disarrange. He was not fit to superintend the needle and pin department at a provincial drapery establishment. To him belonged the signal honor of having lost a British regiment in England so thoroughly that it took a week to find it. The story would read like fiction, but by order of this and countermanding that, by doing some things of his own and some through the W. O. and the Admiralty he hid the battalion so thoroughly that its late district said it was in Ireland, while Ireland said it was (let us say) at Colchester, and we in Pall Mall said it was at sea. But the Admiralty knew better, for H.M.S. Assistance (known to some in the navy as the Imperial plumb line), had gone to and fro and found nothing.

A Red Tape Minotaur.

The building in which the nation's war business is done typifies the way it is done. To go anywhere one goes up and down and round and round. The labyrinth holds a red-tape minotaur; the virgins of reform are strangled in high places. Like another Homer the Secretary of State gives back in flood what his subordinates send up to him in vapor. The military staff comes in fresh and goes out asphyxiated. With the keenest sense of the evil lengths to which pure militarism can go it is impossible not to pity a service reformer face to face with War Office inertia and tradition.

Some will imagine this view exaggerated. It is at least certain that no War Office official will admit that the present office is like what I know it to have been 25 years ago. But few retired men will believe it very different. The younger men there now are at least sure that the other departments are all wrong, and I very much doubt if any one of them would not admit that even now at least half his time is wasted by idiotic and antiquated methods.

Can't Reform Itself.

To expect reform to come out of the office itself is mere foolishness. It can no more reform itself than an old man can make himself young, than a confirmed alcoholic can break his habit. We call ourselves a business nation, and our War Office is proof of it! If it be business to do things that are not needed, to do things a dozen times over, and to shirk every present difficulty, then that office does business, indeed. But what may suit the nation, which does not know the truth, would ruin any ordinary firm, and if the War Office were to compete with men of business it would be bankrupt before the year is out.

A Bright Scotch Laddie.

A Scotch minister in one of his parochial visits met a cowboy and asked him what o'clock it was. "About 12, sir," was the reply. "Well," remarked the minister, "I thought it was more." "It's never any more here," said the boy; "it just begins at 1 again."



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