

The third category of these women thieves comprises those who are really mentally diseased, and who steal without having the slightest idea of what they are doing.

For all these women thieves Dr. Lacassagne invokes the indulgence of the courts. But he is of the opinion that it would be better to prevent than to punish. In the resolution which he presented for the consideration of the congress he said: 'The great stores are veritable provokers of special thefts. They constitute a real danger for feeble or sickly persons. A great many women who would not steal elsewhere here find themselves fascinated and overwhelmed with a desire to appropriate small articles within their reach. It is a temptation that is truly diabolic, for the chances of detection are minimized at certain hours during the day when the stores are crowded, and each clerk has many customers waiting to be served, these meanwhile handling the goods that lie upon the counters.

The best method of preventing these women from becoming thieves would be, he says, to station at each counter an officer of the law, not in ordinary dress like the rest of the customers, but in a uniform as conspicuous and noticeable as possible. If a gendarme was placed at each counter there would be no more thefts. Women steal in these places because they believe that they can do so without being detected.

Dr. Lacassagne also indorsed the rule of some stores that no known kleptomaniacs should be admitted, and suggested that it would be an excellent provision if this rule should be made general, and if minors, unaccompanied, should also be excluded.

"The kleptomaniacs," he said, "steal only in the great stores, in which places the surroundings are all provocative of theft. The articles of merchandise are so arranged as to excite the covetousness of the visitor, for the customer, merchants know well, must be fascinated and her desires excited by the lavish display of rich goods.

"These excitants of the senses might be called the *aperitifs* of crime, for as absinthe or vermouth stimulates the appetite for food, so do heaped-up counters whet the feminine greed for possession. The strongest willed of women will yield by expending more than she in her sober moments has set aside for her wants. But who can measure the force which draws on and overmasters the feebler or degenerate minds?