

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF POCKETS

Lucy Locket lost her pocket,
Katie Fisher found it;
There was not a penny in it
But a ribbon round it.

By ESTELLE M. KER R

particularly disagreeable morning last spring. I was just starting out when the postman handed

FROM a moral suasion point of view the old nursery rhyme has failed lamentably. Think how much more effective it would have been if Lucy's pocket had contained a whole shilling and if, instead of honest Katie Fisher, a bold bad man had picked it up and spent it on rum, then thrown the pocket into the gutter and beaten his little boy! Lucy's fame seems disproportionate to her deeds, or rather to her one misdeed, for no other incident in her history has come down to posterity. The story is weak in plot, consequently, though the rhyme has remained in our memories for we wouldn't like to say how long, it had no influence on our character and we continue to use the most ridiculous kinds of pockets or bags or purses, and to constantly lose them. Had Lucy suffered a real catastrophe, our youthful minds might have been impressed with the folly of the ever-changing feminine fashions with their more or less pocketless garments; it might have been the means of inaugurating a reformation in dress, including good, safe pockets which—provided we kept them free from holes and didn't stand on our heads or encounter master-pickpockets—would keep our pennies in comparative safety.

THE modest and graceful bearing of woman praised so frequently by poets, may be traced to her lack of pockets. Very young boys and girls look similar in their sexless garments and but, with the first pair of pants with pockets, the boy begins to swagger and assert his superiority, while the growing girl spends years trying to think what to do with her hands and where to keep her money. Not only in cold weather, when she hasn't warm mitts or a muff, does she long for pockets, there are many embarrassing moments, during events of a social nature, when pockets would overcome the difficulty of deciding just how to distribute two hands gracefully about her person. But it is perhaps due to this pocketless condition that the girl in the end becomes more graceful.

EVEN in early childhood it is difficult not to let our estimate of a person be influenced by the multitude of his possessions, and the boy need never be separated from his treasures. His pockets (containing a pen-knife, some marbles, a carved chestnut, the stump of a lead pencil, a piece of chewing gum, a slate-rag, and—possibly—a pocket handkerchief or even some money) give him the air of a landed proprietor, while the girl is only too painfully conscious that her few treasures, tied in the corner of a handkerchief, look pitifully meagre by comparison. This attitude of superiority persists in later years. Men are, for the most part, pleased to have us pocketless and voteless, though it makes us more dependent on them, and we are constantly borrowing pen-knives and lead-pencils or asking them what time it is. There are even wives who constantly leave their handkerchiefs under sofa cushions or between the leaves of a book, or—but it is extraordinary how many places they can be left—and then borrow their husband's.

BUT it is where money is concerned that we most lament our lack of good safe pockets. The purses we use as substitutes are far from satisfactory. Pick up any evening paper and look at the LOST column. Careless Lucys must spend, in the aggregate, a small fortune in advertising, and there are still greater numbers who do not advertise—either the value of their purses are too small, or they are pessimistic about the results. In our most popular Journal about ten of them advertise each night. At Christmas time, owing to the unusual shopping activities, the number is much greater. There are also some honest Katie Fishers who advertise in the FOUND column or see that vagrant purses and pay-

envelopes are returned to the proper offices provided by shops, railway companies and other large concerns, for that purpose. Many of the LOST notices contain the pitiful phrase, "working-girl's wages." Of course there are men who lose their little roll of bills, too, on a Saturday night, though these are less numerous in prohibition areas. Possibly they have no wives to mend the holes in their pockets, possibly they have fallen among thieves, but the advertisements point to the conclusion that two men carry money carelessly to ten women.

SMALL black leather bags are the most frequent delinquents. They are the most usual modern substitutes for the little silken pockets which our grandmother Lucy wore suspended from her girdle. Some of us, who delight in what we call "novelties," are carrying that style of bag now, and one of them (made of black velvet) is advertised in to-night's paper. There are also a couple of aristocratic bags of gold or silver mesh in the list, but the little black leather bag is carried by rich and poor alike. Every department store has a long counter devoted to nothing but bags and purses from 98 cents up—ever so far up. Then there are the leather goods specialty shops. I always look at the vast array with amaze-



With his first pockets, the boy assumes the air of a landed proprietor.

ment. If every woman in town lost her bag the same day, I feel sure that they could all be replaced within a few hours, and what becomes of all the old bags is a constant mystery to me. Each year the styles are changed in the hope of forcing everyone to buy a new one, and they usually do. There is no use in getting a "guaranteed real seal" unless you actually prefer elegance and quality to the pleasure of carrying a bag that is exactly the same shape as your neighbour's: now oval, now square, now long and deep, now short and broad. We are forced to the conclusion that tens of thousands of these bags disappear yearly. Either they are burnt, or dropped into the lake or dumped on building lots where there is a sign: "Clean earth may be deposited here." Some of them may be resurrected during the Backyard Garden Thrift Campaign.

FASHION, for the moment, favours pockets—ornamental ones decorated with a dab of wool embroidery, except in sports skirts, where they really serve as a receptacle for hands, handkerchiefs or golf balls. But money—oh, dear, no! They are most unsafe! I have in my possession a unique garment which actually boasts a good safe pocket. To be sure I wear it very rarely, but I put it on on a

me an envelope. I opened it as I walked down the street and discovered, to my joy, that it did not contain a letter from my dearest friend, but a cheque from a publishing house. (Yes, dear reader, they pay me real money for this kind of thing!) I thrust it in my pocket and buttoned the flap and promptly forgot all about it—not the cheque, but the resting-place. There is something about a cheque that makes it linger in the memory. I had a distinct impression of throwing the envelope into the editorial waste basket and concluded that the cheque had vanished with it, so the janitor instituted a search, but in vain. Then I wrote to the aforesaid publishing house and asked for a duplicate cheque, which they promptly issued, and I, with still greater celerity, cashed. Months passed and just the other day I decided to give my old raincoat to the Red Cross waste collection, and there, safely buttoned into my pocket, lay the vanished cheque!

A LITTLE pocket now and then is unsatisfactory. It must have a permanent situation in one's wardrobe to prove beneficial, and so long as we continue to follow the fleeting fashions we shall devise new substitutes—and lose them. We shall also continue to carry very little money. The contents of the average little black leather bag is very indicative of character. The desire for the pocket mirror was universal, so now the manufacturer supplies it. The majority of young women supplement this with a powder box, so unless there is a stick of lipsal, a box of rouge, or some other toilet accessory, inordinate vanity need not be laid to the owner's charge. The pill-box will tell you the state of her health, the shopping-list will give you an insight into her financial standing, the memo pad into her occupation, while samples of dress goods, bills, keys and all the rest will betray her character utterly to even the most distant follower of Sherlock Holmes. The amount of money contained therein is no indication of wealth; on the contrary, the owners of limousines and charge accounts have the emptiest purses, but even the poor are apt to carry insufficient change. This is not because women do not have a great deal of money to spend. One-half the spending power of the nation is theirs, and though the greater part of this wealth simply passes through their hands in exchange for food and clothing, the savings of women are considerable.

THINK of the 360,000 working women in Canada, with steadily increasing wages and constantly expanding fields of activity. The professional woman, the business woman, the woman of independent means, and the factory girl, are all to be seriously reckoned with as investors. But in financial dealings women are naturally timid. In the olden days conservative people kept their savings in a stocking or under the mattress. Now the savings bank answers this purpose and the mere buying of a war certificate seems formidable, yet nothing could be simpler. They may be bought at any Bank or Money Order Post Office, and \$21.50 paid to-day will yield \$25.00 at the end of three years. The women of Canada are asked to assist in financing the war by placing their savings at the disposal of the Government.

The connection between Lucy Locket and the War Loan is not obvious. Perhaps we are wrong in assuming that there would have been pennies in Lucy's pocket had she practised thrift, but from her one careless act in the matter of pocket-losing, we judge her to be no better or wiser than the rest of us, who have not realized that the very best thing for us to do is to

BUY A CERTIFICATE TO-DAY,
OR START TO SAVE FOR ONE.