

ABOUT SHOPLIFTERS.

How They Carry On Their Nefarious Trade in City Stores.

The Professionals Are Exceedingly Clever, But Amateurs Are Caught Before They Can Secure Much Plunder.

(Special Chicago Letter.) WOMAN dressed in a neat-fitting rainy-day skirt and a stylish Eton jacket was examining expensive laces at one of the big dry-goods stores in Chicago. Her hat was of the latest make and bore the unmistakable air of Paris about it. The day was stormy, and so she carried in her hand a dream of a silk umbrella of a changeable shade something between a purple and a blue. The handle was of solid silver exquisitely embossed and engraved. One hand was neatly gloved. The other was uncovered. It was white and soft and the rings upon it glinted with precious stones. It required but a glance to see that the woman belonged to what the world for lack of a better name denominates as the upper class of society. This well-dressed, genteel-looking woman picked up the laces and looked at them critically. At times she had three or four pieces in her hand at once. Her umbrella was unfastened at the top and was held in the left hand near the edge of the counter. The attention of the saleswoman was engaged for a moment by another customer. Just then a modest-looking woman in black with a veil partly drawn over her face stepped to the side of the woman with the rainy-day skirt.

The woman with the veil touched the other lightly on the shoulder and said: "Pardon me, madam, but will you step with me to the manager's office?" The shopper straightened up. Her face flushed.

"What do you mean?" she said. "The veiled woman nodded to a quiet-looking man who stood near and he quickly came to her side. Then turning to the other woman she said: "Madam, this is an officer; you will please come with us to the manager's office and avoid a scene."

The stylish woman in the rainy-day skirt and the Eton jacket was a shop-lifter; the woman with the veil was a house detective, and the quiet-looking man was one of the Central police station detectives in citizen's clothes, detailed for special duty in the big dry-goods store during the rush season.

Without a word the woman caught shop-lifting went with the two detectives. The manager knew they were coming, for he had been notified by a messenger. As soon as the three had entered the door he said to the woman with the veil:

"Have you sent for the patrol wagon?" "Yes," she replied, "it will be here in a few minutes."

The shop-lifter turned deadly pale; grasped a long pair of shears that were on the desk and made a clumsy dash at her throat with them. But the detective was too quick for her and took them from her hands.

"Hold on," he said. With a sob the woman sank into a chair. As she raised her head for a moment what appeared to be a camera was turned toward her, and as it flashed across her that her picture was being taken for the rogues' gallery, she went into hysterics. In the meantime the house detective had opened the woman's umbrella and a half dozen pieces of lace fell upon the floor.

"Oh, I cannot stand the disgrace of this," moaned the shoplifter. "What will my husband say?" "A boy poked his head into the door. "Patrol wagon's coming, sir," he said.

RUMBLE OF RAILWAYS.

Sweden has \$175,540,000 invested in railroads. Nearly \$5,000,000 was taken in at one of the seven railway stations at Berlin in 1898 and nearly \$4,000,000 at another.

The Italian railways have promised the pope a 70 per cent. reduction in railway fares for the jubilee year if they are assured of 250,000 visitors.

It is ascertained on scientific data that the air resistance to a railway train of average weight moving 60 miles an hour is 11,374 pounds—nearly six tons.

One of the old Stockton & Darlington engine drivers has just retired from active service. He has been an engine driver since 1853, and in the 46 years he has traveled nearly 2,000,000 miles on the footplate of his engine.

At a recent inspection of the Southern Punjab railway in India by the government inspector it was found that creosoted pine ties in service on this road were in good condition, while untreated oak ties were being seriously attacked by white ants.

A quick way to coal locomotives has been introduced. The engine is run under a treatise which supports a well-laid coal box. The fireman touches a button, the bottom of the box is opened and the tender is instantly supplied with coal.

At a recent congress of Russian railway physicians it was decided that there should be erected at various places hospital stations and baths, and that in some regions special bathing cars should be run, as is now done along the Siberian railway.

PERTAINING TO SCIENCE. The death rate in New Zealand in 1896 was 9.20 per 1,000 inhabitants, as compared with 18.7 in England and Wales.

A famous Italian faster has been unmasked at Rio de Janeiro. A physician found that he used fibrous meat compressed into the smallest size, and this, in connection with a small quantity of mineral water, was enough to prevent starvation.

The new Victoria and Albert museum, as the old South Kensington museum is now called, is having a new building constructed. The frontage on Cromwell road is 700 feet. The area of the new buildings will be equal to the whole of that covered by the existing museums, including temporary sheds on the west side of the Exhibition road.

In a recent paper by Francis Galton, on "Finger-prints of Young Children," he demonstrates that clear prints of all ten fingers of a baby would suffice for after-identification by an expert, but by an expert only. Although new ridges may appear in infant life, the type of each pattern persists all through life, and is never doubtful to a practiced eye.

Excavations carried on at Beneventum, under the direction of Prof. Baccelli, have revealed in perfect preservation a theater as large as that of Pompey or Marcellus at Rome. This is, says the British architect, quite the most important discovery of the official searches in recent years, though in Rome and at Pompeii something noteworthy is unearthed almost every day. The theater is built of great blocks of travertine.

PLANTS AND ANIMALS. Tarantulas are being raised in Australia for their webs, which are used in making threads for balloons.

A blackbird will stand by the side of a hanging wasp's nest and deliberately tear it in pieces in order to get at the larvae, apparently undisturbed by the swarm of angry insects.

The subject of green oysters has recently awakened considerable attention. They are more highly prized by many consumers abroad than the ordinary kinds. The opinion is widespread that the greening is injurious.

The Marennes oysters are harmless, however, and the color does not depend upon the presence of a particular pigment. These oysters are very popular abroad. No trace of copper or iron has been found in them.

There is a man in California who makes it his business to produce new forms of plants and fruits. He decides what he wants, breeds to produce the results desired, and when he obtains something possessing qualities that will recommend it he disposes of a seedling to some nurseryman and then resumes his work for new results.

Experiments are to be made in Hawaii with a new leprosy cure which is said to have accomplished remarkable results. It is the product of a Venezuelan shrub, the culture of which has been introduced in the islands under the care of Dr. Carmichael, of the United States marine hospital, who has been directed by the department at Washington to make experiments with it.

CHURCH AND RELIGION. Steel girders have been substituted for the rotting wooden beams in the roof of the Old South meeting house in Boston.

Good News for the Unemployed.

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