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## BE THYSELF.

'Twas once well said, if thou be true,  
Unto thyself as God to you.  
It follows as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then e'er falsely play  
To anyone. So look you well,  
Let every act the truth foretell.  
Proclaim to all from sea to sea,  
Let come what will, myself I'll be.

Yes, be thyself, where'er thou art  
In honesty act well thy part.  
Choose thou to do thy heart's command,  
And fearlessly employ thy hand  
In building firm each friendship strong.  
Avoid deceit, eschew the wrong.  
In truthfulness make good thy name,  
And just and true shall be thy fame.  
—New World.

## A CHECK MYSTERY.



IN the whole of my long and eventful experience as a tracker of criminals there is one failing which has puzzled me more than any other thing in connection with the men whom I have been fortunate enough to hunt down, and that is the extreme carelessness shown by the cleverest of scoundrels. A man will plan out a crime with the utmost subtlety and ingenuity, providing for well-nigh every contingency, and altogether showing himself to be a Napoleon of criminality; but all the same, by sheer carelessness or want of foresight, he will leave one glaring obvious clew which brings his house of cards to the ground and delivers him into the clutches of the law. It is the history of such a scheme, ruined by such an oversight, that I will set down in the lines that follow:

One morning I was instructed by my chief at headquarters to go to the office of Mr. John Pennythorpe, in Golden Square, to inquire into a forgery case. I at once took my steps to the office named, and after a short delay was shown into Mr. Pennythorpe's room.

He was a genial-looking, clean-shaven man of some thirty-five years, and he rose to greet me with a smile. "Good morning, Mr. Blake," he said, as he motioned me to a chair. "I am glad that you have come so promptly, for there has been some bother over a check of mine."

I prepared to listen to the details, and he continued: "Last Monday I received from the bank the usual paid checks, which they are in the habit of returning to me every month. There were fifteen in all, most of them for small sums. One of them, however, was for no less an amount than \$500, and directly I looked at it I knew that it was a forgery."

"The signature and the body of the check were apparently in my own handwriting, but as I had not drawn anything like such a sum for months past, I knew, of course, that the business was a fraud. I at once communicated with the manager of the bank and also with Scotland Yard."

"You seem unnecessarily agitated," I remarked, after a pause. "For after all the bank, I presume, will bear the loss and not yourself. In the case of forgeries the bank is always liable."

"Quite so, quite so," he returned. "I myself do not lose a penny; but what agitates me is the knowledge that I must have a forger near me, for nobody but a man intimate with me could have so gauged the amount of my account. It was just \$550, so that after paying the amount of the check only \$50 remained."

The bank has treated me very honorably, and has written already to say that my account has been credited with the \$500 in question. My interest, therefore, in finding the forger is purely from the point of view of justice to the bank. Doubtless if the scoundrel is discovered immediately some of the money may be refunded."

"No doubt," I returned, quietly, "and now perhaps you will be good enough to let me see the check, also a check bearing your genuine signature."

He took from a drawer in his table a couple of checks. "Here is the forged document," he said, "and here is a genuine one. Compare them and you will detect absolutely no difference."

No. There was no noticeable difference. I scrutinized the forged check with the aid of my glass, but the magnifying process elicited absolutely nothing.

"This is the most strikingly clever forgery that I have ever come across," I said, after a pause. "I do not wonder that the bank people were deceived."

"Nor I," he made answer, "for upon my word I myself should have been taken in by so extraordinary an imitation. And now, if there are any details I can give you which may be serviceable, pray command me."

"First of all," I said, slowly, "I should like to ask where you usually keep your check book."

"I am afraid," he answered, "that I have been rather careless in that respect. Its usual place is in an exposed position on this desk."

basebook with the returned checks. I have always had so much confidence in Jenkins that I have allowed him absolute control of my bank business."

"I see. Has he appeared to you lately to be in want of money?" He paused for a moment, and then said: "Well, yes; now I come to think of it. Only a week ago he asked me for an advance of salary."

"That may or may not mean anything. A man may be hard up and desire an advance, and yet hesitate about a deliberate forgery. Have you any of his writing that I can look at?"

"Plenty. How will this suit you?" He handed me a note from the clerk in which the latter made some unimportant communication. As I was something of a graphologist, I thought that doubtless the youth's calligraphy might give a clew to his character, but a shade of disappointment crossed my face as I scrutinized the letter. It was the stereotyped commercial hand which is the bugbear of the handwriting expert, and which gives absolutely no clew to the writer's tendencies. I tossed the paper from me, and said:

"That won't help us a bit. Is the young fellow here to-day?"

"Oh, yes. I could ring for him, and you could have a look at him without his knowing your business. Shall I do so?"

He rang the bell, and a tall, thin young fellow answered it. From a sign made by Mr. Pennythorpe I knew that this was the clerk in question, and I watched him narrowly while his employer gave him some instructions invented on the spur of the moment. When he was gone the other turned to me.

"Well," he asked, "what do you think of him?"

"He looks a simple, honest young fellow," I returned, as I rose to go; "but of course appearances are not often reliable. My next move will be to go down to the bank and interview the cashier who paid the \$500 over the bank counter."

Mr. Pennythorpe rose and held out his hand. "I am sure you will do your best for all of us," he said, as I took my leave.

Arrived at the bank, I had to wait a few moments before I could see the manager, as he was engaged with a customer. At length, however, the visitor departed and I was ushered into his room.

"Glad to see you," he said, heartily. "I presume you have just come from Mr. Pennythorpe's office, as he wrote you that he was communicating with Scotland Yard?"

"Yes, I have seen Mr. Pennythorpe," I returned, "but the interview has elicited very little. He seems much agitated about the loss, although it is the bank's, I presume, and not his."

"Quite so," returned the manager, gloomily. "As you know, the law provides that in case of forgery the bank and not the customer suffers. As to the justice or injustice of that law I will not speak now. Our object is to find the culprit."

"Which may be far more difficult than you may think," I said. "I have already found cases of this kind the hardest to unravel. At least fifty per cent of modern forgers are never brought to justice."

"Let us hope," he replied, quickly, "that this case will belong to the other fifty."

"With all my heart," I said; "and now, if you will allow me, I should like to have a chat with the cashier who cashed the check in question, which I have brought with me from Mr. Pennythorpe's office."

The manager's face fell. "It is rather annoying," he said, "but Wilson, the clerk who paid over the money, is laid up just now with influenza. Still, you might go down to his house and interview him."

"What is his address?" I asked, promptly. "I will go there without a moment's delay."

The clerk, it seemed, resided at Clapham, and a few minutes later I was hauling a cab outside the bank. "Fern Villa, Melthorpe road, Clapham," I cried, and presently we were bowling along in the direction of the southwestern suburb.

He fell back and shut his eyes, as though striving to aid his memory in that manner.

"Yes," he said, after a pause, "he was a rather tall, thin man, of some sixty years. He had a white beard, hair and mustache, and wore gold glasses. His features, as far as I remember, were commonplace. I think he was dressed in a black frock coat and he wore no gloves."

"What makes you so certain about his not wearing gloves?" I asked, quickly.

"Ah, that's the point which I am more certain about than any other: I am positive he wore no gloves, because I remember remarking how shockingly his finger-nails were bitten. There was hardly anything of them."

I jumped up so suddenly that he looked as though he thought me mad. "What's the matter?" he asked.

"Wrong!" I echoed. "On the contrary, everything's as right as can be. By Jove—the blackguard! Excuse me taking a hasty leave, Mr. Wilson; but, really, I think your information is more than sufficient. Goodbye. Hope you'll soon be better; and thanks, very much."

Bushing down the stairs, I bade Mrs. Wilson a hasty good afternoon, and, jumping into my cab, ordered the man to drive back to the bank where I had engaged him.

Curiously enough, the manager was just issuing from the building as we drove up.

"Mr. Venn," I said, speaking very quickly, "I think I have a clew. May I ask you to accompany me in this cab at once to follow the same up?"

He seemed rather surprised at my manner, but acquiesced without a word.

"Where are we going?" he asked, as the cab drove off.

"We are going," I answered, "to Mr. Pennythorpe's office. We shall find our man there, unless I am very much mistaken."

The cab set us down in Golden Square in twenty minutes, and we at once took our way to the room which I had quitted that morning.

Pennythorpe was seated writing as we entered. He recognized the manager and wished him good afternoon. Then he turned to me and said:

"Have you found a clew?"

"More than that," I cried. "I have found the man. John Pennythorpe, I arrest you, in the Queen's name, on the charge of attempting to defraud the London & Suburban Bank in the sum of \$500."

In my time I have seen many cases of moral and physical collapse, but never have I seen such an utter breakdown as took place in that little room on that afternoon. Pennythorpe seemed to shrivel up—his face blanched with terror—his eyes were well high glazed, his knees shook. If ever guilt, was written on his face, it was written on his face then. He clung to the table for support as he gasped out:

"The proof—what proof have you?"

"Quite enough," I answered coolly; "your disguise, Mr. Pennythorpe, which represented you as a dignified old gentleman of sixty, was doubtless exceedingly artistic, and would probably have insured you against detection had you taken the simple precaution of wearing gloves."

He looked rapidly at his hands, and I could see that he understood all, and realized the clew which had tracked him. There was a long pause, at the end of which he turned to the manager, who had stood a silent spectator of the scene and said, brokenly:

## GOOD ROADS NOTES.

### Economical Road Improvement.

A tribute to the superior cheapness of good roads, even when made of dirt, was paid by Captain Browne, one of the delegates to the Virginia Good Roads convention in 1894. In the course of some remarks Captain Browne said:

"The question of good roads comes home to me with great force, for I have in Northampton County good dirt roads to haul over, and in another county bad dirt roads. I put four carts, each one with a mule to it, on the scales, and the loads which were hauled over the Northampton roads averaged 2466 pounds; in the other county, 800 pounds is the universal load in delivering produce. In Northampton the tax for road purposes is ten cents on the \$100, and in the other county, where the roads are bad, it is twenty cents on \$100 worth of property. This difference is owing to the adoption of improved methods, which reduce cost and give much advantage."

Captain Browne's description of the road equipment in Northampton may be of interest to Kentucky farmers who are struggling with dirt roads. The county, he said, owned one road grader, plows, carts, hand implements, six mules, one superintendent for the whole county, who employed five laborers and had a tent in which all could shelter. The superintendent was directed to begin the worst roads first and to work in all parts of the county. He began April 16 and by September 30 had made seventeen and one-half miles of good road, though the force had been idle twenty per cent of the time owing to the lack of teams. The highway made cost only \$55.17 a mile, but this could be reduced half by the purchase of four more mules. The monthly expense was \$175.75; the extra mules would add \$40 a month, but then thirty-five miles could be made in a year. The whole outfit had cost \$1,011.24. The farmers had been very much pleased with the results and would not now adopt a different plan. In time Captain Browne hoped they would get to macadamized roads.

It seems hardly worth while to begin a campaign for better dirt roads when macadamized ones could be secured with a little more effort. Still every upward step counts. Communities which can not undertake extensive improvements might combine this plan of working dirt roads with the one adopted by Augusta County, Virginia. This county was not in debt, and the people there, as in a great many counties in Kentucky, were opposed to any issue of bonds. The Board of Supervisors hit upon a contractor who agreed to build the road and take a certain sum every year. It took nearly a year to build the road, and he received his first payment the next year from the proceeds of a tax levy. The third year he was paid another part and the fourth year all. The county in the meantime had got sixteen miles of badly needed macadam, and the farmers had then been convinced of the benefits of macadamizing and were anxious to continue the work. Many men who had at first refused to contribute to the building of the road then offered to come in and contribute to an extension.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

System in Road Maintenance.

No one has ever supposed that railroad corporations spend money for the mere sake of spending it, or adopt expensive methods when cheaper ones are better. It must be, then, that there is some pretty substantial reason for dividing their roadbeds into sections, and keeping men constantly employed on each in caring for them. Precisely the same principle applies to ordinary highways; the only way that they can be efficiently maintained is by establishing a similar system, and the more expensive they are to construct, the greater the saving that will thereby be made, and increased efficiency secured.

Good Roads Built Towns.

Three years ago a little farming settlement in New Jersey was intersected by good roads. The location was charming and invited the erection of summer homes. With the advent of good highways, the residents came, and a prosperous village grew up, made possible solely by the construction of hard and durable highways.

The Pilgrims' Church Doomed.

Consul Listoe, of Rotterdam, reported to the State Department in Washington that the church from which the Pilgrim Fathers departed in 1620 is in danger of being sold and torn down. It is the Herfordse Kerk (Reformed Church) at Delft Haven. The pulpit, altar and some of the Bibles used by the Pilgrims are still in the church. The church record gives an account of the departure of the Pilgrims. The congregation is poor, Consul Listoe says, and without help may not be able to retain the building. Here is an exceptionally fine chance for some wealthy American to distinguish himself by buying the ancient edifice, transporting it to this country and erecting it near the famous Plymouth Rock and the Pilgrims' landing place.—New York Journal.

The Kaiser Wants This Stopped.

Kaiser Wilhelm has applied through his Ambassador to the English Consul of Lyons to have stopped a song that is being sung nightly in the London music halls. The lyric which offends His Imperial Majesty is entitled the "Mailed Fist of Germany." It begins in this fashion:

Fitzsimmons met the Kaiser,  
And they warily hugged and kissed.  
Old Fitz he had his gloves on,  
Bill had a mailed fist.

The Kaiser he grew zealous,  
They had a blooming row;  
The Kaiser hit Fitzsimmons—  
Where is the Kaiser now?

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## POPULAR SCIENCE.

### Spiral Growth in Plants

is one of the mysteries yet to be worked out by naturalists.

A huge eel of the Fiji Islands, fifteen feet long, is reported to have a peculiar throat formation, causing it to whistle when excited.

French Guiana is said to have the most violent thunderstorms in the world. The thunder is almost deafening, and the peals come in quick succession.

A proposal has been made by a French chemist to obtain easily assimilable iron tonic from vegetables by feeding the plants judiciously with iron fertilizers.

The gradual cooling of France is proved by its vegetation. The Italian poplar, common in early French settlements, is now seldom seen in the country, while the lemon has disappeared from Langedoc and the orange from Roussillon, and the northern limit of many plant species has shifted far to the southward.

Ocean waves have on a number of occasions dashed over the tops of lighthouses which are 150 feet high. As a wave in the open ocean is accompanied by a depression as deep as the wave is high, a ship in the trough of the sea encountering such waves would be banked by hills of water, if the term may be used, 300 feet high.

The Russian Government has decided to adopt the metric system. The United States and the British Empire will thus soon be the only important countries which have not adopted the decimal system of weights and measures. An imperial commission has also been appointed at St. Petersburg to consider the best means of abandoning the Russian calendar in favor of that which prevails in other parts of the civilized world.

Competition in the use of the X-rays seems impending in England. The Treasurer of St. Thomas's Hospital, in London, has written to the London Times protesting that whereas some beggarly fifty-seven cases of the use of X-rays in the Liverpool Hospital were considered worthy of mention, no account had been taken of the 416 similar cases at St. Thomas's, which had involved the appointment of an assistant operator.

Three of the best New York Central men testify that they would never under any circumstances reverse their engines in order to bring the train to a stop. When they had to stop their train in the shortest possible distance, they shut off the steam and applied the air, and did nothing else; there was only one quicker way to stop a train, and that was to run into something. They agreed that upon reversing, the back pressure in the cylinders was so great as to lock the drivers and cause them to slide, thus losing the braking power of the locomotive. Neither did they approve of sanding the tracks, for nothing seemed to be gained by it.

### What Sleep Is.

It was at one time supposed that in sleep the brain was richly charged with blood. This is now confessed to be an error. Sleep ensues when the brain is largely denuded of blood, when cerebral anemia is established. To partly empty the brain of its blood supply, to keep the head cool, the body sufficiently warm, and to send the blood rather to the lower extremities—this is the physical problem of the sleepless.

During sleep a great number of the bodily functions continue quite normal without interfering with sleep itself, and, therefore, sleep is not so like death as some of the poets have imagined. Man asleep is not so profoundly different from man awake, the two chief points of difference, however, being these: A greater inward drawing of oxygen and exhalation of carbonic acid and a complete vaso-motor rest.

With a heavy sleeper there should be no thick curtains, but with a light sleeper curtains are essential, as sunlight plays upon the optic nerve and rouses that attention which it is the one object of the sleeper to keep in suspended animation.

Perfect or nearly perfect health is the first condition of sound sleep. But scarcely any one is quite healthy. The one great thing to do is to fatigue the attention; not only to tire out the body, but to fatigue the active mind, to quiet the congested blood from the brain. Quiet and regular habits, a certain monotony of light evening occupation, will tend in this direction, while a great variety of evening engagements is generally fatal to the victim of insomnia. It is unwise to go to bed on either an empty or a very full stomach; a slight meal before rest is the wise course.—New York World.

### Primitive House Lighting.

The first and most natural way of lighting the houses of the colonists was found in the fatpitch-pine, which, says the Chautauquan, was plentiful everywhere; but as soon as domestic animals increased candles were made, and the manufacture of the winter supply became the special autumn duty of the thrifty housewife. Great kettles were hung over the kitchen fire and filled with hot water and melted tallow. At the cooler end of the kitchen two long poles were placed from chair back to chair back. Across these poles, like the rounds of a ladder, were placed shorter sticks, called candle rods. To each candle rod were tied about a dozen straight candle wicks. The wicks were dipped again and again, in regular order, in the melted tallow, the succession of dipping giving each candle time to cool. Each grew slowly in size till all were finished. Deer suet was used as well as beef tallow and mutton tallow. Wax candles were made by pressing bits of half-melted wax around a wick.