

Women as Successful Bill Collectors

"And this man," said the young woman, referring to the last name on the list, "will give me a check tomorrow without fail."

The manager shook his head doubtfully. "I don't take any stock in his promise," he said. "He is tight as the bark on a tree and slippery as an eel. He never pays anything till he has to. He's been giving us that same old gag about paying tomorrow for the last six months."

"And he will keep his word this time," said the young woman confidently.

And he did. The next evening when she reported at the office the young woman turned in a check for the full amount owed by the tight individual. The situation was so extraordinary that the manager scratched his head in perplexity. "Well," he said, "you certainly are a remarkably fine collector."

And after the young woman had eaten her dinner and had taken time to digest both the meal and the compliment, relates the New York Sun, she came to the conclusion that she was indeed pretty good at the business. "It took me a long time to find out what I was good for," she said. "I tried my hand at teaching, stenography, amateur gardening, dressmaking and photography successively, and was a failure in each. Then I turned my mind to collecting."

"My first employment was with a small publishing house uptown. The owners owed everybody and everybody owed them. They paid nobody and nobody paid them. It took me just about two days to demonstrate to my own satisfaction that I had at last struck the level of my abilities. I began straight off to take in money and when, at the end of the first week the manager footed up his receipts and found that I had collected subscriptions and advertising bills to the amount of \$1,000, which, considering the size of individual accounts, was a sum as high as Pike Peak, he fell on my neck and called me blessed. The firm was too deep in the mire, however, to be pulled out even by the hand of a heaven-born collector. Their liabilities so far exceeded their assets that their only salvation lay in bankruptcy and this last refuge they finally sought when I had collected 99 cents on every dollar coming to them. I do not tell this in a spirit of vanity, but simply to refute the statement that a woman couldn't earn her salt at collecting. I know a dozen women in this town who are so employed and each is considered a gem of great price by her employers."

A West Side furniture dealer who has employed a woman collector for several years said that if there was any one thing he could take time to talk about even in his busiest moments it was the merits of the woman collector. "There was a time," he said, "when I vowed that I wouldn't have a petticoat around my store in any capacity. My attention was first attracted to the subject by the quick way one woman collector made me pay a bill. Physically, the work for this store is hard. There is much walking to be done and many stairs to be climbed. Moreover, many of the people who buy our goods on the installment plan are disagreeable to deal with when it comes to collecting. But that is where I find the woman collector invaluable. Her fund of patience is inexhaustible, and she is inventive and resourceful to a degree. If she cannot get around a creditor one way she will another, and, what is best of all, she never gives up."

It is a curious thing that it is not in the field of distinctly feminine labor, such as dressmaking, millinery and the like, that the woman collector seeks to win her laurels. When asked why this was so one successful collector replied that it was a case of the refutation of the theory that like cures like. "It may take a thief to catch a thief, but it doesn't take a woman to make another woman pay her debts," she said. "I am the manager of a large collecting agency. I have both men and women in my employ, and when I have a bill against a woman I invariably send a man to collect it. Women who owe money know well enough that another woman sent to collect a bill can see right through their subterfuges, no matter how flimsy or how plausible. They do not care a straw for her opinion, however, but they don't want to be found out by the men."

A Nassau street lawyer employs a woman collector whom he regards as an honor to her sex and the calling. "I don't always collect the money I set out to get," she said, when complimented on her achievements and consequent reputation. "A year ago I set out to collect \$1,250 from a client of my employer. 'Go up to his office every day,' were my employer's instructions. 'Don't give him a minute's peace. Hound the very life out of him till he pays. Just walk right in, no matter who is there, and demand that \$1,250. He can't turn you out because I did for him what no other lawyer in New York could have done, and it behooves him to be humble.'

"For three months I obeyed those instructions literally. I traveled up and down the elevator so often that everybody in the building came to know me as 'the dun,' and the man hated the very sight of me. One day I was sick and couldn't go down. A second day I stayed away, and still a third. About 2 o'clock on the afternoon of the third day, as my employer

sat in his private office talking to a client, the door was opened suddenly and a tow-headed little boy stepped audaciously into the room."

"Say," he said, "I'm —'s boy, an' my boss wants to know why that woman ain't been over for that \$1,250 he owes you."

"I positively refused to call after that and we never did get the money. But you, don't come across many people like that."

Robin on a Tear

Many of his northern friends will be shocked to learn that Robin Redbreast leads a double life. Well dressed, jaunty, brimming over with good nature, devoted to his wife and babies, he is a model of respectability.

It's true we do not like to share with him our very earliest peas and choicest cherries, but he is so great a favorite and his thieving is carried on with such calm assurance that we readily forgive. He has



A GAMBLING GAME PROHIBITED IN HONG KONG AFTER 11 P. M.

no enemies but the family cat. All this here at home.

When Robin goes south for his winter vacation he is tempted and falls, relates the Detroit Free Press. It happens in this way:

In December and January the robins find on the gulf coast a climate that suits them. They also find an ornamental tree bearing a hard, yellow berry about as large as a small pea—China berries—of which they are extremely fond. Now, the China berry, while innocent in appearance, is a very dangerous food for robins. It contains some narcotic principle that affects a robin just as alcohol affects a man. It makes Robin drunk, and when he is drunk he acts precisely like a drunken man. He is exhilarated at first, he dances about and sings in a "We-won't-go-home-till-morning" sort of way. This happy condition is soon followed by a drunken stupor—the bright eyes grow dull, the head droops and the bird loses all sense of danger. While in this stupid state the negro boys easily pick the birds from the low branches where they are perched.

After a little the birds recover, but only to hunt more China berries. As long as there are China berries Robin is consistently and persistently drunk. He apparently eats the berries for the single purpose of getting drunk and because he likes it. He isn't hungry, for he is gorged with the berries to such an extent that when, as sometimes happens, he misses his drunk hold and falls to the ground, he bursts open, so stupefied is he.

Now it must not be thought that even a robin can undergo this sort of debauch for a month or six weeks without its having some effect on him. Robin soon loses his self-respect, grows ragged, neglects his bath, and appears generally disreputable. He is a very sad-looking bird, and northern visitors who don't know about China berries can't understand what has caused the change. He reforms when he must—that is, when the China berries are all gone, but until then he apparently never thinks of it.

With the disappearance of the China berries the birds begin to think of their northern homes, their family duties and a more prosaic but healthful diet of strawberries and angle worms. In February they gather in countless thousands in the canebrakes of Tennessee and Alabama, apparently waiting only for warmer weather before beginning their migration. At this season the visitor from the north, who would about as soon think of eating the pet canary, finds "robin pie" a common dish on southern tables. On inquiring he learns that the robins are slaughtered by the thousands. Men with torches and clubs visit the roosts by night and knock the dazed birds off their perches in great numbers. They are brought to market in grain sacks. The writer heard of one man bringing into market at one time 180 dozen, a single night's murderous work. The robins are sold on the streets for from 20 cents to 30 cents a dozen. There is no law against the wholesale slaughter, but many people in the south are interesting themselves in securing such legislation as will put a stop to it. One reason for the indifference with which our favorite is regarded is that he is only a winter visitor and doesn't compete as a songbird with the cardinal and the mocking bird, both of which are common and great favorites.

Much of this pot-hunting is done by negroes for sport. The robins are also shot but the slaughter in this way is small compared with the wholesale destruction of the torch and the club.

Carpenter's Letter

(Continued from Sixth Page.)

and if you eat dog's flesh on the day called Sut the spirit of the dog will haunt you. On the day Shan you must never weep for the dead or you will have sorrow upon sorrow and if you make sauce on the day called Sun it will be tasteless. There are ten days called Male days and twelve which are called Female days. If you wear a new suit of clothes for the first time on the day called Chow you will be sure to die away from home and if you buy land on the day called Moo you will be unlucky. I take these facts from Archdeacon Gray's book on China, which is long since out of print.

These superstitions as to luck extend to the configuration of the country and also to the legends connected with localities. Some time ago a telegraph was projected between Canton and Hong Kong. The scheme was bitterly opposed, the chief

objection being the bad luck which it was sure to bring to the two cities. The Chinese said: "Canton is known to us as the City of Rams or Sheep and the mouth of the river where the telegraph line is to go is known as the Tiger's mouth, while the district opposite Hong Kong is Kowloon, or the Nine Dragons. What can you expect when you put up a telegraph line to lead the sheep right into the tiger's mouth and amongst the nine dragons?"

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

Used Up Six Tickets

"I made a short trip into the country the other day," said Jones to the Detroit Free Press man. "There were six of us in the party and when we were ready to go home there was some doubt about whether or not we would be able to catch our train. I went on ahead, promising to buy the tickets, but the train arrived there before my friends did and I found myself on board with five extra tickets that I had no earthly use for, so I resolved to amuse myself at the expense of the conductor. Tearing up the check that he gave me when he took up my ticket, I waited for him to come around again."

"Tickets," he said shortly on his next round, seeing that I had no check.

"I gave up another ticket without a word and promptly tore up the check that he gave me."

"Tickets," he started to say when he came around again, and then he looked hard at me and I handed over another ticket without comment.

"See here, where is your check?" he demanded on his next trip.

"For reply I handed over another ticket. The next time he passed me without a word, but I managed to seize hold of his coat tails and detain him long enough to hand over another ticket."

"When he came around again he looked at me in a startled manner and I heard him give a sigh of relief when he passed and I had made no sign. I let him go until he was nearly to the door and then I yelled to him that he had overlooked me and frantically waved another ticket."

"The next stop was mine and as I passed the conductor on the outside I handed him another ticket with the remark that he overlooked me."

"That conductor has an idea that he has been worked by some sort of a new game, but is unable to figure it out."

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