

# The SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE SECTION

A Magazine for your Reading Table

## CONTRIBUTING EDITORS' PAGE



Mr. William J. Burns

### Raffles in Real Life

By WILLIAM J. BURNS

Detective Chief of the American Bankers' Association

THE GENTLEMAN BURGLAR is a cold, brutal fact. Ask any up to date police detective in any large American city. He has to deal with the breed from one year's end to another, and he knows. I know, and since I have been asked to express an opinion, I repeat: The gentleman burglar is not a myth, in this country. In another part of this magazine, the distinguished chief of the Identification Department of the French Police—M. Alphonse Bertillon—reveals his views on this subject. He has stated that the term "gentleman burglar" is a misnomer and the type of criminal an invention of the writers of detective fiction. Let us see.

I consider Professor Bertillon to be one of the ablest men of his profession in the entire world, and feel that he is entitled to great credit for the wonderful perfection to which he has brought the method of keeping records of crimes and criminals. I should, therefore, hesitate to take issue with him concerning anything he might have to say on a subject of which he is a master, were I not absolutely certain of my facts in so far as they apply to the United States. It must not be overlooked that M. Bertillon is writing about France and other European countries. He is not to be blamed if he believes that what is bad enough for Paris is bad enough for New York or Chicago.

#### The Gentleman Crook Defined

IN THE first place, how shall we define the word gentleman as applied to a thief? I take it that a man of respectable parentage, who has had a college training and education and has moved in polite society may be called a gentleman. If he goes wrong, and leaving his old friends and associates, steals for a living, he is a burglar—a mere crook among other crooks. But if he uses his social position as a shield, if he robs behind their backs the friends who entertain him and trust to his honor, he is that hero of tawdry romance, the social highwayman. Here is a case in point:

Not long ago my services were enlisted by some people in the upper circles of society. They were losing jewelry in a mysterious way; at receptions and dinner parties, the cloak room would be looted. I ran the thief to earth in short order. To the unspeakable embarrassment of my clients, he proved to be one of their friends. He would obtain an invitation to the place to be robbed, and would bring a confederate along to receive the stolen

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goods, while he remained behind to join in the chorus of polite regrets.

I wish that I could be more specific about this case. It has the advantage of being a characteristic one. But the man is not in prison. He was never punished, because his victims refused to push the charges against him. It is my earnest hope that he has profited by his lesson, and I would not care to say anything that might lead some acquaintance of his, reading this editorial, to identify him with the case. However base the criminal may be, I believe in giving him every chance to lead a new life. In fact, I regard it as my duty to aid in every way possible.

#### Blackmail a Source of Income

BLACKMAIL is a fertile source of income for the gentleman crook. The clubs and drawing rooms of New York and other large cities are dotted with men whose invisible means of livelihood might be traced back—if one took the trouble—to some piece of scandal about a prominent family or individual that had come into their merciless possession.

Nevertheless, the gentleman burglar is not a common manifestation. While cultured men—for various reasons which they have often undertaken personally to explain—become criminals, they lack, with all their education and refined manners, the one essential element of success. They can not keep up the pace demanded by crime.

It becomes a question whether the individual possessing the very highest mental attainments will or will not—through evil association, environment, necessity or what not—allow his sensibility as between right or wrong to become so dulled that he drifts into crime. But that men who almost measure up to the best intellectual standards occasionally become criminals is undoubted.

#### An Aristocratic Confidence Man

I HAVE in mind the case of a French crook who was a genuine member of the aristocracy and possessed all the qualifications of the gentleman, in the way of education, refinement and social poise. This worthy permitted himself to become what we term a professional "confidence man," and succeeded in hoodwinking a philanthropically inclined American gentleman. In robbing the latter of many thousands of dollars, he resorted to the most despicable tactics. He induced his wife, a pure-minded, well bred and highly connected American girl, to act as his innocent accomplice in gaining the confidence of the victim. The American, although duped at first, finally became aware of the real character of this gentleman burglar. He placed the case in my hands. I followed the man to Paris, where I brought about his apprehension, trial and conviction. He is now serving a sentence of several years in a French prison.

If any one questions the soundness of my contention in this matter, let him remember that I am not accusing a whole class of moral turpitude. If it is established that even a small proportion of convicted burglars are also "gentlemen," my case is proved ipso facto.

# Big Ben



### Big Ben the biggest thing in the clock business

Big Ben is the biggest thing today in the alarm clock business.

He is only two years and a half old, but he's already getting more trade from the States than any clock alive.

In two years and a half time, 18,000 jewelers—70 per cent. of the total number of United States watchmakers—have already adopted him.

Two million and a half families leave it to him to call them up in the morning; two million and a half families use him all day long to tell

the right time by.—He is really two good clocks in one—a crackerjack of a timekeeper and a crackerjack of an alarm.

Big Ben has everything in his favor—quality, looks and price.—He runs on time, he rings on time, he stays on time. He stands 7 inches tall. He is triple nickel-plated and wears an inner vest of steel that insures him for life. His big, bold figures and hands are easy to read in the dim morning light. His large comfortable winding keys almost wind themselves.

He rings five straight minutes or every other half minute during ten minutes unless you shut him off. If he is called every other year, there is no telling how long he will last.

His price is \$2.50 anywhere in the States, \$3.00 anywhere in Canada. If you can't find him at your jeweler's, a money order mailed to *Waltham, La Salle, Illinois*, will send him anywhere you say with his railroad fare paid.