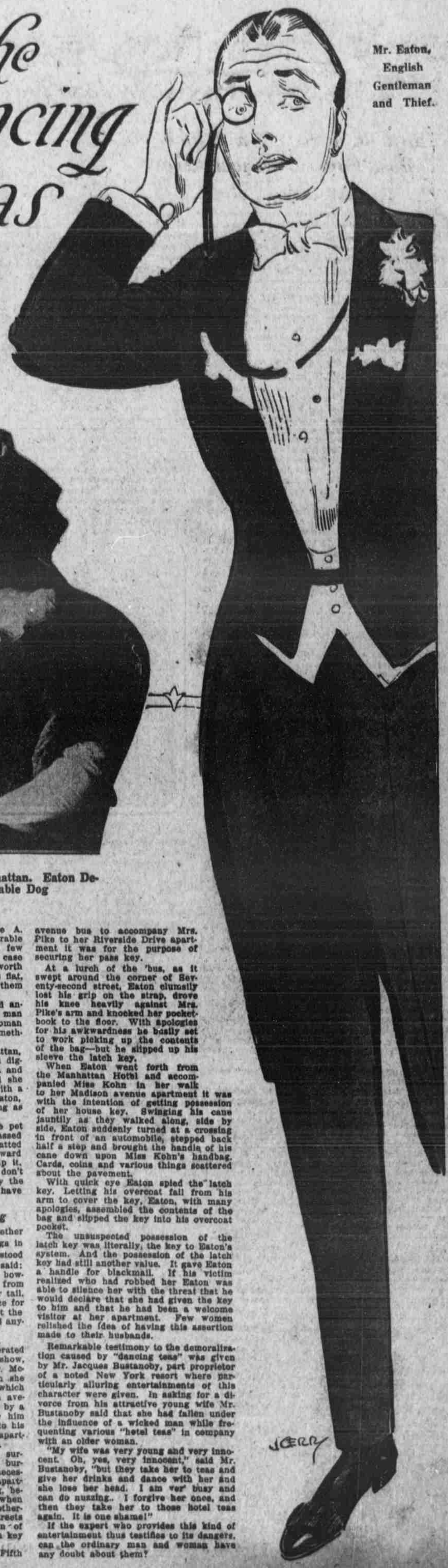


# "Gentlemen" Burglars at the Fashionable Dancing Seas

Surprising Revelations of the Ingenious Methods of Mr. Eaton, Gentleman Thief, and Others Who Are Victimizing Women of Wealth and Respectability in a New Way

Mr. Eaton, English Gentleman and Thief.



Mrs. Jacques Bustanoby, Whose Troubles Began at the Cabarets and Tea Dances.

In the criminal world, as in the industrial and business world, new conditions of life give opportunities for new methods. The "Tea Rooms," the "Cabarets" and the "Dancing Tea" restaurants have opened a new field for criminals. Preying like wolves around these places, the police estimate that 5,000 criminals in New York are now making a comfortable living.

The more notorious case of Herbert F. Eaton and his victim, Mrs. Arthur E. Pike, has shed a flood of light on the operations of these scoundrels. Other cases have shown that robbery is not the only harm to womankind that has followed the breaking down of old social restraints through the insidious influence of the tea room with its accompaniments of music and dancing.

The unmasking of Mr. Herbert F. Eaton—English gentleman, traveller, society man, dancer and burglar—has been followed by some very illuminating revelations. The police are now able to understand the steadily growing complaints of athero unexplained robberies. Mr. Eaton is not alone in his peculiar field of activity; the police records indicate that there are many others who are victimizing the patrons of the tea dance restaurants in the same way.

Eaton was not a thug. He had the manner and the personality of a man of breeding. He was careful never to force his attentions on a prospective victim. It is believed that he worked at times with a young woman confederate and through her was able to be formally introduced to respectable patrons of the places he frequented. But Eaton's own address and resourcefulness were often sufficient to secure an acquaintance with a woman of wealth without the formality of an introduction and yet without arousing suspi-

cion of resentment. An instance of this will be given further on.

It stands to reason that when a woman dances with a man she does not know she enters upon a perilous path. The "the dansant" is a queer institution that gives everybody who can pay the price of admission or of refreshments an opportunity to dance. The manager must see that his women visitors have partners to dance with, and it need hardly be said that if he can find good-looking, well-dressed young men for this purpose he is only too glad to have them and will not inquire very closely into their character. It is proved from recent cases that the most fashionable and dignified hotels in the city have been the means of promoting these promiscuous acquaintances.

The fact that these dances are held in the daytime allows young girls and young married women an unusual freedom to attend them. The old institution of the chaperon has been more or less abandoned for daytime affairs. A girl or a woman who indulges in the intricacies of the modern dance with a man can scarcely help developing a certain intimacy with him, even though she may never have met him before. After the dance she can hardly refuse his request to escort her home, especially if he is going the same way, and in many cases she would not deny a good dancer the privilege of calling on her. Thus chance acquaintance carries a stranger straight into the intimacy of the home.

### New Dangers for Thoughtless Women

Keen observers of life estimate that there are just as many men who frequent the tea rooms simply for the purpose of making the acquaintance of attractive women as for the sake of robbery. The intentions of these men may not be always of the worst, but it is certain that on the whole they are a social danger. A girl has no opportunity of judging the character of a man whom she meets under such conditions, and too often she is not guarded by family and friends against the dangers of chance meetings.

Mrs. Pike's experience illustrated only some of the dangers of this phase of city life—the ease with which the friendship of a highly respectable woman could be cultivated under cover of the afternoon dance and the criminal acts it might lead to. Mrs. Pike, who is the wife of a cotton broker and lives in a handsome apartment at No. 646 Riverside Drive, was shocked recently to find that her place had been robbed of \$1,500 worth of jewels and a quantity of valuable clothing. When she turned the matter over in her mind she was forced to admit that suspicion rested on a certain "Mr. Williams," a very attractive young man she had met at a tea at the Hotel Astor, one of the most dignified and fashionable hotels in the city.

Mrs. Pike was listening to the strains

of "The fox trot," the new fashionable dance, and being an enthusiastic dancer, she could not help wanting to dance. Somebody, she could not remember who it was introduced her to "Mr. Williams," and he immediately asked her to dance. He was a solid-looking man in California. His conversation was full of a fashionable black cutaway coat trimmed with broad braid, short in the tail and cut in front to show the waistcoat.

"Mr. Williams" talked agreeably with a cultured English accent. He had thick curly hair and a merry dark eye. He had been a soldier in the Boer War, just for the sake of adventure, you know, and a gold miner in California. His conversation was delightfully entertaining. Mrs. Pike mentioned that she was a granddaughter of J. Spencer Turner, once a noted cotton broker.

"Oh, yes," said "Mr. Williams." "My people in Liverpool knew him. I remember my father telling me about Mr. Turner's funny American stories after dinner."

"Sometimes we get a bad impression of Americans from your ordinary tourists with their American flags and all that sort of beastly thing. Your grandfather was one of those delightfully cosmopolitan Americans who are the most charming people in the world."

All the circumstances were calculated to disarm suspicion in Mrs. Pike's mind. "Mr. Williams" had not even sought her acquaintance. She had a delightful afternoon, which ended all too soon, though the hour was late. When she said she was going home up Riverside Drive and he said he was going the same way, she naturally said she would be pleased to have him go with her.

They rode in a motor bus. On the way she dropped her purse and after fumbling with it clumsily for a minute he returned it to her. When she returned home she found she had lost the key to her apartment. She had another one made.

The meeting with "Mr. Williams" started a pleasant friendship which lasted up to the time of the robbery. The rest of the facts are well known to newspaper readers. Mrs. Pike received a telephone message from Eaton in which "Mr. Williams" offered to return her jewels for \$400, falling which he would create a scandal. By arrangement with the police she met him and in a struggle "Mr. Williams" was shot by a detective.

Investigation showed that he was a young Englishman of respectable family named Herbert F. Eaton. He was earning a fair salary in a New York business house as a stenographer and had been led into evil ways by the extraordinary opportunities offered by the tea rooms and the rest of the promiscuous topey-turvy social life of New York.

No sooner was the Pike case published than another of Eaton's victims made her-

Miss Marie Kohn, Whom Eaton Met at the Hotel Manhattan. Eaton Devoted Himself to Admiring Miss Kohn's Valuable Dog and Won Her Confidence.

self known. This was Miss Marie A. Kohn, a Frenchwoman of considerable wealth, who came to New York a few years ago. A year before the Pike case Miss Kohn was robbed of \$12,000 worth of jewels. When she visited Eaton's flat, by invitation of the police, she found them all there.

The story Miss Kohn told revealed another way in which a designing man might make the acquaintance of a woman he didn't know. This is the pet dog method of approach.

Miss Kohn went to the Hotel Manhattan, also one of the most fashionable and dignified hotels in the city, to have tea and listen to the music. As she entered she noticed a good-looking young man with a bright eye and curly hair. It was Eaton, but on this occasion he was travelling as "Mr. McDonald."

Miss Kohn was carrying her prize pet toy Pomeranian, "Baby." As she passed the young man, he stopped and patted "Baby" with a friendly but not forward manner, as if he really couldn't help it. "Pardon me," he said. "I hope you don't mind my patting her. That is really the most perfect specimen of a 'Pom' I have ever seen."

### An Introduction Through the Dog

They went into the tea room together and the young man talked about dogs in the most convincing manner. He stood "Baby" squarely on her feet and then said: "Oh! you quite too delicious little bow-wow! She has every point perfect from the tip of her nose to the end of her tail. You know, my mother took first prize for toy 'Poms' four years in succession at the Swansea dog show, but she never had anything finer than this."

"My name is McDonald," he added. Miss Kohn, who has the exaggerated love of pet dogs that some women show, was naturally carried away by "Mr. McDonald's" charming dog talk. When she was going to leave he asked her which way and she said "No. 699 Madison avenue." He got possession of her key by a trick and induced her to wait for him while he pretended he was going into his hotel. When she went on to her apartment she found she had been robbed.

Eaton's methods have come as a surprising revelation to the police. A burglar is usually confronted with the necessity of entering his victim's house or apartment by force. This is embarrassing, because he must work late at night when he cannot be observed and it is bothersome to carry plunder along the streets at such hours. But Eaton's system of always providing himself with a latch key avoided these embarrassments.

When Eaton crowded into the Fifth

avenue bus to accompany Mrs. Pike to her Riverside Drive apartment it was for the purpose of securing her pass key.

At a lurch of the bus, as it swept around the corner of Seventy-second street, Eaton cunningly lost his grip on the strap, drove his knee heavily against Mrs. Pike's arm and knocked her pocketbook to the floor. With apologies for his awkwardness he busily set to work picking up the contents of the bag—but he slipped up his sleeve the latch key.

When Eaton went forth from the Manhattan Hotel and accompanied Miss Kohn in her walk to her Madison avenue apartment it was with the intention of getting possession of her house key. Swinging his cane jauntily as they walked along, side by side, Eaton suddenly turned at a crossing in front of an automobile, stepped back half a step and brought the handle of his cane down upon Miss Kohn's handbag. Cards, coins and various things scattered about the pavement.

With quick eye Eaton spied the latch key. Letting his overcoat fall from his arm to cover the key, Eaton, with many apologies, assembled the contents of the bag and slipped the key into his overcoat pocket.

The unsuspected possession of the latch key was literally the key to Eaton's system. And the possession of the latch key had still another value. It gave Eaton a handle for blackmail. If his victim realized who had robbed her Eaton was able to silence her with the threat that he would declare that she had given the key to him and that he had been a welcome visitor at her apartment. Few women relished the idea of having this assertion made to their husbands.

Remarkable testimony to the demoralization caused by "dancing teas" was given by Mr. Jacques Bustanoby, part proprietor of a noted New York resort where particularly alluring entertainments of this character were given. In asking for a divorce from his attractive young wife Mrs. Bustanoby said that she had fallen under the influence of a wicked man while frequenting various "hotel teas" in company with an older woman.

"My wife was very young and very innocent. Oh, yes, very innocent," said Mr. Bustanoby, "but they take her to teas and give her drinks and dance with her and she loses her head. I am ver' busy and can do nussing. I forgive her once, and then they take her to those hotel teas again. It is one shame!"

If the expert who provides this kind of entertainment thus testifies to its dangers, can the ordinary man and woman have any doubt about them?