

Americans Still Duped by French Antique Dealers

More Than 3,000 of Marie Antoinette's Beds in United States, Says Writer.

Paris, July 8.—"In America there are more than 3,000 beds and 10,000 harpichords which belonged to Marie Antoinette," writes Clement Vautel in Le Journal.

"It has been estimated," he continues, "that 30,000 Corot landscapes have prominent places there in public or private collections."

"About 50 times a year a masterpiece of Rembrandt or Murillo, or of Velasquez is discovered in a garret and estimated at two or three millions."

This condition Vautel and other Parisian newspaper satirists who have recently dwelt heavily on the theme ascribed to an amount of fake antique selling in Paris shops and at Paris auctions that increases in volume and profit as years go by.

Much of the cleverest work of antique swindlers is "put over" on American buyers, who, according to the satirist, will pay any price for something "historical," even if the "history" was acquired by strong arm methods in the workshops of the swindling dealers.

"From year to year there are auctioned off at the Hotel Drouot," Vautel continues, "thousands and thousands of chairs re-covered by antique tapestries, and a formidable quantity of candelabra and grandfather's clocks."

"For a while this commerce in bric-a-brac went on smoothly. But at last a check—

Guarantee is Refused.

"The other day, at the Hotel Drouot, there was sold for 5,000 francs a little table of the 18th century, when someone demanded of the auctioneer: 'There are tables said to be of the 18th century at all. Do you guarantee the antiquity of this object?'"

"The expert guaranteed it without guaranteeing it. 'What are we coming to if we have to guarantee everything we sell?' he asked."

The incident closed with the buyer taking the table, but threatening to prove in court that it was modern and that an attempt had been made to swindle him.

As a result of this case, in which some writers see only an amusing incident, others see the chance for a complete investigation of the entire business of selling antiques and curios to the public and that auctioneers and alleged "experts" must produce written guarantees for their customers.

The buyer of the table, M. Edouard Jonas, president of the Syndicat de la Curiosite et des Reaux, who was deliberately trying to make a case in order to expose the dealers, was interviewed by the Matin.

"I sought occasion to shed light on certain conditions," he said, "which are affecting unfavorably the attitude of art lovers and, above all, of foreign collectors. This is a serious matter, because Paris still is and must remain the center of the curiosity business. Too many times have I noticed the errors of auctioneers, for example, in the course of a recent sale, a case in which a coat of arms cover of Chinese porcelain, catalogued at 400 francs, was valued at 21,000 francs by one of these 'merchant specialists.'"

"Some May Be Experts."

M. Jonas told the Matin the sales were made without any real guarantee.

"Often the catalogue carries on the first page, in tiny letters, a notice that the sale is without guarantee," he said. "As for the so-called experts, some may be experts, all right, but they are selected without any rule or regulation as to their qualifications—simply chosen by the auctioneer."

Wotta Life! Wotta Life!



Ex-Crook Tells How King "Helped" Him to Rob Man

"No Matter How Much Thief Makes, He Keeps Little of it," Says Reformed Pickpocket Who Spent Eight and One-Half Years Behind Prison Walls.

Punxsutawney, Pa., July 8.—"No matter how much a crook makes he retains very little of the loot or cash because there's the crooked lawyer who bleeds you white, the fake bondsman, the go-between, the underworld politician and a score of lesser fry."

Thus spoke Robert W. (Razor) Fenton, who has served eight and a half years behind prison walls. He has reformed and now is telling the world that there's nothing in the crook game in the end.

Between "jobs" Fenton used to loaf in this town in a quiet way when the police of New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh and a lot of other cities were hot on his trail.

"Razor" Fenton's specialty was picking pockets, though he often engaged in other alleged nefarious activities.

\$20,000 Haul.

He estimated that during his "crook" career he had cleaned up more than \$300,000. His biggest single job netted him \$20,000 and his second-best job \$10,000. The present king of England helped him, unconsciously, to make the \$10,000 haul, he asserts.

"There are various grades of aristocracy among the crooks," said Fenton. "We, who figured we were the big fellows in the game, traveled south with the vacationists and returned with them in the spring. In the summer we worked the biggest seashore resorts. We always followed the money around, no matter where it went, and, believe me, we made those who could afford it pay for our vacations."

"I see where the Chicago police say that only 27 pockets were picked in that city during the first week of this month. I used to pick that many every day in Chicago when I was doing business there."

"I used to go to Hot Springs, Ark. for a month every year, and I had no trouble in picking enough pockets to keep myself at a swell hotel."

How King Helped.

"The present king of England unknowingly aided me in robbing a man of \$10,000," said Fenton. "When he was a duke, in 1901, he visited Canada. The papers were full of stories about the great reception planned for him. According to a rumor I got a line on things. When we reached Montreal we decided to visit one of the banks with the idea of selecting a victim. It didn't take us long to pick a man who we knew had a considerable sum of money on him. We took up the trail. A reception for the duke was scheduled that day. While he went past in his carriage this man somehow got an opportunity to speak to him, and while they were conversing I robbed him of \$10,000. It was so easy it was a shame to do it. But in spite of the size of the haul it profited me nothing in the end."

China Drawing Nearer to Civil War Than Unity

Foreigners, Seeing Things Go From Bad to Worse, Prepare to Leave Country.

By CHARLES DAILEY.

Tingtao, Shantung, July 8.—It has been just one surprise after another to the Chinese, this taking over of the Shantung railway and the recovery of Tingtao and the Kiaochow leased territory. And the end is not yet. Every day some new point comes up. A few Japanese troops have gone home—mere "face pigdin"—but many more still remain, while the gendarmes, most autocratic in a way than the actual Japanese soldier, sit on the job all the way up to Tsinan, at the other end of the line, and they appear to be determined to stay, for the protection of Japanese interests, already being almost as official in Shantung as in Manchuria—more so if one excludes the railways.

No doubt China is getting as much as it deserves, for less than half the provinces are remitting to Peking. Corruption stalks on all hands, Peking wallows in the official mire of its own incompetence, continually levying new forms of taxes and as continually causing further revolts among the long-suffering, easy-going people. Meantime China draws nearer to civil war than to reunification, while the foreigners display more uneasiness and seeing things going from bad to worse prepare to send their families to the seaports and to go themselves the moment white troops are withdrawn or extra-territoriality abolished.

Dr. Charles T. Wang, head of the Shantung reorganization commission, fits between Peking and Tsinan and secretly wishes he had passed up the whole job and had remained with his business interests in Shanghai. Other members of the commission are in a like state of mind. They are eager to redeem Shantung for the Chinese people, but they find it a thankless and quite possibly a never-ending task.

The \$31,000,000 (Mex.) which the Chinese so eagerly pledged at Washington provide for the redemption of the railway is just like the million Americans whom William Jennings Bryan once said would spring to arms overnight. A draft is certain to come. And this will bring Peking full of overdrats.

Must "Feed" Underworld.

"Then there was the great underworld to help support—the saloonkeepers, the gamblers, the cabareters, and the like, because that is the game of the underworld, and if you are a member of it you play the game that way. All this kept me broke. Those people got the money I stole. I didn't get one worth-while thing out of it."

"What was worse, I paid twice over for that deal. My brother, falsely identified as myself, was sent to prison for a term and 18 months later I was brought back and did time on the same count."

"The man who steals is robbed of the best things he has. If you count only the money, a man who has been in a legitimate business for 20 years would have something to show for it if he had made the money in the length of time I did. After being in the game for 20 years I didn't have a thing to show for it. I started out in the world with a good character, with friends, with every chance to make good. I finished the game broke and broke in the worst possible manner."

"Instead of a good character I had a set of tricks to beat bad characters. I had companions who played me square enough, but no friends. I had people to help me for so much graft. I had no faith only bitterness and a knowledge that I was clever in a game where the cards were stacked against me."

"One day I was released from the Bridewell in Chicago, penniless, after having been in the game 20 years."

"Does stealing pay?"

"It is the best game that I know of to keep out of."

Dispute Over Who Is Boss at Home Is Aired in Court.

Elyria, O., July 8.—Dispute as to who was boss of their home was aired in police court when the wife of John Halos had him arrested on a charge of disorderly conduct.

When Halos was informed by Mayor Jones that he was only half-boss, Halos remarked: "That's the trouble with this country. The women want to run everything."

Halos was fined the costs.

Crooked Lawyer.

"But, you say, 'what did you do with all the money?'"

"I'll tell you. To begin with, I had the leeches to feed. The first was the crooked lawyer. He doesn't ask you how, or when, or where you got the

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