

THE OMAHA SUNDAY BEE MAGAZINE PAGE

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CLIMBERS-BEWARE SOCIETY'S SLEUTHS! THIEVES- IMPOSTORS-



Mrs. Anthony J.
Drexel in Her
Collection of
Wonderful
Turquoise and
Pearls—
of Which Some of the Latter Have Been Stolen.

Fashion Has Its Own Secret Service Now to Protect Not Only Its Jewels and Pocket books, But Its Daughters, Wives, Reputations and Peace of Mind

SOCIETY matrons are at last forced to take some notice of the fifty-seven varieties of people they run up against in their own and each others' houses. "Undesirable citizens" have been creeping into the most exclusive houses, a few more each year, until now society is using every possible means to get rid of them.

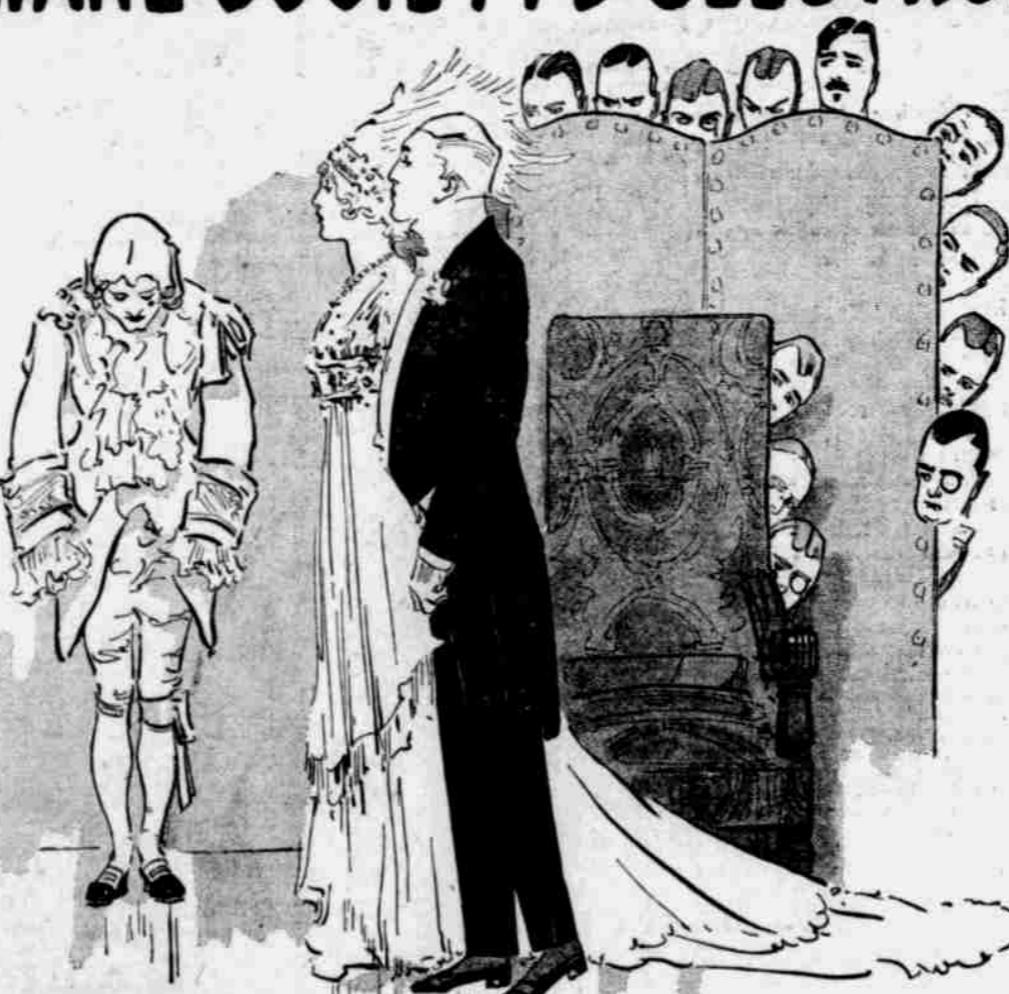
Thieves, climbers, impostors somehow succeed in slipping by the butlers and footmen and mingle with the invited guests. It is a most annoying situation, and to meet it society has formed a secret service of its own. This service undertakes to eliminate the uninvited guest before he even enters the door.

During the last three years, after every big dance, the police have been notified of "losses" of jewels, portable silver and even solid silver candlesticks! These thieves steal anything from diamond sunbursts to girls' hearts! Society matrons recognize the dangerous situations and are using unusual methods to protect their guests and themselves.

For years there has been in existence a mild form of secret service, but it is now antiquated. When New York society was smaller and living was less complex, a hostess always knew who she was feeding. To-day she does not.

Lucky is the modern hostess who knows three-fourths of her guests! Sounds queer, but it is as true as gospel.

At every large affair, a dance or reception, where guests number from two to five hundred, the hostess knows that perhaps one-fourth of her guests will be strangers to her. They will be friends of friends of hers. Out-of-town acquaintances of her sisters and her cousins and her aunts. Men to whom her husband wishes to show some courtesy.



"The secret service is made up of specialists—the visitors run the gauntlet of thief specialist, book-agent and promoter specialists, 'climber' and plain 'bull' specialists and half a dozen others."



Mrs. Wm.
B. Leeds,
Whose Se
cret
Service Protects
the Diamonds and
Emeralds She Is Wear
ing, and Also Keeps Away
Impudent, Poverty-Stricken
Noblemen Who Wish to Wed.

Wedding guests must present cards at the door. It is a case of "no ticked" entrance. The assistants once in a while made mistakes; Johnson never! If an important dowager forgot her card, Johnson always knew whether or not she belonged to the bride's or bridegroom's circle.

When Constance Knower was married to young Coleman Drayton, Mrs. Astor's grandson, a funny mix-up happened. Mrs. Astor had not attended a daytime affair for years. She was unknown to many people. When she alighted from her carriage at the church a "green" man held out a paw and said, "Your card."

Mrs. Astor reared her head and said, "I have left my card at home. I am"—"Nobody admitted without a card, mum; that's my orders!" And then Johnson himself appeared and saved the day!

With the new secret service this could not happen to-day. Johnson died three years ago, leaving his business to his sister, and she is developing it along the new lines. Society, owing to the present and state of affairs, needs more than police methods to defend itself. The men at the door acting as filters, the plain clothes men from Headquarters, cannot cope with the clever impostor of to-day.

It is the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief on which society now acts. There are numerous well-born, well-dressed young men in New York who have no visible means of support. There are others who possess clothes and manner, but no social position. These youths are the new members of the S. S. S.

Society says to them, "We ask you to our dances, our debutante receptions, on condition that you keep guard of our treasures, our jewels, silver, daughters!"

Odd, isn't it? Here is a band of young men, not one knowing who his fellow members are, acting as private detectives in the most exclusive houses! While they are dancing with a pretty but their eyes are busy following fellow guests; they spot unknowns much quicker than their hostess. And they run up against mighty queer impostors!

For instance, there is the book agent. What, a book agent at a Pierpont Morgan reception? Yes, indeed. He will not carry a book under his arm; he will not be peddling two-dollar editions of Shakespeare. Oh, no! He will be dressed in the most correct evening clothes. His waistcoat, his tie, his pumps, will be perfection. He will be nine times out of ten, a college man. But he is a book agent for a' that!

He will be taking orders for a rare edition of some unusual work. He will meet men at these affairs who delight in squandering money on rare editions, and a really clever agent will clear up several thousand dollars every time he "gets past" the

man at the door. Alas for him when the S. S. S. gets on his track!

Then there are the men, sometimes well born, always well educated, who merely want free meals. They have the latest things in evening clothes; they are perhaps known to the debutantes and their college brothers, but they are not on the hostesses' invitation list. They boldly enter the house when several others are hurrying in. The hostess decides he is one of her legitimate unknowns and passes him on.

The impostor dances and eats, eats and dances. He also drinks and secludes half a dozen boxes of cigarettes in his tall pockets! This guest would not "lift" a jewel if it fell at his feet. All he wants is free food and drink and a chance to say: "Oh, yes; I was at the Astor dance last night; bully time; food all to the merry; geo, I'm tired today."

Last Winter Mrs. Vanderbilt, Sr., gave a large dance at her home on Fifty-seventh street. More than three hundred invited guests attended, and at least a dozen uninvited ones. There were no jewels, no silver lost at this dance. There were one hundred members of the S. S. S. scattered about. But the dozen unknowns got two square meals, all the champagne they could drink, and cigarettes enough to last each one a week.

Two of these unknowns were finally spotted by Mrs. Vanderbilt. She knew that under no circumstances could they have been invited, and she sent a member of the

Newport police and private detectives engaged to trace the jewel to Paris. The police of Paris, all over the world, are now on the lookout for it.

Society is naturally very sensitive



Mrs. Robert Goelet, Who Has a Well Organized Set of Sleuths to Protect Her Jewels.

What Society's Secret Service Has to Guard Against

- 1—Thieves in dress suits and white kid gloves.
- 2—Lifting of portable silver and rare curios.
- 3—Impostors anxious to get free food and wine.
- 4—Stealing of daughters' affections and incidentally fortunes.
- 5—Book agents disguised as guests.
- 6—Promoters disguised as gentlemen.
- 7—Climbers (uninvited guests), male and female.
- 8—Chaussiers in evening clothes posing as gentlemen and prone to make love to aforesaid daughters.
- 9—Wine agents who buttonhole guests for orders.
- 10—Girl guests who steal favors belonging to more popular girls.
- 11—And, this Winter, cranks who loudly protest against the indecent dances now in vogue.

Some Matrons Who Use the Secret Service

Mrs. John R. Drexel, who has already lost \$50,000 worth of jewels. Mrs. Robert Goelet, who used the S. S. S. last Summer in Newport. Mrs. William B. Leeds, who uses the S. S. S. in London, too. Mrs. Ogden Goelet, who lost \$150,000 worth of jewels. Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish, who doesn't believe in mesalliances. Mrs. Ogden Mills, who has a horror of uninvited guests. Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, Sr., who had one hundred members of the S. S. S. at the wedding of her daughter Gladys and the Count Szekely. Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr., who has had \$10,000 worth of jewels stolen. Mrs. Townsend Burden, who has lost \$30,000 worth of diamonds and pearls. Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt, Sr., who is going to introduce the Secret Service in France. Mrs. Joseph Harriman, who has had sad experiences with impostors with thievery. Mrs. Oliver Belmont, who is training her suffragette aides for the job. Mrs. Clarence Mackay, who uses six members of the S. S. S. when she entertains even in her country home. Mrs. Edward Berwind, at whose ball last August a \$25,000 jewel was lost.

S. S. S. to request them to leave. They disappeared from view. At five-thirty in the morning, after the last guests had left, a footman discovered the two impostors sleeping on the floor of one of the small dressing rooms!

Episodes of this kind must be eliminated from fashionable society. The new S. S. S. will help greatly in thwarting the designs of ardent chauffeurs, eager to capture heiresses, wine agents who want to "pop" into society, promoters disguised as gentlemen, and climbers of all kinds.

The gentleman thief presents a more difficult, a more delicate, problem. It is one thing to accuse a man of securing free food uninvited; it is another thing to accuse him of lifting a pearl dog collar.

The recent scandal at the Lakewood Country Club calls attention to the difficulties of modern hosts.

Mrs. Jasper Lynch lost a valuable jewelled bag at a large dance given at the club. It developed afterwards that there were several uninvited men present. Naturally, suspicion points to these impostors. But nothing can be proved. Lakewood has no Society Secret Service, and her hosts are helpless.

At Mrs. Edward Berwind's ball in Newark last August Mrs. Lethrop Ames, who was one of the pretty Cryder triplets, lost a superb pearl and diamond pendant valued at \$25,000. This has not been found. There were several men and one or two women present who were unknown to both Mr. and Mrs. Berwind.

Mrs. Berwind noticed them, supposed them to be house guests of some of her friends and did not question their presence until the jewel "loss" was reported the next day.

The Newport police and private detectives engaged have traced the jewel to Paris. The police of Paris, all over the world, are now on the lookout for it.

These "agents" are supposedly collecting funds for some well-known charity, and when a prominent woman meets one in the house of her friends she frequently hands out cash.

But society is no longer willing to be an easy mark.