

NERVE AS A CROOK'S ASSET

Humble Innkeeper's Son Makes His Mark in Shady Lanes.

BIGGEST SWINDLER IN EUROPE

Posed as Prince, Marquis and Mon-signor of the Church and Then Scooped in Millions by Forgery.

Nerve was what kept this phenomenal rascal skating gracefully over the thinnest kind of ice. And his nerve has not deserted him, now that the ice has broken under him and he has sunk over-head in the muddy waters of trouble.

Behind his prison bars he seems, indeed—like most clever criminals—to take a sort of professional pride in his achievements. When he realized that dental was henceforth futile he shrugged his shoulders and said:

"I congratulate the Roman police. I have traveled all over the world and got away with many hundreds of thousands of lire. I have always succeeded in evading the police, and in two days I should have left Rome. My arrest is so great that once when I was abridged in France under the name of the Prince di Belmonte a lawyer wanted to defend me for nothing, and the public prosecutor said to me: 'You are the most intelligent man I have ever known.'"

"However, that which I stole I stole from the rich. I never trimmed anyone for less than 100,000 lire (\$20,000). What a pity that the law must punish me! I have helped an infinite number of poor priests. Today I had an appointment with another priest; instead, I am in jail. What a pity!"

This unique scoundrel is a sort of combination of Tartuffe and Barry Lyndon. He posed as a priest and wore priestly garb, but he was not content with that; for he wore purple at his throat and a purple sash, which indicated that he was a member of the church, and his visiting cards always had "Mon-signor" prefixed to the name. This latter varied. It was changed frequently, but always it sounded noble and was generally the patronymic of some family famous in the councils of the church.

A Crook in His Teens. The bearer of these noble names and ecclesiastical titles had no right to any of them. He was never a priest. He had no right to wear even a cassock, much less the purple of a prelate. He is just plain Giovanni Battista Gindri, son of a respectable Turin hotel keeper. He obtained his familiarity with church affairs while receiving his education in an ecclesiastical seminary. His father probably hoped that he would become a priest. But the youth found his vocation along very different lines.

Just when he began his career of swindling is uncertain, but it must have been when in his teens. He is now 27 years old. Eight years ago, in 1904, he was arrested and sentenced to six months in prison for swindling Father Biasevillo, a French missionary.

But recently he has been having comparatively easy sailing, although he has had to be careful, as warrants for his arrest had been issued in Turin, Milan, Novara, Saluzzo and other cities, and the police of all Italy, France, Germany and Austria were looking for him.

Only by his supreme nerve did he elude them. His name changed like the colors of a chameleon. Here he was Mgr. the Abbe Jean de Seville, there the Rt. Rev. Marquis de Saint-Mars, elsewhere the Rt. Rev. Prince Granito di Belmonte; in some places he was Mgr. Jean Boni de Gallier des Marquis de Villarmoir; again he posed as the Rev. Mgr. Edoardo Lanzetti. In one of his swindling games he was "private secretary to the archbishop of Paris."

Lightning Changes. At his boarding house in Rome he was simply Edoardo di Santo Stefano, theological student. It was only by such lightning changes of name and residence that he succeeded in keeping the fraudulent game going with impunity for so many years. It would be impossible and useless to make a list of those he has swindled. It is believed he has got away with several millions of francs in all. The greater number of his victims have made no formal complaint against him, preferring to pocket their losses rather than to suffer the chaffing of their friends because of their glibness. But it is known that among the sufferers are cardinals, archbishops, abbots of monasteries, mother superiors and abbesses of convents and noblemen and women who are charitably disposed.

How did he do it? In many ways. He forged letters of introduction from one bishop to another. He ingratiated himself here and there by conspicuous acts of charity and piety and so got genuine letters of introduction from prelates and nobles. Among those upon whom he imposed was the dowager duchess of Genoa, mother of Queen Margherita of Italy, in whose private chapel at Novara he said mass, and from whom he received a present.

When caught in Rome he was about to go to St. Peter's to say mass, the authorisation so to be signed by Cardinal Respighi, which signature is declared to be a forgery. At the Pontifical academy called "dei Nobili Ecclesiastici," in the Piazza della Minerva, letters addressed to him had been piling up for several days. They were all directed to "The Rev. Granito di Belmonte," a name he was using in certain quarters where he had passed as a nephew of Cardinal Granito di Belmonte. Many of these letters were in feminine hands and daintily perfumed. They were a puzzle to Monsignor Francesco Sogaro, archbishop of Armida, the president of the college, until he heard of Gindri's arrest and read the list of names the fellow had used. Then he sent all the letters to the police. They are said to throw a brilliant light on Gindri's methods.

Trunks Full of Loot. The police were astonished when they searched the trunks in Gindri's room in the Pension la Bella, in the Via del Babuino. His trunks and valises were of the finest leather, with gold-plated mountings. They were full of sacro-sacred garments of the finest broadcloth lined with silk and satin; laymen's suits made with the most fashionable tailors in Europe; collars and cuffs were in a box of carved ivory; there were a few ecclesiastical vestments of rich damask, a collection of richly illuminated and artistically bound breviaries; boxes containing stationery with embossed monograms, crests, coats-of-arms and coronets; two antique reliquaries, an ivory statue of the Virgin Mary, a gold watch and chain and many photographs of famous personages bearing their autographs and some of them affectionate messages.

The police of Rome had not yet discovered just what he was up to when they caught him. He had been there only two days, having come from Turin

He had called upon an engraver and ordered 300 visiting cards bearing the high-sounding name "Monsieur Jean Boni de Gallier des Marquis de Villarmoir," half of them with "Tours" as his residence, half with "Rome." He had paid four lire—about 80 cents—deposit on them, and had given as his address "No. 1, Via di Santa Chiara," which is that of the French ecclesiastical seminary.

The following day he had visited the studio of the Cavaliere Pelece, official photographer of the Vatican, and expressed a desire to buy the photographs of some cardinals. At his ease in a big arm chair the bogus prelate turned the pages of the big album, from which he selected pictures of Cardinal Merry del Val, Cardinal Rampolla and Cardinal Granito di Belmonte, which he took and paid for.

An Attractive Person.

A high percentage of the Vatican describes the adventurer thus: "He seemed an attractive person, both in face and in manners, although rather affected and slightly too unctuous. There was a certain indescribable something about him that made one hesitate to trust him fully. From the few sentences I exchanged with him I formed the impression that his culture was a layer of plating covering base metal."

"It was easy for him to penetrate the seminaries and the monasteries. Every one of these has a weak spot somewhere, and he had but to discover this. Remember how Mme. Humbert swindled in Paris and what a joke that rascal of Kopenik played on the German army? Well, Gindri has been our Mme. Humbert and our Captain of Kopenik combined."

Gindri's methods were as various as his names, and depended always upon the character of the man he was planning to entrap. He solicited aid for charitable or philanthropic objects, more often real than imaginary; he offered reinvestments of capital at higher rates of interest; here and there when he had an ambitious and not too scrupulous man to deal with he propounded schemes for this man's promotion by means of bribes placed in the right quarters.

There was nothing new about his swindles; they were the old, well-worn devices with which every one ought to be familiar, but which work just as effectively today as they worked in the time of Gil Blas.

Getting forged checks cashed was another and very simple method of obtaining money. When searched Gindri had in his pocket a check book on the Credit Lyonnais, which has branches all over Europe. The stubs in his book showed that checks aggregating many thousands of francs had been cashed for him by ecclesiastical dignitaries, although the only deposit he had made was one of 500 francs. In his pockets were also a solid silver purse containing 400 in foreign money, several diamond rings and a gold watch set with diamonds.

This extraordinary young scoundrel is

tall, slender, with a hooked nose, black eyes and black hair. He speaks Italian, French, German, English, Latin and Greek.

He is to be sent successively to each of the cities where he is "wanted," in each of them he will be tried, and if convicted, will be sentenced. So he has the prospect of four or five prison terms, one after another, in different parts of Italy.—New York World.

EMPTY FORMS OF THE LAW

William Penn, Called Out, Failed to Answer in a Philadelphia Court.

The conservatism of the law as it is practiced in Philadelphia received an absurd illustration recently in the loud summons by the clerk of the court to William Penn, Richard Penn and John Penn to appear in court in order that a certain title to land of which they were the original grantors could be cleared of an encumbrance.

No one suggested in his honor, the present Judge of common pleas No. 4 that William Penn has been dead 200 years and his sons, Richard and John, nearly as long. There was no need of such a suggestion. Everyone within hearing of the clerk's voice knew that it was a vain show and an empty form that was proceeding before their eyes. Through the idle crying of the names of men two centuries dead the demands of the law were satisfied, a title was cleared and a fresh demonstration given that the law is "the perfection of reason."

Lawyers apparently are content to perpetuate archaic forms of this character, but the observing laymen loses some of his respect for the law when he hears court officers calling loudly for William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, to come into court in this the second decade of the twentieth century. It is hard to convince him that there is not some more rational way of quieting the repose of the dead.

There is a strong suspicion entertained by many that the profession of the law is not up-to-date, that clings to forms outgrown and now unnecessary, that it considers the convenience of counsel and courts rather than the pressing interests of litigants, that it is dilatory and costly and looks to form more than it does to substance, that it is dreadfully uncertain and systematically and of set purpose nonprogressive, that it looks backward, not forward, so that a dignified judge with an entirely straight face can go through the solemn mummery of summoning before him in repeated calls a great man whose soul and body, as is known to all, parted company two centuries ago.—Philadelphia Press.

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Leading Manufacturing Cities

WASHINGTON, April 2.—A statement containing the thirteenth census statistics for the fifty cities in the United States which in 1909 stood highest in value of manufactured products, arranged in order of rank, with respect to value of products and also giving their rank as to average number of wage earners, and total value added by manufacture, was issued today by Director Durand of the Bureau of Census, Department of Commerce and Labor. It was prepared under the supervision of William M. Stewart, chief statistician for manufactures, and the figures were drawn from an advance bulletin now in press.

It is pointed out that the figure relates only to the manufacturing establishments situated actually within the boundaries of the several cities. In the case of practically every city listed there are important manufacturing establishments in the immediate vicinity, and in the case of the cities such outside establishments, which virtually constitute a part of the city's industrial interests, have a greater value of products than those within the city itself. The most notable instances of this character are Pittsburgh and Boston, which would rank decidedly higher in a table based on metropolitan or industrial districts than they do in the table for cities proper. While the population of Pittsburgh proper is 233,905, the population of the metropolitan district of Pittsburgh, as defined by the Census bureau, is 1,022,555. Similarly, the population of the Boston metropolitan district is 1,520,470, as compared with 670,385 for the city proper.

The rank of the cities of the country with respect to manufacture is in many cases decidedly different from their rank in population. Thus Boston ranks fifth in population, but eighth in value of manufactured products; Baltimore, seventh in population, but thirteenth in value of manufactured products; and Los Angeles, sixteenth in population, but thirty-second in value of products. Kansas City, Kan., on the other hand, by reason of the large slaughtering establishments there, ranks fifteenth in value of manufactured products, but is not among the fifty principal cities from the standpoint

of population. Of the fifty cities in the United States which have over 100,000 inhabitants, fourteen are not included among the fifty cities having the largest value of manufactures.

In the case of some of the cities listed in the table below the rank with respect to the number of wage earners and the value added by manufacture is very different from that with respect to the gross value of products, these differences being dependent upon the character of the predominating industries. It is noteworthy, however, that the thirteen cities, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Cleveland, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Boston, Buffalo, Milwaukee, Newark, Cincinnati and Baltimore, which rank highest in gross value of products are also the thirteen which occupy the highest rank with respect to wage earners and value added by manufacture, although considered individually, these cities do not in all cases hold the same rank in each of the three respects. Conspicuous instances of cities having higher rank in gross value of products than in number of wage earners or value added by manufacture are Kansas City, Kan.; South Omaha, Youngstown, Bayonne and Perth Amboy. On the other hand, cities which lead in the manufacture of textiles, such as Lawrence, Fall River, Lowell, New Bedford and Paterson, have a decidedly higher rank with respect to number of wage earners than with respect to either value of products or value added by manufacture.

The thirteen cities showing percentages of increase in the value of products, ranging over 100 per cent, between 1890 and 1909, arranged in ranking order, are: Perth Amboy, Los Angeles, Yonkers, Akron, Seattle, Camden, Youngstown, Kansas City, Mo., New Bedford, Indianapolis, Buffalo and Kansas City, Kan. In percentage of increase in average number of wage earners, the cities which showed more than 20 per cent between 1890 and 1909, arranged in ranking order, are: Los Angeles, Perth Amboy, Seattle, Camden, Detroit, New Bedford, Yonkers, Lynn, Bayonne, Syracuse, Waterbury, Omaha, Indianapolis, Bridgeport, Kansas City, Mo., and Buffalo.

Table with columns: CITY AND STATE, Wage Earners, Value of Products, Value Added by Manufactures, and % Per Cent Increase. Lists cities like New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, etc.

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SAVED BY NEWSPAPER STORY Chief Rocky Boy and His Rovins Band Rescued from Starvation and Indian. Word came to the Indian Bureau in Washington recently that Chief Rocky Boy and his Indians in the far northwest were satisfied with the home life, being contented and happy. Includes a photo of Rocky Boy.

Free Land Information The Twentieth Century Farmer, to meet the demand of its readers for land information, has gathered and compiled data on soils, climate and farming conditions in all parts of the country. Do You Want to Know About government land laws, location of land offices, etc.