

# Something for Nothing

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ALMOST unbelievably immense is the amount annually taken from the confiding American public by the schemers who don't always take the trouble to invent new swindles. The old ones are still potent, and especially so when put to work in new ways.

The average human being is generally willing to accept something for nothing, and it is this inveterate weakness the swindler takes advantage of. Hundreds of thousands of dollars a year are drawn by him under various guises and firm and corporation names, but the main avenue through which he works is the post office. Of the good name of that government is sensitively proud; it is zealous in its efforts to protect it and at the same time to protect the money and rights of the large number of citizens who are susceptible to the schemer's lure.

"There are no spectacular cases in view at the moment where brains have been used to invent new schemes to defraud," said United States Attorney Maxwell S. Mattuck recently, but a great many cases of ingenuity in employing old ones have been dug up. Every now and then a fresh avenue of fraud is opened; the scheme may be old but the victims of it are new.

In the department's recent activities flagrant violations were discovered whereby several thousand dollars were bilked from innocent victims who were ambitious to rank as composers of songs. The fakers posed as song publishing concerns and guaranteed, for sums ranging from \$75 to \$100, fabulous profits to writers of singable lyrics.

Alluring advertisements were sent out broadcast with reference to the vast fortunes made by authors of "Two Little Girls in Blue," "Alexander's Rag Time Band," and more modern popular songs hits. In consequence a vast horde of innocent persons knit their brains to compose verses, and when they thought they had succeeded, they forwarded them to the song publishers with the \$75 to \$100. In due time they received 50 copies of their songs set to music, printed on cheap paper. So far so good, but a longer time of waiting brought in no profits, and when the authorities took the matter up, they found that nothing further was intended by the fraudulent publishers.

Among the fraud orders issued by the postoffice department in the first six months of the present year were a number against the same man. He lives in Canada, although he is really an American citizen. Under many firm names he has been writing to the disappointed aspirants for prizes in newspaper, magazine and other contests in sympathetic terms and promising, for the insignificant sum of \$1, to put them "right" in contests that he said were forthcoming. While it might not seem that many persons would be likely to be caught by this bait, they were almost innumerable who came up with the dollar. And then they waited and never heard another word from their sympathetic friend.

### Entree to Heaven.

Thousands of colored persons in all parts of the country were sending a swindler of their own race last winter and spring \$10 for the "Keys to the Kingdom." They expected to get for their money some magic token that would insure them ready admission to Paradise. What they did get was a pamphlet containing a jumble of unintelligible words. The swindler was caught.

He is at his game again in another part of the country, but this time he is selling a salve which, if you anoint yourself with it in the full moon, will bring a remission of all your sins.

The swindler in Rochester who writes sympathetic letters to anybody who gets into the newspapers unpleasantly or otherwise is a sort of kin to the Canadian prize "Upster," but his game is to offer for a mere \$100 a letter that "fell into his possession" and that will clear up some doubtful point. For this amount he



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offered to sell Mrs. James Stijman a letter proving that Canadian witnesses had committed perjury in the divorce case. She turned the letter over to the postoffice department, which is after him. They believe that he is the man who similarly attempted to defraud Mrs. Theodore P. Shonts, Mrs. Thomas and W. E. D. Stokes.

The Family Crest Maker, who carried on a thriving trade in family trees by the aid of a rented typewriting machine and desk room on Fifth avenue is out of dur-

anceville and busy again. But he no longer offers his wares under the imposing title, "American Heraldic Institution," but asserts that he is a former member of the Ancient Order of Heralds instituted in the time of the Plantagenets, and is able by means of his familiarity with documents and family papers to trace anybody's lineage from Henry VIII down. He has increased his price for this service. As a humble American he formerly provided a family tree with innumerable branches for \$5; now as a serv-

ant of the Britannic office he charges \$15 for the same service. At the former figure he trimmed, it is said, judges, senators, governors and society women.

A mean game which started up shortly after the return of our service men from Europe is still being kept up, although exposed by the arrest and punishment of some of its perpetrators. It trades in the affections and sorrows of the parents and relatives of the boys killed in France, and the capital of the swindlers is a list of their names. They carry to these be-

reaved homes C. O. D. packages addressed to the dead veteran. Always there is a pretty steep bill attached to the package, but it is promptly liquidated. The man who takes the money gets out even more quickly, and what is found inside the package is always worthless.

### Get Short Sentences.

A reason for the continuance of these confidence games is thought by some lawyers to be a defect in the law. Long time sentences cannot be inflicted, and

the offender gets out soon and is able to begin all over again under a new name and in new surroundings.

One of the lightest sentences ever served was that given to a pretty Polish girl who called herself Bina Inawaska. She got one day in the society of the United States marshal.

Bina's was a matrimonial swindle. She advertised in western papers for a husband, and to the numerous men who answered her she sent a photograph, not of herself but of an even prettier girl. When that bait caught she wrote to the men to send on traveling expenses. From many of her correspondents she received money in amounts varying from \$25 to \$100. The men who remitted money never heard from her again.

Bina frankly admitted her guilt but pleaded that she was hungry and promised to reform. After serving her short term she disappeared.

By no means all the mail swindlers of the United States are arrested, though fraud orders stop their operations efficiently where the fake games are carried on exclusively through the postoffice. It often happens, too, that the postoffice inspectors are unable to get evidence to convict, so they do not hale these offenders to court. Very often also the frauds of the swindlers never come to the attention of the authorities.

A corresponding type of crime is said by Burgess Smith, formerly inspector of technical work for the United States bureau of engraving, to net the thieves annually more than \$35,000,000. This is the loot obtained by check and draft manipulators and forgers. Mr. Smith left last week for England to investigate protective measures taken by that country against such criminals.

Carelessness in the use of checks explains in a measure this large percentage of dishonestly acquired wealth.

Mr. Mattuck said there was comparatively little forging done in government paper because criminals are afraid of handling it, the penalty being greater than in similar offenses against banks and private individuals. However, he agreed that all signs seem to indicate that our people instead of growing wiser appear to become less sophisticated. In 1914 and 1915 more fraud orders were issued. Later the postoffice authorities cut them down in the belief that it would be wiser to prosecute criminally the operators of fraudulent schemes. Neither plan alone seems to deter the crooks. Business is sometimes continued "at the old stand" all through the periods of arrest, bail, trial and even imprisonment.

### Queer Companions.

The fraud order, on the other hand, puts a quietus on business conducted through the mails. Therefore the authorities are now using both methods.

In the list of what the postoffice calls mail swindlers are inducing betting on "fake" horse races and athletic contests, selling worthless goods through misrepresentation, obtaining commissions on fraudulent orders, selling divining rods for locating "gold" and other minerals, guaranteeing stocks and bonds, using forged bills of lading, brokerage frauds, getting money by impersonating other persons, getting goods under false pretenses, establishing fictitious agencies, using "no fund" checks, matrimonial schemes, running sham employment bureaus, selling interests in non-existent moving picture theaters, and, in a word, the list includes almost all kinds of plans to do the "sucker," from plain three-card monte juggling to blackmail.

It will pay anyone who would like to attempt to measure the credulity of mankind in affairs of business where humanity is expected to have a little caution to vary over a list of securities of wildcat reality that were noted in a will the other day. The very names tell what they are, but at least they were floated somewhere: Blue Pickle Aromatic company, Syrian Banking Corporation of Sialkot Island, Blue Pennel Investment association and Incorporated School for Mercantile Ideas.

## MARVELOUS GOTHIC ART WORKS ARE UNCOVERED AMONG RUINS OF ANCIENT METROPOLIS OF MEDIA

Excavations Conducted by H. Kevorkian, Who Has Just Arrived in America, Show Gothic Art Had Moslem Origin and Solves 1000-Year-Old Mystery That Till Now Has Baffled Archeologists.

WHEN the Rheims cathedral was bombed in the early days of the great war a universal cry of indignation went over the world.

One of the great shrines of Christendom, and one of the great temples of art, was mutilated and pictures of the martyred cathedral, its marvelous spires, friezes and stone traceries filled every home. This act alone stamped the German invasion as an invasion of barbarians to whom nothing was sacred, and vengeance for it fired the wills, not only of France, but of all civilization.

But what would many of these Christians who shuddered at the desecration of this wonderful church; what would art enthusiasts who were enraged by the demolition of this masterpiece of Europe have said if they knew that this glorious structure, the pride of western civilization, was inspired by Moslem art?

Recently there arrived in New York from Persia a noted archeologist, H. Kevorkian, who for many months past has been engaged in excavating a long-buried Persian city that promises to give to history and art as much valuable material as the ruins of Pompeii and the entombed cities of Egypt.

The city was the metropolis of Rhages, called the "bride city" of the world, and capital of ancient Media, and for ages held its own with all the wonderful cities of ancient time like Babylon, Nineveh and Tyre. It was a center of the arts and splendors of the luxurious east, until the savage jingling Khan swept down upon it, nearly a thousand years ago, in

the sand storms of Egypt swallowed up the ancient capitals of Egypt. Rhages was broken and buried.

It was this quaint city that Mr. Kevorkian dreamed of uncovering, and in 1910 his dream seemed on the eve of realization when the Persian government gave him permission to excavate on this site. But that was one of the least of his difficulties, as many influential persons opposed the project on the ground that excavations so near the capital city, with its crowded hundreds of thousands, might result in pestilence. Others opposed him because they held that the undertaking was sacrilegious.

However, Mr. Kevorkian did not give up. He assembled between 500 and 1000 workmen. He trained them himself and directed the work. Surmounting tremendous difficulties, he managed to bring them water and food, and provide for their comfort in a way that surprised even the French archeologists, who admitted that, with all their resources, they could not have done as well.

As objects were freed from their nearly thousand-year imprisonment, Mr. Kevorkian's surprise and enthusiasm kindled. Rhages, it was evident, had been second only to Bagdad as a center of Mohammedan culture, and the tragedy of the city had preserved Mohammedan art at its highest perfection. Other centers have actually suffered more in an artistic way from the gradual decline of Moslem culture than Rhages in its complete destruction. In its revelation of pure Mohammedan art, Rhages provided the lost link between Gothic art and its source in Moslem architecture.

Decorations like those that appear on

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## MANY NEWSBOYS INTERESTING FOLK AND MAKE GOOD MONEY AT GAME

Prominent Men Recall Their Start Toward High Road of Success and Some of Events of Their Paper-Hawking Days.

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name as Zowa Zwa and claims to be 90 years of age. He says he was a laborer all his life and is accustomed to the hardest sort of work and a gnarled and twisted frame seems to prove his statements. Some of the interesting events in St. Francis' life, according to himself, were hearing Lincoln debate when he was 6 years old, spitting nails at the time Lincoln was nominated and building a fence of the same nails at the time the great president was elected to his first term. St. Francis is very religious and says that he was one of the first Christian Scientists and knew Mary Baker Eddy personally. He also claims that Henry George got some of his single tax ideas from a story that he wrote on the subject that George set in type when employed as a printer in the office of the Western Hampton Times at Westfield, Mass. He says that he has walked across the continent both from north to south and from east to west.

The pioneer of all morning paper salesmen is John W. Bowman, who sells at Broadway and Morrison at nights and at First and Alder streets in the morning. Bowman came to Portland in 1906 from Denver where he had been selling papers for 17 years. He is one of the crack salesmen in the game today, is married and owns his own home. Before he went into the newspaper game he used to be a shoe-shiner working with one arm. He lost his arm in a railroad accident.

Up on Tenth and Washington streets any night, no matter what the brand of weather, Smithy is to be found in the same place he has had for the past six years. He says that he lost his leg trying to beat a railroad train to a crossing, something they are yet trying to do with

reared homes C. O. D. packages addressed to the dead veteran. Always there is a pretty steep bill attached to the package, but it is promptly liquidated. The man who takes the money gets out even more quickly, and what is found inside the package is always worthless.

## GOthic cathedrals appear on the loosened friezes, the fallen columns and broken arches of the ancient Mohammedan structures raised up from their tombs of sand. Even in matters of construction there was a strange similarity, the pointing spires of the Gothic cathedrals were variations of the curving spires of the old-time mosques, twisted to represent the curves of flames. The ornament in many cases employs the same design, almost as if the same artist had carved in the stone of these different temples.

The statues are remarkably like the statues that appear in the niches along the sculptured walls of the Gothic cathedrals. They have the same pose and the arrangement of their draperies and the working out of their pedestals is almost alike.

These and hundreds of other convincing similarities offer mute proof, after so many centuries, of the astonishing fact that during the very time when Christianity and Islam were locked in fierce struggle, their arts were being interchanged in a spirit far from the bitter temper of war.

Snow Is Insured.

A unique insurance policy was that drawn in favor of a motion-picture organization engaged in producing "The Two Orphans," says the Scientific American. This film calls for a veritable snow storm, and the policy provided that in the event of such a storm not occurring before November 20, \$25,000 would be paid the producing company. Contracts with leading actors expired on that date, and no snow would mean re-engagement at prohibitive expense, or "shooting" all scenes over again with a new cast.

Fox Farming Profitable. Scientific American. Fox farming in Prince Edward island last year produced a revenue of \$1,240,000, nearly as much as the island's fish and dairy products combined. Three thousand pairs of breeding foxes resulted in an increase in young of 7500.

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