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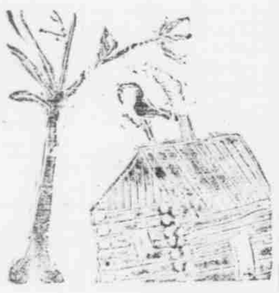

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"The slickest piece of work in the way of a fraud conducted through the mails that has come to my attention recently," remarked Chief Inspector Sharp, of the Post-office Department, "is what we call the bogus medicine dodge. The ingenious author of this scheme now languishes in jail, but, at the same time, he showed himself to be a man of no mean order of ability. His plan was to send out circulars announcing a great cure for catarrh, which was discovered by himself, after many years of study and investigation. He then proceeds to give, without cost, the prescription for this wonderful medicine, and enumerates twelve ingredients which enter into its composition. At the end of the circular is a note which states that if the druggist does not happen to have all these ingredients the prescription will be filled and forwarded upon the receipt of three dollars. The person receiving the circular, and desirous of trying the remedy, takes the prescription to the drug store, but is told by the druggist that he has three of the ingredients, but not the other nine. He looks through his book, but fails to find even their names, and so, of course, he is unable to furnish the desired medicine. The discoverer of the remedy is applied to, and if the three dollars has been furnished, a bottle of some mixture is sent on, which, of course, is entirely worthless.

"That is one phase of the case," continued the Inspector. "Now the man prepares, and causes to be published in some paper in New York city, an article about the prominent doctors of New York City, with a portrait of each, and a sketch giving some account of the life and services of each. All the men mentioned are bona fide doctors, the leading men in the profession, with the exception of a man whose name is, say, Dr. Hart. He is unknown, but the sketch states that he left a practice of twenty five thousand dollars a year to devote himself to the practice of his specialty—catarrh. The bogus medicine man then procures a large number of copies of this paper, and makes the picture of Dr. Hart and the sketch sends copies, together with the circular, broadcast throughout the country. In consequence he receives an immense mail, and large numbers of money orders, and registered letters. After the Postmaster-general had collected that no more money orders and registered letters should be delivered to Dr. Hart, he accumulated in the Brooklyn Post-office that had been sent to him. When an attempt was made to find Dr. Hart, of course no such a man could be discovered; but a sign over a door at the advertised number was found and that was all. A Dr. Lawrence occupied the same rooms, and to him the mail was delivered, and when he was told that the letters could not be given to him, as he was not Dr. Hart, he went off and got a power of attorney by which Dr. Hart authorized him to receive the mail. About this time, however, the officers came in and relieved him of further anxiety about his mail matter. Dr. Lawrence was managing some other business under the name of Lawrence, while his real name was Crosby. He must have made a great deal of money, as one of the witnesses on the trial testified that he had offered $2,000 to personate Dr. Hart.

"It is a regular thing," observed the Chief. "Now these offers to pay something for nothing take with the people, and how rogues fatten upon the credulity of the public. There is another species of fraud, which one would naturally suppose had been given such wide publicity that no one would now be deceived in it. I mean the counterfeit-money dodge, where men propose to forward a large amount of counterfeit money by express or mail, on the receipt of a small amount of genuine money to pay for the manufacture. Usually all that the victim receives in return is a box filled with sawdust. But a recent operator has devised a new plan. He locates near a small town in a country district and then writes in letters. He does not offer to forward the counterfeit money, but invites persons to visit his place, inspect his stock and buy what they wish. When the visitor arrives the operator has a large quantity of good bills which he shows him and allows him to examine. In order, however, to avoid outside interference, the visitor is taken off in the woods where the business proceeds. The operator produces his money and the visitor examines it and determines how much he will take and what price is to be paid. Just as they are about to close the bargain two men come in upon the scene, announce themselves as detectives, and proceed to place them under arrest. The detectives do not fail to take all the money from both the men. As they are about to march them both off to the town, the operator obtains permission to speak privately with the victim. He asks him how much more money he has than what he was going to use in the transaction, and if he has more, he advises that they had better try and buy off the detectives, for if they don't they will both land in the penitentiary. The victim is ready to pay anything to get out of the grasp of the supposed representatives of the law, and offers a guess to contribute to a fund to pay the detectives. The latter, of course, accept the bribe, and, pocketing all the money, disappear. The victim gets away as fast as possible, and goes home and never says a word about his loss. He is too much ashamed."—Washington Star.

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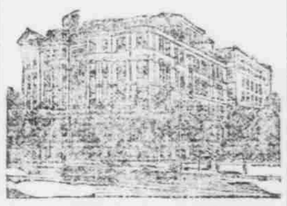

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