

MEN'S POCKETS.

HOW A HUSBAND ESCAPED FROM A GRAVE PREDICAMENT.

Men's pockets exert a strange fascination upon women. Many and many a quarrel has been precipitated upon a quiet and trustful household by the wife in an inquisitive mood thrusting her fingers into the pockets of the coats or waistcoats dangling from the nails of a wardrobe. She finds a card, a letter, a bit of golden hair, or some little gewgaw of feminine apparel, and green-eyed jealousy immediately takes possession of her soul. Sometimes she rushes with demonic fury upon her unsuspecting lord and master, waving aloft the tell-tale card or letter; but more frequently she bids her to her mamma, and the twain betake them to a sharp detective, who is instructed to work up the case. Maude is engaged to Joe Burleigh, called 'Barly Joe' at the athletic clubs, where he is what is known as a good all round man—which is Greek to me. While Maude and Joe were pursuing the phantom of love's young dream in the back parlour, Maude, woman like, began rummaging in Joe's coat pockets. She criticised his handkerchief and the perfume he used; she commented upon his cigarette case and match box, and asked the one to which each key in the bunch was put. At last it occurred to her that she hadn't had her little fingers in Joe's right hand vest pocket, and so down into its depths they were thrust incontinently. There was a sudden start, a deeper grab, a drawing forth and a holding aloft—'what think you? Why, half a dozen as dainty little silver hair pins as were ever thrust into a Grecian coil. Now, as Maude's hair was as black as night and she naturally affected gilt pins, it was impossible for Joe to claim that he had bought them for her, so turning all colours, he stammered out the real truth of the matter, that he didn't know and couldn't tell how the silver pins came in his vest pocket. Maude refused to believe him—they had been bought for some other girl, some horrid thing with taffy-coloured tresses. She appealed to him to make a clean breast of it, promising to forgive him if he told her the whole truth. Suddenly, Joe caught his weeping sweetheart up in his stout arms and tossed her up into the air as if she were a fifty-pound dumb-bell.

'Harrah, Maude! I have it,' he cried. 'You know that Archie Lewis is in love with that strawberry blonde, Kitty Williams. Well, Archie and I have adjoining lockers at the gymnasium. Our clothes often get mixed, as we use the same line of hooks. This afternoon I reached the club before Archie, and he no doubt hung his vest up alongside of mine. Then as he continued to undress he found these silver hairpins in his trousers' pocket, and wishing to transfer them to this pocket he reached up and slipped them, not into his, but into my pocket. That's the way the thing happened. I can see it all now as plain as a pikestaff.'

'Yes,' said the delighted Maude, 'and they are just the shaped pins that Kitty wears. Oh, Joe, I didn't doubt you for a minute, but please don't frighten me like that again.'

MARRIAGE AMONG CRIMINALS.

THE MOST HARDENED CRIMINALS PERMITTED TO WED.

It is well known that the larger part of the criminal classes are unmarried people. Some philanthropists, particularly in Europe, have time and again reiterated their belief that matrimony, with the loving responsibilities that parents assume, would redeem from lives of crime many an outcast who is now regarded as wholly irreclaimable. There is reason to believe there is more sentiment than truth in this pleasant theory. In at least one country marriage is authorized by law between the most hardened criminals during the period of their punishment for hideous crimes. This country is the island of New Caledonia, in the Pacific Ocean, to which many hundreds of the worst offenders against society in France, including a great many women, are transported for life. It cannot be said that this matrimonial experiment is a great success.

F. Ordinaire has recently visited the convent of Bourail in New Caledonia. It is vulgarly called the 'Paddock' by the male convicts, because it is to this convent that they are permitted to go for the purpose of selecting wives from among the hundreds of Frenchwomen who are confined there. This privilege is given them only after some years of residence on the island, when the men who have obeyed the rules of prison life are permitted to build huts outside the prison walls, to choose wives from the convent, and to devote their future life to the care of their families.

Mr Ordinaire interviewed the Mother Superior on this matrimonial scheme, and learned that she regarded it as an utter failure so far as reformatory influences are concerned.

'Our duties here are very simple,' she said. 'We have the care of the unfortunate women who are sent to us from France until they are married. When a male convict desires to take a wife he comes here, informs me of the fact, and I call all the female convicts down into the court, where he surveys the crowd and chooses one who pleases him. Then they go with me into the parlour, where they talk over the conditions of their union, and if the woman desires to wed the man the bans are proclaimed and the marriage takes place in church after the delay required by law. I have assisted at forty of these marriages in a single day.'

'Do these marriages turn out well?'

'Alas, they do not,' said the Mother Superior. 'The women leave the church on the arms of their husbands and go to their new homes, but it is rare that they make these homes happy or in any way attractive. They are far more likely to descend to lower depths of depravity than to become self-respecting women. The children of these unions are, if possible, more degraded than their parents. In my opinion the regeneration of criminals through the family life is a prodigious failure, and I believe that such marriages should not be countenanced, but should be prohibited by law.'

FULLY EQUAL TO FICTION.

HOW A LAWYER UPSET A CASE OF CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

There is no signet of the imagination—if it is at all within the limit of possibilities—more curious or strange than some things that actually happen. The following is an instance in proof of this:

A few years ago Frank Millet, the well-known artist, war correspondent and story writer, published a short story in a leading magazine which had as its principal feature the mysterious killing of a Parisian artist in his own studio. A web of circumstantial evidence led to the arrest of a model who had been in the habit of posing for him. But through some chain of circumstances which the writer of this has now forgotten, the murder—if murder it can be called—was found to have been caused by the discharge of a firearm through the force of capillary attraction. The firearm was used by the artist as a studio accessory, and was hung in such a manner that he was directly in line with it. Its discharge occurred when he was alone in his studio.

The story was a vivid and ingenious flight of the imagination. Now for its parallel in fact:

A recent number of the *Albany Law Journal* tells of the arrest of a man upon the charge of killing his cousin. The dead man was found lying upon a lounge, about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, with a .32 calibre ball in his brain. The cousin who had an interest of \$100,000 in his death, was alone with him in the house at the time. The discovery of the real cause of death was due to the lawyer of the accused, who took the rifle from which the ball had been fired, loaded and hung it upon the wall, and then marked the form of a man upon a white sheet and placed it upon the lounge where the man had been found. Then a heavy cut-glass pitcher of water was placed upon a shelf above. The temperature was 90 deg. in the shade. The pitcher of water acted as a sun glass, and the hot rays of the sun shining through the water were refracted directly upon the cartridge chamber of the rifle. Eight witnesses were in the room, and a few minutes after 3 o'clock there was a puff and a report, and the ball struck the outlined form back of the ear, and the theory of circumstantial evidence was explored.

This is interesting not only because the real occurrence is quite as strange as the imagined one, but because the fact came after the fiction and paralleled it so closely.

ONE may ruin a score of his fellows and be easily forgiven; but let him ruin himself and there's nothing too harsh that may be said of him.

✕ FOR Invalids and Delicate Children, AULSEBROOK'S ARROWROOT and TEA BISCUITS are unsurpassed.—(ADVT.)

FLAG BRAND PICKLES and SAUCE cannot be equalled HAWKARD BROS., Manufacturers, Christchurch.—(ADVT.)

HIGHEST AWARDS EVERYWHERE.



LONDON,
PARIS,
BOSTON,
SYDNEY,
MELBOURNE

PHILADELPHIA,
EDINBURGH,
ETC.

Pears'

For TOILET and NURSERY.

Specially prepared for the Delicate Skin of Ladies, Children, and others sensitive to the weather, winter or summer. Imparts and maintains a soft, velvety condition of the Skin, and

soap

Prevents Redness, Roughness, and Chapping.

DR. REDWOOD, Ph.D., F.C.S., F.I.C.—"I have never come across another Toilet Soap which so closely realises my ideal of perfection. Its purity is such that it may be used with perfect confidence upon the tenderest and most sensitive skin—even that of a new born babe."