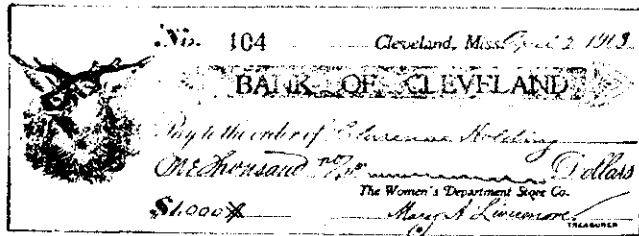


There are such things as secret signatures in the business world, but they are not always proof against the forger who can call photography to his aid. Mrs. Mary A. Livermore, Treasurer of the Women's Departmental Store Company,

"y." The bank paid this thousand dollar cheque without a suspicion, and then it was discovered to be a forgery. The signature must have been photographed and reproduced. The bank demurred at standing the loss, putting forward wo-



FORGED CHEQUE—A SECRET SIGNATURE COUNTERFEITED WITH THE AID OF PHOTOGRAPHY.

of Cleveland, Ohio, adopted a signature which was known only to herself, the cashier and paying teller of the bank. As may be seen from the facsimile, the characteristics were the two dots over the "i" and the blot in the loop of the

man's proverbial weakness in keeping a secret as the basis of a claim that the treasurer had described the signature to other persons. In the end the bank was obliged to restore the \$1,000 to the drawer's account.

## Behind the Banker's Bureau.

Amusing inside information about American banking methods—How they affect social life—Not quite the same in New Zealand—Yet.

EVERY morning, says a special reporter of the "New York Herald," a lot of persons get out of bed wondering how they can beat a bank, and every morning the conscientious and careful banker wonders, as he munches his breakfast roll, what novel job of rascality will be brought to his knowledge before three p.m. It is as true now as it was twenty-five years ago that eternal vigilance is the price of safety in the management of all institutions of the banking character.

### ENEMIES OF BANKS HAVE NOT BECOME FEWER.

They merely have been redistributed as to class. The old order changeth, giving place to the new, and crime renews itself in different ways. Undoubtedly the percentage of victimised monetary institutions is much smaller than formerly, but this is due to the greater efficiency of the precautions of bankers rather than to any lessening of the numbers of evil-minded persons.

At a meeting of alienists in New York city the other day a celebrated American expert told of an interview he had with Cesare Lombroso last summer in Turin and repeated a remark made by the late Italian criminologist as to factors making for insanity in the United States.

"You may expect," said Lombroso, "that with the rapid multiplication of

banks in America there will be an aggravation of certain obscure mental disorders. The spectacle of large sums of gold, silver and paper currency lying exposed to view in a bank and apparently belonging to no one in particular develops a latent insanity regarding possession. Employers should be careful not to permit any employee not of obviously well balanced faculties to have the duty of regularly depositing money for them in a bank, for the exhibits at the teller's window may uncover an unsuspected mania."

So far as open, notorious, flagitious criminality confronts them, bankers have carried precautions in the twentieth century to a point where the grossest forms of felony will have less scope each year. Occasionally the "hold up man" operates successfully in an up country bank, but the percentage of bank burglary is falling steadily and fast.

Embezzling bank officials and employes form the second smallest percentage. But their number also is diminishing under the pressure of heavy sentences, though, according to the president of a big Manhattan bank, every time the newspapers record the arrest of a discovered bank embezzler half a dozen undiscovered scoundrels mutter beneath their breath, "Wonder if I'll be the next."

Thanks to the energy with which the Bankers' Association follows up

### THE FORGER OF DRAFTS,

notes, checks and certifications, the criminal of this group finds that his trade suffers severely from the high cost of living.

In the broader field of offending against the general banking law considerable activity continues; but substantial terms of imprisonment for a few notable offenders and indictments for others bid fair to improve the position materially in such particulars as excessive loans, over-certification and the unwarranted extension of credit facilities.

Of late, however, with the multiplication of banks and the competition for new accounts, conservative bankers are finding that it pays them to keep

### A MORE WATCHFUL EYE

upon the depositor than once was thought necessary or even expedient. In several instances, banks have organised "information departments" through which in a confidential way they are able to keep track of a depositor as to whose social or business habits any ground for criticism might be alleged or suspected.

Impertinence, do you say? Not exactly. Meddling in matters that do not concern them? Not exclusively. Banks in the United States, like those in France, Germany and England, are becoming something more than mercantile conveniences. They have a definite part in the social system; and it is altogether distinct from that of the ordinary trade establishment, to which one person's

Espionage in these circumstances means infinite tact and judgment. A similar system is applied elsewhere much oftener than is suspected by the average depositor, when it is found that a customer keeps a personal account in more than one bank, or a number of accounts of a fiduciary nature in as many institutions—possibly in districts widely separated—and has a habit of interchanging between them and into a local personal account. Nor is the espionage limited to depositors in the categories indicated.

At a celebrated bank the cashier makes it a point, so far as is practicable, to

### KNOW THE ANTECEDENTS, SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND PRIVATE BUSINESS OF ALL HIS DEPOSITORS.

It seems a strong statement, but without the least annoyance to those with nothing to hide he contrives to get hold of a mass of useful information regarding persons who are earmarked by the melady Lombroso defined to the American alienist.

Here is an illustration. It involves a New Jersey man. One morning a New York newspaper, describing a social function held right away in New Jersey, mentioned among other incidents of interest that the guests danced an old-fashioned minuet on a dragon carpet, which, according to the host, had been in his family for more than half a century, having been purchased by an



THE SPECTACLE OF LARGE SUMS OF GOLD, SILVER AND PAPER CURRENCY DEVELOPS A LATENT INSANITY REGARDING POSSESSION.

patronage is as welcome as another's. They have come to be considered more or less as sponsors for their depositors; and the latter are more and more inclined to name their banks first in their credentials of social eligibility.

### EVERYBODY KNOWS HOW IT WORKS.

In New York are several banks we are not dealing, of course, with savings banks, but with institutions carrying cheque accounts—where women constitute a majority of the patrons. They are conducted with as much circumspection as to choice of depositors as could be exercised by a club of the highest tone in the selection of members.

ancestor from an Englishman who got it from a Turk during the Crimean War.

That afternoon the cashier was talking at the bank with the head of a New York carpet house, and the conversation turned to carpets.

"Old carpets seem to be as much of a curiosity as old paintings," he said. "I saw in a Jersey newspaper as I rode in this morning that one of our depositors had been entertaining his friends with a dance on a dragon carpet dating back to the Crimea."

"How's that? I sent a dragon carpet yesterday on approval to a Jerseyman. I forget the name; but, come to think of it, I believe he gave your bank as his reference."

"Funny," mused the banker, reaching for the cashier's telephone; the carpet man called his office, and was informed that the dragon carpet had been returned because too large for the room. Name of proposed purchaser? Same as the depositor's.

Within forty-eight hours the cashier had learned that the gown worn by the depositor's wife at the function—it had been described in the newspapers as "a beautiful confection, bought last month in Paris"—had been sent on approval by a Thirty-fourth-street dress-maker and returned the day after the dance as "not quite what my husband thinks I should wear—not recherche enough." The lady had told the dress-maker that her husband "keeps his account with the So-and-So bank."

But it was the last time either husband or wife had the privilege of this valuable reference. The account was closed out after the circumstances leading to



WOMEN CONSTITUTE A MAJORITY OF THE PATRONS.