His Expensive Lesson

By Andrew Stewart

The two men were sitting at the same table in the lounge of a well-known haunt in the West End of London, and they had fallen into talk.

"It fairly beats me,' said the prosperous middle-aged man, who looked what he actually was, a manufacturer from the Midlands. "I just can't understand how any man with his wits about his ever falls for this confidence trick stuff."

He was commenting upon a case of the kind, reported under big headings in the evening paper, which they had been discussing. His chance companion, a well-dressed, hard-bitten fellow a few years his junior, smiled at the other's incredulity.

"That's just how I used to look at it," he said quietly. "But you'll find that it's always the smartest and most confident of men who get nailed. They work on mighty clever, psychological lines, these confidence tricksters."

"Psychological lines?" queried the manufacturer.

"I mean that they study their victims before they begin to work. They enter into conversation with a man—a colonial or one from foreign parts, for preference—and though he does not know it, they are probing him for his little weaknesses and foibles all the time. Soon they've got him placed as to type and apply the method for that type; and nine times out of ten they get away with it. Still," he added, "we'll trail this bunch."

The manufacturer regarded the speaker with increased interest. "We? How d'you mean?"

"Oh, returned the other easily, "I'm from the Yard."

The other's eyes widened. "What! Scotland Yard?" he asked.

His companion nodded. "Yes. I'm usually put on to these cases. Sort of specialty work. We get to know the habits and haunts of these gangs. I'm half expecting they may show up here to-night; or if not to-night, to-morrow or the day after, and they'll show the usual traces of suddenly acquired wealth. D'you se that chap in the black felt, sitting at the far end of the bar?" he asked.

"Yes, I see him. Why, d'you suspect him about this? answered the manufacturer, tapping the newspaper containing the report.

The detective laughed. "No, he's not a crook. He's working with me."

"Pretty exciting way of earning a living," rejoined the manufacturer. "Selling steel goods satisfies me, thanks. Well, what about another drink?"

"Thanks, I don't mind if I do. A bitter, please."

The dealer in steel signalled to the waiter and ordered the drinks.

"So you work in couples?" he asked.

"No, not usually. But if our guess about this case is right, we're up against a pretty tough tough gang."

The detective put his finger to his lips as the waiter aproached. Experiencing the pleasant thrill of a conspirator, the manufacturer paused and, taking out a bulging note-case, selected a pound note. When the waiter had given him his change and departed, the detective leant across the table.

"If you'll take a tip from me, sir, you won't make a habit of showing a wad like that in this kind of joint," he said in a low tone. "If a confidence man saw that, he'd start operations right away."

The manufacturer laughed heartily. "No confidence trickster would ever make a pigeon of me."

The detective studied him carefully. "No, I guess you wouldn't be easy to pluck that way," he agreed at last. "You're too shrewd. Still, if I might say so, it wasn't quite discreet of you, with that amount of money on you, to make the acquaintance of a stranger and let him see what you had on you."

With a pleased chuckle the manufacturer answered him: "Huh! d'you think I'd have let you see, if I hadn't known you were a detective?"

"There's something in that; but you've only got my word for it that I am from Scotland Yard."

"By Jove, that's so," admitted the other doubtfully.

"Oh, I'm all right,' said the detective reassuringly. "Still, in your place I'd want proof. Why not call up the Yard and ask Inspector Jones whether he's got two men—Parsons and Martin—at this hotel this evening?"

"I won't trouble. I'm a pretty good judge of men. Tell me some more about your work."

"As long as I'm not keeping you," said the detective. "I've got to hang around anyhow."

The manufacturer took out his unchained watch and glanced at it. "I've got half an hour yet."

"Well now, to come back to your risks, aside from confidence men, there's pickpockets."

The manufacturer looked almost hurt. "Pickpockets rob me! Oh, no," he affirmed confidently.

"Perhaps not: but the risk is there," insisted the detective. "No one ought to cart around big sums like that. I'd go farther, and say you deserve to lose it, especially coming to a crook joint like this."

"A crook joint, is it? Well, that interests me, but it doesn't frighten me. As it happens, I was paid four hundred odd in cash on a deal to-day, and it'll go back to Birmingham with me on the ten train."

"Excuse me," murmured the detective, "I must leave you; my colleague has just signalled."

Through the mirror in front of him, the man from Birmingham saw the detective in earnest conversation with his colleague, and thrilled with the conjecture that one of the gang might have come in. Then the detective ordered two drinks, returning with them to the table.

He set his own drink on the table and, in reaching over the manufacturer's shoulder with the other, he caught the stem of the glass and the liquor spilt down his coat.

"I'm terribly sorry," he said concernedly, whipping out a handkerchief and wiping down the front of the manufacturer's coat. "Thank goodness, it's neat spirit: it'll soon dry off. I'll get the glass refilled."

He was back in a few moments with the drink, and, setting it down, he whispered: "My colleague thinks he saw one of the gang put his head round the door. I'm going out to confirm."

In less than three minutes he returned. "Not a sign of him," he said, in a tone of annoyance.

"You'll forgive the liberty, I'm sure," he went on, taking the manufacturer's note-case from his own pocket, and handing it to him; "but you needed the lesson."

The other stared incredulously from the note-case to the detective. "How on earth did you get hold of this?" he demanded.

"One of the pickpocket's simplest ruses. I know and practice them all. I took it when I was wiping you down."

"Well, I'll be hanged!" exclaimed the manufacturer.

"And so you deserve to be," laughed the detective. "Why, you haven't even examined it."

"And I'm not going to," returned the other good-humoredly. "I deserve to lose anything you've taken, for putting me wise."

"Oh, I've not even opened it," the detective assured him. "By the way, I'm not tired of your company, but you did say you had a train to catch."

The other's hand went to his watch pocket, only to be withdrawn as a sheepish look overspread his features. The grinning detective dropped the watch into its owner's extended palm.

"Convinced now?" he queried disarmingly.

"I am," answered the chastened manufacturer.

The detective rose with him. "Well, I'll see you safely into your taxi, sir," he said genially.

"That's very friendly of you," said the manufacturer, his hand going to his breast pocket. "I think I ought to give you a fiver for such a valuable lesson."

"I wouldn't think of taking it," retorted the detective in an offended tone, pulling the man's hand down. "It's my job to protect the public."

"Sorry; I meant no offence," said the manufacturer hastily.

"Sure, I understand,' rejoined the mollified detective, and he hailed a passing taxi.

"King's Cross," ordered the manufacturer, turning to shake hands warmly with his protector. "Good-bye, and thanks again for your very practical object lesson."

The detective laughed easily. "Good-bye, sir; remember, the confidence men work by psychology."

Mr. Benjamin Consett, manufacturer of steel goods, reached his home in Birmingham that night without misadventure. His loyal wife was waiting up, to share the cold supper, and to listen to his account of his day in London. She listened entranced to his story of his exciting encounter with the detective.

"He was quite right, Ben," she stated emphatically, as he concluded. "You'd better give me the money now, and I'll lock it in the safe while you finish your supper."

Her husband smiled indulgently and handed her the note-case.

"Right-o, my dear. Take them out and count them. There should be two hundred-pound notes, one fifty, fifteen tens, and three or four pounds. Why, dear, what's wrong?"

His question came sharply upon an exclamation of dismay from his wife. She looked acros sat him with an expression of infinite pity, and passed the contents of the case across to him.

There were two ten-pound notes and three pound notes, wrapped round a pad of folded newspaper.

As he realized how he had been tricked, he remembered the "detective's last words:

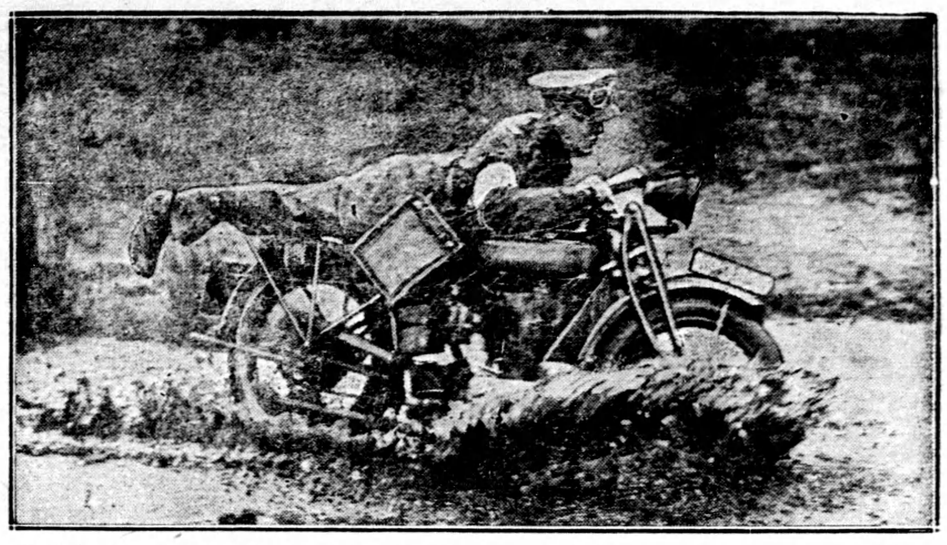
"The confidence men work by psychology." — Pearson's Weekly (London).

IF

If any little word of mine
May make a life the brighter,
If any little song of mine
May make a heart the lighter,
God help me speak the little word,
And take my bit of singing,
And drop it in some lonely vale
To set the echoes ringing.

If any little love of mine
May make a life the sweeter,
If any little care of mine
May make a friend's the fleeter,
If any little lift of mine may ease
The burden of another,
God give me love and care and strength
To help my falling brother.

Daring Riders



Flood or fire the dispatches must get through as shown here by a participant in the recent British army manoeuvres.

Animal Life in A Machine Age

By Clarence Day in Harper's Magazine

The great age of invention was in prehistoric times. The era in which we live is also an age of invention—our stupendous achievements have dwarfed all the past, in our eyes. But, of course, the inventions of old were more basic than ours. The inventions of writing, and wheels; the invention of zero, of needles, and wheat, and of money were made by great men. And aside from these, there were some highly ingenious devices which were made in a field we are wholly neglecting to-day.

Just think of the man who invented the cow. It is hard for us to imagine a home without milk; but once it was very much harder to imagine homes with it. It would have been far easier for a man to bring his wife orchids, if she had desired such weeds, than milk. True, there was plenty of milk in the world, but it was galloping around in the forest, in hostile containers, and it was the private and intimate stay of the animal's family. Then, a genius was born, who experimented with animals as we do with milk. Why not have milk at the door every morning?

The task was a hard one. Which was the best animal? Cows were far from the obvious choice. In some parts of the world men had tried to use the golden-haired ground-sloth, a monstrous creature which they kept in caves and milked when they could. But, there were various objections to the sloth; they have bad skin diseases in summer, and occasionally their milk has a fishy taste. But the serious objection was the fact that sloths are monogamous, and commercially speaking, monogamy ruins a farm. Fortunately, however, that prehistoric genius turned his attention to some rough, horned, fiery beasts who were running wild on the plains. It wasn't any easy task to chase and catch this wild material from which the inventor hoped to develop a milk factory. Many users disliked being kicked while extracting the milk, and for thousands of years men objected in vain to its horns. But, it was a success, and with a very few modifications we are still using the cow for the production of milk.

Another great thinker in the meantime invented the hen. Instead of the tiresome search for small eggs in the woods, this epicure provided mankind with large eggs in the home. It took a long time to make the change, but eventually the odd breed of bird selected learned to go into egg production.

In the Western world men invented the llama and the turkey. In Asia they invented the camel, as a freight car or van. And one of Henry Ford's predecessors, several thousand years back, invented cheap and swift transportation by taming the horse.

In contrast these early inventions make ours seem most despotic. Ours, perhaps, have added a little more comfort than the old inventions, but, strangely enough they have added far more to our toil. An ancient inventor would be amazed at the wonders we've wrought, but he would be equally amazed to see how hard we work. Probably he would say:

"It seems to me you need only moderately intelligent beings to do all the hard—but simple—work in this day of machines. With all the animal kingdom before you, to train and develop, I don't understand why you use for these tasks only men. In our day, when one of our inventions grew tryannous, we did something about it. For instance, we had a lot of trouble with sheep. They bred far more rapidly than the specifications called for, and they got out of order too easily and needed far too much servicing. But we certainly did not allow ourselves to be enslaved by our sheep, valuable as this invention was to us. We were too self-respecting for that. We invented the collie.

"You think you are open-minded today, but you would be very incredulous if an inventor showed you how to man your coal mines with an improved breed of bears. Yet, if we men of old could train our wild horses to give up kicking and biting and running away and become, instead, obedient carriers, reliable and gentle, you ought to find it comparatively easy to train the bear to mine coal. You couldn't put him to work as he is, but, he has the strength and intelligence and a manlike way of using his paws. You could breed for better paw action. You have a far better start here than we had with the cow.

"There are hundreds of animals which you could use on your machines. You could easily school many species to work in your mills. And once they were schooled to perform the same acts every day, you would have little trouble in making them keep on for life. If some planetary steward could have directed the affairs of the world he would have made toilers of creatures that like toil, not human beings. The industrious beaver, the busy bee, the hard-working mole. Activity, yes, but not drudgery. That is against human nature. No wonder it depresses and deforms you and leads to fierce insurrections.

"Some day your descendants will marvel at your wastage of animals, leaving the woods full of husky beasts idling about, while you nearly killed yourselves toiling, and grumbled at fate."

So much for the man from the past. If we ever try his suggestion there will be some queer changes, not only in coal mines, but even in war. Already men are beginning to feel a bit lily-fingered about war. France, the most civilized of nations, is using Algerian troops. In India, in pre-British times, some of the Rajahs used elephants. Why shouldn't we have regiments of leopards to charge future trenches ,and squadrons of carrion vultures to drop future bombs? It's a question of training. We cannot tell 'til we have tried. Meantime we use only a few Red Cross dogs in our wars and an ever-diminishing number of horses and mules. The hardship and suffering of wartime is borne by men. It seems as unenterprising as to use only men in our factories.

Every generation or era has its blind-spot. It is probable that this is ours. We behave in a blind, helpless way in the animal field, compared to our resourcefulness and iniative in the field of the machines. Look at the way we neglect to raise musk-oxen in the Arctic. These animals are at home in the ice and snow, their meat is as good as that of cows, and their wool is not only as soft as cashmere, but it is also non-shrinking. Yet, all we should have to do would be to tame the wild musk-ox. When, some thirty years ago, they wanted to use the grazing lands of Africa, it didn't apparently occur to them to tame the wild eland instead of going to the tremendous trouble of bringing in cows and bulls, which were unaccustomed to the climate.

Let us open our eyes to the capacities and uses of animals. Surely they can learn to understand us. A dog knows what a man says to it; why can't man, the more intelligent of the two, learn to converse with the dog. We could make a scientific study of the speech organs of animals, and gradually devise ways to teach them sounds.

At present we are attempting to breed robots, which can never be as efficient as properly bred and trained animals. Animals could well do the routine work for which intelligent men are now being used. And there is no reason why they couldn't be made to pay. Milk cows didn't pay at first, but they do now. If we are wise in our civilization we won't continue to ignore the possibilities for inventon in the animal world.

American Hotels In Billion Class

Washington — American hotels do a business of more than $1,000,000,000 annually. Preliminary figures announced bythe Census Bureau placed the 1929 receipts of 15,577 hotels at $1,039,363,000. Those operating throughout the year reported receipts of $962,801,000; resort hotels, $76,562,000.

The census covered hotels having 25 or mare guest rooms. It did not include apartment houses, boarding houses, clubs, Y.M.C.A.'s or Y.W.C.A.'s.

Of the 13,328 year-round hotels, 10,907 operated on the European plan; 1097 on the American plan and 1324 on the mixed plan. Of the resort hotels 370 operated on the European plan, 1537 on the American plan and 342 on the mixed plan.

Brink of Storm

Dark arms of storm are flung across the hills;
The breath of summer, warm and quiet, stills
The birds, and, tall and motionless, the trees
Await the sudden tumult on their leaves.

And all the earth, with emerald thirst, is lying
Waiting the windy sigh, the rush of crying
From the throat of storm, and small red foxes lain
At the edge of their burrow, drowse and dream of rain.

—Frances M. Frost, in the New York Sun.

The exhibition of "fat ladies" has been forbidden as vulgar at all future local fairs in Oxford, England.

Football Garb Down South

Battlers of the pigskin don shorts when temperature reaches 90 degrees at Atlanta, Georgia. Fall practice started with a wallop when Billy Street, captain, swung in action, Pug Boyd tried a tackle and Red Bradfield endeavours to block him off.

Canada's Jobless Number 530,000

Ontario Has 130,000 Unemployed and Quebec 100,000

Ottawa.—Canada's unemployed exceed 530,000 according to Hon. G. D. Robertson, Minister of Labor.

The Minister issued figures compiled by provincial governments. In the majority of provinces the totals are based upon registration, and in others careful estimates have been made. All the provinces of Canada are covered in figures which the Minister gave out. Senator Robertson said these figures would probably be swelled in the winter months when seasonal unemployment would become an increasing factor in the situation.

By provinces, figures of unemployment are as follows:

British Columbia, 38,880; Alberta, 15,450; Saskatchewan (cities and towns, 26,904, drought areas), 150,000; Manitoba, 41, 489; Ontario, 130,000; Prince Edward Island, 1,500; Quebec, 100,000; Nova Scotia, 18,000; New Brunswick, 8,000.

Saskatchewan is hardest hit of all the provinces. Registrations in urban centres indicate 26,904 are without crops have failed, there are 76 municipalities where 100 per cent. relief work, while in those areas where will be necessary. Hon. Robert Weir, Minister of Agriculture, who returned from Western Canada, estimates at 150,000 the number of those requiring relief in the drought areas of Saskatchewan.

While the other prairie provinces do not face such a grave situation as that of Saskatchewan, figures show that it is sufficiently serious. In Manitoba, where there are 41,489 unemployed, approximately 28,000 are married men, 10,000 single men and over 4,000 single women. Alberta has 15,450 unemployed, of which roughly 9,000 are married and 6,000 single. Of the 38,880 unemployed in British Columbia 5,490 are transients and 6,745 aliens, according to the registration in that province.

Coming to Eastern Canada, Ontario has the large total of 130,000. According to the information secured through registration, approximately 71,500 are married and the remainder single. In connection with the Ontario situation, Senator Robertson said that it was estimated about 70,000 of the total number of unemployed had partial employment. There were, however, about 70,000 in need, the majority of whom are in Northern Ontario.

So They Say:—

Cold words freeze people, and hot words scorch them, and bitter words make them bitter, and wrathful words make them wrathful. Kind words make people good-natured. Though they do not cost much, yet they accomplish much.—Pascal.

The man who is determined to keep others fast and firm, must have one end of the bond about his own breast—sleeping or walking.—W. S. Landor.

It is not permitted to the most equitable of men to be a judge in his own cause.—Blaise Pascal.

Judgment should be pronounced with diffidence and consideration lest, as happens to many, the critics should condemn what they do not understand.—Quintillian.

The greater the difficulty the more glory in surmounting it. Skilful pilots gain their reputation from storms and tempests.—Epicurus.

He who is taught to live upon little owes more to his father's wisdom than he that has a great deal left him does to his father's care.—William Penn.

No Substitute for Tin

Metallurgists have for long realized that the supply of tin marketable at around present prices is limited, and have bent every effort to produce a fields; electricity will spare them this fate. The devices which thus control the fish are stop signals and were perfected through experiments conducted by F. O. McMillan of the Oregon State College. He discovered that fish are sensitive to small electrical currents and that it took very little power to paralyze them; that it took less to stop long fish than short ones; that they recover from shocks according to their vitality; that when they get too much electricity they get stunned and change color; that high-frequency current has little effect. So by putting electrodes across the mouths of irrigation ditches, with twenty-four volts, he discovered that the fish avoided the vicinity. The signal was against them.

A Prayer of Long Ago

Lord, Thou knowest what is best for me to do according to Thy Will. Give me, I beseech Thee, what Thou wilt, as much as Thou wilt, and when Thou wilt. Do with me in all tings as it shall please Thee. . Place me where Thou wilt. Lo, I am Thy servant, ready to do all things that Thou commandest me, for I desire not to live to myself but to Thee.—By Bishop Hicks in 1694.

A Holy Life

Life, that dares send
A challenge to his end,
And when it comes, say—"Welcome friend!"

—Crashaw.