

LOOK OUT FOR PICKPOCKETS!

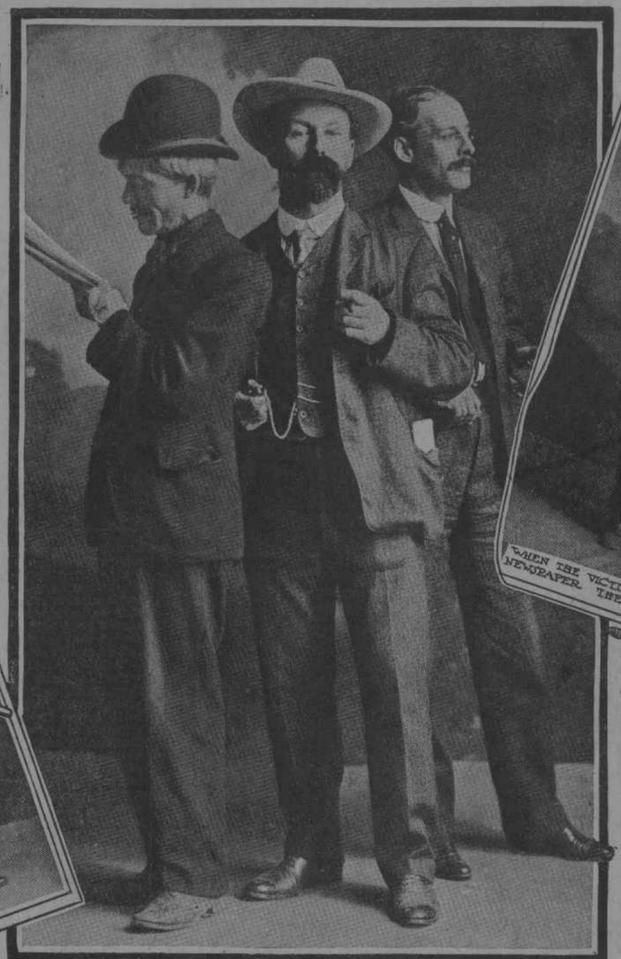
GEORGE APPO, THE EX-CROOK TELLS HOW POCKETS ARE PICKED AND POSED FOR THE PICTURES.



PEELING A SCARPIN UNDER COVER OF A NEWSPAPER



WORKING THE WATCH WITH THE BAND BEHIND HIS BACK, THE CONFEDERATE JUSTIFY THE VICTIM.



WORKING THE WATCH WITH THE BAND BEHIND HIS BACK, THE WORKING HAND OF THE THIEF IS SEEN. THE CONFEDERATE JUSTIFY THE VICTIM.



WALKING OFF WITH POCKET BOOK AND SCARPIN.



THE "HUNCH" WITH AID OF CONFEDERATE, IT IS GIVEN TO PREVENT THE WORKING HAND FROM BEING FELT.

THE gentle art of picking pockets is a theme on which George Appo, the reformed green goods "steerer," is able and willing to wax eloquent. Appo has not forgotten his beginnings, and it is firm belief that after all picking pockets, abstracting rolls of bills and watches, deftly removing scarpins and diamond studs in the broad glare of publicity, is a branch of the thief's trade which, despite its simplicity, can never be surpassed.

The bank workers, the night gangs who go "through" apartments and houses, the confidence and hold up men all work, at least according to this authority, with a good share of the trumps in their hands. The poor pocket man has them all out against him. Only by his nimbleness, his slight of hand dexterity, can he hope to get hold of the "swag," and, having got it, he must call up the reinforcements of nerve, audacity and clever acting in order to get away unscathed.

All the same, the detectives rank the pocket pickers among the lowest of thieves. Appo agrees with them in so far as he believes that a true picker of pockets is born

and is only developed by education and practice. But it is his idea that more genuine courage and hardhood is required to pick a pocket in a crowded Broadway car than it takes to crack a safe.

George Appo, horn of criminals, never had any chance from the start. He knew how to swipe a handkerchief and "peel a scarpin" before he could read, and his deftness as well as boldness made him remarked by experienced thieves. His progress was rapid, and when green goods became an organized system of plunder Appo's talents, and especially his "sickness" of speech, his intuitive knowledge of strategy, were quickly made use of by its promoters.

According to Appo's own story he never materially benefited by the big deals he helped to pull off, and was usually working a little game, picking pockets or something similar, on the side to make ends meet. He hasn't profited at all by his confession and avoidance of evil ways; a little joy of "stoopigeoning" now and then—but that is another story. At the present time he is willing to tell how the deft picker of pockets, the artist in that line, works.

"If you're lookin' for excitement," said

Appo, "you can get it by tryin' to peel a fat poke out of a man's inside pocket. It's never failin'—there the goods are and your hand is on 'em, but that second of time when they are bein' deftly, but surely drawn in your direction is a second of strenuous feelin'; the chills run up and down your back. Will you get off with the poke or be yanked to the lookup? A mere trifle will decide, but while the question is a-hangin' in the balance you never feel that life is one grand, sweet song. The consequences is too tremendous. Either you walk off slowly with a lot of dough or you are pinched again. An' I can tell you this—that I never found any number of human bein's that felt sympathy for a pickpocket. They're always ready to kick him."

"Pickin' pockets is an art—that's what it is—and a man has to be born to it to really make a good record. To stand in front of a man, just near enough to reach his watch or poke, with your right hand behind you, and take 'em both without jostlin' him or interruptin' his thoughts requires just as much natural talent and practice as it takes to make a good lawyer. In the latter case the emoliments are higher—you may get to

be District Attorney and Judge when you are old and sleepy—but a pickpocket is always gettin' suspected and frequently gettin' pinched with the goods on him."

The "nudge" and the "hunch" are as often employed as the jostle. While the latter is administered by the confederate, the artist pickpocket lifts his knee ever so gently, presses it against his victim in such a way that the sly insinuating hand may enter and leave the trousers pocket unobserved, but not without booty. The "nudge" is made use of when the exploration of the inside coat pocket becomes advisable. It distracts the victim's attention, conceals the operation of the working hand, and as the merest fraction of a second is required to go through this easy pocket, the "nudge" is learned among the rudiments of the art.

A general desire of mankind is to read the other man's newspaper, and this harmless idiosyncrasy often leads to loss of jewelry. It is only necessary to hold the paper at a certain angle, make sure that the victim is engrossed in something therein, to proceed leisurely to clear him out of watch, money and scarpin.

"The city is not always the best graft,"

said Appo, "for occasionally there comes a spell when every man is thinking of his valuables, holdin' on to them with both hands and glarin' at his neighbor, who presses up agin' him as innocent as you please in a crowd. That's because they're all been readin' about the 'con' men and pickpockets durin' an annual round-up by the police. Truth of the matter is that at such a spell the nerviest sneak of 'em all holds in his feelers. Then is the time to get out into the country, where a man might be supposed to have a fightin' show for his three meals."

"Sometimes the game is jim-dandy and more often it's rotten. One of my last lays was to do the country fairs with the shells for a main course and any old game on the side. I fell down hard at West Chester, as near New York as that, and I lay so long in the cage there that I thought I'd leave my bones as fertilizer to the cornfields. I tell you it was awful layin' there listenin' to the roosters tryin' to prove it was mornin' and all the time realizin' that you was within walkin' distance of the Tenderloin."

"No, I'd rather take my chance in the metropolis any day, keepin' quiet when folks has raised a crusade against pickers, and

makin' a little extra hay when the Christian Endeavorers come to town. They don't want to send you up for life if you're caught with the goods in the city, while in the country for just tryin' to push in a gentleman's pocketbook for fear he'd lose it they lay you up for several years and won't listen to any attenuatin' circumstances. The country is all right for a come-on, but it's poor pickin' for an artist with nimble fingers. I done well enough with the hay-seeds in my time, but I never got to like 'em. They're too thick for a man of any sensibility."

"What are the rewards of the profession? I tell you, my boy, there ain't any. If you pick up real dough out of a pocket, which you generally don't, for half the wallets are stuffed out with cards and memorandas, the dough don't last more'n a month or so. If it's jewelry what do you get for it? A mereittance—not one-tenth what it's worth, and it's the same with a watch. Your uncle knows you too well, and smile up at him as you may, he will offer a ten dollar note for a real gold. The only thing you can be sure of is that, sooner or later, you'll be pinched again."

THE PHILOSOPHER IN TOWN.

BY JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.



As to Fishing.
GIVE me no striped perch from out the lake,
No pool fed trout from yonder northern vales.
I seek no cod nor deep sea bass to take,
Nor shad by seine enmeshed, nor blubbering whales.
Prate not to me of salmon, nor, indeed,
Of muscallonge or silver skinned sardine!
The town's my angling place, where I may heed
The odd fish that along Broadway are seen.

As to Mountain Climbing.
Why should I seek the distant Hampshire hills,
Or those of Maine to exercise the limb?
Why should I bear the Adirondack ills
Because to climb high mountains is my whim?
Indeed, there's climbing here, not far aloof;
And mighty heights, I'll warrant, to be done.
Let doubters scale the bold Flatiron's roof,
And prate no more about Mount Washington!

As to Coaching.
To coach I love because I love to ride
High seated o'er the heads of those who walk;
To see things strange and novel on each side,
While at the fore good, stalwart equines stalk.
Yet tally-ho and tooting horns be still,
I seek thee not, for as the sun drops down
Contentedly I take the stage up Murray Hill
And view the glad sights of the shimmering town.

His Automobile.
I snap my fingers at those bold chauffeurs
Who spend their hours in travail grim with grime;
Whom hope of speed unto the country lures,
Yet in more tinkering spend half their time.
When I would go a-moting 'tis as free
As any bird that soars 'neath yonder stars;
A nickel, and a front seat comes to me
On any one of scores of trolley cars.



He Bathes.
Keep thou thy sea, oh, wanderer afield,
And thou thy lake who seek the placid deep,
Unto the surf's seductions I'll not yield,
And spring fed pools shall ne'er disturb my sleep.
Yet bathing I shall have in richest store,
In quiet, where no prying eye may con,
Where water hot or cold doth promptly pour
Whenever I turn the nickelled spigot on.

By a Bachelor Girl.
SOME men seem grateful to any one who will flirt with their wives, for then they have just so much more time for their own affairs.
If a man would choose a practical wife he should marry the daughter of a romantic mother.

PROVERBS UP TO DATE.—By Ivan Richardson.
"Labor conquers everything," but the socialists must bide their time.
"He who gives promptly gives twice as much," and more frequently wants for the morrow.
"To err is human," which may account for man's superiority over the beasts.
"The poet is horn, not made," but greed for the dollar has produced some fair counterfeits.
"Too many irons in the fire" does not seem to frighten the couplet.
"Children and fools speak the truth," but the rest of humanity does not crave the epithet liar.