

Ain't Larceny Grand

TIME was when crime standards were low—too low—so low, in fact, that the piker who stole a shilling was included in the grand larceny class of the light-fingered gentry. But times have changed. The march of civilization has lifted, figuratively as well as literally, the spoils and titles of thieves to a higher plane.

Today the two-bit snitcher no longer rates in the grand larceny class. No sir, this insect of pikerdom is now where he belongs—down with the infantile misdeameanists, and rightly so. It is difficult enough for respectable pick-pockets, thieves and burglars to maintain the felonious distinctions of their profession without dragging along these shilling-squeezers who once held their heads as high as any pound-sterling pilferers in the bloomin', balmy days of bonny England. Away with the blighters!

Today one no longer crashes the grand larceny class unless one lifts, in our intellectual old Bay State, at least one hundred sound American dollars, plus one cent. One must needs be careful to grab the extra penny because if one fails so to do one will fall from a full professorship in the grand larceny elite and find one's self down with the petit larcenists. One cannot be too careful of one's rating, in these days of hetic competition, and one should go upon one's "evil errand bent" prepared to make change down to the last, aforesaid, penny.

Our present-day statutes still play pranks, however, in offering distinguishment to money marauders. To wit:—

"Whoever steals in a building, ship, vessel or railroad car shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for not more than five years or by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars or by imprisonment in jail for not more than two years."

Stealing in subways, balloons, Ford cars and Moth planes is not specifically included in the aforesaid specific buildings, ships, etc., so watch your step if you would rate a diploma entitling you to state prison, a five hundred dollar fine or a vacation in a less distinguished, common jail.

If you draw a fine of \$500—in lieu of five years in state prison or two years in jail—higher mathematics discloses that the \$500 alternative is at the rate of \$100 per year against the state prison, but is at the rate of \$250 per year against the less pretentious common jail. The Burglars Union has not yet fathomed this apparent discrimination between the two institutions in this, our high-pressure civilization, but the Union is preparing a legislative bill to clarify the penalty purpose and to avoid partiality on tax rates.

But there is more, as yet untold and as yet unsolved. To wit:

"At common law, if the owner of property is by fraud or trickery induced to part with possession of his property the person so taking is guilty of larceny."

But, fellow larcenist, if you are really smart and can grab the TITLE, as well as POSSESSION, "*this is not deemed larceny at common law.*" So there you are! The more you larcenate, "by fraud or trick," the less risk you run of being pinched for larceny, but you jeopardize your standing as a master larcenist among the Lords of Larceny.

Let's get back to mathematics, however, because figures never lie, albeit mathematicians are not so consistently virtuous. You have noted the tax rate on stealing. Now note the science of figures in regard to petit and grand larceny. Witnesseth:—

If you grab exactly \$100, or less, your sheepskin proclaims your petit larceny proclivities and you rate not the distinguishment of a felon but only that of a mere misdeameanist, and you are entitled to only one year in a common jail or a fine of \$300, because you failed to steal the extra penny. Higher mathematics again unerringly points to the resulting tax rate of \$300 per year against twelve months in the proletariats' hoosegow.

If you are a hog, however, and pick up \$100.01 you then rate the higher title of Grand Larcenist and you are entitled to five years in state prison—or a \$600 fine plus two years' sojourn in a common cooler. Again does the science of nimble numbers straightway point with cold-blooded correctness, to the resulting tax burden deduced as follows. Without prejudice to your case, let's grant that two years in a common jail might bring you a moral uplift equal to the same time in our snooty state prison. Now simply subtract two years (common jail) from five years (state prison) and you have a remainder of three years against which you have an alternative of a \$600 fine—which equals an annual tax rate of \$200.

But we have already figured that (1) the *Stealing* tax rate is \$100 per year for state prison and \$250 per annum for common jail—which means that it costs you less against the greater, state prison distinguishment and more for the less common-jail appointments. Why? Don't ask ME. (2) The *Petit Larceny* tax rate is in the higher brackets, however, and sets you back \$300 per year with no recognition or privileges at state prison—you must in this case be satisfied with a common jail rating. (3) Only by crashing the *Grand Larceny* fraternity can you enjoy the lower tax rate of \$200 per twelvemonth or the state prison advantages.

Thus we find that stealing has a lower tax rate than both petit and grand larceny; that although petit larceny is of a lower order than grand larceny the tax rate of the lower order is higher than that of the higher order; that while stealing entitles you to five years in our stately prison, grand larceny (the grand-daddy of the trio) entitles you to no more than the least of the three titles of theft; that while *stealing* brings you no better reward than two years in a low down jail, the gentle art of petit larceny nets you even less, i. e., one year in said lock-up—which means

one year less for a greater accomplishment than is granted for a lesser trick; that . . . oh, what's the use!

What to do about it?

Let's put out the light and go to sleep.

THOMAS N. ASHTON.

Here's a Sure Enough Candidate

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir*: My hat is in the ring as a candidate for Governor, and I have three planks for my platform which will eclipse completely into the shade all the other numerous aspirants.

First—Howard Jackson proposes to exempt all real estate from tax by the State, but I insist that is not enough pie to hand to our noble owners of corner lots, and so I advocate a bonus of two per cent extra, to be paid in gold (or platinum) to the brave men who hold on to their Maryland land titles.

Second—Every man who does a day's work must punch a time clock and pay two per cent of his wages to the State for the privilege of working. This will make them work a little harder and inculcate habits of thrift.

Third—Mr. Nice offers to let the kiddies play on the grounds of the Governor's mansion at Annapolis, but when I am elected I will invite 'em into the cellar and garret also.

All the other problems of the times will just settle themselves if you don't worry and will vote for me.

EDMOND FONTAINE, in *Baltimore Sun*.

Mr. Samuel Danziger informs us that Mr. Fontaine is a poet of no mean ability, a thinker and a philosopher. The above bit of irony shows where he stands on the land question.

From a Columnist Who is a Thinker

THE Commonweal Party in England has more power, is listened to more readily, is growing faster than the party of protest of any other land, and that through peaceful, non-aggressive, constitutional means.

When it is considered that 25 men own one-third of Scotland, and that the church and the landed gentry of England have nearly shoved the tenant farmers and middle class into the sea, one might get the notion of a somewhat speedier solution of the land problem in England than in any other country because not even Japan has so dense a population as the British Isles. Yet, if the land of England was all used for the public benefit, England could support in luxury double its present population.—HILL BILLY, columnist in *Seattle Star*.

Asks That Honors be Paid Him

HENRY GEORGE thought out the Single Tax as the answer to our deeper economic problem and the glaring social injustice which he could never forget. He devoted his life to making people aware of the problems of poverty. He is worth remembering. We must sadly confess that he, an outstanding creative thinker, has had recognition in every country but his own and ours. Here his name means almost nothing. In England every school boy must read "Progress and Poverty" and in Australia his ideas have to an extent been put into practice. But my wish is to realize the creative thinking which has been the patriotic service of some for whom there is no "Day" but who have swayed our ideas and directed our motives in living—should they not also be remembered?—"Whom Shall We Honor."—Address by MERRILL FOWLER CLARKE at the Congregational Church, New Canaan, Conn., May 2, 1934.

A Great Name Among the World's Social Philosophers

"PROGRESS AND POVERTY" was published in 1879. I can remember what a tremendous sale it had in the early eighties, and how everyone was talking about it. In the year 1886-87, when I was a senior at Yale, Prof. Arthur T. Hadley (later president of Yale), then professor of political economy, offered an entire course in that book, and a large number of undergraduates selected it. There were lively discussions in the classroom, and Hadley's lectures were stimulating and intellectually provocative of argument. We all enjoyed the course.

When I was a schoolboy in Hartford, Henry George came to the city to deliver a lecture on Moses. It was called "Moses—The Great Hebrew Statesman." The speaker was introduced by the pastor of the Unitarian Church, which held its services in Unity Hall. In introducing Henry George, he mentioned the famous book, praised the author for his skill and courage and eloquence, and said finally "I now have the honor of presenting to you Mr. —" and then forgot his name. When it was apparent that he could not remember it, scores of persons in the audience shouted it. The lecture was fine, and I recommend readers to look it up in printed form, as it must be among his works.

The fiftieth anniversary of its appearance, 1929, was marked by a special commemorative edition; and the book has been translated into all the European languages. His other works have also had so large a sale that it has been said that his writings on political economy have sold more copies than those of all other authors put together.

A friend writes me that John Dewey said, in his "An Appreciation of Henry George:" "His is one of the great names among the world's social philosophers. It would require less than the fingers of two hands to enumerate those who from Plato down rank with him. . . . No man, no graduate of a higher educational institution, can consider himself an educated man in social thoughts unless he has some first-hand acquaintance with the theoretical contribution of this great American thinker."

Henry George was quite unselfish—indeed a noble character—and he unwillingly consented to run for Mayor of New York. He died suddenly during the campaign. Both friends and foes mourned his death.—PROF. WILLIAM LYON PHELPS. (Syndicated).

PAMPHLETS RECEIVED

Among the pamphlets received are the following:

"What is the Single Tax," by George A. Briggs, a letter addressed to the Legislative Problems Section of the University of Southern California. An excellent statement.

"Economics of Democracy," by F. Mason Padelford, M. D. This is a pamphlet of 30 pages and cover and can be had of Dr. Padelford for 25 cents. His address is Fall River, Mass. Reduction may be had for those desiring quantities. It is an enlarged and improved edition of the pamphlet issued earlier by Dr. Padelford.

"Our Economic Crime and the Nonsense of the N.R.A.," is a beautifully printed pamphlet published by the Civics and Equity League of Washington, D. C., of which organization Joseph B. Chamberlain is director.

BOOKS RECEIVED AND TO BE REVIEWED

"20,000,000 Every Day," by Otto Cullman.

"Government by the Principle of Moral Justice," by C. Lambek, Copenhagen and London.

"100 Years of Land Values," by Homer Hoyt, Chicago University Press.