

The Detective "Posted" Him

Suggestions Which Aided a Man When He Met a "Bunco Steerer."

A well known artist tells a story of "forewarned, forearmed." When he was a student in Boston he and several others boarded with a woman whose husband was a detective. The detective told them from time to time stories about interesting experiences which he had had, and explained the methods of carrying on "bunco games." There are few new "bunco dodges." Nearly all of them are variations of one or two stock schemes.

"Among other things which the detectives told us," said Mr. L—— in giving the story to his friends one evening, "is an epigram in which Robert G. Ingersoll also believes. It is that the man who begins a statement with a yawn is a liar. I tell you this now, although the yawn comes in later. I had often heard my friend, the detective, tell of the 'diamond game.'

"I was reading in a car once, on my way from Boston to New York, long after I had lost sight of the detective, when someone behind me clapped me vigorously on the back, saying: 'Hello, Charley, old man.'

"My name isn't Charley.' I said sweetly.

"Oh, I beg your pardon,' said the man who had slapped me so generously. 'I thought you were a friend whom I often meet on the road. I am a commercial traveler— drummers, we call ourselves.' Then he went on to another seat. Presently he came back.

"Is this seat engaged?' he asked.

"Oh, no,' I answered pleasantly.

"I hope you will excuse me for my rudeness,' he said. 'I felt very much like a fool when I realized what I had done.'

"He chatted entertainingly for a while and seemed a very decent fellow. Then he yawned and I looked at him.

"My uncle died the other day,' said he.

"Did he?'

"He didn't treat his nephew very generously.'

"H-m-m.'

"He was pretty well off, was my uncle, and he left none of his money to me.'

"He yawned.

“Nothing except a ring. I don’t care for rings myself, but he always wore the diamond— prized it highly. It is said to be worth two or three hundred dollars. I never wore a ring in my life.’

“Have you the ring with you?’ I asked.

“Oh yes, I have it in my pocket.’

“How much is it worth?’

“It isn’t worth much to me because I have no use for it.’

“What would you take for it?’

“Oh, anything— \$30, say.’

“I couldn’t afford to give that much for a ring.’

“Well, say \$25.’

“That is a little more than I could afford.’

“The drummer turned the stone in his hand and looked at it. In the seat behind us was a man who I knew was watching us and listening. He had leaned forward until his head was over the back of our seat. He was so near that I could feel his breath. I understood that he was waiting to see if I should allow myself to be ‘buncoed.’ I threw my head back against the cushion and tilted my hat over my eyes. The drummer was still meditating over the ring.

“See here, Jimmy,’ I said, ‘I got six months once for the same game, see?’

“The man behind me burst into a roar of laughter.

“By Jove,’ said he, ‘I thought you were booked.’ The ‘drummer’ was scurrying down the aisle, making for another car.”— New York Tribune.

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