

MISCELLANEOUS.

Written for this Paper.

TALES OF GOVERNMENT CRIME.

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THE ENORMOUS amounts of which Uncle Sam is robbed through custom house frauds will never be known. The government has 4,800 employees devoted to their detection, and its spies are scattered all over the world. Its collections in the way of duties amounted last year to more than 132,000,000, and the expense of making these collections was almost six per cent of this vast sum. The amount uncollected will never be known. Our custom house records are peppered with perjury and fraud.

Many of the big importers are in collusion with the European manufacturers to evade the payment of duties. They enter their goods at much lower prices than they actually pay for them, notwithstanding the fact that if discovered they are subject to heavy fines and increased duties. I saw a summary of the collections made by the Treasury department during the past few years of this sort of fines and amounts arising from undervaluation. During the past five years the Treasury department has collected more than \$5,000,000 in penalties and in the increase of duties. This is a million dollars a year, and it probably does not represent one-tenth of the actual amount that Uncle Sam is annually robbed of in this way. The law as to the importation of goods is very strict. A foreign merchant who ships goods here must first go before the American consul at the ports from which he intends to ship the merchandise and swear as to the kinds, quality and quantity of the articles he proposes to ship to the United States. He has to have three invoices, describing the goods and giving their cost in Europe. The law provides that the goods must be entered for duty at the market price paid for them in Europe, and at the prices at which they are sold to other countries. In many cases the goods are entered at a much lower valuation than this. The European merchant charges the importer a fair price, but he makes out the bill for a lower price, and the two try to cheat the government out of its duties. At the present time the customs bureau has its special examiners or detectives traveling about through Europe and trying to prevent this. They are visiting big factories. They are inquiring into the prices. They are making their reports to the consuls, and it is their business to find out how Uncle Sam is being cheated and prevent it. They are not doing this, but they are doing something. But notwithstanding their efforts millions of dollars' worth of goods are fraudulently imported every year and they strive in vain to mend this hole in Uncle Sam's pocket.

Enormous amounts of goods are smuggled into the United States by travelers

every year. It is estimated that there are now in Europe more than 100,000 American who are taking their summer vacations on the other side, and who will return in the fall. At a low estimate ninety out of every hundred of these will bring back at least \$100 worth of European goods. I talked with a Treasury department official about this matter yesterday, and he said that \$200 would be a low estimate. You can easily see how these purchases will run into the tens of thousands and into the millions. The most of the goods will be dutiable, and it is safe to say that the above amount will evade the customs. At \$100 per traveler this means the introduction of \$9,000,000 worth of dutiable goods, and at \$200 per person it would amount to \$18,000,000 worth. These travelers will be met upon their arrival in New York, and the goods will be passed as personal effects. A woman has the right according to the law, to a wardrobe corresponding with her station in life, and if she is well-to-do she can load herself with diamonds. Many a New York swell brings in eight or ten suits of clothes, and I am told that these are men who make vacation trips to Europe on the basis that the expenses of their trip will be largely made up by the profits which will come to them through buying their winter clothing in Europe.

This is especially so when women are to be considered. Dresses cost just about half abroad what they do at home, and they are smuggled in by the tens of thousands. I was told the other day by a man connected with the customs that New York dressmakers often send the girls in their employment to Europe with the proper measurements for dresses for their customers. The dresses are made in the latest Paris styles and are furnished to the Americans at exorbitant prices. The dress-making girls pass them through as their own personal property, and some of the maidens who, on the big ocean liners, are looked upon as American heiresses are smuggling milliners. The government does all it can to prevent such importations. It has its detectives on both sides of the big pond, and the stewardesses of the steamships often give tips to the inspectors. There are female inspectors at New York who sometimes meet these smuggling maidens upon their landing. They may have gotten a pointer from the other side, or the girls may have been to confiding in their talks with other people on the vessel. If they are suspected they are taken with their baggage into a private room at the custom house. If the girl cannot show that she is all right her wardrobe is sometimes taken from her. If the inspectresses are pretty sure she is a smuggler they may make her try on some of the clothes. A girl with a thirty-four inch bust finds much trouble in expaining the possession of a forty-two inch Paris corset, and a tall, gaunt maiden of five feet ten looks very funny when her form is clad in a Paris dress made for one of the young ladies or the four hundred who measures five feet two. The inspectors have to be very careful, however, in making such arrests. They must have something more than pure suspicion to depend

upon, as the examination of innocent persons is liable to involve them in great trouble. The dressmakers of Paris, however, seem to have no compunctions or doubts about their being able to deliver goods in America, and I have heard English tailors say again and again that they could fill any orders that I would send them at London prices.

I am told that there are English tailors who send their representatives to America every year to carry clothes over and bring new measurements back. Among the customers of these men are some of our most noted public characters, and a list of the names of names of American swells who get their clothes in this way would make interesting reading.

It is hard to get the real facts about smuggling from the officers of the United States treasury. Our custom officials are, to a large extent, detectives, and they will not permit their names to be used in connection with any information which they give to the press. They think that the exposition of the methods of smuggling would incite others to go and do likewise, and the information which I give in this article is based upon talks with a number of prominent officials whose names I cannot give. The expectation is that a great amount of jewelry will be brought into the United States by the travelers this fall. The good times are fast throwing down the fences of economy, and the savings of the past few years will cause a heavy European expenditure. There will be a good demand for diamonds with our approaching prosperity, and they will be brought in in all sorts of ways. Not long ago a young American swell attempted to evade the customs on a diamond present. He was in Europe and he wanted to send these diamonds to Miss Fay Templeton, the actress. He did not care to leave Europe himself, and he perhaps thought it safer to send the diamonds by his valet. The young man arrived in New York all right. He was an ordinary-looking fellow, and he passed the inspectors without trouble. As he hurried up the wharf, however, his haste was noted by one of the officers, whose sharp eyes also discovered that the young man's coat tails wobbled in a very curious way. It looked as though there was something heavy in his rear pocket. They called to him. He stopped, and they asked him what made his coat bulge out in that strange manner. He turned white at the question and started to run. They seized him and found the diamonds in his pocket. They were confiscated, of course, and the actress lost her jewels.

Another prominent American who for some time was the head of an American exchange in London, did quite a smuggling business in the way of diamonds. He passed the customs several times and he finally became so bold that he boasted to his fellows that he could bring through any amount of jewels without trouble. One day while taking a drink in the Hoffman House bar room the subject of passing the customs officers came up, and this man said:

"Why, gentlemen, it is the easiest thing imaginable to skin those custom house officers. They think they are very smart, but they are as blind as bats. I could give you a dozen ways to get past them. I have brought in