

THE MEDICAL STUDENT.

## A POCKET BURROW.

BY H. J. HOLMES.

*Photographs by Foulsham & Banfield.*

Afternoon Tea Club, and the Teasers were delighted."

"Will you kindly describe this complaint of yours, whatever it is?" besought the Ever Interested.

"It's this. Every man in the room turns out his pockets on a table. The man with the oddest collection wins first prize, which consists of being privileged to send one guinea to the fund for providing breakfasts for hungry children."

"Tell us how the Teasers' affair got on," requested the Smoke-room Solomon.

"LET'S have a pocket burrow!" suggested the Bright Member.

"A what?" asked voices.

"A pocket burrow. You know."

"We don't," said the voices.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" murmured the Bright Member. "For years have I been urging upon you fellows the necessity of being quite up to date, but it seems I am a sort of prophet crying in the wilderness. Do you read the Society journals?"

"Never!" came the fervent chorus.

"We're not quite so far gone as that!" added the Smoke-room Solomon.

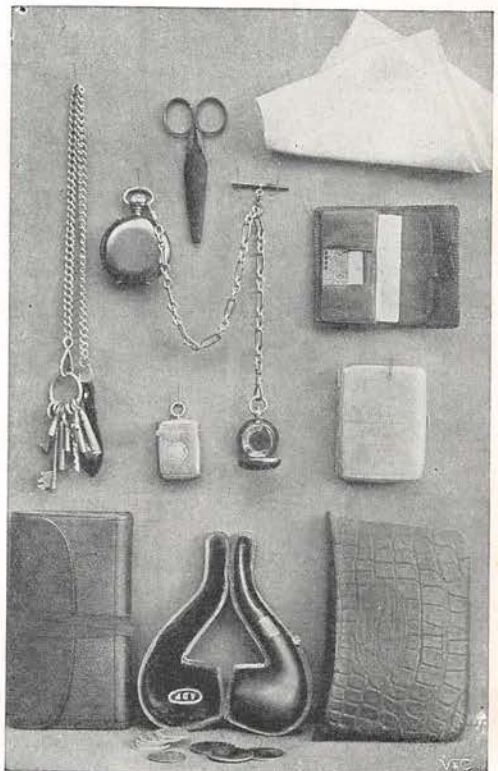
"Well, you miss a lot. But to come to the point. Pocket-burrowing has become a favourite pastime in several country houses on wet mornings when bridge and ping-pong pall. The beauty of the thing is that it must be sprung upon the company quite unexpectedly."

"Look here. Suppose you describe the thing, without too much palaver?"

"That's coming. I may say the idea was created in the capacious brain-cells of yours truly a month or two ago. I hope it won't become a disease, like ping-pong."

"Don't abuse ping-pong; it's one of the finest—"

"I know. You're one of its victims, Parker. Well, I introduced the pocket burrow originally at a gathering of the

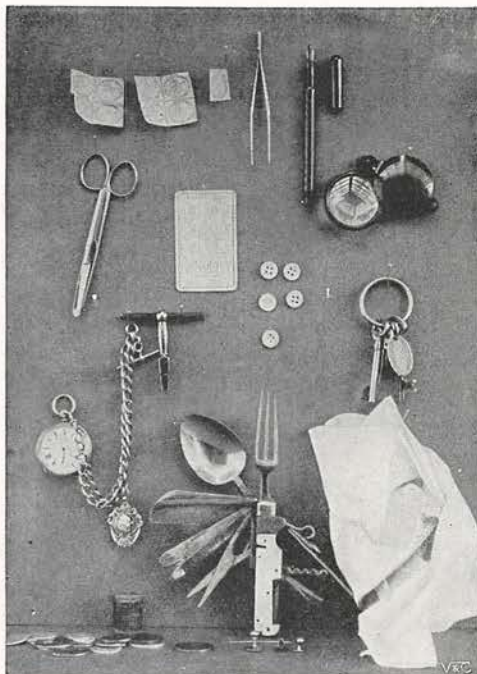


THE SYSTEMATIC MAN.

"Great success. Every man seemed thunderstruck at the quantity of stuff he had been carrying about. You know how things accumulate in one's pockets. You should have seen some of the men's faces as they gazed on the heaps of oddments.

"You can pretty well fix on a man's business, and judge his character correctly, by what his pockets contain. The fellows were so charmed with the whole thing that they proposed a vote of thanks in my favour, and sent for a photographer to secure a graphic record of each man's collection. I have a set of the pictures here.

"Here is one showing what a walking storehouse a fellow may become. It includes a clinical thermometer; a surgical knife; a



THE HANDY MAN WHO CARRIES EVERYTHING WITH HIM.



THE SLOVENLY MAN.

pocket edition of a medical work, 'The Story of Germ Life'; a box of gelatine capsules; a short-bladed pair of scissors stuck in a cork; an indiarubber band; a pipe and tobacco-pouch; some loose letters; a series of photographs on muscular development; a little money, and some other odd items."

"Medical man, of course," said one of the listeners.

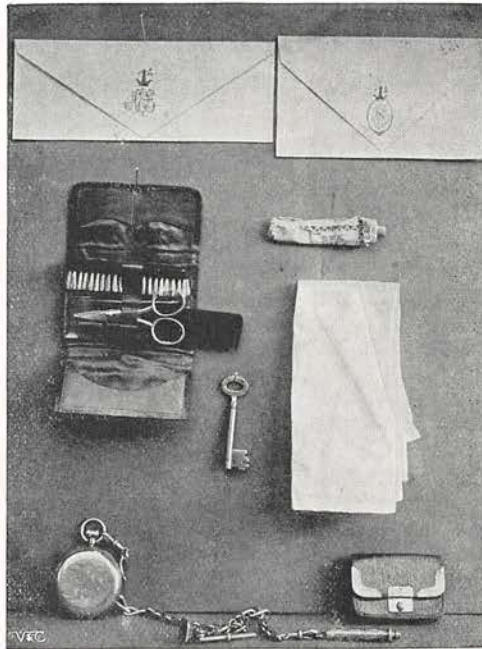
"Student. Now, here's a picture for you. It represents the pocket outfit of Hemming. You know what a tidy, methodical brute he is. You should have seen how these things were lifted from the depths of his pockets. He seemed to know exactly where to find every solitary item he carried.

"The wallet he produced was without a



THE SCIENTIFIC MAN.

wrinkle. That came from one pocket — nothing more. An immaculate card-case came from another; a neat gold watch and chain—the watch in a chamois cover! a sovereign-purse hung on the chain. Then a silver cigarette-case from what was evidently its regular abiding place for years. A pipe came next—snug in a leather case. A gold match-box followed; from his breast coat-pocket he extracted a silk handkerchief—all it contained; his keys were on a silver chain; after this a neat pair of scissors. From the right-hand trousers pocket he produced some silver; whilst his copper coins were extracted from the left. There's system for you!



THE DANDY.

“But here's Belfer's. Belfer is the very antithesis of Hemming. Slovenly individual. Avoid his style, my friends. Mark the loose, partly soiled visiting - cards, the broken cigarettes; keys minus a ring; a pile of crumpled letters, folded anyhow; a leaky packet of tobacco. His money came from all pockets. He produced a knife with only a single blade whole. Odds and ends included three soiled postage stamps from the uttermost depths of his waistcoat breast-pocket!

“One of the most interesting of the Teasers' pocket-burrowers was the scientific Barnard. He proved to be a sort of perambulatory Kew! His carrying



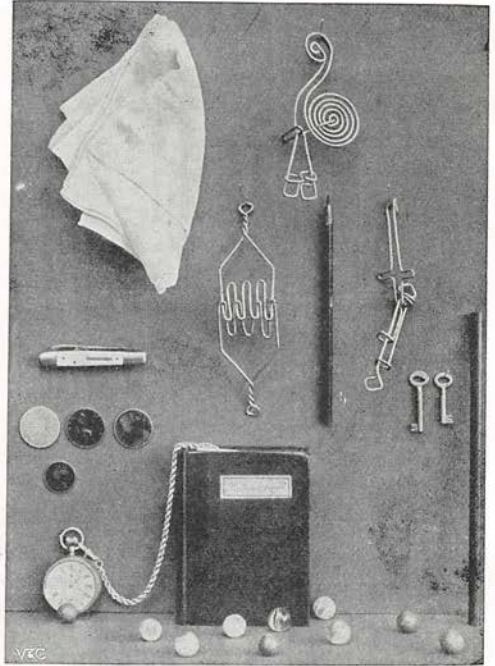
THE SMOKER.



THE HYPOCHONDRIAC.

capacity was responsible for a four-fold steel rule, a small ivory scale ; then a catalogue of scientific instruments, a chronometer and chain. These were followed up by a certificate of correct timekeeping, a sheet of paper with trigonometry calculations, a memorandum-book choke full of awful-looking signs ; next came a table of logarithms, an electric switch, a handkerchief covered with chemical stains ; he weighed in with a couple of brass weights, a litmus book, and three-and-sixpence in loose coins."

"Heavens, what a load !" broke in one of the listeners who hadn't strayed



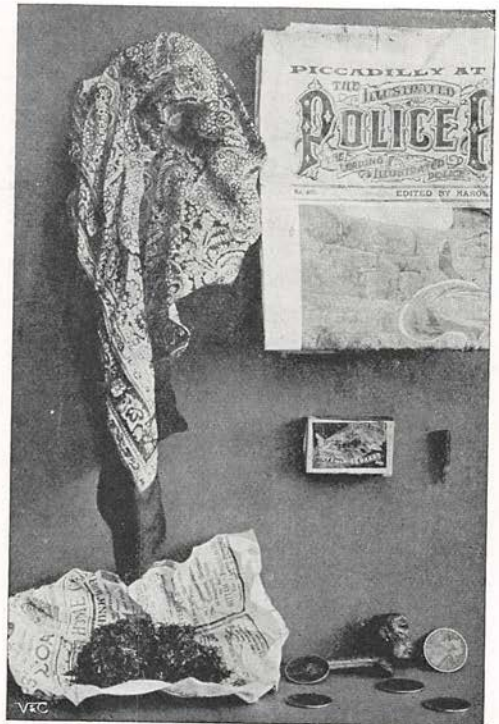
THE SCHOOLBOY.



THE MAN ABOUT TOWN.

away during the Bright Member's lengthy recital.

"Yes ; but he had a close second in Berkeley, the dramatic critic, who, as you know, has the reputation of being a wonderfully handy creature at home and elsewhere. His little collection included a huge pocket-knife that must have weighed a couple of pounds, and bristling all over with various tools ! Then there was a good-sized roll of copper wire ; a stout pair of scissors, a pocket calendar, a pair of nippers, a magnifying glass, not to mention such odd trifles as a railway carriage-key, a couple of shirt-studs, several buttons, a fountain pen, a



THE DUSTMAN

strongly made watch, and some money. There's a pattern for you!

"You can see the dandy in every item of 'Lady' Wells' pocket turn-out! He wasn't a bit ashamed to produce a tube of moustache wax, and a tiny comb for use on the same facial ornament! Then he fished out a pair of nail-scissors and other manicurist's instruments; and concluded his interesting exhibit with a couple of scented envelopes addressed in ladies' handwriting, a dainty little purse, a watch with jewelled case, and a latch-key!

"You know what a slave of the weed our old friend O'Grady, of the *Hurrah*, is? Therefore you will not be surprised to learn that he turned out to be a somewhat erratic kind of a tobacconist's advertisement. He solemnly produced three pipes, a large case stuffed with French cigarettes, an immense case of the very finest cigars; a pouch containing about a pound of strong tobacco; half-a-dozen boxes of matches. He clinched this smoky mixture with a further instalment of tobacco in an unopened packet; the latest pipe-cleaning device; a tool for scraping pipe-bowls; and a knife that fairly vibrated with the odour of the weed!

"Perhaps the most curious collection of all was that of Sims—the younger—who believes that he is suffering from every imaginable disease known and unknown! What do you think of the man who carries about with him a bottle of eucalyptus, a block of camphor, a packet of court plaster, a bottle of pills, two bottles of tabloids, a packet of doctors' prescriptions, a medicine wallet, three handkerchiefs, and some cayenne pepper in a phial? All these, mind you, in addition to the odds and ends that most men carry in their pockets!"

"He deserves to die," murmured someone.

"He doesn't think so," went on the Bright Member. "But, to come again to the Teasers' pocket-burrowing show. Another very characteristic collection was made up by Thompson, who prides himself on being a typical man about town."

"What was it like?"

"A betting-book was the first thing he

laid on the table! This was followed by a copy of the *Pink 'Un*; a lot of old counter-foils of theatre tickets; his cheque-book; a gold match-box, and a card-case of the same metal; a cigar case and cutter combined; some ball programmes, an eye-glass, and a number of letters.

"Thompson's heap was next to that of Murdoch, who has literary ideas. His taste was illustrated by a huge pipe; the latest



THE BUTCHER'S ROY.

French novel; a pocket Kipling; a Shakespearean play; a book of poems. He added to these a pair of spectacles, a stylo pen, a note-book, a pawn-ticket, several printed "regrets" from editors of the magazines, two unreceipted bills, a couple of 'script poems, a lot of old prints, and a piece of blue pencil; besides the pocket requisites generally to be found on persons with no claim on literature! That closed the show."

"And who won the prize?"

"The hypochondriac. We thought it would cheer him up a bit. Besides, his lot was the oddest of all."

"It's very interesting!"

"Very. You can get a lot of amusement out of the thing, I assure you. Do you know, I had the curiosity the other day to invite our dustman into my room for the purpose of finding out what *he* carried."

"How delightfully enthusiastic you must be!"

"Don't be sarcastic. I'm seeking knowledge, you see! Well, he calmly turned out a packet of shag tobacco, a clay pipe black with age, a stump of lead pencil, a copy of a crime paper, a box of cheap matches, fivepence in coppers—which, he delicately hinted, might be augmented at my expense—and a huge coloured handkerchief."

"Afterwards, I had two boys in for a similar purpose. One was a somewhat refined lad, and was guilty of nothing worse

than a clean handkerchief, three wire puzzles, half-a-dozen glass marbles, a French dictionary, a pocket-knife, a catapult, a toy pistol, a couple of keys, a ball of string, and several brass buttons.

"The other boy was—well, he was a butcher's boy. He contained, in various holes and corners of his attire, a mass of sweets, a packet of cheap cigarettes, a bundle of tangled string, three corks, a tin whistle, a bulldog revolver, two penny dreadfuls, five shiny pebbles, a peg-top, a knife with a dagger blade, and a ha'penny in ready cash!"

"What a searcher after knowledge you are!" said the Smoke-room Solomon when the Bright Member subsided into silence at last. "But I'm afraid your new game of pocket-burrowing will scarcely suit such hardened sinners as we of the Twentric are. You might get to know too much! Good afternoon."

