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## **SHOPLIFTING**

### ***Store Thieves Use Three Tricks***

***Bag of candy, umbrella, and baby carriage are favourites in Toronto.  
'Two-Ten' is the warning called out when a suspected woman enters.***

If you enter a department store carrying a bag of candy, an umbrella or wheeling a baby carriage you may become an object of suspicion. After you have entered if a clerk or floorwalker calls out "Two-Ten" you may know that the suspicion has crystallized and that you are regarded as a potential shoplifter.

Shoplifting or unorganized stealing by amateur thieves is one of the big problems of the merchandiser, according to the head of one of the biggest department stores in Toronto. Department stores lose three percent of their sales through thieving from the counters, this merchant states.

The candy bag, umbrella and baby carriage tricks are some of the standard schemes of the shoplifter. The facility with which they can be worked makes anyone possessing the properties for the trick a suspicious character to the department store clerk.

In the operation of the candy bag for obtaining merchandise, a woman stands along the counter displaying rings and cheap jewelry as though she were waiting for someone and dips into her candy bag. Her hand goes from the candy bag to her mouth. But on the downward trip something from the counter goes into the bag. The movement is so simple and unsuspecting that it is almost impossible of detection. Hence the lynx-eyed manner in which the candy-bag totter is scanned.

There is nothing subtle about the umbrella method. It merely consists in entering the store with an empty umbrella and leaving with a full one.

Two women, a baby and a baby carriage are requisites for the success of the baby-carriage trick.

One woman wheels the baby carriage and does a bit of shopping. The other removes articles from the counter, telling the clerk she wishes to show them to another woman who is with her. Whatever is taken is placed in the baby cab under the baby, who is an unconscious accessory both before and after the fact.

The woman returns to the counter while the clerk's attention is distracted and says that she has replaced the article. Flat bolts of lace are the things most often taken in this way. With a pile of them on the counter the clerk cannot tell if they have been replaced. With baby seated happily on the loot, form o wait is calmly rolled out of the store.

“Two-Ten,” which sounds to the uninitiated like the call for a cash girl, clerk or floorwalker, is the signal given by anyone in the store when they see a suspicious-looking person enter. It means “Keep your eyes on her ten fingers.”

In addition to amateur merchandise stealers, the big stores are confronted with the problem of organized gangs of thieves who work department stores throughout the States and the Dominion. Four is the usual number for a shoplifting team.

They arrive in a town and wait until clerks are advertised for by some big store. Two of the quartet take positions as clerks and the rest is easy. It is simply a matter of how much of the contents of the store they can deliver to the outsiders who play the role of customers.

These professionals have such a variety of artifices that they are very successful. The great success of their scheme, however, lies in its essential simplicity.

Floorwalkers and store managers have one almost infallible way of detecting theft among the clerks. It is an application of the old platitude, “A guilty conscience needeth no accuser.” If a clerk follows the floorwalker with her eyes it almost invariably develops that she is stealing. She must watch the floorwalker to prevent his surprising her in some irregularity—and if she does watch him she is gone.

Although women make up the majority of offenders at amateur shoplifting, boys also do quite a bit of thieving. Pocket knives and perfumes are the most common articles taken by the younger generation. They are readily vendable.

It is interesting to note, too, that the head of the Toronto Juvenile Court recently asked one of the Toronto stores to take Ford ignition keys off their counters. Boys were buying them and then unlocking parked Ford cars and taking them for joyrides.

“There are no such people as kleptomaniacs,” said a department store head. “At least, we have never run into a genuine klep. All of the people who steal from us have stolen the stuff because they wanted it or the money it would bring.

“The thieving is divided into two classes, amateur and professional. The amateurs are usually given another chance and released. We try to send the professionals to prison. But never in all my experience with thousands of shoplifters have I encountered a kleptomaniac.”