

Art of Book Stealing



Mayor Sutro Gives an Interesting Disquisition on the Subject



How a Moistened String may be put to a Novel Use

THE Trustees of the Free Public Library are anxious to have certain rooms provided for the more rare and valuable books and documents. They made their wishes known before the City Hall Commission at its meeting yesterday.

Mayor Sutro was instantly roused to an interest in the matter. "Not much," he said. "Let us have no private rooms in the public library. They offer too much temptation to theft. The people who seek rare and valuable books are the lovers of books and they are the most dangerous characters in this regard. They love the books, and of course not many of them have the means to buy them, and so they steal them. Clergymen and teachers are the worst of the whole lot for the reasons I have stated.

"The book thief has many artful ways of getting what he wants," continued

the Mayor. "Suppose, for instance, a book contains some valuable diagrams, say of street engineering, that attracts the eye of some covetous bookworm. He proceeds to the library with a string in his mouth, and as he looks the book through he places the wet string in the book next the page he wants. When ready to leave he pulls out the string, the page is cut loose and is his."

The commissioners were deeply interested in the Mayor's exposition of such artfulness. "No," said the Mayor, "we will have no private rooms in the public library. We will not furnish these people with opportunity for their trade. We will keep the books in the general room, where everybody can look after them."

The Mayor invited the commissioners down to see his library, which he said was the best in the city.

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