

Swindling by Mail.

[From Holbrook's "U. S. Mail."]

We have heretofore taken occasion to warn our readers against the operations of various rascals, who have made use of the mails as a medium for swindling in different ways; but there is one form of fraud practised by this means which we believe we have not yet exposed—we allude to the *bogus lottery* swindle. The mode of operation is as follows:

Some needy and unprincipled scamp (calling himself William P. Hunter, for instance—though the name is always fictitious, and of no importance) sends through the mail a large number of sealed circulars, addressed to postmasters of small offices, and others, throughout the country, each enclosing a ticket (all bearing the same number—1,476, for instance) for a share in a "grand distribution of prizes by the National Art Union Association, to be drawn (at Churubusco, N. Y., for instance) on Wednesday, July 8th, 1863." These tickets are sent out about June 1st, and the accompanying circular reads somewhat as follows:

"SIR:—I take the liberty of sending you a ticket for the grand distribution, etc. There are 2,000 prizes amounting to \$20,000. Should you wish to try your luck, you can forward me the price of the ticket, which is \$5, and you will receive the certificate of the managers, Wright, Gordon & Co., without which no ticket is good. All remittances mailed *on or before* the day of drawing will be good, and the prizes paid if drawn, etc.

Yours,
WM. P. HUNTER."

Of course, very few persons are foolish enough to bite at this bait—nor is it intended that they should; the sending of the tickets and circulars is only the preliminary step in the swindle. On the day of the drawing another circular is issued by Mr. H., containing an official account of the drawing, by which it appears that No. 1,476 (or whatever the number of the tickets previously sent may be) has drawn a prize of \$200. This is sent to each of the recipients of the first circular, accompanied by a *written* letter from the benevolent Hunter, after this fashion:

"SIR—You will perceive that your ticket has drawn a prize of \$200, but as you have not paid for it, you cannot obtain it except in this way: write me a letter, enclosing \$5, and *date* it on the day of the drawing. I will take it to the managers, and tell them it was detained in the mails, and they will pay the prize, which I will forward to you, less 15 per cent. My reason for wishing you to obtain the prize is, that if you let it be known among your neighbors (which I expect you to do) that you have won \$200, I can sell a great many tickets among them for the next drawing," etc.