

CITY HOTEL AFFAIR.

Mayer Imprisoned.

The case was concluded before Mr. E. M. Sabine, P.M., at the Adelaide Police Court on Tuesday, in which Robert Mayer was charged with having been present on the private premises of the South Australian Hotel, North terrace, Adelaide, on September 6, without lawful excuse; and with having on the same day been in unlawful possession of £13 1/11. Mr. H. W. Varley appeared for the prosecution, and Mr. J. W. Nelligan for the accused.

Detective McMahon was further cross-examined.

Detective Ferguson said that after accused's arrest he took some tea to him at the cells at the City Watchhouse. While witness was there, Mayer said, "I would like you to give me some advice." Witness replied, "I will if I am able." Accused then said, "Do you think that if I plead guilty to being unlawfully on the premises, there is any chance of the charge of unlawful possession being withdrawn? I intend to plead guilty to being on the hotel premises, but I know nothing about taking a few quid. You don't honestly think I would fall to taking a few paltry quid. My visit to Adelaide was to get more than that. I made arrangements with another chap before leaving Melbourne to come to Adelaide, as I heard that Madam Elsa Stralia was in Adelaide, and that she carried about with her a quantity of valuable jewellery. On my arrival in Adelaide I tried to get accommodation at the South Australian Hotel, but was unable to do so. I then went and stayed at The Grosvenor. Why I went to the South Australian was to look

went to the South Australian was to look in the letter rack to see if there were any letters there addressed to her. I was not sure she was living there, and did not like to enquire. I could not find out that she was there. I was a bit unlucky, otherwise I would have got a big haul."

Mr. Nelligan submitted there was no case to answer, but the Magistrate held there was a prima facie case established.

Had a Few Drinks.

Mayer, in an unsworn statement, said:—
"On the morning of September 6 about 8 o'clock I got up and did not feel quite well on account of having a few drinks the night before. I walked to the South Australian Hotel, and went into the main hall because I saw that the saloon bar from the outside was closed. I walked around the back of the saloon bar, and there I met a man who appeared to be cleaning up the place. He told me that the bar was not open yet, but there was a bar around the corner. I walked back into the hall to the first door, and saw it was a lounge, and into a second door, which was a dining room. I next saw Mr. Willis standing in front of the office, and asked him where the bar was around the corner. Mr. Willis said to me, 'Are you staying here?' Thinking that one could not get a drink before 9 o'clock unless one stayed on the premises, I naturally said, 'Yes.' Mr. Willis then took me to where the bar was, and I went in and had two drinks. There was nothing else said by Mr. Willis to me. The next thing I heard was when the detectives approached me in the Green room. Before I go any further, I might as well tell Your Honor that about 11.30 I went into the saloon bar again, and

I went into the saloon bar again, and had another couple of drinks. Mr. Willis could have seen me if he had been looking. Detective McMahon asked me my name and whether I had been at the South Australian that morning. I said, 'Yes, I was there and had a couple of drinks.' Detective McMahon said, 'Where's your luggage?' I said, 'About here.' I then showed them my luggage, and told them what I was in Adelaide for. We then walked up to the South Australian, and when we got inside Mrs. Chippendale came down and Detective McMahon asked her whether I was the man who was there that morning. She hid a good look at me, and then she asked me to put on my overcoat. She had another look at me, and said, 'It looks something like the man, but I cannot be sure.' She said, 'I think he had a black overcoat on this morning.' She then went into the office with Detective McMahon. They were there for some time, after which the detective went around looking for other people to identify me. I was standing in the hall with Detective Ferguson. Then Detective McMahon called me out, and we went into the yard. When I got out there were three ladies there. The lot of them were that excited that they would have said any one was the man. As a matter of fact, I was only half-way down the passage when one of the maids said, 'Yes, that's the man, that's the man.' A young fellow in the yard was quite sure he had seen me in the hotel for weeks and weeks in the lounge and sitting about. There was another lady there, and she said she would not swear that I was the man. I said, 'I am sure you are making a mistake, because I was never near the

mistake, because I was never near the room where you said I was. That is all, and the detective took me away and charged me."

The Magistrate found the charge proved. The second charge was then proceeded with.

In support of the second charge, Detective McMahon deposed that on September 6 he questioned Mayer regarding sums of money between £20 and £30 stolen from lodgers in the upstairs rooms of the South Australian Hotel. He replied, "I won't answer any questions. You can do what you like with the money. I don't care what you do with it. I told you before that you made a mistake. I am sick and tired of the whole business. I have enough money to buy and sell you. I would not take a few paltry pounds like this." Witness said, "Any way I want to know where you got it from?" He said, "I won't answer any questions." Witness said, "I am of the opinion that this money belongs to the boarders of the South Australian Hotel; that you stole it from them between Saturday night and Tuesday morning; and I am going to charge you with the unlawful possession of it." Witness spoke to the accused the following morning when the latter said, "What do you think I will get for it?" Witness said, "I don't know, but I should think that if you made restitution of the money it would certainly give the Magistrate more leniency to deal with the case."

The Magistrate found the charge proved.

Mr. Varley said the accused was convicted on February 22, 1921, at Perth on a charge of having been unlawfully on premises, and was sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment. On December 19, 1923, at

imprisonment. On December 19, 1923, at Newtown (N.S.W.) he was ordered one month's imprisonment for stealing; on February 4, 1924, at Sydney quarter sessions he was sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment on each of two charges of stealing, the sentences being made concurrent; and on April 1, 1925, at Melbourne general sessions, the accused was ordered 18 months' imprisonment on two charges of false pretences, the sentences being concurrent.

In mitigation of the penalty the accused said he came from a good home and family, but ever since he returned from the war he had "got in with a wrong crowd." He started drinking, and they could see from his record the result. He had a good business—a clothing factory—and had a really good staff.

Mr. Sabine (to the accused—
You cannot expect much leniency on the evidence placed before me. I hope that when you come out after serving this sentence—which will not be a crushing one—you will not repeat this kind of crime. The maximum penalty I can award you for unlawful possession is two years. On the charge of having been unlawfully on the premises you will serve six months' imprisonment, and on the other charge 12 months, the sentences to be concurrent.