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Title: Scotland Yard: The methods and organisation of the Metropolitan Police

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Release Date: March 13, 2010 [EBook #31629]

Language: English

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SCOTLAND YARD: THE METHODS AND ORGANISATION OF THE METROPOLITAN POLICE ***

SCOTLAND YARD.

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SCOTLAND YARD

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THE METHODS AND ORGANISATION OF THE METROPOLITAN POLICE.

BY

GEORGE DILNOT.



LONDON:
PERCIVAL MARSHALL & CO.,
66, FARRINGDON STREET, E.C.

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PREFACE.

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TO ROBERT.

MY DEAR ROBERT,

It is more than probable that since this book was written you have changed your uniform and your beat. You are in the North Sea, in Flanders, in Gallipoli. Nowhere can admiral or general wish a better man.

I have known you long. I have for many years been thrown among you in all circumstances, and at all times. I have known you trudging your beat, have known you more especially as a detective, have known you in high administrative and executive positions. I have seen you arrest armed murderers, have seen you tactfully reproving a drunkard, have seen you solving tangled problems of crime, have seen you charging a mob, have seen you playing with a lost baby. I do not think there is any phase of your work which I have not seen. And I want the public to know you.

You, whether you be Commissioner or constable, occupy a position of delicate and peculiar responsibility. You are poised between the trust and suspicion of those you serve, and you are never quite sure whether you will be blessed or blamed. I, who realise something of your temptations and your qualities, know how seldom you fail in an emergency, how rarely you abuse your powers.

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You will forgive me when I say you are not perfect. You have your little failings, and at times the defect of one man recoils on 20,000. There are matters I should like to see changed. But, on the whole, you are admittedly still the best policeman in the world.

The war has claimed you and others of your profession. Astute commanding officers have recognised you as "men who are handled and made," and many a constable of a year ago now wears an officer's stars. There are those of you who have gained other distinctions.

There is no branch of the service here dealt with that has not sent of its best to the fighting line. None will recognise more willingly than you in the trenches that the luck has been yours. We know (you and I) that others have been, by no will of their own, left behind. It is to these, in no small degree, that the safety and equanimity of London have been due. And it is as well that here tribute should be paid to those who have endured without retort the sneers of the malicious and ill-informed as well as the multiplicity of extra duties the war has entailed upon them.

One advantage, at least, the war has conferred on you. It has exploded the ignorance of your profession to those thousands of citizens who have elected to share something of your responsibilities. They at least know something of your work; they at least know that the special

constable can never replace, though he may assist, the experienced police-officer. You always understood the Londoner; now the Londoner is coming to understand you. [Pg 8]

I have attempted no more than a sketch of the great machine of which you form part. But if it enlightens the public in some degree as to the way they are served by you it will have achieved its purpose.

Yours sincerely,
GEORGE DILNOT.

London,
October, 1915.

SCOTLAND YARD.

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By GEORGE DILNOT.

"By all means let us abuse the police, but let us see what the poor wretches have to do."—KIPLING.

CHAPTER I.

THE SILENT MACHINE.

We who live in London are rather apt to take our police for granted. Occasionally, in a mood of complacency, we boast of the finest police force in the world; at other times, we hint darkly at corruption and brutality among a gang of men too clever, too unscrupulous to be found out. We associate Scotland Yard with detectives—miraculous creations of imaginative writers—forgetting that the Criminal Investigation Department is but one branch in a wondrously complex organisation. Of that organisation itself, we know little. And in spite of—or perhaps because of—the mass of writing that has made its name familiar all over the world, there exists but the haziest notion as to how it performs its functions.

Perhaps one of the reasons for this ignorance is that Scotland Yard never defends itself, never explains, never extenuates. Praise or blame it accepts in equal silence. It goes on its way, ignoring everything that does not concern it, acting swiftly, impartially, caring nothing save for duty to be done.

There is romance in Scotland Yard—a romance that has never been written, that may never be written. It concerns the building up, in the face of incredible obstacles, of a vast, ingenious machine which has become one of the greatest instruments of civilisation the world has ever seen. [Pg 10]

Imagine an army of 20,000 men encamped over seven hundred square miles, with its outposts in every quarter of the globe—an army engaged in never-ceasing warfare with the guerillas of crime and disorder. Imagine something of the work it does.

In a city of seven million souls, crammed with incalculable wealth, there are less than a thousand habitual thieves—the exact number is 706—and 161 receivers of stolen goods. In spite of all its temptations, there are but seventeen thousand serious crimes in a year, while the number of more trivial offences is only one hundred and seventy thousand. Few of the perpetrators escape justice. Compare this record with that of any city in the world. Ask Paris, ask New York, ask Petrograd, and you will begin to realise how well protected London is.

In a large soft-carpeted room, its big double windows open to catch the breezes that blow from the river, sits the man upon whom the ultimate responsibility for all this devolves, a slim-built, erect man of sixty odd, with moustache once auburn but now grey, grey hair and shrewd hazel eyes—Sir Edward Henry.

Imperturbable, quiet-voiced, quiet-mannered, he sits planning the peace of London. He is playing a perpetual game of chess on the great board of the metropolis with twenty thousand men as his pieces against a cosmopolitan fraternity of evil-doers who never rest. He is the one man in the service who must never make a mistake. [Pg 11]

The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police sleeps on no bed of roses. He must be as supple as willow, as rigid as steel, must possess the tact of a diplomatist, with the impartiality of a judge.

Since the days when Sir Richard Mayne built up the police organisation in its infancy, there has been no Commissioner who so nearly fulfils the ideal of a great police administrator as Sir

Edward Henry. Unlike most of his predecessors, practically his whole life has been spent in the study of police science.

It is something more than forty years ago since he entered the Indian Civil Service as assistant magistrate collector. He became ultimately Inspector-General of the Bengal Police, and then commissioner of a division.

It was there that he first established the finger-print system of identification, as a police device for the registration of habitual criminals which he was to introduce later at Scotland Yard, and which has tightened the meshes round many a criminal who would otherwise have escaped justice.

The man in the street knows little of the silent man who is undoubtedly the greatest police organiser in the world. Even on this very matter of finger-prints there is a general confusion with Bertillonage—a totally different thing. The Henry system has practically ousted Bertillonage in every civilised country. If Sir Edward had done nothing but that he would have ranked as one of the greatest reformers in criminal detection. But he has done more—much more.

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Fourteen years ago he resigned his Indian post to become Assistant-Commissioner in charge of the Criminal Investigation Department. Even then the intention was to "try" him for Commissioner. He spent a period in South Africa during the war reorganising the civil police of Johannesburg and Pretoria. In 1903, when Sir Edward Bradford retired, he was appointed Commissioner.

He found that the vast complex machinery of which he assumed control was running a little less freely than it should. The police force was like an old established business—still sound, but inclined to work in a groove. It needed a chief with courage, individuality, ideas, initiative, and the organising powers of a Kitchener. These qualities were almost at once revealed in Sir Edward Henry.

In the force it was soon felt that a new power had arisen. The Commissioner was not only a name but an actuality. Nothing was so trivial as to escape his attention; nothing too wide for him to grasp. He knew his men—it is said that he knows every man in the force, an exaggeration with a great deal of truth in it—and they soon knew him.

Quick to observe, quick to commend or punish, whether it be high official or ordinary constable, he has come to be regarded with unswerving devotion by those under him. The police force as he took it over and as it is now may seem the same thing to the ordinary observer. To those who knew something of its working it is a vastly different thing.

I have passed many years among police officers of all grades and all departments. Many of these have been veterans of from twenty to thirty years' service. They have told me of things done for the well-being of the force, the convenience of the public, and the confusion of the criminal.

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Telephone and telegraphic communication have been perfected between stations, head-quarters and provincial police, the system of identification has been revised, young constables are taught their trade with care and thoroughness, higher pay has been granted to all ranks, men are housed in greater comfort, red tape has been ruthlessly cut through, the relations between police and Press have been improved; there is a wider, broader spirit in all. A clean esprit de corps, very different to that which at times long gone by has threatened the interests of the public, has sprung up.

In all these things is to be seen the hand of Sir Edward Henry. Scotland Yard is not yet perfect; there still linger relics of the old conservative spirit in certain directions; but the new method has made itself felt. Initiative is encouraged in all ranks. Suggestions and criticism from without are welcomed.

The Commissioner is a man of instant decision. Let anyone make a suggestion, and he ponders it for a second or so. Then he reaches for a pen. "Yes, that's a good idea. We'll have an order on that." And in a little the suggestion has become an official fact.

Little escapes his eye, but he is a man who makes sure. Every morning a bundle of newspapers and periodicals is delivered at Scotland Yard to be carefully scrutinised and to have every reference to the force marked with blue pencil. Where there is an accusation against a particular man, or a criticism of methods in general, special attention is directed to it. But there is rarely any need for this. The Commissioner has probably read it at breakfast. The point, whatever it is, is usually in a fair way to being dealt with before lunch.

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From the moment a constable has been sworn in he is watched and selected for the post that best suits him. A man may do well in a semi-rural district who would be a failure in Commercial Road, E. He may be selected for office work, regulation of traffic, for the Criminal Investigation Department, for the Thames Division, or for routine duty in the street. Wherever he is he is the best man who can be found for the work, and so from top to bottom of the ladder of promotion.

Many romances have been written of Scotland Yard, but imagination has supplied the place of facts, for the tongues of those who have taken part in dramatic episodes, more stirring than any in fiction, are locked.

Yet, in spite of all its cold, business-like atmosphere, the story of the Metropolitan Police is in itself a vivid romance which only a Kipling could write as it should be written. Imagine the

Commissioner, whose power is almost autocratic, weaving a net that is spread broadcast to catch within its meshes any person who breaks the King's peace or the King's laws.

And, although now and again the personal factor is discernible in some piece of work, it is mainly cold, precise, business-like organisation which holds the net so close. Telephones, telegraphs, and motor cars link the police stations of London closely—so closely that within less than half an hour 20,000 men can be informed of the particulars of a crime.

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As an instance of organisation, it may be interesting to recall that during the Coronation procession, when close on 600 detectives were on duty mingling with the crowds, it was possible for Mr. Frank Froest, the then Superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department, in his office, to get a message to or from any one of them within ten minutes. A large proportion of the whole body could have been concentrated on one spot within twenty minutes.

It is organisation that makes Scotland Yard able to carry out its myriad duties, from testing motor omnibuses to plucking a murderer from his hiding place at the ends of the earth, from guarding the persons of Emperors and Kings to preventing a Whitechapel bully from knocking his wife about. The work must go on smoothly, silently, every department harmonising, every man working in one common effort.

The administrative and financial sides of the police are divided, the former being under the Commissioner, the latter under the Receiver, Mr. G. H. Tripp. The maintenance of the Metropolitan Police is naturally expensive, the average cost of each constable annually being £102. The gross expenditure during 1913-14 was £2,830,796; of this, £886,307 was received from the Exchequer, £244,383 was from sums paid for the services of constables lent to other districts, £1,512,072 from London ratepayers, and the remainder from various sources.

CHAPTER II.

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MATTERS OF ORGANISATION.

The great deterrent against crime is not vindictive punishment; the more certain you make detection, the less severe your punishment may be. The brilliant sleuth-hound work of which we read so often is a less important factor in police work than organisation. Organisation it is which holds the peace of London. It is organisation that plucks the murderer from his fancied security at the ends of the earth, that prevents the drunkard from making himself a nuisance to the public, that prevents the defective motor-bus from becoming a danger or an annoyance to the community.

Inside the building of red brick and grey stone that faces the river, and a stone's throw from the Houses of Parliament, there are men who sit planning, planning, planning. The problems of the peace of London change from day to day, from hour to hour, almost from minute to minute. Every emergency must be met, instantly, as it arises—often by diplomacy, sometimes by force. A hundred men must be thrown here, a thousand there, and trained detectives picked for special work. With swift, smooth precision, the well-oiled machinery works, and we, who only see the results, never guess at the disaster that might have befallen if a sudden strain had thrown things out of gear.

In the tangle of departments and sub-departments, bewildering to the casual observer, there is an elastic order which welds the whole together. Not a man but knows his work. The top-notch of efficiency is good enough for Scotland Yard. Its men are engaged in business pure and simple, not in making shrewd detective deductions. The lime-light which occasionally bursts upon them distorts their ways and their duties. Really, they have little love for the dramatic. Newspaper notoriety is not sought, and men cannot "work the Press," as in times gone by, to attain a fictitious reputation.

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It is through well-chosen lieutenants that Sir Edward Henry works. There are four Assistant-Commissioners upon each of whom special work devolves. Sir Frederick Wodehouse, for instance, is the "Administrative Assistant-Commissioner." He deals with all matters relating to discipline, promotion, and routine so far as the uniformed force is concerned.

The Criminal Investigation Department is under Mr. Basil Thompson, a comparatively young man who came from the Prison Commission to succeed Sir Melville Macnaghten, and who has successfully experimented with some new ideas to make the path of the criminal more difficult. Mr. Frank Elliott, who was formerly at the Home Office, holds sway over the Public Carriage Office; and the Hon. F. T. Bigham, a barrister—and a son of Lord Mersey, who gained his experience as a Chief Constable of the Criminal Investigation Department—deals with and investigates the innumerable complaints and enquiries that would occur even in a police force manned by archangels. Mr. Bigham is also the Central Authority under the terms of the international agreement for the suppression of the white slave traffic.

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There are six Chief Constables, mostly ex-military officers. One of these assists in the administration of the Criminal Investigation Department, the remainder control districts of four or five adjoining divisions. To adopt a military simile, they may be compared to major-generals in command of brigades, with each division representing a battalion, and the superintendents,

colonels.

Only once in the whole history of the Metropolitan Police has a man risen from the ranks to the post of Chief Constable, though many, like Mr. Gentle at Brighton, and Mr. Williams at Cardiff, have become the heads of important provincial forces. The post of superintendent in London is at least equivalent in its responsibilities to the average chief-constableness of the provinces. There are metropolitan section sergeants who have as many men under their control as some chief constables of small boroughs.

The unit of the Metropolitan Police is a division which averages about a thousand men. Each is under a superintendent, with a chief-inspector as second in command. Thereafter the ranks run:

UNIFORM BRANCH.	DETECTIVE BRANCH.	
Sub-divisional Inspectors	{ Divisional Detective-Inspectors.	
Inspectors	{ Central Detective-Inspectors.	
Station-Sergeants	Detective-Inspectors	
Section-Sergeants	First Class Detective Sergeants.	
Constables (reserve)	Second Class Detective-Sergeants	[Pg 19]
Constables (according to seniority)	Third Class Detective-Sergeants	
	Detective-Patrols	

These are distributed among close on two hundred police stations in the metropolis, and in twenty-two divisions. Some are detailed for the special work with which London as London has nothing to do. Thus there are: the King's Household Police; divisions guarding the dockyards and military stations at Woolwich, Portsmouth, Devonport, Chatham, and Pembroke; detachments on special duty at the Admiralty and War Office and the Houses of Parliament and Government Departments; and men specially employed, as at the Royal Academy, the Army and Navy Stores, and so on. In all, there are 1,932 men so engaged.^[1] Their services are charged for by the Receiver, and the cost does not fall upon the ratepayers.

Scotland Yard is run on the lines of a big business. To the intimate observer it is strangely similar in many of its aspects to a great newspaper office, with its diverse and highly specialised duties all tending to one common end. The headquarters staff is a big one. There are superintendents in charge of the departments, men whom no emergency can ruffle—calm, methodical and alert, ready to act in the time one can make a telephone call.

There are McCarthy, of the Central Criminal Investigation Department; Quinn, of the Special Branch which concerns itself with political offences and the care of Royalty; Bassom, of the Public Carriage Department; Gooding, of the Peel House Training School; West and White, of the Executive and Statistical Departments. [Pg 20]

Nothing but fine, careful organisation could weld together these multitudinous departments with their myriad duties. It is an organisation more difficult to handle than that of any army in the field. The public takes it all for granted until something goes wrong, some weak link in the chain fails. Then there is trouble.

The Metropolitan Police is the only force in England which is independent of local control. The Commissioner—often wrongly described as the Chief Commissioner—is appointed by the Crown on the recommendation of the Home Secretary, and has wide, almost autocratic powers. It is an Imperial force which has duties apart from the care of London. It has divisions at the great dockyards; it is the adviser and helper of multifarious smaller zones in case of difficulty. It has charge of the river from Dartford Creek to Teddington, and its confines extend far beyond the boundaries of the London County Council.

In one year its printing and stationery bill alone amounts to over £10,000; its postage, telegrams, and telephone charges to another £13,000. Its gross cost is nearly three millions a year. That is the insurance paid for the keeping of the peace. What do we get for it?

We have taught the world that a body of police can be none the less efficient although their hands are clean; that honesty is not necessarily a synonym for stupidity; that law and order can be enforced without brutality. There are no *agents provocateur* in the London police, and the grafter has little opportunity to exercise his talent. [Pg 21]

In one year 17,910 indictable offences were committed within the boundaries of the Metropolitan Police district. For these 14,525 people were proceeded against, and as some of them were probably responsible for two or more of the offences the margin of those who escaped is very low. There were 178,495 minor offenders, all of whom were dealt with.

The machinery of Scotland Yard misses little. How many crimes have been prevented by the knowledge of swift and almost inevitable punishment it is impossible to say, but they have been many.

FOOTNOTE:

[1] This was before the War.

THE REAL DETECTIVE.

Through a little back door, up a stone flight of stairs, into a broad corridor one passes to the offices where are quartered the heads of the most important branch of Scotland Yard—the Criminal Investigation Department, with its wide-reaching organisation stretching beyond the confines of London over the whole world.

It is its business to keep its fingers on the pulse of crime, to watch vigilantly the comings and goings of thousands of men and women, and to bring to justice all those whose acts have made them a menace to society.

No department of Scotland Yard has been more written around; none has been more misunderstood. It does its duty effectually, unswervingly, in the same unemotional spirit that marks the other departments of the service, but with perhaps even a keener eye to its own reputation. The C.I.D. knows how high is the reputation it has won among international police forces, and is very properly jealous of its maintenance.

There have been critics of the C.I.D. Many have held that the system of recruiting from the uniformed police is wrong in essence—that educated men employed direct from civilian life would be more effective. There is no bar against anyone being appointed direct if the authorities chose—but it has been tried.

Once upon a time—this was a long while ago—an ardent reformer held the reins of the detective force. He made many valuable changes, and some less valuable—among the latter the experiment of "gentlemen" as detectives. There were six of them, and the full story of these kid-glove amateurs would be interesting reading. They were, in the euphemistic words of the reformer himself, "eminently unsatisfactory." "There is," he added, "little doubt that the gentlemen who have failed in one of the professions which they usually adopt are less trustworthy, less reliable, and more difficult to control than those who enter a calling such as the police in the ordinary course."^[2] So the only approach to Sherlock Holmes that Scotland Yard has ever seen was killed for good and all, though there is still no legal bar to anyone being appointed directly a detective.

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Six hundred and fifty picked officers, all of whom have worn the blue uniform and patrolled the streets at the regulation pace, form a mobile army scattered over the metropolis.

Quiet and unobtrusive men for the most part, dogged, tactful, and resourceful, they must always be ready to act at a moment's notice as individuals or as part of a machine. For it is the machinery of Scotland Yard that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred checks to the criminal's move. It is long odds on law and order every time.

The administrative work of the department is carried out by the Assistant-Commissioner and the Chief Constable. It is on the shoulders of two superintendents—curiously enough, both Irishmen—at the head of the two main branches of the department that the executive work chiefly devolves.

Superintendent John McCarthy—who for several years has held the reins of the Central C.I.D., to which the main body of detectives are attached—is a blue-eyed, soft-voiced man who governs with no less tact and firmness than his predecessor, the famous Frank Froest. In a service extending for more than thirty years he has accumulated an unequalled experience of all classes of crime and criminals, and has travelled widely in many countries on dangerous and difficult missions. Tall and neat, he gives an impression of absolute competence. And competence is needed in the organisation he has to handle.

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Nothing can ruffle him. He sits at a flat-topped desk in a soft-carpeted room, working quietly, methodically. By the window stands a big steel safe containing hundreds of pounds in gold, at hand for any emergency. Ranged on shelves are reference books—"Who's Who," "The Law List," "Medical Directory," "A.B.C. Guide," "Continental Bradshaw," and others. Behind the office table are half a dozen speaking tubes and a telephone.

It is for Mr. McCarthy to enlist the aid of the Press on occasion. It is sometimes necessary to give wide publicity to a description or a photograph. Then skilful diplomacy is necessary to avoid giving facts which, instead of helping, might hamper an investigation. Only of late years has this co-operation been sought—and credit is due to Mr. Froest for the manner in which he helped to initiate and apply the system. Swift publicity has often helped to run down a criminal, notably in the case of the murderer Crippen.

Immediately associated with Mr. McCarthy at headquarters are four Chief Detective-Inspectors—Ward, Fowler, Hawkins, and Gough—all men of long experience and proved qualities. Most of their names are familiar to the public in connection with the unravelling of mysteries during the last decade. One Chief Detective-Inspector—Mr. Wensley—has his headquarters in the East End.

One or more of these is always available in an emergency. Is there an epidemic of burglary at some district in London? A chief-inspector is sent to organise a search for the culprits, taking with him a detachment from Scotland Yard to reinforce the divisional detectives. Problems of crime that affect London as a whole are dealt with by them.

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Some have specialist knowledge of particular classes of crime or particular districts, though each

must be competent to undertake any investigation, no matter what it may be. Or a provincial police force may ask for expert aid in, for instance, a baffling murder mystery. One may be sent by the authority of the Home Secretary to assist in its solution.

To each of the twenty-two divisions into which the Metropolitan Police is split up are assigned between twelve to thirty detectives, under a divisional inspector. In ten of the larger divisions there is a junior inspector to assist in the control of the staff. Except in a few of the outlying districts there are one, two, three or more detectives to every police station. They deal with local crime, make it their business to know local thieves, and reinforce other divisions or are reinforced as occasion demands. They have special duties allotted to them, and have to keep a record in their diaries of the manner in which their time is spent.

Yet individuality and initiative are not sacrificed by too rigid a discipline. If a man learnt, for instance, while watching for pickpockets in the Strand that a robbery was being planned at Kennington, it would be his duty to make at once for the scene. He would stay for nothing, gathering assistance, if possible, as he went, but, if not, going alone.

Usually, it is found that the divisional men can deal with any matter needing attention in their districts, but occasionally London is startled by some great mystery. It is then that the C.I.D. moves swiftly, with every nerve strained to achieve its ends.

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There is no actual "murder commission," as there is in some foreign countries, but every person and device likely to be of assistance is quickly concentrated on the spot. Not a second of time is lost from the moment the crime is discovered. First on the spot are the divisional detective-inspector and his staff. Telephones and the chattering tape machines tell the details in ten score of police stations.

Mr. Basil Thompson, the Assistant-Commissioner, and Mr. McCarthy will probably motor in haste to the spot. Specialists are summoned from all quarters. Not a thing is moved until a minute inspection has been made, plans drawn, photographs taken, notes made, and finger-prints sought for. It may be necessary to get certain points settled by experts, by Dr. Wilcox, the Home Office analyst, Dr. Spilsbury, the pathologist, by a gunsmith, an expert in handwriting, or any one of a dozen others. The very best professional assistance is always sought.

The danger of amateur experts was exemplified some years ago, when a woman who committed suicide tried to destroy every mark of identity on her clothes. She missed one detail—a laundry mark worked in red thread on her dressing jacket. The mark was read as E.U.X.A.O.Z., and these letters were advertised far and wide. Then the President of the Laundry Association examined the garment, and conclusively showed that the marks really represented E.48992. It was, he declared, not a laundry mark at all, but a dyers and cleaners' mark. And this was what it proved to be.

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While the experts are busy the divisional inspector and his men are no less so. They are making a kind of gigantic snowball enquiry, working backwards from the persons immediately available. A. has little to say himself, but there are B. and C. who, he knows, were connected with the murdered person. And B. and C. having been questioned speak of D. E. F. and G.; and it may be that a score or more persons have been interviewed ere one is found who can supply some vital fact. I have known a murder investigation held up a couple of hours while search was being made for someone to supply the address of some other person who *might* know something.

All very tedious this, and very different from the methods of the detectives we read about. But then the detectives of fiction somehow avoid the chance of the flaws in their deductions being sought out by astute cross-examining counsel.

If a description of the suspected murderer is available a telegraphist working at Scotland Yard will get it, with the letters "A.S." (all stations) attached. As he taps his instrument the message is automatically ticked out simultaneously at every station in the metropolis.

The great railway termini are watched, and men are thrown to the outlying stations as a second safeguard. Should the man slip through this net he will find England locked from port to port. The C.I.D. have their own men at many ports, and at others the co-operation of the provincial police is enlisted. He is lucky indeed if he gets away after the hue and cry has been raised.

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There are no chances taken. Everything is put on record, whether it appears relevant or irrelevant to the enquiry. In the Registry—a kind of clerical bureau of the Criminal Investigation Department—every statement, every report is neatly typed, filed in a book with all relating to the case, and indexed. It remains available just so long as the crime is unsolved—ten days or ten years. The progress of the case is always shown to within an hour.

No effort is spared to get on the track of the murderer while the scent is still warm. Scores of men work on different aspects of the case. The Finger-print Department may be trying to identify a thumb-print from among their records; in another part of the building the photographers have made a lantern slide of certain charred pieces of paper, and are throwing a magnified reproduction on a screen for closer scrutiny; a score of men are seeking for a cabman who might have driven the murderer away.

It may be that these steps will go on for days and weeks with dogged persistence. This stage of investigation has been aptly likened to a jig-saw puzzle which may fall from chaos into a composite whole at any moment. Once the hounds have glimpsed their quarry it is almost

hopeless for him to attempt to escape. His description, his photograph, specimens of his writing are spread broadcast for the aid of the public in identifying him wherever he may hide. Men watch the big railway stations, out-going ships are kept under surveillance, for the C.I.D. has two or three staff men resident in many parts. They are also maintained at ports like Boulogne and Calais.

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The co-operation of the provincial and foreign police is obtained, and the wide publicity of newspapers. The whole-heartedness with which the public throws itself into a hunt of this kind has disadvantages as well as advantages. A score of times a day people will report someone "very like" the wanted man as seen almost simultaneously in a score of different places. All these reports have to be immediately investigated.

And with the search for the culprit the ceaseless search for evidence goes on. It is no use to catch a murderer if you cannot adduce proof against him. The enthusiasm of the investigators is not called forth by a blood-hunt. It is all a part of the mechanism. The C.I.D. and its members are merely putting through a piece of business quite impersonally. "A murder has been committed," they say in effect. "We have caught the person we believe responsible, and this is the evidence. It does not matter to us what happens now. The jury are responsible."

It once fell to the lot of the writer to see an arrest for a murder with which the world rang. The merest novice in stage management could have obtained a better dramatic effect; the arrest of a drunken man by an ordinary constable would have had more thrill. It was in a street thronged with people passing homewards from the city. A single detective waited on each pavement. Presently one of them lifted his hat and the other crossed over. They fell into step each side of a very ordinary young man. "Your name is so-and-so," said one. "We are police-officers, and we should like an explanation of one or two things. It may be necessary to detain you." A cab stopped, the three got into it, and as it drove away there were not two people among the thousands in the street who knew that anything out of the ordinary had happened.

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That is typical of the way arrests for great crimes are effected if possible. Yet, sometimes circumstances force melodrama on the detectives. Another arrest which was watched by the writer took place at dead of night in a dirty lodging-house in an East End street. A house-to-house search had been instituted by forty or fifty armed detectives. They expected desperate resistance when they found their quarry. And at last they came upon the man they sought sleeping peacefully on a truckle bed. A giant detective lifted him bodily. A great coat was bundled over his night shirt, and he was sent off as he was, under escort, into the night.

FOOTNOTE:

[2] Sir Howard Vincent, first and only "Director of Criminal Investigations," said, in 1883: "It has been urged more than once that better and more reliable detectives might be found among the retired officers of the army and younger sons of gentlemen than in the ranks of the police. Willing, as I hope I shall always be, to give every suggestion a fair trial, six such recruits have been enrolled in the Criminal Investigation Department with a result, I am sorry to say, eminently unsatisfactory. There is, I fear, little doubt that the gentlemen who have failed in one of the professions which they usually adopt are less trustworthy, less reliable, and more difficult to control than those who enter a calling such as the police in the ordinary course."

Sir Charles Warren, in the course of a magazine article which had tremendous effect on his reign as Commissioner, said, referring to the detective service: "Some few candidates have been admitted direct to a great number examined and rejected. Of those admitted, few, if any, have been found qualified to remain in the detective service. It seems, therefore, that although the Criminal Investigation Branch is open to receive any qualified person direct, as a general rule no persons, for some years past, have presented themselves sufficiently qualified to remain. And there are indications of the advantages of a previous police training in the uniform branch in the fact that the most successful private detectives at present in the country are those who have formerly been in, and originally trained in, the uniform branch...."

CHAPTER IV.

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ON THE TRAIL.

Primarily, the great function of the police is to prevent crime; secondly, when it has happened, to bring the offender to justice. How do they work? Not by relying on spasmodic flashes of inspiration, like the detective of fiction, but by hard, painstaking work, and, of course, organisation.

Crime is divided into two classes—the habitual and the casual. Every habitual criminal is known. Numbers vary, but the latest available figures show that there are 957 habitual criminals in London, of whom 706 are thieves and 161 receivers. Now, each of these thieves has a distinctive method. A crime occurs. It is reported to the local police station, and a detective is sent to the scene. Perhaps he is able to say off-hand: "This job was done by so-and-so." Then, having fixed his man, he sets to work to accumulate evidence. Scotland Yard is reported to, and thence word is

sent to every police station to keep a look-out for Brown, or Jones, or Smith—that is, if he has left his usual haunts. Every detective—strange as it may seem—makes it a point to keep on good terms with thieves. It is his business. Sooner or later the man "wanted" is discovered, unless he is exceptionally astute.

There are, of course, a hundred ways of finding the author of the crime. The good detective chooses the simplest. Subtle analysis is all very well, but it is apt to lead to blind alleys. Imagine a case such as occurs every day:

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A burglary has been committed and reported to the police. The first steps are automatic. The divisional detective-inspector in control of the district sets his staff to work. Men get descriptions of the stolen property, and within an hour the private telegraph and telephone wires have carried them to every police station in London. The great printing machine of Scotland Yard reels off "Informations" four times a day, and in the next edition the story of the crime is told, and each of the 650 detectives in London, as well as the 20,000 uniformed police, have it impressed upon their minds.

Swift, unobtrusive little green motor cars carry "Pawnbrokers' Lists" to every police station to be distributed by hand. The *Police Gazette* goes out twice a week to the whole police forces of the British Empire.

Every honest market in which the booty can be disposed of is closed. If the thief has been unwary enough to leave a finger-print it is photographed, and should he be an old hand the records at Scotland Yard show his identity in less than half an hour.

All this is a matter of routine. It is "up to" the detectives still to find their man. Should there be nothing tangible to act upon the detectives—who know intimately the criminals in their district, and many out of it—will try a method of elimination. "This," they will say in effect, "is probably the work of one of half a dozen men. Let us see who could have done it, and then we shall have something to go on. A. and B. are in prison; C. we know to be in Newcastle, and D. was at Southampton. Either E. or F. is the man."

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The personal factor enters into the work here. A detective is expected to be on friendly terms with professional criminals, although he must not be too friendly. The principle can be illustrated by an anecdote of Mr. Froest, the famous detective.

Once or twice he had arrested a notorious American crook who was carrying on operations in this country, and whom I will call Smith. In one of his occasional spells of liberty, Smith, who was a reputed murderer in his own country, met Froest. "Say, chief," he drawled after a little conversation, "I'd just hate to hurt a man like you. I always carry a gun, and there are times when I'm a bit too handy with it. If ever you've got to take me *never do it after six in the evening*. I'm a bit lively then."

It is the business of a detective to know thieves. Without an acquaintance with their habits of thought and their social customs, he may be lost. The "informant" plays a great part in practical detective work, and the informant, it follows, is often a thief himself. Of the manner in which he is used, I shall have more to say later.

So it is among the friends (and enemies) of E. and F., that the detectives set to work. It is a task that calls for tact. E., we will suppose, is at home, and all his movements about the time of the crime are checked and counter-checked. F. has vanished from his usual haunts. This is a circumstance suspicious in itself, but rendered more so by the fact that his wife is uncommonly flush of money.

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Often it is harder to connect together legal evidence of guilt than to catch a criminal. The most positive moral certainty is not sufficient to convict a man, and English detectives may not avail themselves of methods in use abroad to bring home a crime to the right person.

Perhaps a detective pays a visit to F.'s wife. With the remembrance of many kindly acts performed by the police during her husband's involuntary absences, she is torn between a stubborn loyalty to him and her wish to be civil to her visitor. He is sympathetic—cynics may not believe that the sympathy is often genuine—but he has his duty to do. He does not expect her consciously to betray her husband, but his eyes are busy while he puts artless questions. An incautious word, the evasion of a question may give him the hint he seeks, or, on the other hand, she may be too alert and his mission may be fruitless.

Meanwhile a description and photograph of F. have been circulated by what may be called the publicity department of Scotland Yard. It may be even given to the newspapers, for your modern detective realises the advantage of deft use of the Press.

Remember, F. is a known criminal, and even in so vast a place as London no man who is known can hide himself indefinitely. A striking personal instance may be cited. The writer, in the course of an aimless walk through obscure streets, accompanied by a well-known detective, was greeted by no fewer than eight officers. I believe there is no instance on record of a definite person being "wanted" where the police have failed to find him. He may have escaped arrest for lack of evidence, but he has been found.

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The wide-flung net will, sooner or later, enmesh F. He may be seen and recognised or, what is more likely, he will be betrayed by one of his associates. It does not follow that he will at once be arrested and charged. He may be merely "detained," which means that the police have him in

custody for not more than twenty-four hours, at the end of which time he must either be brought before a magistrate or set at liberty. He must not be questioned, but he is given to understand why he is held, and may, if he likes, volunteer a statement.

If any of the stolen property is found on him the matter at once becomes straightforward, and if he is believed to have hidden or disposed of it to any particular person search warrants are procured to bring it to light.

Another instance of the methods employed by the C.I.D. to establish identity may be recalled. Two Americans in Frankfort tried to rob a man of £30,000. One was arrested, and the other got away. The C.I.D. was asked if it could make any suggestions to the Frankfort police.

Very courteously, Scotland Yard said in effect: "Yes. If the man left in a hurry, he probably left something behind. Go to his hotel and see."

Frankfort did so, found some luggage in the cloakroom, and among them shirts with the name of a London maker. A Scotland Yard detective went to the address, and found the name of a certain American "crook" as having his shirts made to measure there.

When the man, all unconscious that his connection with the robbery was known, stepped out of the train at Charing Cross Station a few hours later he was arrested. [Pg 37]

Individual initiative is encouraged in every officer. Luck, too, often aids justice. Some years ago it was learnt that an absconding bank cashier would probably try to leave England by a certain liner.

A detective, whom we will call Smith, went armed with a description of the man to effect an arrest. When he got on board he scrutinised the passengers closely. Only one man resembled the description. Smith drew him aside.

"I have reason to believe your name is X.," he said. "I am a police officer, and I hold a warrant for your arrest."

Highly indignant, the man denied that he was the person described. His indignation was obviously not assumed, and there were minor discrepancies between his appearance and the description.

Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"Very well. If you are not X., and can prove it, you have nothing to fear. In that case I presume you will have no objection to my looking through your luggage."

X. paled, stuttered, fumed, and protested that he would never consent to such an outrage.

No conduct could have been more calculated to make the officer determined. He searched the luggage. In a small handbag he discovered, hidden away, a mass of notes and gold. Triumphantly, he conducted his prisoner ashore and had him locked up in the nearest police station.

Then he telephoned to his superior officer, "I've got X."

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"No, you haven't," came the startling reply. "We've got him here. He was arrested at King's Cross half an hour ago."

Utterly bewildered, Smith told of his capture and the compromising gold and notes.

There was five minutes' silence.

Then the voice at the other end of the telephone said quietly: "Oh, that's all right. The man you've got is Y., a rate collector, who made a run from Glasgow a day or two ago."

That was the luck of the service.

Two of the cases in which Mr. Froest was concerned may be recalled, as illustrating how appearances may sometimes lead to wrong conclusions.

In one, an unknown man was found head down in a water-butt outside a country bungalow. There was an ugly bruise on his forehead, and the provincial police who were investigating the case made up their minds that there had been foul play.

They asked for help from Scotland Yard, and Mr. Froest was sent down. He looked over the scene, and his eyes twinkled.

"This is not a case of murder," he said. "That man was a tramp. He hurt his head in climbing through the fence—he was probably going to break into the house—and went to bathe it in the water-butt. As he put his head down he slipped and fell in."

One of the listeners heard this explanation with a sceptical grin.

"That couldn't be so," he protested, and, going near the water-butt, lowered his head to demonstrate the impossibility of such an accident. [Pg 39]

The next instant there was a smothered scream and a mighty splash. A pair of feet waved wildly in the air. As the sceptic was pulled out of the barrel he extended his hand to Mr. Froest with a sad smile.

"I believe you are right," he said.

In the second instance the crews of two Cardiff tramps had joined in an effort to "paint the town red" at Bilbao, the Spanish port.

They returned to the quayside with their pockets stuffed full of biscuits, which they ate as they rolled along. At the quay they were able to clamber down into the boats, except one fireman, who was almost completely "under the weather." So a mate of the other boat fastened a rope round his chest and lowered him to his companions.

Then the mate returned to his own ship. In the morning he was arrested for murder. The fireman had been dead when taken aboard, and his appearance showed that he died of strangulation. It was suggested that the mate had, instead of putting the rope under his arms, put it round his neck, and drawn him up and down, in and out of the water.

A conviction followed the trial, but, luckily, friends of the convicted man asked Scotland Yard to make an independent investigation. Mr. Froest went to Cardiff, where the crews of the two vessels concerned had then arrived. The more he went into the case the deeper became his conviction that a miscarriage of justice had occurred. He went back to Scotland Yard.

"I don't believe the fireman was murdered," he said. "He was eating a biscuit, and a piece probably stuck in his throat and choked him. As to his being wet through, it was raining hard at the time."

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The Spanish authorities were informed of this theory, and the body of the "murdered" man was exhumed. Still in the throat was the biscuit which had choked him.

There was, too, the case of an old woman murdered at Slough. Chief Detective-Inspector Bower, now head of the Port of London Authority police, ultimately arrested a man against whom there was nothing but suspicion, as apart from legal proof. And on the suspect was found a slip of crumpled paper in which coins had apparently been wrapped. The marks of the milling were plainly discernible. Mr. Bower wrapped twenty-one sovereigns—the amount of the money stolen from the victim—in another piece of paper. The marks corresponded, and it was mainly on that evidence that the prisoner was convicted.

CHAPTER V.

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MAKING A DETECTIVE.

The detective net drawn round London is close and complete. Within the last two or three years the headquarters staff at Scotland Yard has completely changed, although there is no man with less than twenty years' service among the five chief detective-inspectors who act as Mr. McCarthy's chief-lieutenants.

These are the men who meet in special council when some great crime stirs London, and whose wits are bent to aid the active efforts of those deputed for the actual investigation. With them at Scotland Yard are some seventy or eighty subordinate detectives. Crime that affects London as a whole is usually dealt with direct from headquarters.

Every division of police in London has its detective detachment of from twelve to thirty men under divisional inspectors. Except in a very few of the outlying rural districts of London, there is no police station without one or more detectives. They are expected to hold local crime in check. But the machine is adaptable to contingencies. The "morning report of crime" sent to headquarters shows daily the ebb and flow of crime. A sudden wave of burglaries, for instance, might be met by reinforcements from another district or from the Yard itself.

Twice a month the big Council of Crime meets—a gathering at New Scotland Yard at which thirty or forty of the senior detectives of the metropolis, heads of districts, and headquarters men meet in conference and compare notes. The movements of criminals are checked, particular mysteries discussed. A. is puzzled by certain peculiarities in a robbery at Hampstead; B. remembers that similar peculiarities were present in an affair in which he arrested Bill Smith, at Brixton, some years ago. Resolved unanimously that Bill's recent movements will bear looking into. Opinions will be discussed of the identity of a swindler who has been duping furniture dealers by selling them furniture from houses or flats he has rented. Many a fraud has been detected by these informal discussions in that bare green-painted room.

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One of the greatest difficulties that beset a detective of real life—it does not so much affect the detective of fiction—is the securing of evidence that is legally convincing. It is one thing to be morally certain of a person's guilt; it is quite another thing to prove it to the satisfaction of a jury. Especially is this so in case of murder. There is probably no other great city in the world which can boast of no murder mystery in which for two years the perpetrator remained undiscovered.

There were twenty-five cases of murder in 1913—the last year for which figures are available—and twenty-four in 1912. In each one, in 1912, the guilty person was known. The 1913 cases were thus disposed of. Eleven arrests were made—one of a man who committed two murders—and in nine the murderers committed suicide. Three of the other cases were caused through illegal

operations, which were not immediately reported to the police. The remaining case was that of an Italian who fled abroad. [Pg 43]

The real detective is a common-place man—common-place in the sense that you would not pick him out of a crowd for what he is. He assiduously avoids mannerisms. You will find him genial rather than mysterious. He does not wear policeman's boots, and he is not always weaving a subtle network of deductions. He is a plain business man of shrewd common-sense who has been carefully trained to take the quickest and most accurate way to a desired end. You can almost fancy him drawing up an advertisement:

"Criminals (assorted) for disposal. Large selection always available. Special orders executed at the shortest notice. Apply Criminal Investigation Department, New Scotland Yard, S.W."

And on occasion he takes, so to speak, your burglar, your pickpocket, or your forger off the shelf, carefully dusts his label, and dispatches him, carriage paid, with a neat parcels note, for conveyance to his ultimate destination by the old-established firm of transport agents in the Old Bailey.

The London detective grows up in an atmosphere of business. Romance, adventure are incidental—and rare. Before he can bring off any big coup he has thoroughly to understand the handling of the big machine of which he forms part. And above all he must have courage—not merely physical courage, but a courage that will assume big responsibility in an instant of stress.

Melville, sometime of the Special Branch, for instance, once committed a flagrant illegality when he decoyed a dangerous Anarchist into a wine cellar and locked him in while a great personage was passing through London. And Mr. Frank Froest, when he snatched a noted embezzler from the Argentine after all attempts to obtain his extradition had failed, gave an example of the same kind of courage. Another detective, in a case where the body of a murdered man had been hidden, did not hesitate to arrest the murderer on the flimsy charge of "being in unlawful possession of a pickaxe" to prevent flight while he continued his search. In each case these men deliberately adopted risks to attain their ends which nothing but success could warrant. [Pg 44]

There are 650 men attached to the Criminal Investigation Department, and they have all learned their trade by tedious degrees. They all started, even the superintendents at their head, as constables on street duty.

Consider the precautions that are taken in recruiting the department. The candidate has passed the stringent tests of character and physique applied to all metropolitan police officers. He has been watched, with unostentatious vigilance, for defects of temperament or intelligence. A few months he has on street duty in uniform, and then he may apply for transfer to the C.I.D. He may be recommended then by his divisional superiors to Mr. McCarthy—the blonde blue-eyed Irishman who rules the Central C.I.D.—who himself interviews and makes a rapid judgment of the aspirant before he is passed on to an examining board of two veteran chief detective-inspectors sitting with a Chief Constable. Some of the questions he will be expected to answer run like this: "How may you utilise the photographs of persons suspected of crime, and what precautions would you take?" "What is meant by a 'special enquiry'?" "Give examples of the use special enquiries can be put to in detecting offenders against the law." [Pg 45]

These examinations, it may be said, are compulsory at every step in promotion in the detective service, in addition to educational examinations carried out independently by the Civil Service Commissioners. Here is a question put at an examination for promotion to detective-sergeant which might form the skeleton of a detective story.

"A night-watchman, in going his rounds, discovers two men attempting to break open a safe on the premises. Both men make good their escape by a window, but one of them receives a blow on the head from the watchman which causes blood to flow, while the other leaves his jacket behind.

"The watchman can give a fair description of the men. In the jacket left behind, which bears no maker's name, are found the following:—(1) A return-half ticket to Birmingham from London; (2) A snapshot of a lady having the appearance of a music hall performer, signed 'Kitty,' but with no photographer's name; (3) a letter (no envelope) as follows:—

"King Street.

'DEAR TOM.—I hope you are coming up on Tuesday. Things are bad here since Bill got his three months.

'MARY.'

"State as fully as you can what steps you suggest should be taken to trace the offenders. How could the articles found be made use of in the enquiry?" [Pg 46]

The preliminary examination is only the first step. The young man who passes finds himself a "patrol on probation," with the knowledge that if he does not justify himself he will be returned to the blue-coated ranks. He is put to school again—the little-known detective school that is maintained at Scotland Yard, with Detective-Inspector Belcher at its head. There are lectures on law, and even lantern lectures. He is taught the methods of criminals, from gambling sharps to forgers, from pickpockets to petty sneak-thieves. The Black Museum primarily exists for his instruction. He is shown jemmies, coining implements, shop-lifting devices, and the latest word in the march of scientific burglary—the oxy-acetylene apparatus. All that ingenuity and experience

can suggest for the confusion of the criminal is taught him. He is shown where an expert must be called in, and where his own common-sense must aid him. He is taught something of locks, something of finger-prints, something of cipher-reading. He learns the significance of trivialities, and the high importance of method.

I have said that the detective must know when to call in the expert. Science plays no inconspicuous part in many investigations, and there is a little corps of consulting specialists whose aid is always available. It was the work of the analyst that proved the guilt of men like Seddon and Crippen. The microscopist has brought more than one forger to justice. A murder was proved because a tool-maker's aid was enlisted to decipher some scratches on a chisel. A blackmailer was captured because a paper manufacturer identified a peculiar make of paper on which a letter was written. And, of course, the help of the medical jurist is a commonplace of criminal investigation.

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The finger-print experts are on the staff; so, too, are the photographers. There is a big magic lantern used in connection with the latter department which has made clear more than one mystery by the enlargement of some photograph. In one case an envelope with a blurred post-mark was picked up on the scene of a robbery. It was enlarged, and so the name of a town was picked out. In an hour or two the criminal was under arrest.

CHAPTER VI.

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MORE ABOUT INVESTIGATION.

Outside fiction, the real detective does not disguise himself in any elaborate or melodramatic fashion. He will not wear a false moustache or a wig, for instance. But the beginner is taught how a difference in dressing the hair, the combing out or waxing of a moustache, the substitution of a muffler for a collar, a cap for a bowler will alter his appearance. They keep a "make-up" room at headquarters, its most conspicuous feature being a photograph of a group of dirty-looking ruffians—detectives in disguise. But it is a disguise the more impenetrable because there is nothing that can go wrong with it. Yet not half a dozen times in a year is the make-up room used.

The kind of case in which a disguise is useful may be illustrated. Some thieves had broken into St. George's Cathedral, at Southwark, and then rifled the Bishop's Palace. The booty they secured was worth some three thousand pounds, and they left not the faintest trace behind. The officer charged with the investigation resolved on a long shot. He dressed himself—I quote a newspaper report—"in a long overcoat and slouched hat, sported a heavy chain, smoked a big cigar, and was well supplied with gold." In this attire he made himself conspicuous about Vauxhall. Among the "crooks" of that neighbourhood, it soon became known that a Jew receiver—one Cohen, of Brick Lane, Whitechapel—was about, and in a very short while the "receiver" knew all that he needed to arrest the thieves and recover the stolen property.

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"Shadowing," too, is a matter of experience. Let anyone who doubts its difficulties try the experiment of keeping sight of a person in a frequented thoroughfare. When a suspect knows or guesses he is being followed—as he inevitably does, if it is continued for a day or two—it becomes ten times more difficult. Unless incessant watchfulness is maintained, a shadowed person will be lost sight of in five minutes. Shadowing is, when possible, always done by detectives in pairs, sometimes in threes. Detective No. 1 shadows the suspect, detective No. 2 shadows his colleague. Then if the suspect stops or turns suddenly No. 1 walks innocently on and No. 2 takes up the chase. It is a wearisome task when a person has to be watched incessantly, for it may not be possible to assign a spot with any certainty for reliefs to continue the trail.

When the young detective begins his career he will carry a virgin drab-coloured diary in his breast pocket, wherein he will be expected to record every moment spent on duty, every penny he spends. If any illusion remains in his mind that he will be turned loose on the streets to catch thieves or murderers, it is quickly destroyed. Hard labour is his portion. Small enquiries at pawnbrokers', searching directories to verify addresses, running errands for his superiors, and doing all the small odd jobs are his immediate concern.

Only now and again is he called upon to play a minor part in an arrest. But all the while he will be learning and improving his acquaintance with the thieves in his district. All his painfully acquired knowledge goes for little unless he can cultivate a certain friendship with the rogues in the vicinity of his sphere of duty.

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The "informant" plays a big part in the workings of Scotland Yard. If the old phrase, "Honour among thieves," had any truth in it, London would be a poor place for honest men to live in. But gossip of the underworld is easily attainable to ears that wish to catch it.

One of the problems which beset the architect of New Scotland Yard was this same problem of the informant. An inconspicuous entrance had to be arranged by which access could be unobtrusively gained by a person too shy to be seen walking publicly up the main entrance of the headquarters of police.

A great detective once told the writer how, in his early days, he set to work to learn the world, and gained valuable acquaintance with the deliberation that a young student might apply to the

pursuit of an exact science. He took a room in Jermyn Street, and began his studies in every moment he could spare off duty. "I haunted night clubs; I went to gambling houses; I was a frequenter of any resort where one was likely to meet rogues or tricksters. I stored my memory with faces, and made myself friendly with all sorts of people—waiters, barmen, and hall-porters. So it was that I got hints that I should never have got by any other method, and scores of times, years afterwards, I received information from the channels I had formed when I began. To show the value of some of these acquaintances I may tell you that when some idea of my identity leaked out at one of these clubs an American crook—he was drunk—declared openly that he would shoot me at sight. The waiter contrived to draw the cartridges from his revolver, and to give me a hint as I entered. And sure enough my man stood up, took aim, and pulled the trigger of the empty weapon. I hit him on the jaw, and let it rest at that. But if I hadn't treated that waiter right, I might have been a dead man now."

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The personal factor is an important one in dealing with informants. There is not very often ill-feeling between criminals and detectives. A slight straining of red-tape will sometimes have wide-reaching results. A detective, conveying a prisoner from Liverpool to London, offered the latter a cigar. "You're a good sort," exclaimed the man impulsively. "Tell you what; I'm in for it, I know. But I can do you a bit of good. It was X. and Z. who did that Hatton Garden business." And so was provided a clue to an apparently insoluble mystery.

At the end of three months, the probationer, if he has qualified, finds himself a fully-fledged "detective-patrol." Thereafter he has to pass an examination whenever he is promoted, and may pass upwards through the grades of third, second, and first class detective-sergeants to second, first, and divisional inspector, and even eventually to chief detective-inspector.

The everyday duties of the C.I.D. are legion. There are "Informations" passing between headquarters and the different stations daily, almost hourly. Stolen property has to be traced, pawnbrokers visited, convicts on licence watched, reports made, inquiries conducted by request of provincial police forces. It means hard, painstaking work from morning to night.

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As I have said, so far as is consistent with his duty, a man keeps on good terms with those criminals he knows. It is a point of policy. They know that the average detective does not wish them harm. If he has to arrest them they know he will be scrupulously fair when it comes to giving evidence. Often a detective will help a man out of his own pocket when he knows that a case is really a necessitous one. He has no animus against any person he arrests. His duty is merely to place in safe custody the person he believes to be responsible for a breach of the law. Conviction or acquittal matters nothing to him after that. He has done his duty.

A wide knowledge of human nature is necessary to his calling, and he never forgets that the power of a police officer has its limitations. A man who brings discredit or ridicule on the department has a short-lived official life.

There is another part of the Criminal Investigation Department which has duties entirely distinct from that of the main body of detectives. That is the Special Branch, under Superintendent Quinn, M.V.O.—a section which, with the war, has suddenly become of great importance, for it has now largely to do with the spy peril. Of its methods and organisation little can be said, for obvious reasons.

In ordinary times it concerns itself solely with the protection of high personages, from the King and Queen and Cabinet Ministers to distinguished foreign visitors. The Special Branch in the days of suffragette outrages was the chief foe of the vote-seekers. It deals, too, with all political offences which need investigation.

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There is a special squad of officers who deal with the white slave traffic. These are assisted by a lady appointed by the Home Office. She makes enquiries from women and children where victims might be reluctant to confide in a man, and has other similar duties.

The department is practically self-contained, working side by side with the uniform branch under its own officers. The point of contact is at superintendents of divisions, who exercise a supervising control.

CHAPTER VII.

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THE CROOKS' CLEARING-HOUSE.

Many high authorities have argued that the best way to prevent crime is to keep all known criminals under lock and key, as we do lunatics. The theory may be right or wrong, but it is not yet possible to put it into practice.

So Scotland Yard does the next best thing, and exercises a quiet, unwearying, persistent surveillance on those hundreds of persons who are likely to resume their depredations on society when they are released from prison.

For over fifty years—since 1862—there has been accumulating a library of biography on which prison governors and police officials have worked, which must by now include every living

criminal by profession who has enjoyed the hospitality of the State.

The files—immense, dirty brown covered albums—each containing 6,000 photographs—overflow through room after room and corridor after corridor. There are smaller volumes with duplicate photographs, 500 in each, which give particulars of marks or physical peculiarities. Hundreds of thousands of records are kept, mostly illustrated by the inevitable full and side face photographs, and each is kept up-to-date with scrupulous care.

The Convict Supervision Office, with its subsidiary Habitual Criminals Registry, has within the last year or two been amalgamated with the Finger-print Section under the general title of the Criminal Record Office. Although the two departments work in unison and are, to a certain point, interdependent, their work has to be conducted in sub-departments.

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The Habitual Criminals Registry—I retain the old title for convenience—is a sort of British Museum of crime. It is a central bureau that is constantly being consulted from all parts of the kingdom, and not seldom from all parts of the world. It has to be ready at any moment to lay its hands on the record of any criminal that may be demanded, and in this it is immensely helped by the Finger-print Department, which can usually identify the person and supply the number by which he is known.

It sometimes happens, however, that no finger-prints are available. Then search has to be made under the old system. The records are grouped by the height of their subjects and the colour of their eyes and hair. Thus, if a prisoner on remand is five feet nine, with blue eyes and brown hair, the margin of search is limited to those indexed under those characteristics.

The records include photographs, descriptions, and particulars not only of licence-holders and supervisees, but of every person who has been convicted twice or more times of any crime, with a few exceptions, and of all persons sentenced to hard labour for a month or more.

They are a veritable "Who's Who" of the criminal world, and go even further than that useful work of reference in supplying intimate details of the appearance and idiosyncrasies of their subjects.

But the keeping of recidivist records is only one part of the business of the Criminal Record Office. This is the department which is responsible for keeping a watchful eye on those people the public love to call "ticket-of-leave men," but who are officially known as licence-holders or supervisees.

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These are convicts who, through good conduct in prison, have been released before the expiration of the full term of their sentence, or persons ordered at the time of their conviction to undergo a period of police supervision after they leave prison. This class is composed very largely of an elusive gentry, and to keep track of their comings and goings is no simple matter when they have reason to vanish for a season.

There are usually about a thousand of these in London; the exact number in 1913 was 811. Strict regulations are laid down, which they must observe for the protection of the community; but, in practice, they are afforded every facility for earning an honest living.

Ever and anon the old myth recurs that "ticket-of-leave men" are hounded and harassed by the police so that ultimately they are thrown back to their old life in sheer despair.

Listen to what the "Police Code" says:

"It is of great importance to avoid giving licence-holders and supervisees any ground for alleging that they are being interfered with by the police, or in any way prevented from leading an honest life. When it is necessary to make enquiries at their addresses or places of business it is desirable, if possible, that they should be made by officers in plain clothes who are not known in the district, and great care should be taken that the nature of the inquiry should not be disclosed to anyone other than the licence-holder or supervisee himself."

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That regulation is carried out with a rigid regard for both the spirit and the letter.

The relations of the detective force with the men they watch are quite friendly. It is a matter of policy that they should be so. Yet the situation has its humours at times.

There is a fund maintained at the office from which many ex-convicts have been provided with a fresh start in a straightforward career. No inconvenient enquiries are made, and the bare word of the applicant is often accepted—within limits, of course.

Does he want to sell flowers? A stock is provided. Is he a workman needing tools? He is supplied. Another cannot get a berth because his clothes are in pawn; a detective is sent to redeem them.

There is no bother or fuss. Scotland Yard knows the class too well. It knows that it is often cheated by liars; on the other hand, prompt help may really redeem a man. Every chance is given a man to run straight, however often he has fallen. And most of those who are helped do not forget.

There are, however—as there must be—many who take advantage of the system. One man had his clothes taken out of pawn. He thanked the office—and promptly went and hypothecated them at another place. There was another coolly impudent scoundrel, with a turn for carpentry, who

made all sorts of odds and ends out of soap boxes. He always had some plausible story. He wanted tools or materials, or his rent was in arrears, or there was a doctor's bill to pay. Surprise visits to his rooms in the East End always bore out his story. But, ultimately it was discovered that he was doing the same thing with many charitable societies—the Church Army, the Salvation Army, and others. He made quite a good thing out of it while it lasted.

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But usually Scotland Yard is not imposed on twice by the same person.

Police science has evolved the Criminal Record Office very gradually. The problem of the incorrigible offender is one that many years' study has not yet completely solved. When the licence system was first initiated the police were instructed by the Home Office not to interfere with the ticket-of-leave men, and, not strangely, these men found opportunities of crime made easy for them.

But prison reorganisation and police organisation went on hand in hand until, in 1880, the Convict Supervision Office was established. Then, as now, its chief work lay in classifying the records and photographs of habitual criminals, compiling the "Rogues' Gallery," which is still of inestimable value in the prevention of crime.

The finger-print system is, of course, of enormous aid in identification, and, as I have said, is a complete safeguard against the possibility of a wrongful conviction. The ordinary detective is most often engaged in tracing a criminal after a breach of the law has been committed. The Criminal Record Office has the more delicate duty of trying to prevent crime.

It is a distinct sociological force, incessantly watchful that none of those persons who are allowed out of prison on probation (which is really what the licence system amounts to) drift back into the evil ways or among evil associates. By this means it is endeavoured to cut at the very roots of crime in this country, for it is a proved fact that the larger proportion of serious offences which are brought before the courts are the work of the habitual criminals.

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Thus, of 10,165 persons convicted of serious crime at assizes and quarter sessions throughout the kingdom during 1913 nearly 70 per cent. were recognised as having been convicted before—a significant fact which emphasises the necessity of the eternal vigilance of the C.R.O.

While I was gathering material on this subject I was prepared to find that the police acted with severity. I was agreeably disappointed. I found that they go as far as possible to the other extreme.

In effect, the law says that a licence-holder or supervisee shall produce a license when called upon, shall not habitually associate with persons of bad character, shall not lead an idle or dissolute life, shall report themselves monthly to the nearest police station (this regulation does not apply to women), and report any change of address.

But the law is carried out with a broad appreciation of the variations in human nature—even criminal human nature. There are dangerous men who must be watched closely; there are others it is unnecessary to keep under close surveillance.

A licence-holder, as distinct from a supervisee, is not necessarily likely to become a criminal again. A trusted clerk in a City office who has forged his employer's name, a solicitor absconding with trust funds, a man who has committed manslaughter are not to be classed in this respect with burglars, jewel thieves, or coiners.

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It is true that either class may hold licences, but the former are not often sentenced to police supervision. They are not, in that sense, habitual criminals. So the circumstances of every case are taken into consideration.

Sometimes a man is allowed to report himself by letter instead of in person. Nor is a detective attached to a district, who might be known as a police officer, allowed to make inquiries when the mere fact of his calling might make things unpleasant for a licence-holder. A stranger from Scotland Yard is sent. This applies especially when a man is in a workhouse, a hospital, a Church Army labour home, and such places.

To a limited extent the work of the department has been lightened by the scheme which resulted in the establishment of the Central Association for the Aid of Discharged Convicts—an amalgamation of various prisoners' aid societies—which may recommend that a discharged prisoner should be excused reporting to the police in certain cases. The result has been that one man in every ten has been freed from the obligation to report.

There is a little row of figures in the last issue of "Judicial Statistics" which affords a striking illustration of the work of the department. It shows that during the year 1913 the number of persons under police supervision in the Metropolitan Police district was 1,197. This is what happened to them:

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Supervision expired	229
Supervision remitted by Home Secretary	3
Removed to other districts	111
Sent to prison	133
Missing	49
Left England	30

No less than 421 were known or believed to be living honestly, and those who were suspected of continuing their old career of roguery, but were not convicted, numbered only 95.

The management of the office is vested in Chief Detective-Inspector Thomas—a shrewd, able man, with a wide experience, in which he has gained a keen and extensive knowledge of criminals of all types—who deals with those who come under his jurisdiction with a firm and tactful hand. He has a staff of twenty-two assistants, which includes the only two women detectives—if they are strictly detectives—in the service. In point of fact these ladies are employed by the Home Office and attached to Scotland Yard, so that strictly they must not be considered "policewomen."

These ladies are necessary in carrying out the policy of the department, and their duties are wide. No man is allowed to visit a female licence-holder or supervisee, mainly for the reason that his identity might be suspected. So the women detectives take this in hand, and with feminine tact manage to know all about their protégées, to give a warning here, sympathetic advice there, in a way that would be difficult for any man to do. [Pg 62]

Their work takes them at times into some of the worst quarters of London, and all their pluck and firmness are sometimes needed, for habitual women criminals are usually worse subjects to handle than the habitual male criminal.

For criminals, as for experts in other trades, all roads lead to London. Your expert criminal, whatever his branch of rascality, sooner or later tries his hand in the metropolis, and so there is a continual inward and outward flow of persons the office must keep in touch with.

This is done by the co-operation of the provincial police, and by the issue of the "Habitual Criminals Register," which gives detailed particulars of persons entered in the files of a department. This is sent to every police force in the kingdom.

There is another very useful publication which has brought about the downfall of many an ambitious rascal. It is called the "Illustrated Circular," and its subject is travelling criminals.

These form a clever, mobile fraternity who operate swindles and robberies in one part after another, dodging in and out of various police districts. They are as slippery as eels, and, without some means of codifying information as to their movements and delinquencies, many of them would defy justice with impunity.

The "Illustrated Circular" forms a link between the police jurisdictions in this respect. It gives descriptions and particulars of the latest known movements of itinerant criminals, and publishes photographs of them, to enable police officers to recognise them wherever they may go. [Pg 63]

Every movement made by a travelling criminal is recorded in the "Circular." Men who have found themselves too closely watched by the Bristol police may, for example, hope to find Cardiff less vigilant. But the "Illustrated Circular" tells of their departure from Bristol, and Cardiff is on the alert. There is little hope of escape from that all-pervading vigilance.

The *Police Gazette*, too, is issued by this department twice a week, not only to all the police forces of the kingdom, but to the Colonies and the nearest European countries. This is the latest police move to checkmate the operations of the more widely travelling rogues.

No less important are the "Special Release Notices" or, as it is now called, the *Weekly List of Habitual Criminals*. Since 1896 prison officials have furnished to Scotland Yard, every week, a list of prisoners about to be released who are habitual criminals. This list, which gives a detailed description of each man, and his index number in the records, is sent to every police force in the country. It is so made easy to draw a conclusion should an outbreak of burglaries commence in a district wherein a burglar has lately been released.

In a corner of one room in Scotland Yard is piled a miscellaneous heap of thieves' equipment—jemmies, chisels, scientific safe-breaking implements, and other oddments. The office periodically destroys these, though their fashioning has probably cost skilled workmen much time and trouble. Only a new invention is spared, and that so that it may be placed in the Black Museum for instructive purposes. [Pg 64]

In other rooms is kept the personal property of the prisoners still undergoing sentence. It was, I think, David Harum who remarked that there was as much human nature in some folks as there is in others—if not more. A glance round this mixed assortment proves the truth of the truism.

A bag of golf clubs, a fishing rod, cameras, books, clothes, rings, watches, jewellery—all give an index to the temperament of the individual owning them. Money, too, is often kept here by the wish of the convicts themselves. Personal belongings are restored at the expiration of a sentence, but valuable articles—and many find their way to the store-room—are not restored except on absolute proof of ownership. When a claim is doubtful the matter is referred to a magistrate, and on his order the disposal of the property rests.

The department plays no small part in tightening the meshes of the net that keeps evil-doers within bounds. It does its duty with kindness, but without fear or favour; but the difficulties of the work are so enormous that they could hardly be exaggerated.

FINGER-PRINTS.

Once upon a time a wily burglar sat in his cell at Brixton awaiting trial. He knew that conviction for his latest escapade was inevitable.

That troubled him little. As he would probably have said, he could do the sentence he was likely to get for a first offence "on his head." But it was by no means a first offence. Stored away at Scotland Yard was a long list of little affairs in which he had been concerned which would not incline the judge to leniency.

John Smith—that is not his real name, but it will serve—knew that presently warders would ask him to press inky fingers on a white sheet of paper, so that the resulting prints should be sent to Scotland Yard. Inevitably then his previous ill-doings would be disclosed. They might make all the difference between a nominal sentence as a first offender and five years' penal servitude as an habitual criminal, to say nothing of police supervision afterwards.

John Smith thought hard, and at last got an idea. He broke a tag from his boot-lace and began to skin the tips of his fingers until, as he thought, every trace of a pattern by which he could be identified had been obliterated.

Notwithstanding his bleeding hands, he smiled cheerfully when he was reported for prison hospital treatment. The sequel affords a saddening reflection on misplaced ingenuity and endurance. He had only penetrated the outer skin, and it began to grow again.

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They nursed his bandaged hands with infinite care, for a conclusion as to his record had become obvious. And then officers took his prints after all—and discovered that he was none other than Bill Brown, with a criminal history to which an Old Bailey judge listened with unaffected interest. Bill—or John—got his five years after all.

I have told this little story because it affords an excellent illustration of the work of the finger-print department at Scotland Yard—a department which serves not only the Metropolitan Police, but every police force in the kingdom.

There is a great deal of confusion in the public mind between Bertillonage and the finger-print system. Even responsible London newspapers fell into the error, when M. Bertillon died, of ascribing to him the invention of the system—with which he had nothing to do.

To many people has been ascribed the discovery that finger-prints are an infallible method of identification. The knowledge however was of little use till the inventive genius of one man worked out a simple method of classification for police purposes, so that prints could be compared almost instantly with those on record. That man was Sir Edward Henry, long before he came to Scotland Yard, when he was in the Indian police service.

The Henry system has almost entirely superseded the Bertillon system throughout the world, and there is little doubt that it will ultimately become universal. Thousands of criminals who would otherwise have escaped a full measure of punishment for their misdeeds curse its author. It is in this department that police science has been brought to its highest pitch of perfection—a perfection begot of organisation.

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Every prisoner for a month or longer nowadays has his prints taken a little before he is discharged. These prints, if they are not already in the records of Scotland Yard, are added to them, and a number gives the key to the man's record in the Habitual Criminals Registry.

In this manner there has accumulated since 1901, when the system was first put in force, a collection of more than two hundred thousand prints. It is all a matter of system, of scientific and literal exactness, and there is no margin of error. A mistake in identification by finger-prints is literally impossible.

As everyone knows, the ridges at the tips of the fingers maintain their formation from birth to death, and even after. Nothing can change them. It is a possibility, though I believe it has never been known to happen, that there are two people in the world who have the markings on one finger-tip exactly alike. But even that incredible chance is guarded against, by taking the markings of the whole ten fingers. It will be realised how great a miracle it would be for two persons to have exactly the same lines, broken in exactly the same way, in exactly the same order on their two hands. That fact is the root principle of the finger-print work.

It is necessary to point out that the existence of the department is not so much for the purpose of detecting crime as of detecting criminals. In the administration of justice a judge takes the past career of a prisoner into consideration when passing sentence. The main work of the department is to furnish the clue to a past career by scrutinising the finger-prints of persons on remand to discover whether they are habitual criminals or not.

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A thousand aliases will not help a man, no change of appearance, no protestations of mistake, if his prints correspond with those in the files. But it is all so simply done. There is nothing spectacular, nothing imposing about the process. Practically all that is needed is a piece of tin,

some printer's ink, and a sheet of paper. Within a few minutes afterwards his record can be known.

Compare this with the old Bertillon system of anthropometric measurements. Bertillon's system depends on the fact that after a person reaches maturity certain portions of the body are always the same in measurement. The theory is sound, but the difficulties in the way of applying it are immense.

In his book Sir Edward Henry has pointed out the defects of the system. The instruments are costly, measurers have to be specially trained, and even so may make a mistake—an error of two twenty-fifths of an inch will prevent identification—the search among the records may take an hour or more, and, moreover, through carelessness or inattention, the whole data may be wrong. For six years—from 1895 to 1901—this system was in force at Scotland Yard. The maximum number of identifications in any one year was 500. In 1913, by the aid of finger-prints, 10,607 persons were identified.

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Roughly, it is all a matter of classification into "arches," "loops," "whorls," and "composites." It is intricate to describe, but simple to carry out. To the uninitiated it inevitably suggests the old problem "think of a number, double it—."

What happens is this: Every print for primary classification purposes is considered as a loop or a whorl. The fingers are taken in pairs and put down something like this:

L.	L.	W.	L.	L.
<hr/>				
L.	W.	W.	W.	W.

Now a whorl occurring in the first pair would count sixteen, in the second, eight, and so on. The loops are ignored. Consequently, the number in the above formula is:

0.	0.	4.	0.	0.
<hr/>				
0.	8.	4.	2.	1.

These are added together and become 4-15. The figure 1 is added above and below, and the searcher knows that he has to look for the record he wants in the sixteenth file of Number 5 horizontal row in a cabinet specially arranged.

Of course, sub-classification is carried much farther than this, but it is scarcely necessary to elaborate the point.

Day by day, the prison governors from all parts of the country are sending in records to be added to the files, and police authorities, also from all parts of the country, are asking for prisoners to be identified.

An interesting story concerns two men whom we will call Robinson and Jones, who were tried for different offences the same day. Robinson was rich; Jones was not. Robinson received a long sentence, Jones a light one.

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Probably they arranged it all in the prison van, but anyhow, when they reached the gaol they had changed identities—and sentences. All went well until a short time before the *soi-disant* Jones was due to be released. Then his finger-prints were taken, compared with those of Jones in the files, and found not to correspond.

Half an hour later wires were being exchanged between Scotland Yard and the prison, and, to the mutual consternation of the two men, the little scheme was revealed. Finger-prints had outwitted them.

Save for a few filing cabinets stretching from floor to ceiling in a well-lighted room, there is little apparent difference between the Finger-print Department at Scotland Yard and the interior of an ordinary City office. Men pore over foolscap sheets of paper with magnifying glasses, comparing, classifying, and checking, day in, day out.

They are all detectives, but their work is specialist work, totally different to that of the bulk of the men of the C.I.D. It may be that sometimes they realise that a man's life or liberty depends on their scrutiny, but for the most part they do their work with cold deliberation and machine-like precision. Is one set of finger-marks identical with another? That is all they have to answer. It is the pride of the department that since it has been established it has never made a mistake.

At its head is Chief Detective Inspector Charles Collins, an enthusiast in identification work, who has seen the system change from the old days when detectives paid periodical visits to Holloway Prison to see if they could recognise prisoners on remand, and when profile and full-face photographs were used for the records, to that now in use which he has had no small share in bringing to its high state of efficiency.

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He can read a finger-print as other men can read a letter, and has even, for the purposes of study, taken prints of the fingers of monkeys at the Zoo. Many times has he given evidence as an expert in cases where finger-prints have formed part of the evidence. His cold, scientific analysis has always convinced the most sceptical, and always a conviction has followed.

He wrote the chapter dealing with the photographing and enlarging of finger-prints in Sir

Edward Henry's standard work on the subject, and is something of a magician in the way he can detect a mark when none is obvious to the naked eye.

I have seen a man press his fingers on a clean sheet of paper, apparently without leaving the faintest trace. But Mr. Collins is not baffled so. A pinch of black powder—graphite is commonly used—scattered over the paper, and behold the prints standing out in high relief. A grey powder will act in the same way on a dark surface, and a candle which has been pressed by the fingers may have the print rendered clear by a judicious use of ordinary printer's ink.

A corps of expert photographers, equipped with the latest appliances, is attached to the department, and their services are in constant requisition by the C.I.D. for many purposes other than those of finger-prints. One room is entirely devoted to a powerful lantern apparatus by which every photograph may be thrown up to a hundred times its normal size for the purpose of minute study. This has often proved useful in detecting forgeries as well as aiding the work of the Finger-print Department.

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I have said that the primary purpose of the department is not the detection of crime. Nevertheless, it has played no small part in the solution of mysteries where other clues have failed. There was the case of the Stratton brothers, for instance, where the print on a cash-box led to arrest, although other evidence aided the conviction.

Perhaps the most interesting case is that which first focussed the public attention on the value of the system. It occurred in 1898, shortly after the present Commissioner initiated the system in India. He himself tells the story.

The manager of a tea-garden was found murdered, and a safe and despatch-box robbed of several hundred rupees. Suspicion was at first divided among the coolies and cook, the relatives of a woman with whom the dead man had carried on an intrigue, a wandering gang of Kabulis, and an ex-servant whom he had prosecuted for theft—a wide enough field, in all conscience.

But the police were unexpectedly helped in their investigation by the discovery in the despatch-box of a small light-blue book, a calendar in Bengali characters. On the cover were two indistinct smudges. Under a magnifying-glass these proved to be the impressions of a blood-stained finger.

Search was made in the records of the Bengal police, and it was found that the finger-print was that of the right thumb of the ex-servant.

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He was arrested some hundreds of miles away, and charged with murder and robbery. On the ground that it would be unsafe to convict him of murder, as no one saw him do it, he was acquitted on that charge, but was convicted of theft.

It would be possible to write largely on cases where finger-prints have afforded culminating proof of a person's guilt. One that has a grim touch of humour may be recalled.

A constable pacing his beat in Clerkenwell noticed a human finger on one of the spikes of the gate of a warehouse. Closer investigation showed that the place had been broken into, and that the marauder had been disturbed and taken to flight in panic. In scaling the gates he had caught the little finger of his right hand on the spikes, and it had been torn away.

It was sent to the Finger-print Department and identified as that of a man well-known to the police, and the word was passed round the C.I.D. to keep a bright look-out for him. Time went on. The finger, carefully kept in spirits, remained at Scotland Yard.

Then one day a detective arrested a man for picking pockets near the Elephant and Castle. One hand was bandaged, but the prisoner was unwilling to say what was the matter with it. Soon the reason of his reluctance was disclosed.

The Finger-print Department held his missing finger.

But if the Finger-print Department makes it hard for the guilty, it often helps the innocent. Such a case as that of Adolph Beck would now be impossible. There are two criminals alive to-day who are said to be so much alike that the difference can only be told by their finger-prints.

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One hears often that the police will bolster each other up when a mistake is made. That is, of course, preposterously false throughout the service. There have been cases where police officers have been prepared, quite honestly, to swear to a man as an old offender, and the department has stepped in in time to prevent the error.

It should be understood that the fact of finger-prints being found at or near the scene of a crime does not mean that they are of any use in solving a mystery, unless facsimiles are in the records—that is to say, a criminal has been convicted before. This rarely happens in the case of murder, for the reason that a murderer is unlikely, in an official sense, to be an habitual criminal. Of course, if a person is suspected and arrested it is easy to compare his finger-prints with those found where the crime was committed.

In the system the human liability to err is almost completely eliminated. A prisoner's prints are registered automatically, and, to prevent any chance of mistake, are examined and checked by a series of officials, each of whom signs the record.

Nor do those engaged in this business have an idle time. Between 70,000 and 80,000 sets of prints are dealt with every year. The following list shows the number of recognitions effected

since the system came into being at Scotland Yard. It must, of course, be remembered that they have increased as the number of records has grown:— [Pg 75]

1902	1,722
1903	3,642
1904	5,155
1905	6,186
1906	6,776
1907	7,701
1908	9,446
1909	9,960
1910	10,848
1911	10,400
1912	10,677
1913	10,607

That, in itself, is a record which justifies the faith now placed in the system.

CHAPTER IX.

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THE SCHOOL OF POLICE.

In the long chain forged for the preservation of law and order in the metropolis the constable is the chief and, in some ways, the most important link. The heads of Scotland Yard have to make it certain that at moments of unexpected strain or heavy stress no link will fail. To that end every candidate for the Metropolitan Force is rigorously tested and prepared, physically, morally, and mentally, before he becomes an accredited member of the service.

For, to vary the simile, the constable is the foundation on which all the rest is built. Every man in grades right up to the superintendent has begun at the bottom of the ladder. You will have seen the constable, placid and unemotional, pacing the streets at the regulation beat of two and a half miles an hour—do you know how much he has to know before he is trusted alone on his duty?

He has to be ready to act decisively and firmly at an instant's notice, to solve on the spur of the moment some intricate problem of public order, to know the law, so that he may arrest a person on one occasion, and let him go on another, to act as guide or consultant to the public, to aid at a fire, or capture a burglar.

He must know everything out of the common that comes in his sphere of duty, enter the particulars fully in his note-book, and be prepared to swear to the accuracy of his notes at any time. It would be easy for a man less carefully selected and trained to make a slip of judgment, to succumb to a temptation.

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It would be futile to pretend that there are twenty thousand plaster saints in the Metropolitan Police—there are not. Yet, man for man, in efficiency, in honesty, there is not their equal in the world in any profession.

The Metropolitan Police is a business body, controlled by business men, and run on business methods. But it is a specialist business, and so it has to train its recruits, making sure, first of all, that they are of the right material.

Before Sir Edward Henry's time a candidate had only to fulfil a medical qualification and a test of character, and then, after a few weeks' drill at Wellington Barracks and a few days' watching the procedure in a police court, he was turned out into the street to get on as best he could. A veteran detective officer told me how he was treated twenty years ago.

"I was pretty raw," he said. "I came straight out of a Bedfordshire village, and was boarded out at a sergeant's house. He put fourteen of us in a back room with a tiny window, and charged us 14s. 9d. a week out of our pay of 15s. The food! I should smile. In case we overdid our eating, meals were never placed on the table until just before we had to parade at Wellington Barracks for drill.

"Then we were sent to the old Worship Street Court. We were glad enough at last to get out on the streets for a breath of air with all our troubles before us. The very first day, I was called on to arrest one of a gang of men in Whitechapel. His friends had knives, and they threatened to 'lay me out' if I touched him. I didn't know whether I was justified, but I drew my truncheon and swore I'd brain the first man who came near me. But I was in a cold sweat all the time. They didn't coddle us in those days."

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That was the old system. The wonder is that the police did so well. But now all that is changed. A policeman is prepared for his responsibilities by a thorough course of training, as scientific in its way as that of a doctor, a lawyer, or a school teacher.

Instead of going on his beat redolent of the plough, with a thousand pitfalls before him, the young

constable now has a thorough theoretical acquaintance with his duties before ever he dons a helmet. More than that, he has been shrewdly observed for weeks to see whether his temperament is fitted to his calling. If it is not, be he ever so able in other respects, he is of no use as a police officer.

In a big building, hidden away in a back street at Westminster, the embryo policeman learns the first principles of his trade. Peel House, as this school of police is called, was established by the present Commissioner a few years ago, and since then has trained thousands of men.

Always there will be found two or three hundred young men gathered together from the remote corners of the British Isles, being gradually moulded into shape by a corps of instructors under Superintendent Gooding.

They have two characteristics in common—a character without flaw, and a good physique. For the rest, there are all types, with the agricultural labourer predominating—a country-house footman, an Irishman from some tiny village near Kilkenny, a sailor, a clerk, a provincial constable hoping to better himself, and, more raw than the rawest, men from Devonshire, Yorkshire, Wales and Scotland.

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It is said that a *good* Irishman makes the best officer, while perhaps the least teachable is the Londoner. A countryman is fresh clay to the potter's hands, the Londoner has much to unlearn before he can be taught.

While these men are undergoing their training, they are not uncomfortable. Peel House has all the comforts and conveniences of a big hotel and club. Each man has his own cubicle; there are a billiard-room, a library, gymnasium, shooting gallery, scrupulously kept dining-rooms and kitchens, and, for the primary purpose of the school, a number of class-rooms.

Mr. Gooding holds no light responsibility. His duty is to see that no man leaves the school to be attached to a division who is in the faintest degree lacking in all that goes to make an officer of the Metropolitan Police.

Tactful and sympathetic, a shrewd judge of character, able to discriminate between nervousness and stupidity, a disciplinarian, with a gift of lucid exposition, an organiser, and a man with a fixed belief in the honourable nature of his calling. That is Superintendent Gooding, and his characteristics are reflected in his staff.

As the *corps d'élite* of the police services of the world, the Metropolitan Police is careful in the selection of its men. Before a candidate is admitted to Peel House he must prove that he is of unblemished good character, be over twenty and under twenty-seven years of age, stand at least 5 ft. 9 ins. in his bare feet, and be of a strong constitution, free from any bodily complaint.

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Then he is passed on to the school, which will be his home for at least eight weeks—unless before that time he is shown to be obviously unfit for the service. There he will work from nine in the morning till half-past seven at night, learning the thousand and one laws, written and unwritten, that a policeman has to obey. In cold black and white the curriculum, of which even a summary would occupy many thousand words, looks formidable. But so minutely, so lucidly is everything taught that a man of average intelligence finds no difficulty in grasping it.

Every contingency that a constable may have to face, from dealing with insecure cellar flaps to the best method of stopping a runaway horse, to action in cases of riot, and the privileges of Ambassadors is gone into. Nothing is omitted. And day after day the instructors insist: "Remember, the honour of the service is in your hands; you are to serve, not to harass, the public."

That is dwelt upon and reiterated until it is indelibly impressed upon the memory of the most dull student.

A candidate begins in the fifth class. He is supplied with an official pocket-book and a thin paper-covered book called "Duty Hints" wherein is set forth, carefully indexed, a mass of concise information as to laws, regulations, addresses of hospitals, and so on. Should he ever, when a fully-fledged constable, be in a difficulty he has but to refer to his "Duty Hints" to have his course made clear. It is, in fact, a *precis* of the "Instruction Book," which deals with everything a police officer should know and be.

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He is told the difference between a beat and a fixed point. He is shown how to make a report, and warned of the perils of making erasures or tearing leaves from his pocket-book. The unobtrusive marks to be placed on windows, doors, walls, shutters, and padlocks so that he shall know if they have been disturbed are made clear to him. He is told what to do should there be a sudden death in the street, should the roadway subside, should a street collision occur, should a gas explosion occur, should he be assaulted. He is initiated into the mysteries of the Dogs Act, the Highways Act, the Vagrancy Act, the Aliens Act, the Lottery Act, the Licensing Act, the Larceny Act, the Motor-Car Acts, the Locomotive Acts, the Children's Act, and others.

Nor is he merely crammed with these things. He has to know them, to be able to make a plain report, to answer an unexpected question.

As he passes upwards to the first class his instructor reports as to his progress and prospects of becoming an efficient police officer. It is a tedious process, this hammering raw countrymen—for most of the candidates are from the country—into serviceable policemen. Yet it is worth it.

Very craftily a candidate is instilled with the self-reliance and confidence so necessary in a police officer. He is not bullied or badgered. The staff patiently discriminate between nervousness and stupidity. The ordeal of giving evidence for the first time, for instance, is feared by a raw countryman, and for that reason a practical object-lesson is given to the senior classes at Peel House once a week.

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Three of the instructors play the part of shopkeeper, thief, and constable. Little strain is put on the imagination of the men. They see everything for themselves, from the actual robbery to the procedure at police station and police court. In quiet, level tones Mr. Gooding gives the reason for every action taken. Then the men are called upon, one by one, to take charge of the case. Mr. Gooding explains:

"Now take hold of your prisoner. No, no, you must not use ju-jitsu except in self-defence. Take hold of your man firmly, so that he is in custody. That's it. Bring him to the station. You will let him stand by the dock and outside. In no circumstances must a person be put in the dock unless he is violent. Now I am the inspector on duty. What is this?"

Candidate: "At 2.40 this afternoon, Sir, I was on duty in the Strand, when I heard loud cries of 'Stop thief!' I saw this man running towards me, closely followed by prosecutor. I stopped him till prosecutor came up, who said (referring to official pocket-book): 'This man has stolen a gent's gold wristlet watch from my shop 1,009 Strand. I wish to charge him.' The prisoner then said: 'This is monstrous. I really must protest.' I then took him into custody and brought him here, Sir."

Mr. Gooding (suddenly): "Suppose he had been a well-dressed man and had said, 'You're a fool, constable, I am Lord So-and-So, and I shall report you to the Commissioner for this stupid insolence?'"

Candidate: "I should have still brought him to the station, Sir."

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Mr. Gooding: "Why did you refer to your pocket-book for what he said? Couldn't you remember it?"

Candidate: "Yes, Sir, but it is necessary to give the exact words as far as possible. I am not to put my own construction on what is said."

So the case goes on, with now and again a little lecture in the law of evidence or the police regulations.

"Remember, the only evidence you may give is as to the prisoner's actions, your own actions, things said by the prisoner or in the prisoner's presence—*not* things heard. In a court you swear to speak the whole truth—all you know in favour of, as well as against, a prisoner. It matters not a jot to you whether a man is convicted or discharged. You are not to judge. Every person whom you have to take into charge must be considered as innocent, and is innocent in the eyes of the law, until proved guilty. Don't forget that."

After which the prisoner is searched, makes some remarks, and the charge sheet is signed. Then there comes another little hint—one of vast significance in view of the misapprehensions of many of the public of the police system.

"You must never take your own prisoner to the cells unless directly ordered to. A constable in reserve will see to that. A man may bear you ill-will and may assault you in the corridor or he may say that you have assaulted him. If you only bring him to the station such a charge can be easily refuted."

It is in this manner that the constable is shown not only the purpose of the regulations but how easily a little thing may trip him up.

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Following the charge-room procedure, the case is brought before a magistrate. Each man is warned to state exactly what took place. The evidence is the same as at the station, but, in addition, the result of the search has to be stated, and what the prisoner said on being charged.

A great trap this last. Many of the men omit it altogether, and again and again the importance it might have as bearing on the guilt or innocence of the accused is pointed out. But always the instructors are kindly, forbearing, tactful. A man blunders.

"Perhaps you feel a bit nervous," says Mr. Gooding. "Go to the other end of the room. The rest of the class look this way. Now."

And so the candidate gets through, without the disturbing effect of twenty or thirty pairs of eyes fixed on him.

I cannot refrain from emphasising the manner in which the relations between police and public are dealt with during the training—a matter of greater importance, to my mind, than anything else taught in Peel House. A course of lectures is interspersed with lessons and drill on, among others, the following subjects:

Truthfulness, Civility,
Command of temper,
Inquiries by public,
Complaints by public,

Constable to readily give his number on request,
Tact, Discretion, Forbearance,
Avoidance of slang terms,
Necessity of cultivating power of observation,
Liberty of the subject (unnecessary interference, etc.),
Offences against discipline (drunkenness, drinking on duty, etc.)

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To familiarise the men with the surroundings, they are taken sometimes to a real police court while a magistrate is not sitting, and lectured on the surroundings. Everything is done with the idea of wearing away their rough edges, of smoothing the path for them when they should come to have only their own knowledge to rely on. All that takes place at Peel House is aimed to that end. There are classes on such subjects as reading, writing, grammar, composition, the use of maps, drawing plans. There is foot drill, Swedish drill, revolver practice, and ambulance classes—all these in addition to an acquaintance with police law and the routine work of the force.

As they progress they are taken to the Black Museum at Scotland Yard, where they are given a practical demonstration of the kind of tools criminals use—from scientific and complicated oxygen and acetylene apparatus, used to break into safes, to the simple but efficacious walking-stick to which may be attached a bird-limed piece of wood for lifting coins off a shelf behind a shop or public-house counter.

So for eight weeks the candidate is taught the manner of work he will have to perform. He is given every opportunity to prove himself capable, but at any time he may be courteously told that he is not fitted for the work; 15 or 20 per cent. of the candidates are rejected for one reason or another before their term is over.

But, thorough as the training is, no constable is considered fully qualified when he is drafted from Peel House to a division. Tuition, both theoretical and practical, still goes on while he is a unit in the station. He goes out with an older man to see how things are done, to learn his "beat" or "patrol." There is a class-room at the big police stations where his education is carried on. For a period too, he must attend an L.C.C. evening school. And at last he becomes a unit ranked efficient in the critical and criticised blue-coated army of which he is a member.^[3]

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FOOTNOTE:

^[3] Peel House during the war has been temporarily converted into a club for overseas soldiers.

CHAPTER X.

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IN A POLICE STATION.

Ten o'clock at night, and the West End.

In a back street a lonely blue lamp twinkled, a symbol of law and order placed high above the door of the police station. The street itself was appallingly quiet and gloomy. Yet a few hundred yards away the radiantly lighted main thoroughfares seethed with thousands of London's pleasure seekers, and an incessant stream of cabs and motor cars flowed to and from restaurants and theatres.

Here were men and women in search of pleasure and excitement, and other men and women on the alert for opportunities of roguery that might present themselves amid the stir of gaiety. There were the "sad, gay girls" sitting in the night cafés and strolling the streets. Pickpockets, beggars, and blackmailers were mingled with the crowds. A little later and unwise diners would begin to come unsteadily into the streets.

The West End, as the police know, is always pregnant with possibilities. And things usually happen after the time I have sketched. A fight, a robbery, even a murder is always a contingency.

There is a class of men and women who frequent the neighbourhood among whom passions run high. From a police point of view, it is a difficult place to handle—a district even more difficult than the East End, for here the iron hand must be concealed in the velvet glove. Every officer, from constable to inspector, must be possessed of infinite tact and firmness. Every man on patrol, point, or beat has usually at least one delicate decision to make in a night.

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Yet the lonely blue lamp shines serenely, and serenely the constable on reserve duty at the door stands at ease. Within, under the shaded electric lights, men are at work as quietly and methodically as though they did not hold the responsibility for the safety of one of the richest quarters of the richest city in the world in their hands for eight hours at least. During that time, as a rule, it is the busiest police station in London.

For all that it has special problems to deal with, this station is typical in procedure, discipline, and other essentials to nearly two hundred others scattered over London. There can be no uniformity in the classes with which the Metropolitan Police has to deal.

For the convenience of visitors and inquirers, a couple of waiting rooms are provided, a first and second class, so that the respectable citizen does not find himself in the unpleasant company of a "tough," who may be a pickpocket come to enquire about a friend's welfare, or a not too cleanly ticket-of-leave man.

Near by is the inspector's room, a lofty, well-lighted chamber furnished with high desks, tables, and a variety of official books and papers. Everyone is quietly busy here, for there are always reports and records to be made of everything that occurs, of callers, complaints, lost property, inquirers, charges, particulars of persons reported for summonses.

Clerks in police officers' uniform bustle to and fro. In an adjoining room there are telegraphists and telephone operators receiving and dispatching messages. [Pg 89]

There are two telephones—one attached to the ordinary public system, the other to the private system of the Metropolitan Police. The telegraphs are a couple of tape machines—one for receiving, the other for dispatching. Every message is automatically recorded.

A small, quiet room, one side occupied by a couch, and all sorts of medical and surgical appliances at hand—this is the divisional surgeon's room. He lives close by and can be on the spot in three minutes, if necessary, but on busy nights he is at the station.

On the first and second floors are the offices of the superintendent (for this is the chief station of the division) and the C.I.D. The detective force is a strong one, composed of men, specially picked—men of good appearance and address, who have never-ending work in the district.

Below the ground floor there are open pillared halls with asphalted floors where the men assemble for parade, and, before they are marched off under the command of their section-sergeants, have orders and information read to them. There is a drying-room through which a current of hot air continually passes, where an officer may place his sodden clothes after a wet day or night in the street, and a room where the instruction of young constables is continued under the supervision of a sergeant after they have been drafted from Peel House.

The personnel of the station is interesting. Apart from the superintendent and the chief-inspector, who are in control of the whole division, it is in charge of a sub-divisional inspector, with a dozen or more other inspectors under him and over three hundred sergeants and constables. [Pg 90]

The bulk of the men are single—it is an expensive district for married men to find quarters in—and live, not at the station itself, but at a couple of section-houses some little distance away. There they have cubicles, where they sleep, big reception rooms, sitting-rooms, dining-rooms, a canteen, and all the comforts of a club.

With these men a complex game of chess has to be played, varying according to the ever-changing conditions of the West End, where one day may see a Suffragette window-smashing campaign, and the next a royal procession, and the following a riot in a park. To deal with these occasions a number of depots are available—private houses, garages, and other places where bodies of police may remain out of sight, but instantly available.

There have been many fantastic stories told, to which the public lend a sometimes too ready ear, of what occurs in police stations. Always one can find some person to assert positively that the police as a body are bribed by bookmakers or prostitutes—that, in fact, there exists a practical blackmail. These things were investigated and disproved at a Royal Commission some years ago. They are pure silliness.

Take the case of the police station with which I am dealing, situated where it might be supposed there were ample chances of such a thing. Such a suspicion involves a gigantic conspiracy among more than 300 men. And by the Metropolitan Police system every man promoted is transferred to another division, so that the rank and file would have to induce a continually changing series of strangers to connive at their malpractices. It is on the face of it absurd. [Pg 91]

I recall a little story which shows how keen an eye the public has for the probity of the police. A famous detective had occasion to question a veteran constable, and took him into a tea-shop to do so. At the close of the conversation he handed the officer a half-crown. A day or two later a highly respectable country vicar wrote to Scotland Yard. He had been having a cup of tea at a certain tea-shop. There he had seen a constable, Mr. So-and-So, in talk with a suspicious character, and had seen money pass. Of course, there was an investigation, and it was a long time before the "suspicious character"—who is one of the best-dressed men at Scotland Yard—heard the last of it.

Let us see the method of "taking a charge." Prisoners, as they are brought in, are placed in one of a couple of large rooms, with a low partition, near the corridor, over which it is impossible for anyone to see them. There they are kept for a while until the inspector is ready to take the charge. Presently they are ushered into the charge-room, a big apartment with a tall desk in the centre, and a substantial steel structure a few paces away—the dock. But the dock is not used nowadays except when a person is violent.

The first charge is that of begging, the accused being a boy who looks 17, but says he is 13. The policeman who arrested him stands by his side, and a reserve man stands at attention a little distance away. The boy is quite at ease. There is little of the terror of the law here. He admits that he was begging, his father is on strike, and he hadn't done well at selling papers. [Pg 92]

"Don't be frightened, my lad," says the inspector kindly. "What's your name? Where do you live?"

The boy hesitates, but at last gives an address.

"He gave me a different address, Sir," says the constable, and the boy hurriedly protests that he has told the truth now.

"H'm," comments the inspector calmly. "Look here, sonny, you don't want to stay here all night. You'll have to, you know, if we can't find your father. Tell us the truth."

The facts elicited, the boy is searched, the main contents of his pocket are a handful of coppers and a cigarette end.

The inspector picks up the latter. "Do you know it's against the law for a boy of 13 to have cigarettes? All right. Put him in the detention-room until his father comes. You'll be charged with begging, my boy."

In an hour the youth is free, his father having entered into recognisances for his due appearance at the police court.

It should be explained that no person is detained at the police station, except on a serious charge, who can prove his identity. Often no further inquiry is necessary than reference to a directory.

The detention-room, too, which is attached to every police station is intended to spare a respectable person the ignominy of the cells. It is a comfortably furnished room, with tables and chairs, and sometimes with a few papers and magazines.

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The charges begin to multiply towards midnight. There are several beggars, one of whom is a dirty, round-shouldered old ragamuffin with a long, matted beard. He cringes in front of the inspector's desk, and suddenly his hand flickers upwards with a deft movement. The next instant he is looking as innocent as though butter would not melt in his mouth.

There is a sharp "Put that down" from the reserve man, and it is discovered that a cigarette end taken from the boy has found its way to his pocket. He curses the keen-eyed officer as he is led away to the cells.

Then there are the "drunks," some quiet, some riotous, some still in a torpor, others defiantly asserting that they are perfectly sober. Some of these latter are seen by the police-divisional-surgeon, who by now is in the station. The Inspector sifts each case thoroughly, making sure that there is a *prima facie* case before allowing the charge to proceed. It is at his discretion to grant or refuse bail.

It is after one o'clock. A girl is brought in by a constable, pale and sullen, and with dark eyes a little apprehensive, a little triumphant. The officer handles a man's jacket carefully. The whole of one sleeve and one side of the coat is wringing wet—but it is with blood, not with water. It is a more serious case this—one of attempted murder, which later developed into one of murder. There was an altercation with a man, a lover who had abandoned her, and she stabbed him with a pocket knife, and waited without attempting to escape. An unsavoury, sordid drama, but it is treated in the same cool, business-like way as the other trivial charges.

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"I only meant to hurt him," says the girl, and she is led away by the matron. I may as well finish the story here. The man she had stabbed died in hospital, and she was charged with murder. Eventually she was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment.

In the intervals of taking charges, there are other things to be done. There is a woman half hysterical because her daughter is missing. A couple of people walk in to hand over a gold match box and a purse found in the streets. These things have to be entered in official documents for prompt communication to headquarters.

The tape machine rattles out a report of an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Surrey, and fresh orders relative to the passage of cattle through London. This will have to be made known to the reliefs when they go out.

A constable hurries in with the report that a window in a certain big business firm's premises is open. A man has been left to guard it.

The inspector is a little impatient. "They're always leaving windows open," he says, and gives a few instructions. Half a dozen men are sent out to surround the place, while a search is made for possible burglars. Of course, there are none. The window has been left open by a careless clerk, which was what the police knew all along, but they could take no risks.

Several of the cells are occupied now. There are about a dozen of them all told. You pass through a locked door from the charge-room into a wide, stone-flagged corridor, lined on each side with massive doors. Swing back one of these doors, and you will enter a high pitched room with a barred window at the farther end, and a broad plank running down one side, the full length of the cell. This serves either as a seat or a bed. Washable mattresses and pillows are served out at night-time, and I can imagine that, if lonely, the cells are not uncomfortable. The doors lock automatically as they are swung to. There is an electric bell in each cell which communicates directly with the inspector's room. Thus the senior officers are made responsible for sending to answer a prisoner's ring.

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Besides these cells there are a couple of large apartments—technically also cells—where a large number of prisoners may be kept together. They are often useful when suffrage demonstrators

are on the warpath, or when, say, a gambling raid has taken place. These, like the other cells, have what their most frequent occupants call "Judas holes"—a small trapdoor which can be let down from outside to see that all is well within.

The matron's room also opens into the corridor—a pleasant little chamber where often women prisoners who cannot be allowed bail, but whom it is felt should not be placed in a cell, are allowed to sit.

I have said that all the prisoners are searched. This is done thoroughly with a twofold object—to ensure that no prisoner has means of doing himself bodily harm, and to discover whether he carries on him anything bearing on the charge, as, for instance, in a case of picking pockets. Everything discovered has to be entered with particularity; but although such things as matches or a knife might be taken from a man, he would usually be left with his own personal property, watch, keys, pocket-book, money, and similar things.

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Every person having business at a police station is treated with courtesy, whether prisoner or prosecutor. That is one of the rigid rules of the service which is rarely neglected. Even the man on duty at the door is not allowed to ask a caller his business without permission. That is for a senior officer.

I was much struck by the fair and impartial manner in which the inspector elicited the facts of a case before accepting a charge. Always polite, with no leaning to one side or the other, he endeavoured by careful questioning to elicit whether an arrest had been made on reasonable grounds. There was no bullying, no taking it for granted, except in an obvious case of drunkenness, that a charge was proved.

I have, perhaps, not made clear the distinction between reserve men at a station and reserve men in a division. The latter do ordinary duties, and are the first called upon in the event of emergencies anywhere in London. They receive a small sum in addition to their ordinary pay. The former are men who, instead of doing eight hours' duty in the street, do it at the station itself, and are available for any sudden contingency that may present itself within the subdivision.

The personnel of the London police is, as I have indicated, selected and tested under the most rigorous conditions. No less relentless in the search for efficiency are the promotion conditions. The Commissioner is an absolute autocrat so far as promotion is concerned, though, in practice, he usually acts upon the recommendation of the superintendents.

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A constable, before he is promoted, must serve at least five years—in practice, the average is eight years—and must then pass two examinations. One of these is set by the Civil Service Commissioners to test his education, the other is an examination in police duty before a board of high officials. Should he be approved then for promotion he is immediately transferred to another division. These examinations are carried out at every step in promotion. In the words of a keen American observer:

"That such a system is successful in bringing to the front the best men available, that it is carried through without favouritism or political considerations, that, in its fairness and justice, it has the confidence of the uniformed force is a splendid commentary not only on the integrity of the Commissioner and his administrative assistants but on the stability and sound traditions of the entire department."

CHAPTER XI.

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THE RIDDLE DEPARTMENT.

The perpetual solving of riddles is one of the commonplace duties of Scotland Yard, not only in the C.I.D., but in every branch of the business. Luck may, and sometimes does, help a detective to solve a mystery; but luck never helps to quell a riot or maintain order on the King's highway in times of stress.

It is for such matters as these that they keep a Riddle Department at headquarters. They call it the Executive Department, but no matter—as Mark Twain would say. It is there to supply the answers to the conundrums that are always cropping up in police work.

Everyone in the Metropolitan Police who wants to know anything goes to the Executive Department. And it does a heavy work by the sheer light of common-sense and a meticulous organisation which is ready for anything, for many of its riddles are simply variations of the great one:

"Here are twenty thousand men who must eat and sleep and guard seven hundred square miles and seven millions of people; how can we concentrate a hundred, a thousand, or ten thousand swiftly into a particular district to meet an emergency without leaving other places unguarded?"

An unthankful task. I can imagine that at times subdued but bitter revilings are heaped upon the head of the department.

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You cannot take men from the comparatively pleasant surroundings of the West End and dump

them into Dockland, for instance, without evoking grumbles. Naturally, every division which is drawn upon thinks it ought to have been some other division. But discipline and tact do great things.

Rarely is there any cause for complaint, although the known fact that the force is undermanned naturally entails hardships on individuals at times.

Now let me introduce you to the Riddle Department at work. In the telegraph-room of Scotland Yard one of a cluster of tape machines breaks into hysterical chatter, and a constable springs to read the message of the unreeling coil of paper. It is a message from the East End. A riot has occurred which the local superintendent fears may become greater than the force at his disposal will be able to cope with.

The constable dashes into an adjacent room with the message, and the superintendent of the department takes in its import at a glance.

He picks up a typewritten table, and his finger glides to a particular spot. That table tells him how many men a 5, 10, or 20 per cent. draft from neighbouring divisions will give.

In another minute he is in consultation with Sir Frederick Wodehouse, the Assistant Commissioner who controls the department, and possibly with Sir Edward Henry himself. All three are men used to unhesitating decisions, and with an intimate knowledge of the force.

A few sharp words and the private wires again begin to get busy. Almost immediately the reserves from the neighbouring divisions commence to mobilise, and are poured into the disturbed area as swiftly as means of communication allow. It is a riddle solved with quiet precision, and no district is bereft of adequate guardianship. One of the exigencies of the business has been met. [Pg 100]

If the public ever thought about such a feat at all, they would consider it as something of a miracle. But it is not as spectacular as the catching of a criminal, and the only persons who call indirect attention to it are those who would have us believe that great, hulking policemen have batoned helpless men and women who were, of course, doing nothing, although broken bottles and stones may litter the thoroughfare where an affray has taken place.

It is curious this suspicion of the police which sometimes affects otherwise clear-headed people. You pick out men whose character is without flaw from their childhood upwards. You put them into a blue uniform, and lo! their whole personality alters. They are hypocrites and bullies, bribed by bookmakers and prostitutes, and capable of any sort of baseness.

Let us return to the Riddle Department. The secret of dealing with such a happening as I have painted above lies naturally in the organisation. Every division has a certain number of reserve men—approximately 10 per cent.

They are picked veterans of not less than eight years' service, who receive an additional eighteenpence per week, and must always be ready to carry out special work when called upon. These, then, are first called out, and other men are taken as occasion demands. [Pg 101]

There are other branches of the Metropolitan Police where a mistake would make havoc in a department or division; here it would affect the service as a whole.

The Executive Department is as much concerned in the work of every other part of that complex machine as the engineers of a great ship are in keeping the vessel moving. Sir Frederick Wodehouse, who is at its head, in his quarter of a century's service as police administrator—twelve of which have been spent with the City Police and the remainder at Scotland Yard—has always been keenly alive to the necessity of keeping pace with the science of organisation. He has as his right-hand men Superintendents West and White, who split up the work between them—one in charge of the Executive Department itself, the other supervising the Statistical Department.

It will be understood why I call it a Riddle Department when I explain some of its duties. It is concerned with the discipline and administration of the force as a whole; the organisation of men when they have to be used in mass; it controls the public and private telephone and telegraph service of the force; it compiles statistics on all sorts of police subjects: it edits and issues "Informations," "The Inebriates' List," "The Cycle List," "The Pawnbrokers' List," reward bills, and police notices; it makes traffic regulations; it works with the Board of Agriculture when cattle disease breaks out; it issues pedlars' and sweeps' certificates; it keeps a gruesome record—a sort of photographic morgue—of all dead bodies found in London; and it has to give its consent before any summons may be taken out by a police officer. [Pg 102]

That is the merest inadequate list of its duties. While other departments are clean-cut, knowing where their work begins and ends, the Executive Department has no limit.

Anything that does not properly belong anywhere else goes to the Executive Department. That is why it specialises in solving riddles.

It is in such a department as this that alertness of mind and elasticity of resource are developed. When war broke out, it had to spend many sleepless days and nights in what was practically a redistribution of the force. Hundreds of the force had enlisted, and innumerable new duties and problems arose. A system of co-ordination between the immense new bodies of special constables

and the regular force had to be evolved. Depleted divisions had to be readjusted, men selected for particular work, a system of co-ordination with the Special Constabulary made, and a hundred re-arrangements made.

So, when a great procession takes place, as at the Coronation festivities, the most meticulous organisation is necessary. It seems simple to order so many men to arrange themselves at so many paces apart over a certain number of miles. But the problem is much more complex.

First it has to be decided where the men are to come from. Then they have to be disposed strategically so that no man shall be wasted where he is not needed; there have to be reserves ready at hand for emergencies; it has to be decided what streets shall be closed and when, what streets shall remain open; how a vast number of men shall obtain food and rest, and so on.

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All this without offending an eager populace, thronging the streets night and day, and without exposing outer London to the risk of marauders when its guardians are enormously diminished in numbers.

We all know that it has been done, and how cheerfully every man in the force, from constable to Commissioner, give up leisure and comfort to carry out the demands made upon them.

But of the long, long planning and scheming we know little. The working out of draft schemes; the hours spent in conference with superintendents of divisions; the poring over maps and sectional plans—of this unceasing labour we never heard, although we accepted its result almost without comment.

Such work as this goes on whenever there is likely to be a gathering anywhere in London, be it a boat-race or a Suffragette procession.

A point that is always borne in mind, and which is emphasised in the "Police Code," is that "traffic should never be closed until the last moment consistent with public safety, and be re-opened as soon as possible." Something of the same process goes on when there is a likelihood of riot and disorder, but in some contingencies it is often necessary to act immediately, as I have already pointed out. Nevertheless, in a district where it is known that disorder may break out the police are usually reinforced beforehand.

The department is responsible for the communications of Scotland Yard. The telegraphs and telephones are continually at work night and day. With a few exceptions, every station is linked by wire to headquarters. Tape machines record every outgoing and incoming message so that a message is clear and unmistakable. One operator at work at Scotland Yard can send a message simultaneously to every main station. There is a private telephone system by which stations can talk with stations and headquarters without delay, and without fear of secrets being "tapped," and the public system is also used.

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It is not so very long ago that the only wire communication was by an antiquated A.B.C. instrument which worked laboriously and slowly, and such a thing as a telephone was undreamed of.

Then it was a matter of much formality and sometimes intolerable slowness for a provincial force to get in touch on a matter of urgency. Now it is merely a question of a trunk call.

This naturally brings me to a consideration of Scotland Yard in a new and little-known light—as a newspaper office. For daily, weekly, and evening papers are issued from the big, red-brick building. Some of them are issued by the Criminal Record Office, some by the Executive Department. It will be convenient, however, to deal with them in a mass.

They are papers sometimes much more interesting and informative than those to be procured on the bookstalls, but much gold could not buy one for a private person.

Best known of all, perhaps, is the *Police Gazette*, a four-page sheet published on Tuesdays and Fridays, and issued broadcast over the kingdom. Its correspondents are police officials everywhere. It publishes photographs occasionally, usually official ones taken in profile and side-face. It deals with what the newspapers call "sensations" unsensationally, and its editor is free from that bugbear of most editors—the fear of a libel action.

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The Tuesday edition deals almost entirely with deserters from the Navy and Army, while Friday's issue is concerned with bigger fry—criminals and crime. It is an interesting paper with an extensive circulation, and is, perhaps, more carefully read by those into whose hands it falls than any other publication, however fascinating.

The official title of what may be called the evening paper is *Printed Informations*. This is a sheet about foolscap size, and its publication is confined to the Metropolitan Police. It is printed four times a day, except on Sundays when it is issued twice, and distributed by brisk little motor cars among the various stations. Some idea of its contents may be gathered from the headings: "Wanted for Crime," "In Custody for Crime," "Property Stolen," "Property Lost or Stolen," "Persons or Bodies Found," "Persons Missing," "Animals Lost or Stolen."

Apart from these papers, which are purely confidential, there are other papers issued. There is the "Black List" issued to publicans, with portraits and descriptions of persons to whom it is an offence to supply liquor, and the "Pawnbrokers' List and Cycle List," which has to be sent to those persons to whom stolen property might be offered for pledge or sale. These latter are distributed

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from each station by hand.

It is at the Statistical Department that many of the riddles are fired. It has the record of each man in its files, knows his official character, his medical history, and so on.

Now and again some one wants to know how many street accidents occurred in London during a particular week. The department produces a carefully prepared table showing the number and details in each case.

Figures may be unattractive things, yet at any moment the statistics collected in that quiet, methodical office may have a direct effect on any one of London's teeming millions.

When the order went forth that all cyclists in London should carry rear lights it was probably a string of figures put together in that department which was responsible—figures which showed the number of accidents that had been caused in the absence of any such precaution.

It keeps track of everything done by the police, individually and collectively. Ask how many charges were preferred by the police in one year. You will learn at once that there were 133,000, that 26,000 summonses were issued by police officers, and 63,000 were served on behalf of private persons.

There are about three hundred mounted police in the force, and these, as a whole, come under the control of the department, although at ordinary times they are attached to divisions.

They used to be attached to the outer divisions, but it was found that they were too far away when an emergency arose, for, after all, the mounted man is of most use in controlling unruly crowds. So now they are with the inner divisions, within easy reach of the most crowded thoroughfares when needed.

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All the men in this branch of the service have been thoroughly trained in horsemanship, and those who have seen them at work on their adroit horses, keeping back a mass of pushing, struggling people, or dexterously dispersing a threatening crowd, know their worth as maintainers of order.

Both the Executive and Statistical Departments are concerned with reports which are the basis of all discipline and organisation in the Metropolitan Police. The first—"The Morning Report"—is compiled by the superintendents of divisions, and passed and commented upon by the Chief Constables in charge of districts.

This is London's bill of criminal health. It shows what has happened beyond the ordinary over seven hundred square miles in the preceding twenty-four hours. A murder, a riot, a robbery, a fire, a street collision—all things are recorded. Every police station, it should be said, keeps an "Occurrence Book" and it is from this that the reports are compiled.

Then there is the "Morning Report of Crime." This is largely the work of the divisional detective-inspectors. Every crime for which a person can be indicted is included here, and an elaborate report of the steps that have been taken. Comments are made upon this by both the Chief Constable of the district and the Assistant-Commissioner of the C.I.D.—commendations, reprimands, suggestions.

The third report is the "Morning State," which deals with matters of internal administration of the force itself—numbers available, disciplinary matters, affairs of health.

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All these reports ultimately reach the departments for record and for the transmission of orders.

CHAPTER XII.

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THE SAILOR POLICE.

Fantastic reflections dappled the Pool of London—reflections from the riding lights of ships at anchor, and the brighter glare of the lamps of the bridges. They danced eerily on the swift-running waters of the river, intensifying the gloom of the black waters. Here and there the darker blur marked where a line of barges was moored.

The police-boat, its motor chug-chugging noisily, slipped unostentatiously behind one of the tiers of lighters. To my untrained eyes it was incredible that in the labyrinth of craft, amid the darkness, we should be able to pick our way. Yet deftly, unerringly, the inspector moved the tiller, while two constables kept keen eyes on the motley assembly of vessels.

A barge was swinging across the stream with two men at the sweeps. The tide caught it, and it dropped heavily down on us while we were trying to steal a passage athwart another vessel. The launch was caught between the two, and it seemed inevitable that our boat should crack like an egg-shell. With my heart in my mouth, I prepared to jump. But with swift precision the constables acted. Holding tight to the gunwale they forced our boat over sideways, and we sidled through at an angle of forty-five degrees into open water.

I looked for an expression of relief, but the men had calmly resumed their seats. The escape had

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been a matter of course to them, and they laughed when I spoke of it as an escape. For the men of the Thames Police take things as philosophically as sailors. It was all in the day's work to them.

Since then I have seen much of the men and methods of the force which guards the great highway of London. They have heavy duties to perform, and, from the rank and file to the superintendent, are adequately fitted for their work. The histories of some of those who wear the blue jacket with the word "Thames" on the collar, and the peaked cap with the anchor badge, would make enthralling reading.

There is Divisional Detective-Inspector Helden, who probably knows more of the ways of the waterside thieves than any man living. He is a linguist, as are many of his staff—a qualification much necessary in dealing with the cosmopolitan crews of ships plying to and from the Port of London.

There is an inspector who has saved three lives—a fact none the less noteworthy in that he holds the quaint superstition that all the troubles of those people will accumulate on his own unfortunate head. There is a bronzed, brown-moustached station-sergeant who had been around the world before he was twelve, and who has had strange adventures in every quarter of the globe. There are men drawn from the Navy—and now serving again—the mercantile marine, and river craft.

All have an intimate knowledge of that thirty-five mile stretch of river which passes through London from Teddington to Dartford Creek.

They know every eddy, every trick and twist of the tide; they know on any given day what boats are on the river, be they barges or liners; and they know the men who work them. [Pg 111]

The force is under the control of Superintendent Mann, who has had a varied experience of many years, and has brought a ripe knowledge of men and organisation to his work.

There are five stations—at Wapping, Waterloo Pier, Barnes, Blackwall, and Erith—with a complement of 240 men, fourteen launches and motor boats, as well as row-boats. The division possesses its own engineers and carpenters, and does its own building and repairs.

Now-a-days, men are only drafted to the division after serving for a time in the ordinary land force, but the rule has only been in force of late years, and consequently most of the men have spent their whole police career on the river.

A different thing this to land work. In the whole thirty-five miles there are only five "sections." These are patrolled by series of boats putting off at different hours. For eight hours they ply to and fro, keenly vigilant, courteous as their colleagues in the West End, as helpful and resourceful in an emergency as men of the Navy. Sometimes a barge gets adrift. It has to be boarded and towed to safe moorings.

Some of these barges have valuable cargoes—tobacco, silk, and what not—and the incredible carelessness of the owners in not always providing a watchman presses hardly on the police, who may, perhaps, have to spend a whole night in looking after some single craft. There was a case in which a barge broke adrift with £20,000 worth of goods aboard. [Pg 112]

"Oh, that would have been all right," said the owner off-handedly, when told that it had been safely looked after. "It would have come to no harm."

Not a word of thanks. And that attitude is a typical one.

The patrol-boats beat to and fro, each with two men and a sergeant, in all weathers, amid blinding sleet and snow in the winter, fog in November, and more pleasantly on summer nights. Eyes are strained through the darkness at the long tiers of barges, ears are alert to catch the click of oars in rowlocks. They know who has lawful occasion to be abroad at such times.

Occasionally the sergeant hails some boat. He can usually identify the voice of the man who replies, but should he fail to do so, the police-boat slips nearer. A stranger or a suspicious character is invited to give an account of himself. Should he not be able to do so satisfactorily, he is towed along to the nearest police station until inquiries have been made.

Sometimes, not often, when a man, who on the river corresponds to the sneak thief ashore, is caught red-handed stealing rope or metal or ships' oddments there is resistance. But always the police win. They know the game. A hand-to-hand struggle in a swaying boat, even a fall overboard with a desperate prisoner, does not concern them greatly.

"You see," explained a veteran to me, "if you fall out while you've got hold of a man it's ten to one that he tries to get his breath as he goes under. That makes matters worse for him. All you do is to hold your breath, and let him wear himself out. He's usually quiet enough when you come up again." Of course, every man in the division is an expert swimmer. [Pg 113]

There are other tricks of boatcraft in such a case which all river-police officers know. The flashing of a light is an equivalent of a police-whistle ashore, and will bring the assistance of any police-boat in sight.

At the floating police-station at Waterloo Pier a dingey is always in readiness to put off to rescue would-be suicides who fling themselves from the "bridge of sighs." In the little station itself there is a bathroom with hot water always ready, and every man in the division is trained to the

Schafer method of resuscitation of the apparently drowned.

A still more grim side of the work is the finding of dead bodies. The average number is somewhere around a hundred a year. Most of these are suicides, a few accidents.

The duties of the patrols are to keep vigil over the river and its banks. There are other patrols at work for the Customs and the Port of London Authority, who see that the revenue is not defrauded, and that the traffic regulations are kept. But this does not free the police from all responsibility in these matters. Here are a few of the things they have to do:—

Secure drifting barges and inform owner,

Detect smuggling, illegal ship-building or illegal fitting out for service in a foreign State,

Report damaged cargoes or food, and offences against the Port of London Authority's bye-laws,

Arrest any drunken person navigating a boat,

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Detect cases of navigation without sufficient free-board below Battersea Bridge,

Search all suspicious-looking craft,

Inform harbour-master of vessel sunk or dangerous wreckage adrift,

Report wrecks to Lloyd's.

There is more—much more. For instance, all manner of craft have to be watched to see that they do not carry more passengers than their licence permits, that obstruction is not caused by mooring across public stairs, that more than the fixed fare is not demanded by watermen, that no boat is navigated for hire without a licence, and so on.

Detective-Inspector Helden and his staff of the Criminal Investigation Department of the division are the most dreaded enemies of the river thieves. Time was, when the "light-horsemen" of the river were in their heyday, that £25,000 worth of property was stolen annually. That has been reduced to less than a couple of hundred pounds—a comparatively trivial, insignificant figure.

It is to both branches of the river police that those who use the river owe this complete immunity from theft. Every man of the C.I.D. in the division has a complete knowledge of thieves and receivers on whom it is necessary to maintain constant surveillance. Marine store dealers and old metal dealers are kept in close touch, for it is to them that the odds and ends of ship equipment might be taken by a dishonest sailor or watchman.

One of the most famous of river thieves was a man whom the public knew as "Slippery Jack." He made a rich harvest until he was laid by the heels. Almost naked, and his skin greased lavishly, he would slip aboard likely-looking craft in search of plunder. If he were disturbed, he would dodge away, his greased skin aiding him if anyone attempted to seize him. He was tracked down one evening to Blackfriars, where he backed his boat into midstream and turned at bay with a vicious sheath-knife. Only after a fierce struggle, in which the police did not escape scot free, was he arrested. His exploits cost him ten years' penal servitude.

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It was the detective branch of the Thames Police that solved the complicated mystery of a supposed case of murder which attracted much public attention at the time. The full facts have never been made public, and may be interesting.

In August, 1897, the body of a naked man was found floating near the Tower Bridge. A line was woven tightly round the body, arms and neck, and a doctor stated that the body must have been in the water about three weeks, that death was due to strangulation, and that he thought it impossible for the man to have tied the rope round himself, though it must have been tied before death.

A woman identified the body as that of her husband, Von Veltheim—he who shot Woolf Joel in Johannesburg and was later sentenced at the Old Bailey for the blackmail of Mr. Solly Joel—and a jury brought in a verdict that "death was caused by strangulation whether amounting to murder the evidence fails to show."

Here were all the elements of the mystery that might have puzzled Sherlock Holmes. The detectives began to puzzle it out. They were all watermen, and knew, what the doctor had apparently overlooked, that a body will often swell after prolonged immersion in water. Although the rope was woven tightly about the body there was only one actual knot. They came to a directly opposite conclusion to the doctor—that the rope had somehow enwound itself round the man after he was in the water, and that the swelling of the body had tightened it. They began to make enquiries. Soon they discovered that a seaman named John Duncan had vanished from the ship *Thames*, moored at Carron Wharf, near Tower Bridge. Also a piece of "throw line" similar to that twisted round the body was missing. Also that Duncan, the last time he was seen alive, had declared his intention of taking a bathe. These facts made it easy for the sailor police to reconstruct the tragedy.

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Duncan was unable to swim. He attached one end of the rope round his chest and fastened the other end to the ship. Then he had slipped overboard among the piles of the wharf. By some

means the end of the rope in the ship became detached. Duncan struggled to save himself and the rope became entangled about him. That was the solution of what seemed a baffling problem.

The men of the division receive the same pay as men ashore, but they are a class entirely apart. On land, men are transferred from division to division as they are promoted, or as occasion demands. On the river this system does not apply in practice. Most of the men spend their whole police career on the water, for it takes so long to make the complete police officer of the Thames Division, and a man once trained is too valuable to be used for other work.

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CHAPTER XIII.

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THE BLACK MUSEUM.

Outside Scotland Yard they call it the "Black Museum"; within, it is simply the "Museum"—a private museum the like of which exists nowhere else in the world. Money cannot purchase access to it, and curious visitors are only admitted on orders signed by senior executive officials who know them personally. For the museum contains too many of the secrets of crime to be a wholesome place for the general public, although the indiscriminate publicity that it has suffered in print has made it appear to be a kind of gratuitous show-place. If that were its only purpose, it would not exist at Scotland Yard.

It was originally established, some forty years ago, in a cellar of Old Scotland Yard, as a place where young police officers might get an elementary acquaintance of the ways and appliances of evil-doers.

Gradually relics of great crimes began to accumulate there until there are now over six hundred exhibits, ranging over the whole gamut of criminal activity. There is much, perhaps too much, to appeal to the morbid-minded—revolvers by the score, wicked-looking blood-stained knives, hangmen's ropes, plaster casts of murderers taken after death; but more interesting are the tools and equipment of the professional thief and swindler, by which demonstrations are made to raw policemen of the weapons with which his adversaries wage their war upon society.

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In one case it is an innocent-looking ring, now palpably tarnished brass. But examine it, and you will find that it bears a tolerable imitation of an eighteen-carat hall-mark. When it was fine and bright it was picked up in the street, very ostentatiously, by an astute gentleman who promptly sold it for as much as he could get from a passer-by, who had probably thought it a bargain when he noticed the forged hall-mark. That same trick flourishes to-day, as it flourished over a century ago when Sir John Fielding issued a warning to the public.

Close by are a little heap of white sapphires, calculated at one time, with their glitter and dazzle when set as "diamond" rings, to deceive all but the most sophisticated of pawnbrokers. Similarly so, "field-glasses" stamped with the names of famous makers. These are little things, perhaps, but they give the most trusting of young constables some ideas of "ways that are dark and tricks that are vain."

Publicans and pawnbrokers seem to be the invariable victims of a certain type of swindler. There is a walking-stick, innocent enough to all appearance, but with a tong-like attachment which, at the touch of a spring, will jump out of the ferrule, enabling a wineglass full of coins to be lifted from a shelf across the counter.

A glazed black bag with hinged bottom, which may be placed over any article and automatically swallow it is another ingenious invention.

All these, however, are byways of crime. There is much more to be absorbed by the learner in police science. Here he is shown the different types of jemmies, and bars of steel so fashioned that they may be used as chisels or levers. Here are bunches of skeleton keys which, in the hands of experts, will open any ordinary lock in the world. A massive steel implement shaped like a gigantic tin-opener, and used to rip open the backs of safes, is another item in the collection. There are vice-like tweezers which, when properly screwed up, will cut quietly through the bolts of, say, a jeweller's shutters.

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Still more scientific is a complicated apparatus with tubes in which oxygen and acetylene gas are used to melt through safes with a fierce heat—a quieter, less clumsy, and more effective method than the use of explosives.

It would take more space than is at my command to detail all the practical instruction which is afforded by the object lessons the young constable has in the museum. Not only is he initiated into wrinkles and tricks which he may meet any day, but he is shown into those more subtle branches of crime which few but specialists enter.

Coining is a case in point. There is a complete coiner's outfit—which, for obvious reasons, I shall not describe—and the process is explained from A to Z. Now-a-days the "smasher" is a difficult individual to circumvent. He works preferably with real silver, and with coins like sixpences and shillings which are not so closely scrutinised as those of higher denominations. Of course, even in a genuine sixpence the silver is not worth its face value.

A step higher in the criminal hierarchy is the forger. Of his handicraft, specimens are not lacking. There are relics seized when a notorious forger went into forced seclusion for ten years some time ago. He manufactured Bank of France thousand-franc notes and foreign bonds, and even used lithographic stones to imitate the water-mark. Photography played an important part in his operations.

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I have shown, sketchily perhaps, how the primary function of the museum is carried out. But it has another and allied interest of great importance to all interested in police science.

One may study the stages by which the professional criminal has adapted the work of invention to his ends, and mark at the same time how the swindler always strikes the same old chord of credulity in human nature.

Dropped in one of the corners is a heavy bar of brass, originally in the possession of an early gold-brick swindler. Mr. Albert Blair Hunter, of Wilmington, Delaware, U.S.A., communicated with two gentlemen in this country, stating that a wealthy relative had died possessed of considerable property, among which was a box of gold from Klondike, value £12,000. For various plausible reasons he was willing to dispose of it to them for £2,000. The good, simple-minded souls went to New York, and handed solid English money to that amount over to Mr. Albert Blair Hunter, of Wilmington, Delaware, U.S.A. For what? A bar of brass worth perhaps twenty shillings sterling.

Gambling swindles are numerous, seized for the most part on race-courses. A little tee-to-tum, marked with dice faces, can be manipulated so as to fall high or low, according to the betting, irrespective of the person who holds it, so long as he does not know the secret. There is a board with a dial face and a pointer on a print. The luckless "punters" cannot tell that it is controlled by a magnetic ring. Into these mysteries the police are initiated.

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The policy of education at the museum is a wise one, for many young constables, whatever their natural abilities, come fresh to London from the plough, and no more reliable method of destroying a too trustful faith in appearances could have been devised than this which shows them the actual equipment of criminals.

I have deliberately avoided giving too close a description of these things. Nor have I in any way given a complete description of the museum.

The mere manuscript catalogue occupies two portly volumes. Each of the relics contains a story in itself,—a story that has often ended in a shameful death. To recall them would be beyond the scope of this book.

CHAPTER XIV.

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PUBLIC CARRIAGES.

"Keep very still, please. Thank you."

A constable replaced the cap on the lens of a big camera, and with a sigh of relief a man rose from the chair where he had been seated under a cardboard number. It was the photograph-room of Scotland Yard, through which every cab-, omnibus-, and tram-driver, and every conductor has to pass once in three years. "The Yard" is as careful with a cabman on licence as with a convict on licence, although for different reasons. But the chief idea is the same—the safety and comfort of the public.

There are thousands of dossiers stored in the vaults, which give a complete history of each man holding a licence in connection with a public vehicle—records of warnings, convictions, medical tests, and so on. Officially stamped photographs are placed on every document which passes into a man's possession, so that there can never be cases of personation, such as I believe have happened many years ago.

It is no mean work that is performed by the Public Carriage Department, although it is done quietly, smoothly, and for the most part out of sight of the public. Not a cab, omnibus, or tramway car that plies for hire in the metropolis—and they average about 16,000 a year—but has passed stringent tests by experts, and this applies equally to the men in charge.

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Every human precaution that years of experience can suggest is taken to guard against the passing on the streets of any man or vehicle that might be a nuisance or a danger in congested traffic. Rigid regulations, numbering forty in the case of taxicabs, and sixty-two in the case of motor omnibuses, insist upon details as far apart as adequate brakes and freedom from noise.

We speak about the perils of the street; but they would be increased, perhaps tenfold, but for the unobtrusive care of the Public Carriage Department.

There are other detectives at Scotland Yard than those of the Criminal Investigation Department—detectives, that is, in all but name—for the control and supervision of traffic does not end with the issue of an annual licence.

There are fifty skilled men dotted about London, all holding certificates of proficiency in motor engineering, who exercise a constant surveillance. Quick of eye and keen of hearing, they keep unceasing watch on all public vehicles. An unusual sound as a motor omnibus passes may tell them something is wrong with the engine. Thereafter the proprietors are warned not to use the car until the defect has been remedied. Or they may station themselves unexpectedly at the gate of a garage, and test the brakes and steering gear of every car that passes in or out.

That this is no mere formality is shown by the fact that on one morning an officer stopped no fewer than forty taxicabs from going on the streets. Indeed, during the last year for which figures are available officers of the department reported 35,123 vehicles as unfit for use. In some it was merely a question of noise or a trifling fault easily remedied. In others the trouble might easily have caused a bad accident. The principle acted upon throughout the department is that prevention is better than cure.

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Whenever a car of a new type is devised, be it a cab, an omnibus, or a tramway car, Scotland Yard examines it, and, if necessary, calls in a consulting expert for advice.

Should the type be suitable, similar vehicles are afterwards examined by local staffs of the department—there are twelve of these in London—and a certificate presented by the maker that there has been no variation in the type.

In the early days of motor omnibuses complaints in shoals were received by Scotland Yard from tradesmen, private individuals, borough councils, and others as to the frightful noises made by them when running.

That resulted in the establishment of a committee of high executive officials for the testing of every motor omnibus in respect of noise before it is licensed.

Pass through Great Derby Street into New Scotland Yard any day after ten o'clock, and you will find always a number of men clustered about a low building and in the little square. They are drawn from all types and classes, and all are candidates hopeful of obtaining their licences.

A would-be taxi-driver—an "original" he is technically termed—has to be clean in dress and person and not under five feet in height. Two householders who have known him personally for three years must give him a good character. A doctor is required to certify that he does not suffer from any ailment, that he is sufficiently active, that he does not smoke or drink excessively, and that he is fitted for his duties by temperament. After this he will be permitted to undergo examinations in fitness and knowledge of driving. It is a tight-meshed net through which an incompetent would find it hard to pass.

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But it is the topographical examination that undoes most of the "originals." I went through a couple of large waiting-rooms; hanging on the walls of one was a slip of paper with the name of one man. "There were twelve yesterday," said my guide; "he was the only one to get through."

And then he told me something of the history of the man whose name was hanging solitary on the wall. It was not an altogether unusual one in that building. The candidate, a University man, had been in possession of an income of about £1,500 a year. He had been neither reckless nor extravagant, but suddenly, at the age of forty, with no trade or profession in his hands, he had seen his fortune lost. So he had taken his place among the "originals" and had started in the world anew as the driver of a taxicab.

At the end of the waiting-room there are two little apartments, each containing one table and a chair; there the "originals" are examined in topography, *viva voce*, one at a time. Now, it is sometimes asserted that trick questions are put to candidates. That is not so. There are twenty-five lists officially laid down, each of eighteen questions, and one of these lists the candidate has to answer.

Here are typical routes which a candidate has to describe:—

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St. James's Park Railway Station to Baker Street Railway Station,

Clapham Junction to Brixton Theatre,

Hop Exchange to Royal Exchange.

The names are sometimes varied. For instance, the second might be "from the South-Western Police Court to Lambeth Town Hall," or the third "London Bridge Station to the Mansion House." But in each case the route is practically the same. Thus a complaint of unfairness can be checked by reference to the record kept by the examiner of the list he used.

Some of the men present themselves again and again. In 1913, of 676 "originals" only 366 passed, yet there were 6,339 separate examinations.

Omnibus drivers and ex-horse-cab drivers do not have to pass this topographical test. But all alike have to undergo a driving test of the type of vehicle for which a licence is required.

First of all, there is a preliminary examination in the yard, so that an examiner is not called upon to risk life and limb—to say nothing of those of the public—before he is sure that the candidate has at least a rudimentary knowledge of driving.

Afterwards, there is a more complete test under the difficult conditions of the West End. Should a

man fail at his first test, he is not allowed to appear again for fourteen days; if at his second, he is put back for a month; at his third, for two months. His failure at his fourth and final examination is inexorable. Ex-horse-cab drivers are allowed two extra tests. A fee of a half-crown is payable for each of the last two tests.

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The necessity of these precautions is evident when it is considered what harm might be done by an ignorant, careless, dishonest, or short-sighted driver, yet I have come to the conclusion that when a cabman gets his licence he has earned it. But the Public Carriage Department has first of all to consider the safety of the public.

I have tried to make clear some of the work that devolves upon the staff. But that is by no means all. Now and again a warning has to be issued to drivers and proprietors on some particular subject. Here is a typical one:

SPECIAL NOTICE.

"In view of the number of accidents in the streets of the Metropolis, and of the numerous complaints of the public as to the reckless driving of certain drivers of public vehicles, the Commissioner of Police gives notice that every case of conviction for dangerous and reckless driving will entail serious consequences, and the renewal of the drivers' licences may be imperilled.

"Repeated convictions for exceeding the speed limit by drivers of public vehicles will be considered to constitute evidence of reckless driving."

Such hints bring home to drivers a remembrance that their livelihood depends upon their good conduct. They never know when they may be under surveillance, and they know that every time they transgress it is entered in the records, which are scrutinised when an application comes for a renewal of licence. Nearly 200 licences were cancelled or recalled in 1913.

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There is a Committee of Appeal at Scotland Yard, to which most cases of this kind are referred, so that no man is deprived of his licence without a fair hearing and reasonable cause. This committee heard no fewer than 1,648 cases during 1913.

Some of us may recall painful memories of the early days of taxicabs, when taximeters were not altogether above suspicion, and deft manipulation with a hatpin or some other jugglery was possible, by which fares and cab-owners were defrauded.

Those days have passed. A taximeter when it has once been sealed by Scotland Yard is now a sternly conscientious instrument, with a regard for the truth that might shame George Washington. There is a separate register of taximeters kept cross-indexed to cabs, so that the number of the latter is all that is necessary to reveal the record of a particular taximeter.

Eight different kinds of badges are issued, varying in colour. Thus an officer can tell at a glance who holds a conductor's licence, who has a horse-cab licence and who a taxi-cab licence. In a few cases composite badges are allowed, by which a man may act either as driver or conductor, or as driver of a horse or motor vehicle.

All men of the department are police officers, but they are something more. They are living directories of London and its suburbs from Colney Heath, Herts, to Todworth Heath, Surrey, from Lark Hall, Essex, to Staines Moor, Middlesex; they are skilful engineers; they have a keen eye for the defects and qualities of a horse; they can drive a horse or a motor car, they know the conditions of traffic in Piccadilly Circus or in the deserted roads about Croydon.

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Above all, and in this they are again police officers, they have a very sure appreciation of human nature. They do not harass those with whom they are concerned unnecessarily, but whether it is the London County Council, a powerful omnibus corporation, or an unlucky hansom driver, they act impartially, without fear or favour.

Outside their own province they have nothing to do with crime, though it sometimes happens that their records are useful to other departments of Scotland Yard. In reality, the actual police functions of the Public Carriage Department are few, and for this reason there are people who hold that it should be entirely separated from the force. The argument is a forcible one, yet it is not complete.

Time was when all licences were issued from Somerset House. But even then the police were asked to carry out certain enquiry work. It has been suggested that the London County Council should take it over. But the London County Council is not an impartial body in regard to public carriages. It owns tramway cars which are run in opposition to motor omnibuses. A Traffic Board for London might solve the difficulty.

But, however plausible such theoretical reasons for separating this work from the police may sound, one thing is certain. The duties could not be more efficiently performed than they are at present. A perfect system has been devised by which not only are the perils of the street minimised for pedestrians, but the comfort and convenience of all who travel by public vehicles are ensured, whether it be the millionaire in a taxi, or the factory hand in a workman's tramway car.

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The Public Carriage Department has learnt its business. It has grown up with the growth of motor traction. It knows the tricks of the trade, and those who would throw dust in its eyes must

needs be ingenious. To hand over its duties to an outside body would result, at any rate for a time, in something like chaos.

CHAPTER XV.

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LOST, STOLEN, OR STRAYED.

This is the legend of the lost centipede that once held undisputed sway of the Lost Property Office at Scotland Yard before it came to an untimely end. It arrived with a cab-driver, housed in a little tin box, comfortably lined and pierced with air-holes. Casually an official opened the box, caught one glimpse of its contents, and jumped for safety while the centipede pleased at the opportunity of stretching its multitude of legs, cantered incontinently for the shelter of a pile of lost articles.

But even a centipede cannot defy Scotland Yard with impunity. The forces of the law rallied, and, headed by an intrepid inspector with a fire shovel, eventually tracked down the insect—or should it be animal?—and placed him under arrest.

Trial and execution followed summarily, and the honest cab-driver went empty away.

The Lost Property Office is not, as is popularly supposed, a general depository for all articles found in London. It receives only things found in public carriages—tramway cars, omnibuses, and cabs. Other articles are dealt with by the police in the divisions where they happen to be found. But, even as it is, it keeps a large staff busy month in, month out.

In the basement of Scotland Yard there are many rooms filled with articles varying from a navy's pickaxe to costly jewels. Take an example of one year's working of the department. There were 90,214 articles deposited. Here is a rough classification of things dealt with in one year:

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Bags	9,340
Men's clothing	6,749
Women's clothing	7,942
Jewellery	2,395
Opera Glasses	723
Purses	4,340
Rugs	273
Sticks	2,134
Umbrellas	35,319
Watches	451
Miscellaneous articles	20,548

Of each of these things a minute record is taken before it is stored in one of the large rooms, with barred windows, in the basement. Umbrellas, sticks, and bags, for instance, are classified, each under half a dozen or more heads, and the card index with different coloured cards for various months, enables an article to be discovered instantly. Articles to the value of £39,859 were restored to their owners.

Suppose you left an umbrella in a cab on June 16th, enquiry at Scotland Yard would enable it to be picked out at once, if it had reached them. You describe it as having a curved handle, mounted with imitation silver. At once an official turns to the blue cards in the index. Under "umbrellas" he turns to the subdivision W.M.C., which, being interpreted, means "white metal crook handle," and your umbrella is handed back to you. But you do not get it for nothing. There is a reward to pay to the cabman. In the case of an umbrella, or such small article, your own suggestion will be probably adopted, but on most things the scale fixed for gold, jewellery, and bank notes applies. This is, up to £10, 3s. in the £, and over that sum an amount to be fixed by the Commissioner.

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The rewards paid out annually form no inconsiderable sum. Recently figures have not been published, but an idea can be obtained from those given a year or so ago. Then 32,238 drivers and conductors shared between them nearly £5,000. One lucky cabman got £100; six received between £20 and £100.

These rewards are mostly for articles claimed, which numbered 31,338 of the declared value of £31,560, out of 73,721. The rest, with a few exceptions, were returned to the finders after an interval of three months. This return to cabmen and conductors is an act of grace—not a right. In some cases where a thing is of value, and remains unclaimed, it is sold, and a percentage of the proceeds given to the finder.

While I was in the office a black cat strolled leisurely out from behind one of the crowded sacks, and rubbed itself against the knee of one of the officials. "Left in a tram car," he explained. "We had a tortoise, some gold fish, and a canary a few days ago, but they have been claimed. It was suggested that we might save space by having the cat look after the fish and the canary, but we did not think it advisable."

Almost any kind of a shop might be stocked with the loot of the Lost Property Office. There are false teeth, books, golf clubs, pickaxes, snuff-boxes, and ladies' stoles, stuffed fish, and wax flowers, petrol, and motor tyres, boots, and watch-chains, every conceivable kind of portable property that an absent-minded person might forget.

Each month's articles are kept separate, so that at the end of three months unclaimed things can be dealt with. A great safe swallows up all articles of jewellery or money of the value of £1 or more. I have seen a cabman hand over the counter an exquisite pearl worth several hundred pounds. It was examined, and then carefully sealed and placed in the safe. Constant handling of these things has made the officials quick and accurate judges of their value.

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The authorities are not content to merely look after articles until they are claimed. Every effort is made to trace the losers, and a large clerical staff is constantly at work sending out letters where the property is marked or identifiable in any way, or where a cabman has remembered the address to which he has carried the supposed losers. More than 40,000 letters are sent out annually in such cases, and there are, in addition, something like 50,000 written enquiries to answer in a year.

This alone will show something of the monstrous business with which the officials have to deal. There is, of course, a constant stream of enquirers at the two offices, one at each side of the great red-brick building. One of these offices receives lost articles, the other restores them. Intermediately there are the vast store-rooms through which the accumulations progress every month, till in the third month all unclaimed things are ready to hand in the "outgoing" office.

Nothing but a well-organised system could avoid confusion, and confusion there is none. It is all part of a great business conducted on business principles. Every article, every farthing of money is recorded, with the circumstances under which it found its way to the Lost Property Office and its description, so that of the scores of thousands of things which pass through the hands of the officials, a ready history of each one can be quickly referred to.

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There are queer visitors sometimes—persons who make preposterous claims for something they may have heard has been lost. These are firmly but effectively dealt with. On the other hand, sometimes articles of value are never claimed solely for the reason that their owners have no wish to make known their movements or whereabouts on a particular day.

Now and again the authorities find it necessary to remind people of the existence of the Lost Property Office. The following advertisement is typical of those inserted in daily newspapers periodically:

"METROPOLITAN POLICE.—Found in public carriages and deposited with police during June and July, numerous articles, including a bank note, a purse containing cash, a bracelet set stones, and a purse containing a bank note. Application for property lost in public carriages should be made personally, or by letter, to the Lost Property Office, New Scotland Yard, S.W. Office hours, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m."

Once every three months articles that have been unclaimed are sold by auction. The average proceeds of these sales are about £60, which is handed over to the Board of Inland Revenue. The Metropolitan Police receive no benefit from the vast machinery they keep in motion to guard the public from its own carelessness.

I cannot do better than conclude this chapter with the advice proffered to all those who use public vehicles: "The very great majority of articles deposited have been left *inside* cabs. Hirers, therefore, might with advantage make it a rule not to pay and discharge the cab before they are satisfied that nothing is left in the cab."

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