

Criminals "Who's Who"

SCOTLAND'S YARD'S OWN NEWS-PAPER.

The greatest foe of the criminal is the inter-communication. Thus, in the first half of the last century the electric telegraph did more than anything else to reduce crime making the capture of the criminal easier and surer.

Slowly, by wireless, the world can be informed in a few moments not only of the commission of a crime, but, quite often, of the personality of the criminal. His escape from the clutches of the law becomes ever more difficult.

At the same time, were it not for the information, for the most meticulous criminal identification methods of registration, even these modern scientific aids to capture would be less effective.

A Record of Misdeeds.

To know what and whom to look for is half the battle, and it is not unusual when a crime is committed in Scotland Yard to be in prior possession of information which narrows the field of search to very small limits. In other words, they recognize a man's style, just as the art critic or the book reviewer may "spot" the anonymous or the author by certain unmistakable signs in his work.

To this end the police press is as it were, wearing the shoes of invisibility, and walking about in perfect safety, is, in fact, treading on volcano every day of his life.

Take the case of Patrick Mahon, the good-looking, smartly-dressed, plausible ruffian who murdered Edith Kaye, and whose doings and misdeeds filled the columns of the newspapers for weeks.

The police had had his doings and misdeeds recorded in their newspaper, certainly for months, if not years, before Mahon attracted the attention of the general public.

For Police Eyes Only.

Probably he would have been as much surprised as anybody had he been allowed to peruse the close-knit columns of "Informations," formerly the "Hue and Cry," a paper issued daily by Scotland Yard, or "The Police Gazette," in which the fullest information regarding his activities was recorded.

Needless to say, the general public gets even a peer at these columns. For a civilian to possess a copy is an offence under the Official Secrets Act. Printed at Scotland Yard, "Informations" is distributed by color-cyclists to all police stations in London metropolitan area, and is responsible for many a capture which seems miraculous to be unaided.

The zealous policeman makes this part of his daily reading. It consists mainly of details of current crimes in summarized form, and only the information is given as will be helpful to capture. Everything else is ruthlessly expunged.

"On the Books."

The "Police Gazette" is much more than a newspaper, and is issued only twice weekly. There the deeds of criminals down to the police are set forth, and get into its pages a criminal must be a "somebody," a criminal with possibilities—one who may any day rob or commit a murder. The paper has no space for the sneak who steals a sick man's grapes, the washing of the line, or the thief from the doorstep.

It is, in fact, a sort of "Who's Who" of crime, and many residents in a neighborhood would be surprised to find therein the portrait, the birthplace, convictions, and most important of all, the well-known mode of some quite respectable-looking and even attractive neighbour whom the police have long had "on their books."

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