

Townsend, a well-known Bow Street runner, who had been in the police since 1782, in giving evidence before a committee of the House of Commons in 1816, said: "At that time, before the Police Bill took place at all, it was a trading business; and there was Justice This and Justice That. Justice Welch in Litchfield was a great man in those days, and old Justice Hyde and Justice Girdler, and Justice Blackborough, a trading justice of Clerkenwell Green and an old ironmonger. The plan used to be to issue out warrants and take up all the poor devils in the street, and then there was the bailing of them, two shillings and four pence, which the magistrates had; and taking up one hundred girls, that would make, at two shillings and four pence, eleven pounds, thirteen shillings and four pence. They sent none to gaol, the bailing them was much better."

"Look with thine ears: see how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief. Hark in thine ear: change places and, handily-dandy, which is the justice, which the thief?"

The author of "Tom Jones," "that exquisite picture of human manners," thus describes his experience as a justice for Westminster: "By composing instead of inflaming the quarrels of porters and beggars (which, I blush to say, has not been usually practised), and by refusing to take a shilling from a man who most undoubtedly would not have had another, I reduced an income of about five hundred pounds of the dirtiest money upon earth to little more than three hundred pounds, a considerable proportion of which remained with my clerk; and, indeed, if the whole had done so, as it ought, he would be but ill paid for sitting almost sixteen hours in the twenty-four in the most unwholesome as well as nauseous air in the universe, and which hath in his case corrupted a good constitution without contaminating his morals,"

Five hundred pounds, I may state, is the salary which, with three exceptions, the Legislature has since assigned to the chief clerks of the metropolitan police courts. At Bow Street and Great Marlborough Street the salary is indefinite, and at West Ham it is eight hundred pounds.

Fielding adds: "A predecessor of mine used to boast that he made one thousand pounds a year in his office, but how he did this (if indeed he did it) is to me a secret. His clerk, now mine, told me I had more business than he had ever known there. I am sure I had as much as any man could do. The truth is, the