

They then buy extensively, carefully paying cash on each purchase. Thus a reputation for prompt payment is acquired. The next step is to order a large quantity of goods on short time. Immediately on receipt of these goods, they are re-boxed and shipped off. The store is then emptied, swept and garnished and the birds flown. The creditors are rarely able to find them. Perhaps three months later, parties of totally different names will be reported to the police for a similar fraud at a point 2,000 miles away. The complete change of name has deceived the trade. When found out, it is too late.

The criminal classes have always in the past adopted and will continue in the future to adopt changes of name as readily as they adopt black masks or other disguises. Laws or no laws, this is what they will do. They are referred to only to remind us of the enormous difficulty which they cause the police by this expedient. Finger printing and Bertillon measurements are beginning to cope with this evil. But the business world still loses and the fight between the law and the criminal still goes on, each fighter availing himself of every advantage science affords. Yet so important is identity in the detection of crime, that, during the past year, legislatures have debated and considered laws which would impose upon all citizens the necessity of having their finger prints and Bertillon measurements taken and publicly recorded; as well as to require all citizens, whether prospective criminals or not, to carry passports with photographs and minute descriptive personalia. From this it is apparent how far all such suggestions of useful and necessary laws are from the trend of the loose laws not uncommon throughout the United States, which have been said, somewhat flippantly, to permit a citizen to totally change his name by putting "a nickel in the slot."

Admitting, then, that it is clearly to the advantage of the criminal classes to change their patronymics as frequently as they change the location of their criminal operations, the question naturally obtrudes itself—what interest has the non-criminal public in assisting them; and are there no considerations of public policy involved in connection with the matter?