

officially certified to be a print of the same thumb. And now recently one of these two "other contemporaneous" waxes, the one registered as No. 55, has come into the possession of Mr. Carrington, as his accompanying statement shows, and it reveals a pattern absolutely identical not only with Mr. Dudley's No. 56 but also with "Kerwin's" left thumb print, in direct contradiction to the assertion of the Committee. If, therefore, the "Walter" wax used by Mr. Dudley is identical with at least one of the other contemporaneous "Walter" waxes as well as with the fourth, how can the Committee justify their statement that it "seems to be unique"?

If the Committee deny the genuineness of the left wax used by Mr. Dudley, then they must deny the genuineness of the two above-mentioned photographs in the *Journal*, in which case we must assume that they claim that photographs of some stranger's thumb print, though absolutely dissimilar to "Walter's," have been substituted in the *Journal* for "Walter's" genuine left. If such blunders had occurred, then it is strange that these substitutions of obviously dissimilar photographs for the authentic ones should never before have been officially noticed; or, if noticed, that they should never have been officially disavowed; and it would be all the more strange, in view of the fact that such blunders or frauds had occurred twice in the last four years. There could have been absolutely no excuse for failing to detect these substitutions, for, as Mr. Bird testified in the November 1929 *Journal*, the left pattern is one that is "easily recognized," and their official expert, Mr. Fife, himself certified in the same issue as to his familiarity with it, yet he never noticed the alleged substitutions, or, at any rate, never denounced them. Dr. Crandon has often displayed these two condemned photographs on the screen, so evidently he never noticed the substitutions either; and as for Dr. Richardson, who is a member of the Research Committee itself

and who must feel a keen sense of responsibility for the absolute veracity of the record, he also never appears to have detected the errors; and all of these gentlemen have been industriously studying "Walter" prints for years.

And here we cannot refrain from expressing our wonder how it happened, as alleged, that an outsider, whose left thumb print, though "dissimilar" to "Walter's" got substituted for "Walter's," was also the very man whose right thumb pattern happened by some strange fatality to be identical with "Walter's." Such a coincidence as this, if accidental, could occur only once in a billion years, if ever at all.

Now, when the Research Committee, in their statement, insinuate that photographs of some stranger's thumb print were allowed to be unwittingly or intentionally substituted for "Walter's," such substitutions remaining long undetected, they must realize that this claim constitutes a serious indictment of the competence not only of all the members of the preceding Research Committees but also of their authorized expert, and, in fact, of the whole personnel of their Research Department of recent years. And such an indictment can be justified only on the ground that there is distinct evidence that such substitutions occurred, and up to the present time no such evidence has been offered, nor in view of the facts, in our estimation, can be offered.

It is incomprehensible to us, however, how the present Committee, who thus in their statement reveal their own ineptitude in the science of finger printing, can also therein presume to suggest, as they do, doubts as to the validity of that science as an infallible system of personal identification. If they question its validity, then why do they continue to defer to the verdicts of a so-called expert? And how can they still maintain that the alleged vestige of a finger mark on "Walter's" razor-handle contributes any evidence of his survival? And if now they claim that

there are serious errors in the record in the *Journal*, why do they criticize Mr. Dudley for having innocently pointed them out?

Meanwhile, it will be interesting to observe whether the Society, whose founder, Prof. Hyslop, placed sincerity and devotion to

scientific truth above every other consideration, will remain indifferent to this indictment of the competence of its former Research Committees, with its gratuitous implication of stupidity or worse in the editing of their *Journal*.