

Book Review

The Famous Cases of Sir Bernard Spilsbury. By LESLIE RANDALL. Published by Ivor Nicholson & Watson, Ltd., London, England. Price 8s. 6d.

The story of thirteen of the most outstanding investigations by Sir Bernard Spilsbury as told by Leslie Randall, who, as a Newspaper Reporter, was on the scene of a number of the greatest cases and was therefore in a position to observe Spilsbury work and later give evidence.

The famous Crippen murder is reviewed. In this case it was necessary to prove not only that murder had been committed, but that the remains produced were indeed those of Mrs. Crippen. An examination made with this purpose in view, disclosed a piece of skin about 6 inches square on which there was a mark, which, experts for the defence stated, was a fold in the skin. However, Spilsbury proved to the satisfaction of the Court that the mark was a scar, there being an absence of glands and hair follicles. This evidence was of outstanding importance as it was known that Mrs. Crippen had undergone an operation. Vital evidence in the case was also produced by a Dr. Wilcox, who, after having eliminated every other known poison, at length discovered hyoscin then a very rare drug. The Crippen case is also one of the first criminal cases in which wireless telegraphy played an important part.

In the Voisin case, Spilsbury, after an examination of the remains, came to the conclusion that the victim met death as a result of blows on the head inflicted by a weakling but that the remains were cut up by someone of unusual strength and accustomed to the use of a knife—not a surgeon, however. This theory proved to be correct, it being found that the blows had been administered by a woman and that a butcher had dismembered the body. The trial was also unique in that the death penalty was pronounced by the English Court in the French language. In this article there is also an excellent description of the method adopted by Police Officers when questioning suspects.

The famous Thompson and Bywaters case is reviewed, in which it will be remembered that half-way through Sir Henry Curtis Bennett's final speech for Mrs. Thompson, when adjourning the trial until the following day, Mr. Justice Shearman offered this advice to the jury:

"You should not forget that you are in a Court of Justice trying a vulgar and common crime. You are not listening to a play from the stalls of a theatre."

Particulars of the investigation conducted regarding the A. A. Rouse case are given. In this the murderer avoided the fatal mistake of Sidney Fox, who murdered his mother and then lit the fire that was designed to explain her death. Sir Bernard Spilsbury was able to prove that this was a murder because his post-mortem examination showed that Mrs. Fox had not breathed smoke or carbon-monoxide gas and must therefore have been dead when the fire broke out. Rouse only stunned his victim before carrying out his incendiary programme.—R. A.

"Here's to Crime". By COURTNEY RILEY COOPER. Published by McLelland and Stewart, Ltd., 245-249 Victoria Street, Toronto. Price \$2.50.

"Here's to Crime" by Courtney Riley Cooper is of particular interest to police officers as it reveals a situation and conditions in the U.S.A. startling to the average citizen.

The author is evidently well versed in his knowledge of the underworld, and exhibits a racy style in describing crime and criminals, together with their methods of operation. The book clearly emphasizes the handicaps which fetter the police in law enforcement, and is recommended for those who appreciate the study of crime as it exists in the present day.—J. F.