

Professional Training for the Police

By GRAHAM TAYLOR.

Believing that policemen would be able to render greater service if they knew something about the nature and laws of evidence, about physiology and anatomy, elementary psychology, personal and public hygiene, practical sociology, and other matters usually regarded as unimportant for them, the law school faculty of North-western University offered last December to give such a training course to the Chicago police if the city administration and police department authorized it.

A letter from the faculty to Mayor Thompson, making the offer, pointed out that the instruction would be without cost either to the city or to members of the force. It was thought useless to offer the work, however, unless the department would require it to be taken by officers who could pass a preliminary test of their capacity to profit by it, would assure promotional credit to men who successfully completed the course. The letter made clear that the course was offered, not as a substitute to the thirty days' training now demanded of new policemen in Chicago, but as a supplement.

Classes three times a week were proposed, and it was suggested that in addition to university instructors, specialists in various aspects of police work be secured to give the instruction. In addition to the topics above named, criminal law and procedure, first aid to the injured, the observation of charitable and penal institutions at work, and a comparative study of police administration were suggested.

The only response to this offer was a brief acknowledgment stating that it was referred to the general superintendent of police and the corporation counsel. The Police Sergeants' Association has started this summer a study class on its own initiative and under its own auspices.

Cities in the United States and Canada have, of course, lagged far behind those in Europe in demanding professional attainments of their police. A few American cities have set up a compulsory thirty days' training course for new policemen, although patrolmen are taught little more than to be clever and tactful, and to know something of the laws and ordinances they enforce.

In New York City, Commissioner Woods has built up one of the best schools in the country. Heretofore a six weeks' course of instruction for recruits was all that was attempted. This has now been lengthened to three months and the curriculum broadened to take in nearly every branch of police service.

Ever since 1908, Berkeley, Cal., which has a small police force of ninety members, has been trying to raise the educational standard of the department. The University of California was the first to offer initiative and academic assistance to this end. For eight years, required courses covering the following topics have been furnished by some of its professors and other specialists: elementary rules of evidence; general principles of evidence; criminal law; elementary physiology, first aid to the injured and municipal sanitation; parasitology; elementary psychology and feeble-mindedness in its relation to crime; psychiatry; physical defects and their relation to crime; social causes of crime.

In response to inquiry as to the practical effect of such training upon the morale and efficiency of this police department, August Vollmer, chief of police of Berkeley, writes:

"We need no better illustration of the value of this training than the more intelligent manner in which much of the police work of this city is now performed by our officers.

"It has always been my opinion that the police officer should be trained for the profession in much the same manner as physicians, attorneys, and other professionals are prepared for their life work. There should be established in every state university a chair of criminology, and no person should ever be appointed to do police duty until he or she has secured from such an institution the necessary degrees to qualify as an officer.

"Scientific police schools have been established in Europe, and the results obtained have been highly satisfactory. Salvatore Ottolenghi, professor of legal medicine at the University of Rome and director of the School of Scientific Police, in an article published in the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, March, 1913, gives three reasons for the adoption of the new system:

"(1) To introduce a scientific method, based on investigation, in all the departments of the police. Every preventive and repressive measure ought to be based upon an actual and profound knowledge of normal and of criminal men especially. Each branch of the police administration should adopt the method, founded upon investigation, i. e., nothing else but the application of Galileo's experimental, objective and rational method, which made experimental science possible. By extending this method to the study of moral evils, modern psychology, psychiatry and anthropology were created. This method, if applied to the police, would serve as a safeguard against errors of any kind. It is the most reliable way to discover the truth.

"(2) To seek the support of biology, psychology and criminal anthropology for investigations; i. e., to reckon with natural laws when we investigate, cross examine and report on facts.

"(3) To rest all police work on the thorough knowledge of man, especially of the criminal type, and to make use of the teachings of anthropology and psychology for the better prevention and suppression of crimes and for the discovery and more efficient supervision of criminals."

Prompted both by the great possibilities for human service that the police might render in every community and by their incapacity to render it, we have long hoped for professionally trained commanding officers in the police departments, at least in large cities. It is perhaps too much to hope with Chief Vollmer that no member of the force should do police duty until certified by some competent training school. If, however, such certification were required as a promotional test, and provision were made to give aspiring police officers such technical preparation, highly trained commanding officers could soon be secured. They in turn could train the rank and file to higher standards, pending the time when patrolmen, too, could be required to take special training.

The vision of the patriotic service that might be rendered by every police force has led us to expect the day when college men would volunteer and train themselves for commanding police positions, as they do now for similar ranks in the army and navy. Why not, if this civic service were given the opportunity to acquire the status that a more preventive, constructive, formative function would surely command? Indeed, every patrolman's beat has seemed so much like a parish that we have appealed to the rank and file at the station roll-call to rise on their rounds to the personal service of the parish priest or minister.

To help the right as well as to hinder the wrong, to make it easier to be good as well as harder to be bad, to encourage the better as well as to arrest the worse, to overcome evil with good, to promote virtue as well as to destroy vice and crime, to build up the town as a part of its plan for progress — these functions require in the police, as well as in officials and citizens of every other class, soul as truly as strength, character as surely as physique, social qualities and intelligence as well as other technical training.—The Survey.

MORE ATTENTION BEING PAID TO SHADE TREES.

That the shade tree increases the value of property, and adds much to the beauty of surroundings is being more and more appreciated. Municipal corporations are encouraging the planting of trees in greater numbers, as well as protecting those they already have. Many estimates have been made as to the actual cash value of a growing shade tree, but all concede that its aesthetic greatly exceeds its monetary value. In the transfer of real estate, a favourably situated shade tree will enhance the value of the property out of all proportion to the intrinsic value of the tree. From a financial standpoint, therefore, the shade trees should be protected.

Several railways are giving careful attention to the trees. Not only are they protecting, by special patrols and otherwise, the forests along their lines, but, at no inconsiderable expense, they are protecting them on their rights-of-way. One railway line was diverted from its originally planned route to save two handsome maple trees. Considerable attention and much favourable comment has been bestowed upon this considerate action of the railway corporation.—Conservation.