

HOW CRIMINALS ARE IDENTIFIED.

The System is so complete that Aliases Are of No Use.

To most people there is but little inducement to conceal their identity; the surname that their fathers bore serves most men sufficiently well to distinguish them from their fellows, and the Christian name that was given them in childhood becomes their signature through life; while when ladies change their names the alteration is usually quite sufficiently advertised among their friends and their relations.

By occasional strokes of luck some of us inherit a fortune on condition of adopting our benefactor's name, and then our friends remember us without any effort on our part.

But there are some ladies and gentlemen whose past career is such that a new name is a convenience, and efforts at the concealment of their identity are made with much ingenuity and persistence.

When a gentleman has been a guest of Her Majesty at Dartmoor, or even Holloway, his modesty sometimes leads him to conceal the fact he can, so that when he is again being questioned by an inquisitive magistrate about his unconventional performances there may be no chance of his former visits leading to the prolongation of the term of residence the thoughtful judge is likely to impose.

These efforts at concealment usually include a change of name, and not infrequently whiskers or a mustache are found on a visitor who on a previous occasion was clean shaven; apparently permanent alterations in height and other bodily changes are attempted with varying success.

For a long time the memory of officials was the chief, and frequently very effective, means of discovering these efforts at concealment; then photography was called in, and the ingenious people were all photographed in two positions, full face and profile on the right side, and the two pictures nearly mounted side by side in the national portrait album: care being taken to photograph them with the same apparatus, under similar circumstances of light and distance. But even so, the recognition of the full face views is by no means easy; and though the outline of the profile and the details of the right ear are not easily changed, yet variation in the style of hairdressing tends to make recognition difficult.

But when there are many thousands of these photographs, it becomes no light task to hunt through them all in order to ascertain if a particular visitor has had the honour of a previous sitting. Under these circumstances, various scientific men have joined with the police officials in Paris in devising methods of detecting these modest efforts at concealment.

They began by measuring the height of their visitors, but many of them were afflicted with a stoop that was accounted for in innumerable ways, so that even the scientific police efforts could not be sure of it to within less than three-quarters of an inch. But other measurements were made with much greater accuracy, and the ingenuity of the measured has not yet enabled them to vary the width of the head or the length of a finger-joint, and it is found that there are some measures which can be made with a practical certainty of their being very close indeed to perfect accuracy, and that they are dimensions which do not vary with age after maturity is once reached.

The measures taken are the height, which is somewhat unreliable, partly because of deception and partly because of variation with age; the length of the head by means of screw compasses, a measure which can be relied on to the twenty-fifth of an inch, and which varies in different people as much as 11-5 inches and after twenty remains practically unaltered throughout life.

The maximum breadth of the head from bone to bone; the length of the middle finger of the left hand, which is the most exact measurement of all, as it exhibits no variation with age after maturity, and deception is impossible if attention is paid to the length of the finger-nail. The length of the left foot when standing on it alone and leaning forwards, which is only moderately reliable.

The maximum length of arms extended, which is not by any means always equal to the height, as frequently supposed. And finally, the colour of the eyes, which needs some practice to name definitely, and is not very much to be trusted.

Now, all the measurements may be divided into three classes of large, medium, and small, the limits of each class being chosen for the sake of convenience, so as to make each division about equal in numbers. Thus, in Paris it is found that there are about as many men over 5ft. 6in., and a like number under 5ft. 4in.; and so with other cases. The colours of the eyes are in like manner subdivided into classes.

Let us now suppose there are 100,000 records of criminals; about 20,000 are women, 20,000 children, and 60,000 men. If it is wished to identify a man who comes with a name not found in the index, and who says he has never had the honour of being measured, the proceeding is very simple. Take for instance a prisoner called Bernard, examined on the 13th November, 1884.

His height was measured and found to be 5ft. 3in. high the length of his head was 7.3in., breadth of head 6.4 in., length of foot 9.7 in., middle finger 4.1in.; color of eyes, chestnut with a greenish periphery. Beginning with the most reliable measures first: the length of his head is of the medium class, 7.3in., which at once reduces the records to be examined from 60,000 to 20,000; these 20,000 are subdivided into broad, medium and narrow heads and Bernard was broad, 6.4in.; so the records are brought down to between 6,000 and 7,000.

A further division by three, due to the length of the finger-joint, reduces the record to 2,300; the length of the foot brings them down to 700, the height to about 230, while the classification of the eyes being into more than three divisions, reduces it to perhaps twenty.

Finally, there is the record of body marks and signs, such as moles, scars, etc.; three or four of these would suffice to identify a man out of a million, let alone out of the few records are reduced to.

In the case of Bernard, he proved to be identical with a gentleman previously examined under the name of Jean Leopold, a criminal of the worst type, who had been sought for during several months under

that name, and who had been arrested and catalogued about sixteen months before.

After identification a man's antecedents can be inquired into, and everything known about him by the authorities can be produced.

So efficacious has this method proved in Paris that criminals have given up adopting an alias as perfectly useless; and so complete is the record by measurement, that it seems no longer necessary for the authorities to employ photography in all cases as was formerly desirable. Approximate classification by age will enable the records of men who must be dead to be put away, and additional classifications of finger-joints or other characteristics and sub-division into four classes of each kind instead of three, would afford still greater facilities if such were needed for the detection of the identity of such gentlemen among us whose modesty or whose antecedents might make them wishful to pass through life—like Royalty on a holiday—under some other personality than their own.—Tit Bits.

By a Stratagem.

The following story well illustrates the unflinching resources of the English sharper. One morning a "gentleman" alighted from a well-appointed brougham at the door of a London silversmith's shop and selected a considerable quantity of plate, tendering in payment a one-hundred-pound note, and receiving a small balance as change. He carried the silver away with him in the brougham, and shortly afterwards a "policeman" called at the establishment to say that he had heard of the purchase, and to inform the vendor that the note given in payment was a bad one. He was glad to add, however, that the thief had been apprehended, and requested the master to attend at the neighbouring police-station at a certain hour in the afternoon to identify the prisoner. He told the silversmith that it would be necessary for him to give up the bad note to facilitate the preliminary inquiries, and this the latter did, obtaining a formal receipt. On going to the station the tradesman found that he had been thoroughly duped. The "gentleman" and the "policeman" were both members of the thieving fraternity, and there is no doubt that the bank note was a genuine one.

Why Lost Folk Go in Circles.

The fact that people lost on a desert or in a forest invariably walk in a circle is due to a slight inequality in the length of the legs. Careful measurements of a series of skeletons have shown that only ten per cent had the lower limbs equal in length, thirty-five per cent had the right limb longer than the left, while in fifty-five per cent, the left leg was the longer. The result of one limb being longer than the other will naturally be that a person will unconsciously take a longer step with the longer limb, and consequently will tend to the right or to the left, according as the left or right is the longer, unless the tendency to deviation is corrected by the eye. The left leg being more frequently the longer, as evidenced by measurement of the skeleton, the inclination should take more frequently to the right than to the left, and this conclusion is quite borne out by observations made on a number of persons when walking blindfolded. The inequality in the length of the limb is not confined to any particular sex or race, but seems to be universal in all respects.

The Serpentine Dancer.

Swift! midst a whirl and a swirl of soft tissues
She leaped.
The girl!
See her hurl and furl and uncurl, in a whirlwind of
gestures,
All her wrinking, many-twinkling bright vestures;
We're looking of devil
In her bound!
But no tinkling of sound
Is correct?
Silent gliding, quiet striding, quiet bending,
Noiseless spinning, mute beginning, silent ending!
Now she goes, on her toes, with her arms in the air!
And she charms with a fair, winging motion.
Like the swoop of a bird, or the glide of a sloop at the ocean!
See her writhe now, as lithe now as a withe of green
Willow.
Through the turbulent mists
Where this queen
Of rhapsodies,
In a sheen,
Madly twists
Three escape
Hints of shape,
And quick glints
Of the twinkling
And the curves
Of her limbs,
As she swines!
And her dance, they enhance with the might
Of a light
Weirdly changing
Strange ranging
From the hue
Of the rose, where she goes like a sprite
O'er the dew,
Throned in white, blinding bright,
To the blue
Of the moon, at the noon of a night
When June is a blight!
Thus she dashes and flashes and lashes herself
To a wild
Bacchic madness!
Then a fit
With the gladness
Of a mild
Darkling
El!
Gay's sparkling
On the coast of a lawn
All moonlit!
Ay! she wheels and she reels
Till she steals
Quick away!
And is gone!
As a ghost flees his post at the dawn
Of the day!

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A Statement Endorsed by Two Prominent Clergymen!



MR. JOSEPH ROLSTON.

Mr. Joseph Rolston, of Nixon, Norfolk County, Ont., is a well-known farmer, and one of the most prominent men in that part of the country. As a member of the local school board, he is attentive and hard-working; as a church member, he is earnest, devout and sincere; as a friend and neighbour, he is kindly, courteous and beloved by all in the community.

For a considerable time Mr. Rolston was afflicted with dyspepsia, which became so severe that it produced nervous prostration and delirium. The sufferer's condition was extremely alarming and relatives and friends were fearful of results. Four skilled physicians labored honestly and faithfully to bring back health and strength, but all their efforts were vain and fruitless.

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JOSEPH ROLSTON,
Nixon, Ont.

I know Mr. Rolston, as I visited him during his illness, and can testify to the above.

T. R. CLARK, Methodist Minister,
Delhi, Ont.

I am one of Mr. Joseph Rolston's nearest neighbours, and have been acquainted with him for many years. I can testify to his illness, and believe the above statements to be correct.

D. Williams, Methodist Minister,
Nixon, Ont.

The following gentlemen, neighbours of Mr. Rolston, also vouch for his statements:—Erwin Weir, Alex. Weir, Christopher Johnson, B. C. Williams and Wm. Lindsay.

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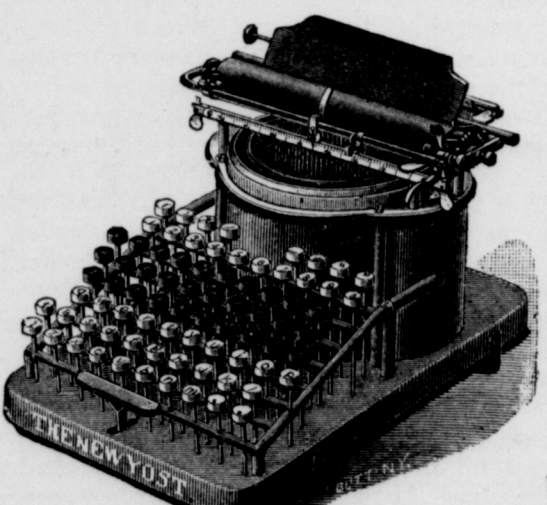
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