

WOMAN IS THE NEMESIS OF CRIMINALS—A LADY FINGERPRINT EXPERT EXCEEDS IN HER WORK

(New York Sun)

Not many years ago no accomplishment was more useful to a girl than a knowledge of palmistry. With even the sketchiest information regarding head lines, heart lines, life lines and mounts, any girl was assured of popularity, and her services were far more valuable at the charity bazaar than those of the maiden at the candy booth and the one at the sofa pillow raffle put together.

But times have changed. Women these days are too busy to go in much for the old-fashioned parlor accomplishments. When the modern girl turns her attention to hands it is to fingertips and not palms. In fact, a number of feminine fingertip experts are proving able assistants to the Sherlock Holmes's of New York State under the direction of Miss Clara Parsons, chief of the Bureau of Criminal Identification of the New York State Department of Correction at Albany.

Miss Parsons, who has been attending the seventh annual Identification Association convention here, told a Sun reporter yesterday about the extensive work of her bureau which has classified records that tell all there is to know concerning more than 500,000 men and women of the underworld.

Her Appearance Deceptive

Although she has been connected with her department for more than twenty years and has been head of it since 1914, Miss Parsons is quite unlike the popular, fictionalized conception of an expert whose activities in establishing "Who Is Who" are the terror of the professional criminal and the mainstay of the police. She is a trimly tailored, businesslike person of medium height with softly waved white hair and smiling blue eyes.

"New York State was a pioneer in fingerprint and Bertillon measurement work," Miss Parsons said. "The Criminal Identification Bureau of New York State was established by law in 1896, and recent amendments have provided for expansion to its present size and scope of activities. At the time I joined the department there were four people working there, and now I have a staff of forty, largely women, in the bureau, which includes an identification division, a modus operandi-photographic section and a statistical division."

"Two copies of the fingerprints of every person arrested and charged with a felony or certain misdemeanors

are sent to us by every police department in New York State, together with such information as may be available concerning any previous record. One copy we forward to the Washington Bureau, and the other is analyzed, classified and filed in our bureau. We make a report on every individual fingerprint submitted to us, and you may be interested to know that of more than 500,000 records in our files, a majority include fingerprints, and at least 175,000 have Bertillon records."

No Stigma in Fingerprint

"Of course fingerprinting does not always relate to criminality," explained Miss Parsons. "I believe that in time we will have a nation-wide fingerprinting system as a means of identification for everybody. In many foreign countries fingerprints are widely used as an infallible means of identification, and no one feels it is a disgrace to be fingerprinted. Unfortunately, the work has been developed almost entirely in connection with criminal prosecution in this country and in the minds of many persons there is a stigma attached to fingerprinting."

Miss Parsons is proud of the efficient way in which the women in her department assist police departments in checking up on criminals who are arrested in the Empire State. She does not know why the bureau, whose employees are under civil service, relies almost entirely on women to do its work, but she feels they are as capable as men.

"We have a man in the statistical division and a man has charge of the modus operandi and photographic records," she said. "The modus operandi statements are an important part of our records, as they tell the particular crime in which each offender specializes and his particular style of working. Every criminal's work is marked with certain peculiarities and if a query comes to us concerning a crime committed in a certain way we can furnish a list of the men who would be likely to do that sort of work, once our files are started on this line of information. That immediately narrows down the field of search."

Miss Parsons is the only woman heading a State bureau of criminal identification, so far as she knows. There are about twenty-five similar bureaus throughout the country whose records of distinct individuality are used by police forces of the nation and even referred to by foreign govern-

ments seeking criminals.

Character Not Shown

"Records of dead criminals are not destroyed, but kept for possible future reference," Miss Parsons said. "We even have a separate file containing all the records on more than 300 persons who have been executed in New York State within the last thirty years or so."

Miss Parsons does not believe that the lines in the fingertips indicate the characteristics of their owner. Even race and sex cannot be determined from fingerprints, she said, although in some races the fingerprint patterns usually are coarser than in others.

"The prints of everyone fall into 1,024 primary subdivisions," she explained. "And it is entirely possible that the prints of a reputable person may be classified in the same group as those of a criminal—in fact, I have seen it happen many times. The pattern of whorls, loops, arches and other major groups differ absolutely in each individual. Every other means of identification may change, including features and handwriting, but the fingerprints never change."

Miss Parsons did not start out in life with the intention of becoming a criminal identification expert. She was born in Greenwich, Washington County, New York, of Yankee stock, and was educated at the Greenwich Academy and the Albany Business School. While a stenographer in a law office she took the civil service examination and was assigned to work as secretary and assistant to the head of her present bureau.

"I became interested in the work," she said. "For a long time identification of faces fascinated me, and from that I went on to the study of fingerprints. You might say I have just grown into my present job."

MUSTACHE IS WORTH \$25

Providence, R. I. Oct. 12—A Superior Court judge has ruled Philip Reltano, a barber, must pay \$25 for having unintentionally chopped off Francesco Mastrostefano's forty-seven year-old handle bar mustache. Mastrostefano wasn't much pleased with the decision. He claimed the time required to grow the adornment entitled him to \$2,000.

If any man flatter me, I'll flatter him again, though he were my best friend. —Ben Franklin.

When you hear a woman say she wishes she had a nice thick piece of porterhouse steak and a baked potato you know she's not afraid to get on the scales.



Oct. 11—A group of Boy Scouts and Wolf Cubs has been organized at New-castle Bridge, the prospective Scouts numbering 19, the prospective Cubs, 21. Suitable Leaders have been found; and a strong local committee is in process of organization, some 13 gentlemen having already joined. The opening meeting was held on the evening of October 4th., when Cub Leader Pugh started to organize the boys, and Brig. Gen. Hill, President of the Fredericton Pack, has also assisted with the organization of the Wolf Cubs.

On Monday, Mr. Pugh, with six Cubs and Instructor Smith of 2nd. F'tons, motored to Nashwaaksis, where they were met by Instructors Hill and Lawrence, and six cubs of the local pack. All hiked to Killarney Lake, where, after Treasure-hunts, lunch was eaten. Later, they hiked for tea to Moonlight Lodge, the log-cabin built by the Nashwaaksis Troop last year, in the woods to the back of the village. The weather was perfect and all had a good day.

ROBT. PUGH
Provincial Akela Leader.

TROTSKY BARRED FROM EUROPE

London, Oct. 10—Lonely, half crippled, and ill, Leon Trotsky, erstwhile military head and virtual dictator of Soviet Russia, is still feared and hated by almost the whole world. Notwithstanding the evolution of the Bolshevik experiment into a more or less stable form of Government, accorded diplomatic recognition by most nations, the odium attached to Trotsky, one of its earliest leaders, has grown no less. Even Turkey confines him to out-of-the-way Prinkipo, not far from Istanbul.

When he was expelled from Russia in 1929 and allowed to take refuge in Turkey, he immediately set about trying to get permission to go elsewhere to secure medical attention. He was and is very ill with gout, rheumatism and chronic colitis. He first applied to Germany, for German doctors had treated him for his many ailments in former years. He applied in most humble terms, agreeing to live in strict seclusion and to leave the country as soon as his treatment had ended, but the Government authorities would have none of him.

He applied to Norway. The head of the state police expressed fears that he might be assassinated. He was again refused.

He applied to England, famous as a minded him of the expulsion order, still on the books, whereby he had been sent out of the country before. Nothing could be done about it.

He applied to England, famous as a refuge for political exiles. J. R. Clynes, Home Secretary of the Labor Government then in power, refused to let him enter the country.

Recently his health became so bad that he addressed a desperate appeal to the Czechoslovakian Government to be allowed to take the waters at Pstyan Spa.

After long discussions, it was decided that he should be allowed into Czechoslovakia on condition that he furnish assurance from the Turkish Government that he would be allowed to re-enter that country, that he secure written permission of other countries to pass through their territory on his way to and from the Spa, and that he must travel in a private compartment with all curtains drawn, accompanied by detectives of each country through which he passed.

He agreed to all this. Then it was discovered that he had no passport and the countries through which he would have to pass could not give him the required visa. The Czech national press clamored for his arrest as soon as he should enter the country, and finally the Minister of Interior announced that he could not assume any responsibility for Trotsky's personal safety.

Disappointed on all sides, Trotsky continues to hobble.

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