

LONDON POLICEMEN UNARMED, AND SO ARE THE CRIMINALS

(By Negley Farson)

LONDON, England, April 21—London policemen are unarmed. If they happen to want or desperately need a revolver, they have to go back to the police station and fill out an order to get one. And as the criminals are, therefore not afraid of being shot by a policeman, they in their turn seldom carry revolvers. In 1934 in London—city of 8,250,000—there were only thirty cases recorded in which arms were found on prisoners, in their cars or alleged to have been used. Of these twenty four were cases of robbery and assault with intent to rob; six were found on housebreakers or in their cars. This thirty includes several air pistols and children's toy pistols! When they do use guns, or are caught with one, it is considered a very unsporting act, and the judges given them the absolute limit for any sentence they are liable for.

For using a revolver to resist arrest or for intimidation—even if it is only a child's dummy revolver—a housebreaker or burglar can, and will, be given fourteen years penal servitude in addition to his probable fourteen years for burglary. For the mere possession of a revolver a burglar (even though he has left it in his car) can be given an additional seven years' penal servitude.

Can Patrol Wide Area

This helps to explain why the London metropolitan police, a force of some 20,000 men, can police an area of 700 square miles within a radius of some fifteen miles from their famous Scotland Yard. Calculated mathematically in a city of 8,250,000 population that would give one policeman to look after every 410 citizens. But with three eight-hour shifts and policemen sick or on leave, never much more than one-quarter of this force is on duty at any one time. That leaves one policeman to chaperon about 1,600 of London's vast population. But of this complement only two-thirds are on patrol duty, either foot bicycle, motor car or stationary at traffic points. So apart from the moral effect of his willingness to catch criminals with his bare hands, there must be other reasons for the excellence of the British "bobby".

The foremost reason, of course, lies in the Englishman himself. On the average he has the highest standards of law and order of any major nationality. Also, he is the least nervous. His proverbial calm functions both in and with the police. English motor-car drivers will wait patiently in a traffic jam, watching a casual policeman trying to disentangle it, with a patience that will drive any American or Frenchman mad. They don't blow their horns at him. If you get impatient and blow yours you suddenly find yourself blushing as if you had been caught whistling in church. And as a result you would almost die from shock if a British policeman ever yelled at you.

Bad Traffic Jams

As a consequence London traffic is probably more hopelessly jammed at rush intervals than that of any other major city in the world. And when it comes to handling big affairs, such as the continuous stream of cars from London to the Derby or the Aldershot military tattoo, it is the Automobile Association's men, not Scotland Yard, who handle that flood of cars so smoothly that one hardly has to change gear from London for twenty miles.

As British crowds are good natured as a rule, the London bobbies through long experience have become extremely good natured with British crowds. The sight of some 5,000 chin-strapped London police keeping 20,000 people from getting at Sir Oswald Moseley at a fascist rally in Hyde Park is an inspiring demonstration of British tolerance. With their backs to an assortment of red-decked Bloomsbury intellectuals and musical unshaven gentlemen who call themselves "British communists", the London bobbies calmly hold one another's hands, as if forming a May chain, and exchange writ over their shoulders with the shouting mob.

Sometimes Get Rough

Not that they are so lamblike on every occasion. I was outside the houses of parliament in 1926. I saw the baton charges down Whitehall the night the great general strike was declared. On that occasion I remarked how much it all was like a very rough football game. The police cracked a few heads. But for the most part the people ran laughing before them and when the police did catch up with a worthy bearing a red banner demanding "Down with the ruling class", they broke his wooden standard and told him to "hop it".

That was in 1926. Since then there's been a big change. Some of the tension of the world depression seems to have got on the London bobby's nerves.

An Excited Inspector

In 1932 I stood in Trafalgar Square between the police and the crowd of "hunger marchers" and their Bloomsbury sympathizers around the foot of Nelson's monument. And the only really excited man I saw that night was an inspector from Scotland Yard. He rushed toward me and three British pressmen, who were standing in somewhat lonely grandeur at the pedestal of Charles I.

"Clear out! Clear out!" red-faced, he yelled at us. "Get out of our way and let us give 'em a bloody good hammering".

Followed a furious charge of the foot police. The nearest occasion I've come to being clubbed insensible in my life. A huge bobby towered over me. His baton raised sky-high above his helmet. One of those country lads. Fury in his eyes. I held up one finger.

"Press", I murmured feebly. For just one second I saw the look of murder in those eyes. Here was a detested newspaper reporter. Probably one of those blokes who had been calling the police "Cossacks" in the labor press. Here's . . .

I waited for my doom. Like a rabbit facing the boa constrictor, I could not move. Then came the galloping mounted police, crashing pell-mell into the red-cockaded long-haired men and short-haired girls among the "intelligentsia." They whanged at their legs like rattling a cane along a picket fence.

That night I saw a bystander hit (by mistake) by a horse' rump and hurled through a shop window, where he was literally speared straight through—pinioned on a spear tip of half-inch thick plate glass.

"Oh, God I was merely looking!" he groaned.

The police did not mean to do that. They didn't look at all happy about it. But they did give several heads "a bloody good hammering", as witnessed by the black, glistening blood on the matted heads of men they shoved into some of the hardest working ambulances London has seen for many a wild night. The anger of the police, however, was not against the genuine "hunger marchers" (with whom many police undoubtedly had great sympathy), but with the hoodlums from the East End, flocking like vultures to prey on disorder, and with the Bloomsbury intellectuals, who are enough to drive any person with a sense of humor quite murderously inclined.

Corruption Is Rare

London bobbies are not even entirely immune to the charge of corruption. There's a certain small amount of it always going on, arising out of the attempt to enforce laws which are hostile to public opinion. Selling drinks after 11 P. M., or 10 P. M., in some places for instance, or chocolates after 8 o'clock, or keeping a small betting book. You might find a bobby who would take 2-6 for not reporting you for leaving your car parked more than a half hour while you were having lunch. I say, you might—but I would not try it. Certainly, there is one thing I would never do, I would never try to give 10 shillings or a pound.

"You don't need to tell me!" said an ex-Britisher, who after a long jail sentence, had been deported from America. "I know what's what. Try to fix these cops over here—and they will fix you!"

WHOLE CITY PLANS WORK FOR JOBLESS

Unemployment Service Committee Distributes Work Pledge Cards

(PRINCE RUPERT, B. C., April 20—A neighborly movement was manifested here with the formation of an unemployment service committee whose duty it is to secure the co-operation of all citizens in giving as much work as possible to those needing it and at the same time improving the city.

It was arranged to make a thorough canvass of the city with pledge cards which residents were asked to fill up telling how much they can expend during the next six months in providing gainful work.

The committee has nothing to say as to who is to be employed. All they ask is that the money be expended in such a way as to employ Prince Rupert people. If a new garage is built, lumber dealers and millmen benefit, hardwaremen get something and the owner gets the much needed improvement. If every householder does something, no matter how little, it is urged, the effect will be to improve the city and give jobs to a great many men and women, it was emphasized.

EASTER IN OTHER LANDS

Although many of the old customs that were once associated with the great festival of Easter have fallen into desuetude some of them still remain in many parts of England and other countries of Europe and a few of them have been transplanted to the New World. The custom of distributing Pascal eggs which was once universally observed by all Christians is not now so generally observed although children still take a delight in coloring their eggs for the festival. In Washington it has long been the custom to have an Easter Egg party on Easter Monday and the hundreds of children who are invited to the party get great fun out of their games and by their search for colored eggs which are hidden in all sorts of places.

In the Midlands of England there is a quaint custom of "lifting" and "heaving." On Easter Monday the men of the village lift the women off their feet when they meet them and on the following day in order to retaliate the women go about in pairs and by joining hands across each other's wrists form a stool from which they are able to "heave" men folk.

In Durham on Easter Monday the men claim the privilege of taking off the woman's shoes, which are then given back to her and the next day the women retaliate.

In Germany it is the custom in many districts for the parish clergy to go round to the houses of their parishioners on Saturday night, carrying small white cakes about an eighth of an inch thick and from five to seven inches in diameter. In return for the offer of these cakes every member of the family makes some offering for the church.

In Rome the centre of interest is, of course, St. Peter's where the Pope says Mass with imposing pomp and ceremony. He is carried into the church seated in his sedia gestatoria and his vestments blaze with gold. On his head he wears the famous tiara, a tall round gilded cap in the form of a triple crown which is supposed to typify spiritual power, temporal power and the union of both. Beside him are borne the fiabelli or large ostrich feather fan in which are encrusted the eyelike parts of peacock feathers which signify the eternal vigilance of the Church. A rich canopy deeply fringed is borne over his head. After officiating at Mass the Pope is borne back again through the nave of the church and ascends a balcony over the central doorway. There rising in his chair of state with his principal officers around him he pronounced the benediction. The streets of Rome are packed on this occasion and in the evening the dome of St. Peter's is brilliantly lighted up.

In several parishes in England, notably at Biddenden in Kent

100 FISH IN A RIVER FOR SEVEN MILLION FOLK

New Yorkers Catch Oil Cans, Inner Tubes On Fish Hooks — Really Deplorable.

(By Henry McLeMure)

NEW YORK, N. Y., April 19—If there is a society for the prevention of cruelty to fish its members should launch and without delay, an attack on the New York State Conversation Commission which, in a burst of enthusiasm, decided to make the Bronx river a fisherman's paradise.

The Bronx river flows by and around New York city, and those of you who haven't seen it would perhaps appreciate a bit of description. Starting as a brackish rivulet from a Westchester county drain pipe it quickly swells into a mighty stream and when it passes McPherson's coal yard to bend majestically around Long Island dump, it is 100 feet wide.

Setting a "Picture".

Bordering it are picturesque junk yards, lumber mills, gasoline refineries, and mattress factories. Like great trees, smokestacks rear their tall heads to cast long shadows on the river's ripples made iridescent by the oil and exhaust fumes of the quaint tugs and barges which ply it. Here and there are gurgling rapids, formed as the water tumbles happily over model T Ford frames, bed springs, gasoline drums, and battered crates. In little eddies, grapefruit rinds spin and dance.

Into the River Bronx, into this clear, cool mountain stream, the game commission placed city's seven million citizens to get out their rods, slip on their hip boots, and fish to their hearts content.

A Paradise

The day following the creation of the fisherman's paradise, a hundred thousand metropolitan Izaak Walton's came down to cast.

By 10 in the morning the fishermen were banded. Their equipment was fantastic. Some used broom handles for rods, others employed curtain rods, coat hangers, and sticks picked up en route. Bait ranged from string beans to gin bottle corks. Those who came with regulation rods and reels might just as well have tried to cast in a phone booth, so great was the jam.

Honors for the biggest individual catch of the day went to a retired brick salesman from the Upper Bronx who late in the afternoon, hooked the captain of a passing ferry boat in the leg. Until this strike the leader was a milkman who got the jump of the field. When the main body of fishermen arrived this chap already had, on his string, two innertubes, a corset, a roll of chickenwire and an oil heater. He used a Royal Rochman No. 4 on a clothesline.

Too Bad

One of the fisherman brought a home-made harpoon. All he got was a flesh wound.

How long the fish are going to stand for the Bronx river is not known. The commission had a terrible time getting them in there. The rout fought until overpowered. If here is a society that watches out for the interests of trout, now is the time for it to bestir itself.

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CLEVELAND, April 20—Wharton Larned, who as a commercial airline passenger pilot, drives aeroplanes faster than 180 miles an hour was fined \$10 and costs in police court here for driving his automobile 50 miles per hour.

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money derived from an old bequest is distributed on Easter Sunday to the poor and needy of the parish and some of the stipulations surrounding these gifts are a relic of the past and somewhat out of harmony with the present age although they are pre-served as a tradition of the past.

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