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Police Science Book Reviews

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which is a crime—are uncovered in the process of a valid search, they may be seized; but that to seize papers for evidentiary use, the possession of which involves no infringement of the law, was another matter. The dissent further contended that the fact that this evidence might have been secured by a lawful warrant seems a strange basis for approving a seizure without a warrant.

(A future issue of this Journal will carry a more complete and annotated discussion of this case.)

POLICE SCIENCE BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by

Ralph F. Turner†

HOMICIDE INVESTIGATION: By Le Moyne Snyder, with chapters by Harold Mulbar, Charles M. Wilson, and C. W. Muehlberger. Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas. 1945. XIII and 287 pp. illustrated, \$5.00.

This interesting and excellently illustrated book rates two book reviews, one a review from police investigation angle and one from the view of the medical pathologist—this review is such. Perhaps a third review would be in order, the legal view on admissibility of evidence elicited by the investigations.

In general, the book portrays the accumulated knowledges of the author who is a physician and a lawyer and medicolegal director of the famous Michigan State Police. If the evidentiary and legal parts are as true as the medical parts, then it is a superlative book, for its pathology is sound and impeccable. In the writing two merits are observable, one is that the author's style is easy to read and grasp, and second that there is no padding nor dissertation on what is already known and published, *e.g.*, the chapter on poisoning is condensed text with little new but is organized for ready reference. The printer's use of heavy italics for high points makes it valuable to the laboratory worker in instructing prosecuting attorneys. Another criterion of worth is the honesty of such statements, "If an alkaloidal poison is believed to have caused death and if the body has been buried longer than three months, exhumation is seldom worthwhile." The reviewer knows that to be true for the reason the author does not bother to state, *viz.*, that putrefaction of proteins creates many alkaloids largely related to amino acids: this any reader knows but expresses himself when saying, "Rotten, putrid meat is very poisonous."

The author has picked his associate authors well, Mulbar on "The technique of criminal interrogation," and Wilson on "The preservation and transportation of fire-arms evidence," and a topic new in such books as this, Muehlberger on "The investigation of deaths due to highway accidents."

In general this book covers the scene of a homicide, time of death, blood stains, and types of death. The types include gunshot, cutting and stabbing, asphyxia, drowning and bodies found dead in water,

† Laboratory Supervisor, Police Department, Kansas City, Mo.

burns, poison, alcohol, direct violence, criminal abortion, and sexual assault. It ends with two brief chapters on popular fallacies in homicide investigations and "Why I wrote this book," the reason being that investigators should not make mistakes of ignorance but that investigating officers and prosecutors should be wise and purposeful in what they do in Homicide Investigation.

It is a book deserving to be well read and then kept in the fore-library of police, prosecutors, and pathologists.

Chicago

HAROLD S. HULBERT, M.D.

THE SHELLEY LEGEND. By Robert Metcalf Smith in collaboration with Martha Mary Schlegel, Theodore George Ersham, and Louis Addison Waters. Charles Scribner's Sons. New York. 1945. Pp. vii, 343. Illustrated. \$5.00.

Professor R. M. Smith and associates set about in *The Shelley Legend* to analyze the basic material upon which biographies of Percy Bysshe Shelley are constructed in order to evaluate the conflicting characterizations of him and to point the way to a true and accurate portrait of the poet. Such a task is far from simple. Not only does Shelley's life differ from the usual pattern of behavior, which of itself tends to create biographical prejudices, but, as these authors so clearly reveal, his heirs have deliberately attempted to suppress facts and to alter and twist the truth.

Since Shelley was a prolific letter writer and maintained a continuous journal during a large portion of his life, contemporary documentary evidence upon which to base a biography is plentiful. Among the archives of his intimate circle of friends extensive records of the same sort can be found. Unfortunately, documents dealing with critical periods of Shelley's life are not entirely reliable. Mary Shelley, his second wife, and Lady Shelley, his daughter-in-law, have successfully built a legend around the poet by suppression of portions of his and Mary's journals, as well as their letters, and even more effectively by the introduction into the record of letters which Professor Smith and associates definitely condemn as forgeries.

As a basis for their conclusions the authors have investigated a number of letters dealing with critical events in Shelley's life. Both the contents and the provenance of these documents are carefully examined to determine if they are consistent with the known facts of his life. Several fail to stand up under such scrutiny. To complete their condemnation of these suspected letters, and especially of a letter allegedly from the poet to Mary Shelley on December 16, 1816, the manuscripts were submitted to Mr. L. A. Waters, a professional document examiner, who had no knowledge of or personal interest in the Shelley controversy. On the basis of the handwriting characteristics alone he condemns this letter as a forgery and goes further to identify the forger as a Major George G. Byron, who during the 1840-50's dealt extensively in spurious Shelley manuscripts. This forged letter, dated during Shelley's stay in London after the suicide of his first wife, Harriet, contains his only derogatory statements as to her character and behavior. Thus, it has stood as a cornerstone of the Shelley Legend serving to relieve him of blame for deserting Harriet and to set the elopement with Mary in a more favorable light. Its spurious origin leaves the Legend in a weakened condition.

The Shelley Legend is thorough in its approach to the problem as it investigates all persons connected with Shelley and his biographies as well as all pertinent material written by him, to him, and about him. It is unfortunate that other letters besides the important December 16th forgery could not have been submitted to Mr. Water's professional examination for the authors have directed accusations of forgery toward a number of documents in English collections. Handwriting investigation might establish irrevocably the status of these documents.

In using the tool of handwriting identification the authors have pointed the way to definite findings in the confused mass of Shelley papers and to a new adaptation of this scientific aid to the field of biographical research. While the use of such evidence in the problem at hand is propitious, much could have been gained in presenting Mr. Waters' conclusion by the introduction of one or two carefully prepared comparison charts, first of Shelley's genuine writing in juxtaposition with the forged specimens, and second, of the forged specimens with Major Byron's writing. Thus, to the layman, inexperienced in the detection of forgery and proof of handwriting, his findings would become self evident rather than obscured in several pages of technical argument.

ORDWAY HILTON

Examiner of Questioned Documents, New York City