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Police Science Book Reviews

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POLICE SCIENCE BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by
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MODERN CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION. By *Harry Söderman, D.Sc.* and *John J. O'Connell*. 4th Edition, completely revised and rewritten. Funk and Wagnalls Company, New York, 1952. Pp. 557. \$4.75.

Since the publication of the first edition in 1935 this has been the standard textbook of scientific police technique in this country. In it are combined the experiences of one of Europe's outstanding criminal investigators (see this *Journal* May-June 1952) and the late Chief Police Inspector of our largest city.

To keep pace with the progress of police science during the intervening 17 years, new chapters have been added on "Aspects of Detective Work" (3 pages), "Police Organizations Here and Abroad" (20 pages), "Elements of Toxicology" (17 pages), "Drug Addiction" (12 pages), "Investigation of Arson" (28 pages), "The Police Laboratory" (27 pages), "Some Problems of the Uniformed Police" (14 pages) and "Plant Protection" (15 pages).

Except for some new illustrative cases and illustrations, textual material of the remaining 21 chapters have not been materially changed since 1935 when the first edition was published. From this one would infer that no significant advances had been made in these fields. True, a few pages have been added in these chapters on such subjects as the "lie detector," sex perversions, the use of sound recordings in taking statements, trailing of suspects, photographing of subjects for identification purposes, collection and preservation of evidence in shooting cases, and studies on glass identification by Tryhorn and Prof. Paul Kirk's associates. Altogether about two-thirds of the book is essentially identical with the 1935 edition. Thus, one might question the publisher's claim that the book has been "completely rewritten and revised."

It is interesting to note that two pages are devoted to the use of the so-called "lie detector" in criminal investigation, whereas as equal space is given to such outmoded procedures as the use of the *oustiti*, or block and string method for locking a door from the inside. The Gettler test has been included to assist the police investigator in answering the puzzling question of whether a person had been drowned in sea water or in fresh water. The formula of the etching reagent for restoring obliterated serial numbers of guns was withheld in the first edition to keep such information out of the hands of the criminal element, but this fourth edition makes the information public. However, the structure of improvised bombs employed by the criminal element (page 440) is still kept secret. In accordance with the recommendations of the National Safety Council and the American Medical Association, the statutes of some dozen of our states have adopted the scientific measurement of alcohol influence in terms of blood alcohol concentration. Nevertheless, the author of this work still clings to an antiquated four-stage classification of alcohol intoxication which was outmoded even in 1935. The author praises the Mezger, Heess, and Hasslacher "Atlas of Arms" as "one of the achievements of police science in modern times" (page 206), but any firearms identification technician who has had to cope with its numerous inaccuracies

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