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Police Science Book Reviews

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POLICE SCIENCE BOOK REVIEWS

Richard L. Holcomb*

FINGERPRINTS—SCOTLAND YARD AND HENRY FAULDS. By *George Wilton Wilton*, W. Green and Son. Ltd. Edinburgh, and The Carswell Company, Ltd. Toronto. Pp. 26. 7s6d.

There is considerable evidence that fingerprints have been used as a method of identification for centuries. However, there was nothing published in the English language until October 28, 1880 when "Nature" magazine published a letter from Henry Faulds, a physician practicing in Japan at the time. In this letter Faulds described variations in prints, used the modern terms "loops" and "whorls", described the method that is still used for taking prints using printers ink on a glass plate, suggested the use of latent prints found at crime scenes and told of two criminal cases in Japan where latent prints had been used. In this first material published in English on fingerprints Faulds came forward with all of the basic ideas on the application of fingerprints for both identification and the solution of crime.

On November 25, 1880, "Nature" published a letter from Wm. J. Herschel, a civil servant in India. Herschel had read Faulds' letter and was thus moved to write about his work. He had used fingerprints to identify persons in jail and pensioners since 1856, but he had been unable to convince his superiors of the value of the system. There is a question in my mind if Herschel would have ever written anything on the subject if he had not read Faulds' letter. No discovery is of value until made available for use. Herschel had not seen the value of latent prints and he later gave Faulds full credit for this discovery.

Now the remarkable thing about all of this is that Faulds, who first published and who very apparently is the sole discoverer of the value of latent prints has received almost no credit, while Herschel, who used them for 22 years before he published, is generally recognized as their discoverer. Faulds' name is rarely mentioned in official British publications and in many cases, not mentioned at all. This is true even in the very recent books published by ex-Scotland Yard personnel.

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Why has this happened? Why has Faulds been forgotten? This is a difficult question to answer. Basically, it probably arises in part because, for some reason I do not know, Galton, and then Henry, did not work with Faulds, but rather with Herschel. Two other points are of interest. Herschel based his belief on the unchanging form of prints on comparison of prints of the same subject covering a period of many years. Faulds developed the same idea by carefully shaving off the top layer of skin a number of times and observing how the pattern persisted. With his experience as an anatomist and the use of an experimental method, he was able to prove in 20 months the same point that Herschel took 20 years to prove. However, Faulds did not explain this technique until many years after his original publication. This resulted in some friction between Faulds and Herschel and his friends. For many years there was a lively controversy and unless you take the time to read back issues of "Nature", you are likely to get the impression that Faulds was almost considered an imposter with a false claim. This is far from the truth. Beyond question he is the first man to publish on the value of fingerprints for identification. This was not a few random ideas, but well organized material, the result of considerable careful research. Beyond question he was first to conceive the use of latent prints. Herschel had been using prints for identification for 22 years, but had not seen this other important value and freely admitted that Faulds was first with this concept.

This book by Wilton is a careful review of the evidence in this interesting case, written for the sole purpose of gaining the proper recognition for Henry Faulds, even though belated. The author has reviewed this controversy at some length. His conclusions are sound. His belief that Henry Faulds deserves recognition deserves full support.

In addition, he writes of five interesting cases involving fingerprints and has some biographical notes on two men who have done much to increase the use of fingerprints—J. Edgar Hoover and Juan Vucetich.

This publication is of interest and value to anyone in the field of crime detection.

R. L. HOLCOMB

PSYCHIATRY AND THE CRIMINAL. By *John M. MacDonald*, Charles C Thomas Publisher, Springfield Ill., 1958. Pp. 242. \$5.50

Since World War II there has been a great increase in the interworkings of law and psychiatry. Courts and lawyers on the one hand have recognized the need for greater understanding of human motivations and sources of human conduct. Psychiatrists, on the other hand, have found themselves drawn into the orbit of the law, and have in many instances willingly entered that orbit because of a desire to improve, reform, or at least assist legal determinations. The author of this book is well qualified to write on psychiatry and the criminal. Dr. MacDonald is a professor of psychiatry at the University of Colorado, director of a psychiatric hospital, and what, in the reviewer's opinion is equally important, serves as consulting psychiatrist to the District Courts of the State of Colorado. His practical experience in the field will give those readers who understand the enormous difficulties in the field greater confidence in his judgments than they might otherwise have. Lawyers, particularly, are doubtful of the pronouncements of the psychiatrist who has not had to work with the law; Dr. MacDonald's extensive experience should set this preliminary fear at rest.

The book is aimed primarily at physicians, particularly psychiatrists who will be concerned with the administration of criminal law whether as court consultants or witnesses. But it would be a great mistake not to state at the outset that this little book will be very valuable for anyone concerned with the administration of criminal justice. The book though written for doctors is not overloaded with medical lingo meaningless to the layman. It is short and well organized. It is written clearly and understandably.

The opening chapter dealing with the origins of criminal behavior is reassuring to any reader who has made some study of the problem. Too often the Sunday supplements and the T.V. shows dealing with criminal behavior oversimplify and tend to find one particular cause of criminality to serve as whipping boy. Dr. MacDonald does not fall into this error but emphasizes the real complexity of the problem. Not every reader, certainly not every sociologist, will agree with him in laying the major

problem in the very large area of psychopathology. Those lawyers or others who would like to ascribe criminal conduct to lack of volley ball courts or broken homes, without more, may be hostile at first to Dr. MacDonald's attempt in a few pages to lay bare the psychological springs from which crime flows. This hostility is understandable and represents an educational problem. Lawyers and others, indeed many physicians, have not been taught to think in terms of psychopathology. Dr. MacDonald recognizes this, and he stresses the need for education in the area. His own presentation is necessarily short, but illuminating and provocative. It should open the minds of readers as yet unsophisticated in the area.

After some criticism of the McNaghten Rules and advocacy of the Durham Rules in which, in the reviewer's opinion, he does not give full recognition to the vagueness and incompleteness at present surrounding the Durham Rules, Dr. MacDonald proceeds to a very practical chapter on the psychiatric examination. This chapter should be read by all doctors conducting such examinations; it is eminently practical, and it speaks of a wealth of experience. All too often the examining physician has not found out clearly what his examination is going to be used for. For instance, it makes a great deal of difference if the patient is defending himself against criminal charges on the ground of insanity, or if, on the other hand, the court has ordered an examination of the patient because of some question of the patient's mental competence to stand trial. This chapter goes into the character of the examination, the type of questions to be employed, techniques to detect malingering or simulated mental illness, etc. In a later chapter Dr. MacDonald discusses critically and not very favorably narcoanalysis which he regards apparently as no panacea for careful persistent and intuitive questioning of the fully conscious patient. Also in a later chapter he discusses amnesia both real and feigned. This is a common claim in criminal cases, and it requires careful examination.

Dr. MacDonald also discusses rather briefly epilepsy. He calls attention to the fact that epileptics as such are not excessively criminal, and he also points out that as a diagnostic tool the electroencephalogram is not infallible. This is a good thing because courts tend to accept EEG findings as conclusive on the question of epilepsy. There is also an excellent chapter on chemical tests for intoxication. This is an area in which we can expect more activity in the future, and it is well for all

concerned to understand to some extent both the strengths and weaknesses of the tests proposed. It may be that not only the lawyers but also the doctors will need considerable briefing on these chemical tests in the future.

There are also chapters on the sex offender, the juvenile delinquent, and psychological tests. Persons who have not had much experience with these fields will find these short chapters illuminating, and for those who wish further enlightenment the footnotes at the end of the chapters should serve as a guide. There is a weakness in Dr. MacDonald's bibliography in that he includes almost no citations to articles published in law reviews. Even doctors will find much that is stimulating in recent law review writings in this general area, and since many of his readers will be lawyers or courts, it is too bad that this vein of rich ore is not explored more thoroughly.

Dr. MacDonald also has a chapter on the psychiatrist as a witness. In spite of the fact that there is really nothing new in this chapter it is good that it should be included in the book. Apparently we cannot overemphasize for our medical witness the necessity first of extensive technical preparation for the stand with full understanding of the nature of the issue and of the kind of questions to be asked; and second of his own psychological preparation for the hurly-burly of appearances on the witness stand in an adversary proceeding. This reviewer has heard doctors testify as to the sanity of a patient whom they had examined for a half hour or less, and the unfortunate experience of Dr. Binger in the Alger Hiss case should stand as a lighthouse to warn later psychiatric mariners. No less distressing is the sight of the medical witness who is pompous, arrogant, hyper-technical, or emotionally volatile. It is well that they should be warned by one of their own profession.

This is a very useful little book. For the physician it ought to serve as a guide and handbook in the area while not pretending to include all that could be said on many of the topics covered. For the lawyer it should give insight into the nature of criminal behavior and the problems of the physician who must analyze it. It is a valuable contribution in a field only now being explored and should take its place among the few books published in that area which can positively bring light and assist the interested reader.

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EVIDENCE FOR THE PATROLMAN. By *Floyd N. Heffron*, Charles C Thomas, Publisher, Springfield, Illinois, 1958. Pp. 172. \$5.75

This text is directed to the patrolman. It is designed to supply information that will be helpful in the collection and preservation of evidence. Two of the book's seven chapters deal directly with this problem. The remaining five chapters are concerned with allied subjects: crime scene coverage, search procedures, how the expert may assist, and summary reports. It also contains two appendixes, one for descriptive terms and one recommending contents for an evidence collection kit.

The book contains no bibliography and, except for a few scattered references to legal citations and *Black's Law Dictionary*, references are made to only two other texts: a previous effort by the author and Osborn's *Questioned Documents*. From the latter text, a paragraph that is sometimes used in obtaining handwriting standards is reprinted. The author then recommends that the suspect copy this paragraph; this is contra to the policy advocated by most document examiners who prefer that standards be dictated. It is mentioned here only as an illustration of the several misleading statements which appear throughout the book.

Although the reader has no way of knowing it from the text, it is presumed that the discourse on the "legality of search" is based upon California law. This chapter could be especially confusing to police officers from those states where legal requirements and practices pertaining to search warrants are at variance.

The book's inadequacies can probably be attributed to the author's attempt to provide an authoritative reference on a wide variety of subjects without making sufficient effort to thoroughly research and qualify the subject matter.

For the most part, the text is a reiteration of established ideas and principles; it contains nothing which cannot be found in other recognized texts on criminal investigation.

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HANDWRITING, A NATIONAL SURVEY. By *Reginald Piggott*, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd. London, 1958. Pp. 188. Illustrated.

A comprehensive study of contemporary handwriting of Great Britain provides a broad basis for some suggestions in the revision of the teaching of

handwriting intended to overcome the shortcomings of the author's fellow Briton's handwriting. The study provides much basic information about handwriting habits and characteristics that, although primarily concerned with the systems and practices differing somewhat from those in the U. S., will supply reference information of value to document examiners and others with a serious interest in handwriting study.

About two thirds of the book comprise a report on the author's discoveries in a survey of handwriting which included some 25,000 actual contemporary writings gathered in 1956 and 1957. An account of the development of British handwriting during the past century introduces the survey. This is followed by a presentation of 355 representative contemporary adult handwritings in slightly reduced facsimile. Each specimen is accompanied by data as to the sex, age, and occupation of the writer as well as information as to the kind of writing instrument used and the hand with which the specimen was executed. These are arranged by occupation of the writer. The representative specimens are followed by a series of discussions and statistical charts in which an analysis of selected features of the whole survey of adult handwritings is undertaken as related to the occupations of the writers, as follows:

- I. Style of Handwriting. The three major styles, Copperplate, Civil Service, and Italic, a category for minor systems or unclassifiable cursive writing and non-cursive styles are provided for.
- II. Type of Pen. Five classes are shown, three for nibbed pens, one for ball-point, and the fifth for uncommon writing instruments.
- III. Slope of Handwriting. Six classes are recognized, backhand, vertical, and four degrees of forward slant.
- IV. Legibility. The four arbitrary classifications extend from "almost" to "Completely" legible.
- V. Left-handedness. The proportion of left-handed writers in each occupational group is shown.

Similar bar charts cover the aggregate of all occupations.

Representative specimens of the immature handwriting of children are included and discussed in a

separate chapter but not subjected to detailed analysis.

The title of the final portion of the book, "A Plan For Better Modern Writing", well describes its content. The author first suggests a model alphabet based on experience as well as the findings of his survey. The choice of a suitable pen is taken up and for the purpose of discussion the work of a large number of the many steel and fountain pen nibs currently available in the British Isles is shown. Choice of ink and paper are treated briefly. Some attention is devoted to factors affecting handwriting in practice such as pen position, problems of letter joining, etc. A chapter considers the influence of writing size, spacing, and pen characteristics together with arrangement of text to writing space on the overall pictorial effect or "character" of a handwriting.

The United States generally seems unaware that the period since 1950 has seen the publication in England of some fifty books on the subject of handwriting reform. For the most part these advocate Italic writing or a modification of it as a cure for their handwriting ills. Both the quality and quantity of these works on handwriting contrast sharply with materials published in the States. The approach of Mr. Piggott to the problem by way of analysis of existing writings and their shortcomings is refreshing when compared with the almost classical vague complaint of those dissatisfied with the current state of handwriting. Whether or not his solution, which seems to strike a compromise between Italic and Marion Richardson writing, is the right one, his effort with its by-product of fundamental handwriting information is a distinct contribution which has no parallel in the U. S. Whether or not a similar effort would prove fruitful in the U. S. is open to some question in view of the lack of distinct classes of handwriting. Certainly the principle of attempting an objective analysis of handwriting problems as a basis for their solution deserves the thoughtful consideration of our educators to whom the inadequacy of the laissez-faire policy of the last few decades should be apparent.

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