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## Editorials

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## EDITORIALS

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### A PROGRESSIVE POLICE SYSTEM IN BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

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Something like an ideal relationship between the public and the police force has developed in Berkeley, California. The chief of police, Mr. August Vollmer, an associate editor of this JOURNAL, came into office approximately thirteen years ago, a veteran of the Spanish-American War. Police work was for him an altogether untried profession. He brought to this office an untiring vigor, supreme moral and physical courage, and an unusually high order of intelligence which always carries with it a far vision or imagination and the practical sense needful to realize visions. In this period he has become intimately familiar with the best literature relating directly and indirectly to the work of the police and to criminology in general. Such a degree of public confidence has been established in the Chief that frequently parents and teachers take to him personally their troublesome youths in order that they may have his advice as to their treatment, and under his initiative a psychopathic clinic, with volunteer physicians in attendance, has been established in the city for the service of the public schools and the police department. In this clinic every arrested person who is in the least degree suspected of any form of alienation receives an examination and diagnosis, and many others are induced, through the friendly mediation of the police officials, to go to the clinic voluntarily for examination. Through this agency many cases of mental alienation, acute and chronic, such as those referred to by Drs. Murray and Kuh in their article in this JOURNAL on "A Psychopathic Laboratory in the Chicago House of Correction" (Vol. VIII, No. 6), have been transferred to institutions where they can be properly cared for until cured, which in many cases means permanent detention.

Another outstanding feature of the Berkeley police organization is the police school which was fully described in this JOURNAL (Vol. VII, No. 6) where the complete curriculum may be found. The course of study is estimated to require three years for its completion. The class holds daily meetings of one hour's duration throughout the year and pursues but one subject at a time until it is finished. The course is comprehensive. It includes subjects that have a direct bearing upon police work such as Evidence, Methods of Identification, and

Police Organization, and others that have less direct application, such as Civics.

The operation of the school is almost without cost. Members of the state university faculty and other public-spirited persons volunteer their service as instructors.

A selected group of policemen are in regular attendance. Once each week all the members of the force who can be spared from their posts are brought together to hear a lecture upon some phase of the policeman's profession. Mr. Vollmer believes that on the whole the larger the intellectual background of the policeman the better public service he is able to render in his daily occupation.

This sounds "high brow" to the majority of police officials, but the fact is that Berkeley has a most effective police service. There are only twenty-eight men in the whole force; a ridiculously small group when compared with that employed in many cities of half the size of Berkeley—a city of about 65,000 inhabitants. During Chief Vollmer's thirteen-year administration, while the population of the city has trebled the police force has been reduced from thirty-two to the present number, and in the same period the number of complaints of serious offenses in the city has been reduced by approximately one-half. In 1907 there were thirteen special policemen, privately employed, in the city. At present there are only four and two of these are engaged solely to turn lights on and off, to adjust awnings, and to do other chores in the business quarters of the city.

In this connection it should be recalled that Berkeley is not a city isolated from contagions of crime such as are abroad in many large municipalities. It is adjacent to Oakland with its population of approximately 225,000, and is directly across the bay from San Francisco with more than a half million inhabitants, and, by electric railroad and water, but a half-hour distant from the main business and residential centers of Berkeley. This city, with an ineffective, unintelligent police force could easily be over-run by the social dregs of surrounding districts. Even the tramps shun the city.

Every member of the force is required to own a gasoline-driven automobile and to operate it in his daily work on the streets. The city pays him \$27.50 in addition to his monthly salary and supplies him in addition with gasoline and oil. This enables him to purchase and maintain a durable car. He has a fixed beat, but covers it differently every day. Mounted as they are, the whole force, no matter where they may be in the city, are controlled by an ingenious signal system

and in a few minutes at any hour of the day they can surround any block from which trouble is being reported.

Each car is equipped, not only with the usual policeman's implements, but with a rope and hook which may be useful in assisting the fire department and in giving a lift to stalled teams and dead cars; with a jack by which the officer may give aid to the driver of a broken-down truck or what not, and with first aid for the injured materials as well.

While organizing and administering the system in Berkeley Chief Vollmer has been able to wield a very great influence in public welfare organizations throughout the state of California, and to take an effective hand in directing legislation for the elimination and control of crime in the state. The State Bureau of Identification owes its existence to his genius. He has taken an active hand in the development of instruction in criminology in the state university in Berkeley, and in his last report he declares his hope that soon our future police officers may receive from the universities of the land the training they need to fit them for their responsible positions. It is implied that then there will no longer be a need for police schools organized within municipal departments.

The organization in Berkeley is one striking indication among others that we are on the threshold in America of the era of scientific police. Here is a system that is equipped with all the modern appliances that science affords for photography, finger printing and measurements; for keeping complete records of all this data and of the *modus operandi* of criminals, and for the professional instruction of policemen. At the same time the department takes the lead in forming public opinion and in initiating movements for public welfare. All the while the department works effectively.

For generations we in America have, in many respects, labored under the disadvantage of our extreme individualism. This expresses itself, among other ways in our attitude toward the police forces. We are inclined to look upon them as at least a potential interference with individual privileges and to resent even an occasional advance on their part, toward an official or semi-official relationship with persons who are neither charged with crime nor under suspicion, even though such an advance may clearly be in the interest of public welfare. Yet there are known to the police in every municipality many persons who are a public nuisance, at least potentially, by reason of their near-incorrigibility and evil associations, or because of gross defects in personality such as may be apparent even to the casual observer, or be-

cause of both of these facts. No official or private citizen in any community knows these characters and their ways better than the police. If we were less sensitive than we now are on the point of our alleged individual rights and privileges the police could do much more than they are now doing to help us over some of our social disabilities. Responsibility for improvement rests both upon the public at large and the police, but upon neither side alone.

ROBERT H. GAULT.

### THE CRIMINAL IDENTIFICATION BUREAU

Wherever police departments are maintained the officials in charge have recognized that the identification bureau is a very important branch of the police organization. They have learned from experience that the delinquent changes his demeanor toward them as soon as he learns that his identity is known. When offenders are able to conceal their identity they are defiant, non-communicative, and frequently combative, whereas, if they are shown by the identification officers that their previous record is known the defiant attitude vanishes, and the hitherto silent and sometimes combative suspect is quite a talkative and congenial sort of fellow, ready to tell all he knows about himself, his associates, and his fence. Moreover, he frequently furnishes valuable information concerning the whereabouts and activities of others who are engaged in unlawful occupations.

The police have learned also that the identification of prisoners facilitates criminal procedure. Instead of spending days interviewing witnesses, securing evidence, and later prosecuting the case in court with prospects of a long, tedious trial, the matter is completely disposed of in a few hours, if the prisoner is convinced that his record is known. He is usually willing to waive all of his rights and enter a plea of guilty as quickly as the legal machinery will permit him to do so.

Identification bureaus are useful also when it is necessary to compare finger-prints found at the scene of the crime with finger-prints that are filed in the police department. Numerous delinquents have learned to their sorrow that identification was quick and certain when their finger marks have been discovered by the officers in the vicinity of the crime.

Photographs of prisoners pasted chronologically in photograph albums furnished the only means of identification for many years. Later additional albums were added in which were filed photographs of specialists in various criminal occupations, such as pickpockets, safe

burglars, bunco men, etc. In large cities the number of the photographs increased rapidly and many hours and even days were spent in search of the criminal record of the suspect, often without result.

In 1882 Dr. Alphonse Bertillon was made chief of the Paris Identification Bureau and introduced a new method for the identification of delinquents. This system is divided into three parts: the anthropometrical, which consists in measuring with calipers some of the most characteristic dimensions of the bony structure of the human body; the descriptive, which is the observation of the bodily shape and movements, and even the most characteristic mental and moral qualities; and finally, the signalment by peculiar marks, which is the observation of the peculiarities of the surface of the body resulting from disease, accident, deformities, or artificial disfigurements, such as moles, warts, tattooings, etc. Bertillon's fame spread throughout the police world and his system was adopted by most of the important cities in this and other countries.

Finger-printing as a means of identification is much older than the other two systems, namely, photography and anthropometry. While it is true that the police have only within the last few years recognized the importance of finger-prints, the Chinese for centuries past have used the papillary lines on the tips of the fingers for identification.

The finger-print system is being substituted for Bertillon's anthropometry system for the following reasons: first, the cost of the Bertillon system is greater; second, longer time is required to take measurements; third, errors in measurements are common, frequently rendering the record useless. In considering the advantages of the finger-print system as compared with the Bertillon we note: first, apparatus required is comparatively inexpensive; second, the experienced person can take, classify, and file the finger-print record in a few moments; third, errors in classification or filing are very rare.

The two best known methods for classifying finger-prints are the Vucetich and the Henry. In both systems the ten fingers are used for filing and classifying. The single finger, however, is sufficient for identification. Finger-prints are taken from the third phalanx. Henry's classification has four types: arches, loops, whorls, and composites; while Vucetich divides his types as follows: arches, internal loops, external loops, and whorls. All other methods are modifications of the Vucetich and the Henry systems. English and United States police organizations use the Henry system; South American countries use the Vucetich system; both systems are used in Europe, Asia, and Africa.

A new system for the identification and detection of delinquents which is being looked upon with much favor is the Modus Operandi System devised by Major W. L. Atcherley, Chief Constable of West Riding of the Yorkshire Constabulary. This system is briefly described by Mr. R. B. Fosdick in the November, 1915, issue of this JOURNAL.

The Modus Operandi System is intended to supplement other identification systems now in use. Whatever the cause, it is a fact that numerous delinquents operate in a manner peculiar to themselves. One man will enter a home by forcing open a side window with a jimmy, while another will use pass keys to enter a rear door. Some thieves steal jewelry, while others confine their attention entirely to silverware. A burglar who enters a home at night seldom operates in the daytime and the daylight burglar seemingly prefers not to take any chances at night.

While the old photograph method was useful in determining the identity of individuals responsible for particular offenses, it was first necessary to find a witness who could pick out of the many thousands of photographs the one which resembled the criminal operator. Every experienced identification officer can testify that mistakes in identity of offenders by photographs are not uncommon, and many innocent persons have suffered temporary imprisonment as the result of faulty identification; nevertheless, photography plays a very large part in the identification of delinquents. But the investigation or identification officer feels better satisfied when he is fortunate enough to secure finger-prints at the scene of the crime. There is then no doubt in his mind as to the guilt or innocence of the suspect.

Thieves may disguise themselves in such a manner as to prevent their identification by untrained persons; they may not leave finger-prints behind them at the scene of their crimes, but it is almost impossible for them to commit any crime without leaving behind a most important clue, and that clue is their method of operation. We may, therefore, expect that in the future more attention will be given to the detection and identification of professional criminal operators by the Modus Operandi System.

Only unimportant cities or cities whose inhabitants are lacking in civic pride are without identification bureaus. The same may be said of the several counties in the United States. County bureaus are growing in number each year. Sheriffs and chiefs of police, recognizing the difficulty which beset them in detecting, apprehending, and identifying the migratory crook, are urging the establishment of state

bureaus of identification which will serve as clearing houses for crime records. A brief outline of the work performed in the state bureau will illustrate its usefulness. The finger-prints of persons charged with a criminal offense anywhere in the state are sent to the state bureau, where they are filed without delay, and when identifications are made the previous record of the accused is sent to the office from which the record was received. Reports of crime where property has been obtained by theft, fraud, or violence and of all felonies are forwarded to the clearing house where they are indexed according to the locality and method of operation. A pawnshop record file is maintained in some of the state bureaus wherein are filed all of the articles reported stolen, or pawned, or sold in second-hand stores. Every article, excepting those which already have numbers such as watches and revolvers, is given a numerical value by the decimal system, and by using different colored cards to distinguish stolen property from pawned and sold property, a large amount of stolen property is recovered yearly.

At the last convention of the International Association of Chiefs of Police a committee was appointed to visit Washington and place before our national law makers plans for a National Intelligence Bureau.

The plan embodies all of the features of the state bureau, including finger-print, Bertillon, and Modus Operandi systems of identification, pawnshop and stolen property files, delinquents' history file, and English descriptive file.

Not only would a national intelligence bureau identify habitual offenders, locate stolen property and persons wanted for crime, but would, in addition thereto, furnish life histories of recidivists, invaluable to the prosecuting officer and psychopathic laboratory. Most important from the viewpoint of crime prevention is the influence such a bureau would exert in promoting uniform and better methods of police procedure, standardization of record forms, and a healthier spirit of co-operation between federal, state, county, and municipal public safety organizations.

AUGUST VOLLMER.

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#### PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INSTITUTE OF CRIMINAL LAW AND CRIMINOLOGY.

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At the annual meeting of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology, held at Cleveland on August 26, the following officers were elected for the ensuing year:

For President: The Honorable Hugo Pam, Judge of the Superior Court, Chicago, Illinois.

For Vice-Presidents: The Honorable William Renwick Riddell, Justice of the Supreme Court of Ontario, Toronto, Canada; Thomas C. O'Brien, Deputy Director of Prisons, Boston, Massachusetts; August Vollmer, Chief of Police, Berkeley, California.

For Treasurer: Bronson Winthrop, 32 Liberty Street, New York City.

For General Secretary: Edwin M. Abbott, Land Title Building, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

For Members of Executive Board (term expiring 1921): James Barbour, Illinois State Senator, Chicago, Illinois; James Bronson Reynolds, Former Assistant District Attorney, New York City; F. Emory Lyon, Superintendent Central Howard Association, Chicago, Illinois, and Prof. James H. Tufts, of the University of Chicago.

In the present number, we are publishing the address of the retiring President, Dr. George W. Kirchwey, the report of the Committee on the Teaching of Criminology in Colleges and Universities, the report of the Committee on Drugs and Crime, and that on Probation and Suspended Sentence. Further reports and account of the proceedings will appear in our next number.

On September 25, a meeting of the Executive Board was held at the University Club in Chicago, at which the financial condition of the Institute and the Journal came forward for discussion. A committee on Ways and Means was appointed, composed of the following named gentlemen: The Honorable Hugo Pam, President of the Institute; John B. Winslow of the Supreme Court of Wisconsin; Justice Orrin N. Carter of the Supreme Court of Illinois; Mr. James Bronson Reynolds, Former Assistant District Attorney of New York City; Senator James J. Barbour of the Illinois State Senate; Colonel John H. Wigmore, Dean of the Northwestern University Law School, and Judge Advocate U. S. Army; Mr. F. B. Crossley, Secretary of the Northwestern University Law School; Professor Robert H. Gault, Northwestern University. This committee was instructed to prepare a letter and whatever other devices may seem useful in a canvass for additional members in the Institute and subscribers to the Journal.

A resolution was introduced by Mr. F. B. Crossley, providing for the office of Executive Secretary of the Institute, and placing this office in the hands of the Managing Editor of the Journal of the Institute. The resolution carried unanimously, and was so ordered.

There was general discussion of the personnel of Institute committees. Final decision as to appointments was deferred for a few days. Announcement will be made later.

ROBERT H. GAULT.