

ART. IV.—*Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners appointed to inquire into the alleged Disturbances in Hyde Park, with Minutes of Evidence.* 1856.

2. *General Regulations, Instructions and Orders for the Government and Guidance of the Metropolitan Police Force.* 1851.

MOST men who have arrived at that age when the last one or two buttons of the waistcoat are allowed to be unloosened after dinner, can remember the time when the safety of life and property in the metropolis depended upon the efforts of the parochial watchman, a species of animal after the model of the old hackney coachman, encumbered with the self same drab greatcoat, with countless capes, with the self same Belcher handkerchief, or comforter, speaking in the same husky voice, and just as sottish, stupid, and uncivil. At night—for it was not thought worth while to set a watch in the day time—the authorities provided him with a watch-box in order that he might enjoy his snooze in comfort, and furnished him with a huge lantern in order that its rays might enable the thief to get out of his way in time. As if these aids to escape were not sufficient for the midnight marauder, the watchman was provided with a staff with which he thundered on the pavement as he walked, a noise which he alternated with crying the hour and the state of the weather in a loud singing voice, and which told of his whereabouts when he himself was far out of sight.

Up to the year 1828, and indeed for ten years later, in the City these men were the sole defence by night of the first metropolis in the world. The Charlies, as they were familiarly termed, had very little fight in them at any time, but it is well known that they 'winked hard,' when required to do so by people who could afford to pay them for it. It is not astonishing that crimes under such a police flourished apace, or that robberies increased to an extent which alarmed all thoughtful people. Mr. Colquhoun, a magistrate, whose work on the police, written at the beginning of the century, gave the first ideas of the reforms which have been since adopted, estimates that the annual value of the property stolen at the time at which he wrote, was at least 1,500,000*l.*; and that the evil was gaining ground may be judged from the fact that the number of receivers of stolen goods had increased between 1780 and 1800 from 300 to 3000!

In addition to the nightly watch there was another class of persons who, if more active, were calculated in a still greater degree to defeat justice, but in a totally opposite direction: we allude to those men who made their bread out of the blood of the criminal population. The Government of the country was
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mainly to blame for the sins committed by these loathsome creatures. Since the time of Jonathan Wild thief-catchers had been stimulated to make criminals by what was termed Parliamentary rewards, or sums of forty pounds given by the Home-office to persons affording such information as would lead to the conviction of felons. The object of the officers was to secure blood-money, not to suppress crime; and it was their deliberate practice to allow robberies to proceed which they might have prevented, in order to obtain the reward. To use their own language, they were accustomed to 'let the matter ripen' until the fee was secure, and work was cut out for the hangman. These men must not be confounded with the Bow-street Runners, or detective police, some of whom were able and perhaps honest men; but they chiefly occupied themselves with thief-catching in private preserves, where the pay was ample, and contributed little if anything to the suppression of general crime.

With a class of watchmen totally inoperative as a preventive police, with a class of informers stimulated by unwise enactments to lure men into villainy, and with a code savage almost beyond belief—as late as 1800 there were 160 capital crimes, and to break the dam of a fish-pond, or to cut down an apple-tree in a garden, were offences punishable with death—it is not to be wondered at that 'the deadly never-green,' as the gallows were called in the slang language of the day, bore fruit all the year round. Old Townsend, the Bow-street officer, who gave evidence before the Committee which sat in 1816 to inquire into the police of the metropolis, said, 'I remember in 1783, when Sergeant Adair was Recorder, there were forty hung at two executions; the unfortunate people themselves laugh at it now, they call it a bagatelle.' Among the more serious offences were the robberies committed by mounted highwaymen; and, in order to give an idea of their frequency, we again quote the racy evidence of Townsend: 'Formerly there were two, three, or four highwaymen—some on Hounslow Heath, some on Wimbledon Common, some on Finchley Common, some on the Romford road. I have actually come to Bow-street in the morning, and while I have been leaning over the desk had three or four people come in and say, "I was robbed by two highwaymen in such a place; I was robbed by a single highwayman in such a place." People travel safe now by means of the horse patrol, which was planned by Sir Richard Ford.' This horse patrol, established in 1805, was the first innovation on the old system of watching; and it succeeded so admirably, that in a few years the highwaymen were entirely banished from the metropolitan counties, and the greatroads in the neighbourhood of London, which were

once as unsafe as those in the vicinity of Rome, became as orderly as Fleet-street. It does indeed seem strange that while the outskirts of the metropolis were thus provided with a new force which proved itself to be perfectly capable of clearing away the ruffians, no means should have been taken until 1829 to supersede the old parish constables who had flourished from the time of the Saxons, and appear to have been in full bloom in Elizabeth's reign, since Dogberry is a finished portrait of the race. No means existed by which the watchmen of different parishes could be made to co-operate against their common enemy the thief. In the City they were under the direction of no less than thirty different authorities. There were the street-keepers, the patrol, the ward-constables, &c., all acting under separate masters; and so complete was the division that the constable of one ward would not interfere to prevent a robbery going on on the opposite side of the street, if it was out of his bounds.

Mr. J. Elliot, in his evidence, given in 1838, before the Committee on 'the Metropolis Police Offices,' mentions a glaring instance of the perfect paralysis of the executive which arose out of this absurd system. 'Two years ago,' he said, 'a neighbour of mine had his warehouse broken open, and a hundred pounds' worth of tea was taken away; a watchman at the top of the street saw a cart going away from the warehouse, but he said it was not in his ward, and therefore he did not interfere.' The public indisposition to get rid of the old watchmen most certainly did not arise from any ignorance of their inefficiency; they had long, in fact, been bywords of feebleness and imbecility. To thrash a Charlie was a pet pastime of the young bloods of that day. The determined propensity to doze of these worthy functionaries was a standing topic for witticism. 'A friend of mine,' said Erskine, 'was suffering from a continual wakefulness, and various methods were taken to send him to sleep, but in vain. At last his physicians resorted to an experiment which succeeded perfectly. They dressed him in a watchman's coat, put a lantern in his hand, and placed him in a sentry-box, and—he was asleep in ten minutes.' It might be imagined that tokens like these indicated pretty clearly that a reform would have been hailed with delight. The result proved, however, that to abuse a thing and to amend it are widely different. Mr. Peel, who had been feeling his way to his grand experiment by the establishment of a Bow-street day-patrol, obtained in 1828 the appointment of a committee of the House of Commons to inquire into the expediency of establishing a uniform system of police in the Metropolis, and the Committee having reported to the House in favour of the scheme, it was immediately adopted. This salutary change
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was not made without creating a deep sensation. That stalking-horse, 'the liberty of the subject,' which in truth meant the liberty of rogues to plunder, was immediately paraded before the public; and we have no doubt whatever that in the tavern debating-clubs of the day it was reported, that with the fall of the Charlies 'the sun of England's glory had set for ever.' And indeed to Englishmen, jealous of their personal liberty, the establishment of this new force might at first have created some well-founded alarm. It was no longer a question of a few constables, but of a standing army of nearly six thousand men, drilled like soldiers, taught to act in masses, and entirely independent of the control of the ratepayers. The very fact of the appointment as one of the Commissioners, of Colonel Rowan, who had been employed in that quasi-military force the Irish constabulary, favoured the idea that the new police were to be a veritable *gendarmerie*. That such was the popular idea was clearly indicated by the numerous prints which appeared at the time of a fierce-looking 'Peeler,' armed with a belt full of pistols and a formidable sword.

Those accustomed only to the slow pace of the constitutional watchman, as he waddled out to his post, beholding with astonishment the sergeant's party as it marched along the kerb in close file, and keeping quick military step, believed that so powerful a force concentrated under a single head might be turned to political purposes. The constables never appeared in the streets without being followed by crowds hooting at them, and calling them by the obnoxious names of 'Peelers,' raw Lobsters, Crushers, Bobbies, &c. At last, in 1833, an actual collision took place between them and the great unwashed in Coldbath Fields. A meeting of Chartists was appointed to be held there, from which serious consequences were expected to arise. Directions were given to disperse it; but whilst in the performance of their duty three of the police were stabbed, and one of them mortally. It might have been thought that the very fact of a mob coming thus armed, with the express purpose of resisting a constituted authority, would have excited the indignation of the more respectable classes of the citizens; the contrary was the fact. A coroner's jury brought in a verdict of justifiable homicide, a pretty significant sign of the feeling towards the new force of the class from which the jury was selected. Such was the ferment that a commission was held to inquire into the conduct of the police, and they were exonerated from the charge of having as a body acted with greater violence than was necessary. From that period, with the exception of the investigation during the present year into the charge of having dispersed a gathering in Hyde

Park with undue severity—a charge which was not at all substantiated—their conduct has been so exemplary as completely to have removed the original dislike. Experience has served to teach the men the virtue of moderation and patience; and they are now looked upon as a constitutional force, simply because we have got accustomed to them.

At the present time the Metropolitan Police Force consists of a Chief Commissioner, Sir Richard Mayne, 2 Assistant-Commissioners, Captain Labalmondiere and Captain Harris, 18 Superintendents, 133 Inspectors, 625 Serjeants, and 4954 Constables, making a total of all ranks of 5734. The machinery by which this comparatively small force is enabled to watch by night and day every alley, street, and square of this vast metropolis, nay, tries every accessible door and window of its 400,000 houses, patrols 90 square miles of country, exercises a surveillance over the 8000 reputed thieves who prey upon its inhabitants, and keeps in awe the 40,000 or 50,000 people who form 'the uneasy classes' of the Metropolis, is not very complicated. The Metropolitan Police district extends from Charing Cross 15 miles in every direction, and includes the whole of Middlesex and large portions of Surrey, Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent, Buckinghamshire, and Berkshire, for which seven counties the Commissioners are magistrates and the police are sworn constables. The River Thames is also under its jurisdiction, from Chelsea to Barking Creek, including all its wharves, docks, landing-places, and dockyards. The entire district has a circumference of 90 miles, and extends over an area of upwards of 700 square miles, 100 of which, forming what is called the interior area, is covered with our great Babel of brick and mortar. This wide extent of ground is mapped out into 18 divisions, each of which is watched by a detachment of men, varying in number according to the extent of the area, the exposed nature of the property, or the density of the population.

Letters of Divisions.	Local Names of Divisions.	Strength of each Division.
A	Whitehall	380
B	Westminster	324
C	St. James's	265
D	St. Mary-le-bone	371
E	Holborn	175
F	Covent Garden	165
G	Finsbury	317
H	Whitechapel	233
K	Stepney	482
L	Lambeth	208
M	Southwark	350

N

Letters of Divisions.	Local Names of Divisions.	Strength of each Division.
N	Islington	513
P	Camberwell	408
R	Greenwich	454
S	Hampstead	410
T	Kensington	288
V	Wandsworth	381
Thames Police	103

Thus it will be seen that policeman X, who figures so often in the pages of 'Punch,' is a myth of our facetious contemporary.

Each division is separated into subdivisions, the subdivisions into sections, and, last of all, the sections into beats. Of the main divisions, A, although one of the smallest in area, is by far the most important; it is the seat of the central authority located at Scotland Yard. Its police are much finer men (taller on the average than the Guards), and their duties are more responsible than those of any other division. They attend upon the Sovereign, the Parliament, the theatres, the parks, and all other places of public resort, such as Epsom and Ascot races, the flower shows, Crystal Palace, &c. The A division is, in fact, to the general body of Metropolitan Police what the Guards are to the army. To enable it to perform these extra duties, it has a reserve force of 250 men, drafted off on ordinary occasions in companies of fifty each to the B, C, D, G, and M divisions; upon this reserved force it draws when necessary.

The other divisions are pretty much alike in the nature of their duties, which are simply those of watching. Certain modifications, however, arise from the character of their districts; thus a constable on duty at Whitechapel, if suddenly removed to Westminster or Mary-le-bone, would find himself considerably at fault, inasmuch as a familiarity with fights in courts, disputes with tramps, and the coarse language of low lodging-houses, is not a good school for the amenities required among a more fashionable population. In all the divisions exactly the same organization is maintained and the same amount of arduous work is performed. Two-thirds of the entire force is on duty from nine or ten in the evening till five or six in the morning. Not long since the night-police were condemned to patrol the streets for nine hours, without sitting down or even leaning their weary limbs against any support. This severe labour was found incompatible with the maintenance of due vigilance towards the end of the watch; the men are, therefore, now kept on duty only eight hours. Day work is divided into reliefs, and extends from six A.M. to nine P.M. Notwithstanding its greater severity, there are men who prefer

men who prefer the stolid unimpeded walk in the night, in which they go through their work like machines, to the more bustling and exciting day-patrol. The serjeants or inspectors make the round of the districts to see that the constables are duly parading their beats.

If a door or window is discovered in an unsafe condition, its insecurity is immediately made known to the inmates; and if the constable fails to detect the circumstance during his tour, and it is afterwards observed by his serjeant or the succeeding constable, he is reported and fined for his neglect. Continued inattention is visited by dismissal. Offences of every kind are severely punished, as appears from the fact that, between the years 1850 and 1856, 1276 policemen were turned out of the force. Of these 68 were criminally convicted. Thus the men are kept up to their work, and collusions with thieves are rendered exceedingly difficult. Every morning a sheet of 'Occurrences' is forwarded to the Chief Commissioner at Scotland Yard, which contains the full particulars of all matters worthy of notice which have taken place during the night throughout the metropolis, and a record of all property lost or stolen, from a gold pin to a chest of plate, is kept in the same central establishment.

In case any affair of unusual importance occurs, a murder or a great robbery, the intelligence is conveyed by the constable who first becomes cognizant of it to the central station of his division; from this point the news is radiated by policemen, carrying what are termed route-papers, or papers of particulars of the offence, on the backs of which are marked the hour at which they were received at the different divisions through which they passed. In this manner information can be circulated in two hours to all the stations, excepting those belonging to the exterior or suburban districts. In these reports are given the names of the constables who were on the beats in which the offences took place, the serjeants in charge of the sections, and the names of the constables whose particular business it was to trace the offenders as far as possible. We understand, however, that the electric telegraph is now shooting its nerve-like threads to all the divisional stations in the metropolis, and, when the new agent is brought to bear, the communication will be almost instantaneous. Thus, in case of robbery, every constable will be made acquainted with the particulars without a moment's delay, and the police-net will be thrown at one cast over the entire metropolis. Thieves will no longer be able to get away with their plunder, ere a hue and cry has been raised after the property. Had the telegraph been in existence, in all probability Her Majesty's plate-chest would have been intercepted before it reached

reached the field where it was ransacked in Shoreditch. In cases of riot of a formidable nature, the telegraph will be able to concentrate 5000 men in a couple of hours upon any spot within five miles of Charing Cross.

Towards the outskirts of the metropolis, in the exterior or suburban districts, the widely-scattered constables chiefly perform the duties of a rural police. The great distances they have to traverse necessitates the use of horses; here, accordingly, we find the mounted police, the successors of the old horse-patrol established in 1805. The strength of this force, men and officers included, is only 120; they are furnished with powerful nags, and are armed with swords and pistols. Indeed the foot-police, whose beats lie in unfrequented rural districts, are allowed side-arms—a precaution which the fate of the policeman, who was brutally murdered in a field at Dagenham, in Essex, some years since, proved to be by no means unnecessary.

In the middle of the Metropolitan police district, is the City police, under the management of the Corporation. The area of this peculiar, to borrow an ecclesiastical term, is only one square mile and a quarter, but forming as it does the very centre of business, it is by far the richest part of London—for while it contains only one-twentieth portion of its inhabitants, it possesses a fourteenth part of its wealth. This small space is in fact the great heart not only of the metropolis, but of the commercial world. Through its principal thoroughfares a vaster flood of traffic is poured for several hours than is to be found in any other streets in the world. In the year 1850, it was ascertained that no less than 67,510 foot-passengers, and 13,796 vehicles, containing no fewer than 52,092 persons, passed Bow Church, Cheapside, in one day. By another channel of communication, Aldgate, near the Minories, 58,430 foot-passengers and 9332 vehicles, containing 20,804 persons, passed in the same time; and it is estimated that altogether no less than 400,000 persons are poured into this one square mile and a quarter in the course of the twelve hours. The congregation in so confined a space of so vast a number of people, many of whom are forced to carry about with them considerable sums of money, must prove a great source of attraction to thieves of all kinds, and demands the constant vigilance of a comparatively large body of police. It was not until ten years after the successful experiment of the Metropolitan Police, however, that the Corporation of London wedded to its old system of ward-beadles, street-keepers, and imbecile constables, could be brought to adopt the new system; but it must be admitted that the present force, consisting of 1 superintendent, 13 inspectors, 12 station-serjeants,

serjeants, 47 serjeants, and 492 policemen—making a total of 565, do the duty well; and the City, with all its stored wealth, is now as safe as the rest of the metropolis. At all the banks plain clothes men are constantly in attendance to keep out the swell mob who buzz about such places, as wasps do about a peach wall; and in the great thoroughfares, such as Cheapside, six or seven policemen are always to be found.

The peculiarities of the City, which produce its characteristic robberies, are the number of its uninhabited warehouses, the perfect labyrinth of lanes which traverse and intersect its streets in all directions, and the vast number of carts and vans always standing full of valuable goods at the warehouse doors. The greatest precautions are taken to mark the fastenings on the warehouse doors, so as to betray any attempt to force them, and these devices are generally successful. The reticulation of lanes will always prove a trouble to the police, and a security to pickpockets. Not many years ago a bank clerk was attacked at mid-day in one of these passages in the very heart of the City, but luckily he retained hold of his case which held most valuable property, and it is now the custom to chain these bill-cases to the person, just as they used to chain books in the olden time to the library shelves. It is also customary for bank clerks to tear the corners off all Bank of England notes, so as to render them unnegotiable, unless to persons who can produce the corresponding piece—a contrivance which no doubt put a stop to audacious attacks upon these money-carriers in the middle of the day. The most common robberies are those from vehicles loading or discharging valuable silk and other goods at the warehouse doors. For the protection of such property a small dog is the best policeman, and carts are rarely seen in the City without one of these nimble guardians. The old restriction which prevented the Metropolitan Police from entering the City, and the City force from entering the Metropolitan districts, is now abandoned. Nevertheless the fact of their being under a distinct jurisdiction, prevents that unity of action which ought to prevail. Not long since a City policeman patrolling one of the streets which extended into the Metropolitan department, was informed by a passer by that they were killing a constable at the top of the street, to which the policeman replied, that it was out of his beat, and he could not interfere! When next the Sibyl presents her leaves to the City Corporation, in all probability the present isolated system of police will not be found inscribed on any one of them.

Scotland Yard, as we have said, is the brain or central ganglion which directs the system of Metropolitan police. Here the Commissioners sit daily, and are ready to receive the complaints or
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other communications of the public. Its rooms are full of clerks, but all in the uniform of the police; in one office may be seen the constables wielding the pen instead of the truncheon, preparing daily returns and reports; in another, reading the morning and country papers, to learn what is doing that may require their presence, and to know what thieves have turned up in the police courts; in a third room an inspector is reading to the clerks from the different divisions any particulars it may be advisable to communicate to the entire force; in a fourth we see the secret chamber of the Detective Police—those human moles who work without casting up the earth lest their course should be discovered. In an office apart from the rest are the foreign detectives, who watch over *mauvais sujets* from abroad. The entire floating foreign population in the metropolis is well known to the police, and no plots against allied governments could well be hatched in London without their cognizance. All articles lost in public conveyances are here taken charge of. The 'Lost Property Office' contains piles of umbrellas, parasols, and walking-sticks, together with a curious assemblage of articles of jewellery and wearing apparel, brought by honest cabmen. On one occasion a parcel with cash to the amount of 1600*l.* was deposited; and on another a thousand pound-note. Valuable property is always claimed immediately, but sticks, parasols, and umbrellas accumulate in a manner which proves that their loss is due to the carelessness of their owners and not to the loose morality of others. The offices for the inspectors of dangerous structures and for licensing common lodging-houses and the drivers and conductors of public conveyances, all of which departments are managed by the police, are close at hand.

In the drilling-ground of the force—an open space surrounded by a hoarding close to the State Paper Office—there are generally from thirty to forty men in course of training, to fill up the gaps caused by dismissals, resignations, &c. On the occasion of our visit the yard was occupied by two bodies—the raw material in the shape of some twenty individuals dressed in every variety of costume, and another batch of the finished article, buttoned up in blue and resplendent with plated buttons. The eye had only to run along the 'gammut of men,' if we may so term the fresh recruits drawn up before us, in order to see from how many ranks of society the police brigade is reinforced; smock-frocks, shooting-coats, frock-coats, tail-coats, some seedy and worn, some still good and fresh, denoted the condition in life of their owners, and the necessities to which some of them were reduced. Young men flushed with hope come from the provinces to push their fortunes, after a brief struggle
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find themselves stranded, and accept this, the most readily obtained respectable service.

As every policeman must be able to read and write, have a good character, and be of sound body and mind, the mere overflowings of the labour-market are excluded from the force; moreover, persons can always leave the service by giving a month's notice. For these reasons a much more intelligent class of men recruit the police than the army, and it is singular to note how this intelligence tells. The drill of constables and soldiers is nearly alike, yet the former learn all their movements in a fortnight, whilst the latter require at least two months. Intelligence of a certain kind, however, may be carried too far; your sharp Londoner makes a very bad policeman; he is too volatile and conceited to submit himself to discipline, and is oftener rejected than the persons from other parts, with whom eight-tenths of the force are recruited. The best constables come from the provincial cities and towns. They are both quicker and more 'plucky' than the mere countryman fresh from the village—a singular fact, which proves that manly vigour, both physical and mental, is to be found in populations neither too aggregated nor entirely isolated.

The policemen, perfect in their material drill, next undergo a mental one. Drawn up in line, a serjeant or inspector questions them as to their duties. 'Supposing you see two men fighting, what would you do?' or, 'If you were to discover a house on fire, how would you act?' Sometimes the constable addressed answers the question, but more generally his interrogator does it for him. When drilled and catechised to the full pitch, he doffs his plain clothes for a uniform, and comes out in the full bloom of a policeman. But he is still a neophyte, and before he is entrusted with a beat he attends at a police-court in order to watch the manner in which trained constables comport themselves in the witness-box. Having learned to give evidence clearly and briefly, to listen to ludicrous scenes without smiling, and to bear bad language with imperturbable patience, he is marched off to the division in which he has elected to serve (the policeman is always if possible allowed this privilege), and with his armet on his wrist, his staff in one pocket, and his rattle in the other, he patrols his beat.

Two especial injunctions are given to him—never to show his staff except to protect himself, and never to spring his rattle at night except in a case of great urgency. The care taken to hide his offensive weapon is one of the best points of our police arrangements. The officers sent over here to gain information, prior to the introduction of the English
police

police system in Paris, were astonished at this forbearance: the Frenchmen could not understand why a man should carry a deadly weapon, unless to make a demonstration with it! In this little incident we see the essential difference between the French and English character. In six months' time it is expected that the young hand will prove a steady officer; that a wild young fellow, who perhaps only a few months before knew no restraint, should become a machine, moving, thinking, and speaking only as his instruction-book directs; and so wonderful are the powers of organization that such an officer he generally becomes. We all know him, for we see him day by day as we promenade the streets. Stiff, calm, and inexorable, he seems to take no interest in any mortal thing; to have neither hopes nor fears. Amid the bustle of Piccadilly or the roar of Oxford-street, P. C. X. 59 stalks along, an *institution* rather than a man. We seem to have no more hold of his personality than we could possibly get of his coat buttoned up to the throttling-point. Go, however, to the section-house, an establishment generally attached to the chief station of each division, in which the unmarried policemen are lodged, and enter the common hall or reading-room, and you no longer see policemen, but men; they have cast off their tight coats, as certain other unboiled lobsters, at fixed intervals, cast off their shells. They are absolutely laughing with each other! Some are writing, some are reading the morning papers, a group are grinning at the caricature of P. C. X. 202 in 'Punch'; some are deep in the horrors of a romance, extended at full length along a bench, with their trowsers tucked up; all are at their ease, taking rational amusement. In the common room of every section-house there is a library.* That in King-street, Westminster, contains twelve hundred volumes, a well-selected medley of subjects grave and gay. Some of the volumes, indeed, surprised us, as they seemed to indicate an erudite taste which we did not give police-constables credit for possessing. We give a few of their titles as they came under our notice:—

Taylor's Holy Living.	James's Naval History.
The Annals of the English Bible.	Lane's Modern Egyptians.
Macaulay's Essays.	Life of Mohammed, by Mohun Lal.
Alison's Europe.	Tom Cringle's Log.
Paley's Works.	Bishop Heber's Journal.
Byron's Works.	Washington Irving's Works.
The Waverley Novels.	Colonial and Home Library.

* Mr. Walker, the superintendent of the A Division, we believe, selected the works in these libraries. The love of books evinced by this gentleman sufficiently proves that literary tastes are not incompatible with the energetic performance of police duties.

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What do you think of the list, good reader? Policemen reading Paley! Can we wonder that they are so very blue! But we must not misrepresent the force. If volumes such as these are thumbed sufficiently to show that some Scotch serjeant has a taste for theological reading and 'fee-lo-so-phy,' the prevalent inquiry is after good English literature; and although the 'Wandering Jew' and the 'Mysteries of Paris' are in the library, we were told that the men do not like, and apparently do not understand, French romances. The library is only open on Thursdays, and then but for two hours. For this there is a philosophical reason. 'What we can always see,' said the superintendent, who kindly showed us over the Section-house, 'we never see; it is only strangers that know all the sights of the metropolis.' On the same principle the issue of books is limited in the manner we have stated, and we are told that the plan answers admirably. The dormitories at King-street accommodate about ninety persons, the great portion of whom, having done night-duty, we saw fast asleep on a fine, tempting afternoon. It takes full three months, for the men to acquire the habit of sleeping in the day; but once acquired, they never lose it afterwards, although they return at stated intervals to day-duty again. They find their own breakfasts and suppers, but they mess together at dinner. They take it in turns to cater for the week; and the emulation thus created proves to the advantage of the mess, as we hear that early peas and other delicacies of the season find their way to the policemen's table.* It would be an immense boon to the Benedicts of the force if accommodation could also be found for them in the section-houses. In these days of model lodging-houses such an injustice to family men should scarcely be allowed to exist.

One of the strongest reasons which weighed with Mr. Peel in proposing the establishment of the new police in 1829 was the expediency of instituting a force powerful enough to cope with mobs, and to repress those incipient commotions which, if too roughly dealt with by the military, are apt to leave an abiding sense of irritation in the public mind. The massacre of 'Peterloo,' as it was vulgarly called, without doubt proved to the reflective mind of Peel that civil disturbances could no longer be dealt with by the sharp edge of the sword, and that a knock-down blow of a truncheon was far more congenial to the English skull than the sabre of the yeoman or the bullet of the 'sodger.' That

* The partiality for the cook ascribed to the policeman is, we are assured, a slander upon the force. The commissariat at home is too good to justify any suspicion of this ignoble sort of cupboard love.

view was undoubtedly correct. The new police have not, it is true, come in contact with excited mobs on more than three occasions,—the affair of Coldbath Fields, in the year 1833, the chartist gathering in 1849, and the skirmish in the Park of last July. On each of these occasions the crowd was immediately dispersed, and whatever irritation might have existed at the time, it quickly died away. There seems to be no fear that a London mob will ever prove a serious thing in the face of our present corps of policemen. A repetition of the Lord George Gordon riots would be an impossibility. Those who shudder at the idea of an outbreak in the metropolis, containing two millions and a half of people and at least fifty thousand of the ‘dangerous classes,’ forget that the capital is so wide that its different sections are totally unknown to each other. A mob in London is wholly without cohesion, and the individuals composing it have but few feelings, thoughts, or pursuits in common. They would immediately break up before the determined attack of a band of well-trained men who know and have confidence in each other. The genuine Londoner, moreover, is no fighter; he will ‘slang’ and ‘chaff’ wittily with his tongue, but he will not come to blows. Those who have any experience in the *gamins* of the great towns in England must have observed the vast difference between the want of pugnacity in the cockney-bred boy, and the love of fist-cuffs among the youths of Bristol, Birmingham, or Manchester, which are the nurseries of prize-fighters. The great town has sharpened the brain of the Londoner, but unstrung his sinews and cowed his courage, and he is a pigmy in the hands of the vigorous provincials. The middle classes are an exception, and we doubt not that the same spirit which marched with the trained-bands from London to Gloucester in the civil war, is still to be found among them.

We believe that the only quarter in which any formidable riot could take place would be eastward, in the neighbourhood of the docks, where there are at least twelve thousand sailors in the river or on shore, ready for a spree, fearless and powerful, and acting with an undoubted *esprit de corps*. These, if associated with the seven or eight thousand dock-labourers and lightermen, would certainly produce a force difficult to cope with. For such emergencies the police are provided with side-arms, but we fear they are not well trained to their use, and it would take at least fourteen days to perfect them. If in any civil disturbance, however, it should come to cold steel, we think that the soldiers would prove far more effective, and their interference would be less galling than that of the police armed with murder-
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ous weapons. Prevention is the true duty of the civil force. One of the simplest methods for breaking up a crowd, in order that it may have no unity of action, is to march sections of constables, in double files of say fifty each; these sections moving a few yards apart speedily cleave by their weight the densest mob in twain. When once this division is made, the order is given to face right and left, and march; by this means the mass is riven into a dozen helpless portions. If the mounted police can be brought into action, it is customary to march them in every direction through the crowd. Those who were in Hyde Park on the evening of the great Sunday gathering in July last, witnessed how effectually this singular manœuvre was executed under the orders of Captain Labalmondiere. The horsemen, circulating among the immense crowd, entirely disintegrated the mass, and rendered it helpless for a common movement, and this without any altercation, for what use could there be in arguing with horses' heels? A policeman's staff thrust in your chest, accompanied by a peremptory order to stand back, would probably 'rile' the best of us; but what is to be said against the push of a horse's flank or the descent of a heavy hoof? Everybody is glad to get as quickly as possible out of the way, and thus the whole company break up as it were of their own accord.

Let us now revert to the Detective Police. When the Metropolitan force was established in 1829, the old Bow-street officers, not caring to work with the new system, retired from public life and set up a private practice in hunting out offenders, in which occupation some of them continue to this day. For fifteen years there was no establishment of Detectives connected with the police; but the inconvenience of not possessing so necessary a wheel in the constabulary machinery induced Sir James Graham, who had perhaps a leaning towards this branch of the profession, to revive the fraternity. The force consists of three inspectors, nine serjeants, and a body of police termed 'plain-clothes men,' whose services can be had at any moment. There are about six policemen in each division who take upon themselves the duty of detectives when wanted, which affords a total number of 108 auxiliaries, upon whom the inspectors and serjeants can rely to carry out their orders with silence and address. In all great gatherings these men are distributed among the crowd, dressed according to the character of the assembly. Thus, at an agricultural meeting, smock-frocks are worn, or the dress of a small farmer; at a review, the habiliments of a decent mechanic in his Sunday best. In this respect they follow the principle of Nature, who protects her creatures from observation
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by giving them coats of a colour somewhat similar to that of the soil they inhabit: to the arctic fox, a fur white as the surrounding snow; and to the hare, a coat scarcely distinguishable from the brown heath in which she makes her form. It is the general rule to station these plain-clothes men as near as possible to the policemen of their own division, in order that they may be assisted in capturing prisoners.

Man is eminently a hunting animal, but there is no prey which he follows with such zest and perseverance as his fellow man. Some policemen, directly they enter the force, show the taste so strongly that they are at once marked off for this special service. Others, on the contrary, will remain years without detecting a single crime. From among the 6000 persons composing the force a splendid field is afforded for selecting good men; and Bow-street, great as was its fame, did not turn out more intelligent detectives than we now possess. The officers, although they are not hail-fellow-well-met with every thief, as in the last century, still find it necessary to keep up a personal knowledge of the criminal population, especially with that portion of it whose members they may at one time or other be likely to 'want.' The detectives, as well as thieves, are generally famous for some particular line of business. One is good at housebreakers, another knows how to follow up the swell-mob, and a third is a crack hand at forgers. By confining themselves to distinct branches of the art they acquire an especial sense, as it were, for the work; and it is remarkable how much their trouble is lightened by the division of labour. The detective stands in a very different position from the ordinary policeman; his work, long and laborious though it may be, must, to succeed, never see the light. Although he may have followed a case for years, all the public knows of it is summed up in the four words used by the constable who states the charge at the police court—'from information I received,' &c. The detective lays the foundation which, from the shifting soil he has to deal with, is frequently far more extensive than the superstructure. His duty is to pursue the criminal through all his shiftings and turnings, until the case is clear against him; and then fearlessly to draw him forth from his hiding-place, as a ferret would a rabbit, and hand him over to an ordinary constable to bring to the judgment seat.

Much of the information by which the perpetrators of crimes are discovered comes from their own body: thus two thieves fall out, and one, prompted by revenge, and stimulated by the hope of a reward, splits upon his confederate; or some abandoned woman, jealous of another, gives information which leads

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to her paramour's apprehension. The revenge taken by members of the fraternity upon a 'pal' whose treachery has been discovered, is often so signal, that the utmost caution is exercised in communicating with the police, lest suspicion should be excited. The constable, whose aim is to encourage these revelations, must never, by his want of address, give any hint of the source from which he receives his information; nay, he finds it necessary sometimes to pursue keenly a false scent in order to divert attention from the betrayer.

Between the detective and the thief there is no ill blood: when they meet they give an odd wink of recognition to each other—the thief smiling, as much as to say, 'I am quite safe, you know;' and the detective replying with a look, of which the interpretation is, 'We shall be better acquainted by and by.' They both feel, in short, that they are using their wits to get their living, and there is a sort of tacit understanding between them that each is entitled to play his game as well as he can.

In pursuing the track of an offender, the officers often come across other crimes of which they were not aware, and for a time are thrown off the scent, just as a pack of fox-hounds by a hare which crosses their path. In such cases the only way is to try back until the original trail is found. It is not uncommon in this manner to stumble upon a regular net-work of roguery, and to discover the whereabouts of parties who have long been 'wanting.' The most trivial hint will suffice to put the detective on the right track: for, like men accustomed to work in the dark, things which to other persons are invisible, to them appear clear as noon-day. The gossiping tendency of neighbours is especially useful to them in worming out secrets. To obtain a single link in a chain of facts, they will often hang about a house for months, interrogating the newspaper lad, waylaying the servant girl as she is going for her supper beer, and picking all he wants to know out of her as easily as a locksmith picks a lock, and with quite as little consciousness on the part of the person operated upon.

Mr. Dickens published some excellent papers in the early numbers of 'Household Words,' which illustrate admirably the habits of these officers. From these we select the following story, not that it is the most dramatic, but because it shows the vast number of dodges by which the detectives accomplish their ends:—

“Tally-ho Thompson,” says Sergeant Witchem, after merely wetting his lips with his brandy-and-water, “Tally-ho Thompson was a famous horse-stealer, couper, and magsman. Thompson, in conjunction with a pal that occasionally worked with him, gammoned a countryman
out

out of a good round sum of money, under pretence of getting him a situation—the regular old dodge—and was afterwards in the ‘Hue and Cry’ for a horse—a horse that he stole, down in Hertfordshire. I had to look after Thompson, and I applied myself, of course, in the first instance, to discovering where he was. Now, Thompson’s wife lived, along with a little daughter, at Chelsea. Knowing that Thompson was somewhere in the country, I watched the house—especially at post-time in the morning—thinking Thompson was pretty likely to write to her. Sure enough, one morning the postman comes up, and delivers a letter at Mrs. Thompson’s door. Little girl opens the door, and takes it in. We’re not always sure of postmen, though the people at the post-offices are always very obliging. A postman may help us, or he may not,—just as it happens. However, I go across the road, and I say to the postman, after he has left the letter, ‘Good morning! how are you?’ ‘How are *you*?’ says he. ‘You’ve just delivered a letter for Mrs. Thompson.’ ‘Yes, I have.’ ‘You didn’t happen to remark what the post-mark was, perhaps?’ ‘No,’ says he, ‘I didn’t.’ ‘Come,’ says I, ‘I’ll be plain with you. I’m in a small way of business, and I have given Thompson credit, and I can’t afford to lose what he owes me. I know he’s got money, and I know he’s in the country, and if you could tell me what the post-mark was, I should be very much obliged to you, and you’d do a service to a tradesman in a small way of business that can’t afford a loss.’ ‘Well,’ he said, ‘I do assure you that I did not observe what the post-mark was; all I know is, that there was money in the letter—I should say a sovereign.’ This was enough for me, because of course I knew that Thompson, having sent his wife money, it was probable she’d write to Thompson by return of post to acknowledge the receipt. So I said ‘Thankee’ to the postman, and I kept on the watch. In the afternoon I saw the little girl come out. Of course I followed her. She went into a stationer’s shop, and I needn’t say to you that I looked in at the window. She bought some writing-paper and envelopes, and a pen. I think to myself, ‘That’ll do!’—watch her home again, and don’t go away, you may be sure, knowing that Mrs. Thompson was writing her letter to Tally-ho, and that the letter would be posted presently. In about an hour or so, out came the little girl again, with the letter in her hand. I went up, and said something to the child, whatever it might have been; but I couldn’t see the direction of the letter, because she held it with the seal upwards. However, I observed that on the back of the letter there was what we call a kiss—a drop of wax by the side of the seal—and again, you understand, that was enough for me. I saw her post the letter, waited till she was gone, then went into the shop, and asked to see the master. When he came out, I told him, ‘Now, I’m an officer in the Detective Force; there’s a letter with a kiss been posted here just now, for a man that I’m in search of; and what I have to ask of you is, that you will let me look at the direction of that letter.’ He was very civil—took a lot of letters from the box in the window—shook ’em out on the counter with the faces downwards—and there among ’em was the identical letter with the kiss. It was directed, ‘Mr. Thomas Pigeon, Post-Office,

Office, B——, to be left 'till called for.' Down I went to B—— (a hundred and twenty miles or so) that night. Early next morning I went to the post-office; saw the gentleman in charge of that department; told him who I was; and that my object was to see and track the party that should come for the letter for Mr. Thomas Pigeon. He was very polite, and said, 'You shall have every assistance we can give you; you can wait inside the office; and we'll take care to let you know when anybody comes for the letter.' Well, I waited there three days, and began to think that nobody ever *would* come. At last the clerk whispered to me, 'Here! Detective! Somebody's come for the letter!' 'Keep him a minute,' said I, and I ran round to the outside of the office. There I saw a young chap with the appearance of an ostler holding a horse by the bridle, stretching the bridle across the pavement while he waited at the post-office window for the letter. I began to pat the horse, and that; and I said to the boy, 'Why, this is Mr. Jones's mare!' 'No, it a'nt.' 'No?' said I: 'she's very like Mr. Jones's mare!' 'She an't Mr. Jones's mare, anyhow,' says he: 'it's Mr. So-and-So's, of the Warwick Arms.' And up he jumped, and off he went—letter and all. I got a cab, followed on the box, and was so quick after him, that I came into the stable-yard of the Warwick Arms by one gate just as he came in by another. I went into the bar, where there was a young woman serving, and called for a glass of brandy-and-water. He came in directly, and handed her the letter. She casually looked at it without saying anything, and stuck it up behind the glass over the chimney-piece. What was to be done next?

'“I turned it over in my mind while I drank my brandy-and-water (looking pretty sharp at the letter the while), but I could n't see my way out of it at all. I tried to get lodgings in the house, but there had been a horse-fair, or something of that sort, and it was full. I was obliged to put up somewhere else, but I came backwards and forwards to the bar for a couple of days, and there was the letter, always behind the glass. At last I thought I'd write a letter to Mr. Pigeon myself, and see what that would do. So I wrote one, and posted it, but I purposely addressed it, Mr. John Pigeon, instead of Mr. Thomas Pigeon, to see what *that* would do. In the morning (a very wet morning it was) I watched the postman down the street, and cut into the bar, just before he reached the Warwick Arms. In he came presently with my letter. 'Is there a Mr. John Pigeon staying here?' 'No!—stop a bit though,' says the barmaid; and she took down the letter behind the glass. 'No,' says she, 'it's Thomas, and *he* is not staying here. Would you do me a favour, and post this for me, as it is so wet?' The postman said Yes: she folded it in another envelope, directed it, and gave it him. He put it in his hat, and away he went.

'“I had no difficulty in finding out the direction of that letter. It was addressed, 'Mr. Thomas Pigeon, Post-Office, R——, Northamptonshire, to be left till called for.' Off I started directly for R——. I said the same at the post-office there as I had said at B——; and again I waited three days before anybody came. At last another chap on horseback came. 'Any letters for Mr. Thomas Pigeon?' 'Where

‘Where do you come from?’ ‘New Inn, near R——.’ He got the letter, and away *he* went—at a canter.

‘“I made my inquiries about the New Inn, near R——, and hearing it was a solitary sort of house, a little in the horse line, about a couple of miles from the station, I thought I’d go and have a look at it. I found it what it had been described, and sauntered in, to look about me. The landlady was in the bar, and I was trying to get into conversation with her; asked her how business was, and spoke about the wet weather, and so on; when I saw, through an open door, three men sitting by the fire in a sort of parlour or kitchen, and one of those men, according to the description I had of him, was Tally-ho Thompson!

‘I went and sat down among ’em, and tried to make things agreeable; but they were very shy—wouldn’t talk at all—looked at me and at one another in a way quite the reverse of sociable. I reckoned ’em up, and finding that they were all three bigger men than me, and considering that their looks were ugly—that it was a lonely place—railroad station two miles off—and night coming on—thought I could n’t do better than have a drop of brandy-and-water to keep my courage up. So I called for my brandy-and-water; and as I was sitting drinking it by the fire, Thompson got up and went out.

‘Now the difficulty of it was that I was n’t sure it *was* Thompson, because I had never set eyes on him before; and what I had wanted was to be quite certain of him. However, there was nothing for it now but to follow, and put a bold face upon it. I found him talking outside in the yard with the landlady. It turned out afterwards that he was wanted by a Northampton officer for something else, and that, knowing that officer to be pock-marked (as I am myself), he mistook me for him. As I have observed, I found him talking to the landlady outside. I put my hand upon his shoulder—this way—and said, “Tally-ho Thompson, it’s no use. I know you. I’m an officer from London, and I take you into custody for felony!” “That be d—d!” says Tally-ho Thompson.

‘We went back into the house, and the two friends began to cut up rough, and their looks did’nt please me at all, I assure you. “Let the man go. What are you going to do with him?” “I’ll tell you what I’m going to do with him. I’m going to take him to London tonight, as sure as I’m alive. I’m not alone here, whatever you may think. You mind your own business, and keep yourselves to yourselves. It’ll be better for you, for I know you both very well.” I’d never seen or heard of ’em in all my life, but my bouncing cowed ’em a bit, and they kept off, while Thompson was making ready to go. I thought to myself, however, that they might be coming after me on the dark road to rescue Thompson; so I said to the landlady, “What men have you got in the house, Missis?” “We haven’t got no men here,” she says, sulkily. “You have got an ostler, I suppose?” “Yes, we’ve got an ostler.” “Let me see him.” Presently he came, and a shaggy-headed young fellow he was. “Now attend to me, young man,” says I; “I’m a Detective Officer from London. This man’s name is Thompson. I have taken him into custody for felony. I’m going to

take him to the railroad station. I call upon you, in the Queen's name, to assist me; and mind you, my friend, you'll get yourself into more trouble than you know of, if you don't!" You never saw a person open his eyes so wide. "Now, Thompson, come along!" says I. But when I took out the handcuffs, Thompson cries, "No! None of that! I won't stand *them*! I'll go along with you quiet, but I won't bear none of that!" "Tally-ho Thompson," I said, "I'm willing to behave as a man to you, if you are willing to behave as a man to me. Give me your word that you will come peaceably along, and I don't want to handcuff you." "I will," says Thompson, "but I'll have a glass of brandy first." "I don't care if I've another," said I. "We'll have two more, Missis," said the friends; "and con-found you, Constable, you'll give your man a drop, won't you?" I was agreeable to that, so we had it all round, and then my man and I took Tally-ho Thompson safe to the railroad, and I carried him to London that night. He was afterwards acquitted on account of a defect in the evidence; and I understand he always praises me up to the skies, and says I'm one of the best of men."

The largest of all the classes of thieves, and that which employs the most extensive range of intellect, of age, and of dress, is the pickpocket. From the first-rate thief who 'works' about the banks for six or nine months until he gets a 'good thing,' to the miserable urchin who filches a pocket-handkerchief, how vast a descent! Although strung together by the common thread of crime, and pursuing, as it were, the same line of business, a duke could not, and certainly would not, look down upon a street-sweeper with half the hauteur that the leading rogues do upon the Fagin-led urchin who replenishes with bandanas the stalls of Field-lane. The popular notion of swell-mobsmen is far wide of the truth. It is supposed that they may be at once recognised by a certain ultra-foppish manner of dressing, and an excess of jewellery, whereas the aim of a professor of the 'conveying' art is to go about his occupation unobserved, for to be known to the police is to be disappointed of his booty. He has his clothes built by the most correct tailor, and gets himself up as much like a gentleman as possible; the necessities of his art, it is true, oblige him to carry a coat over his arm in all weathers, but so may any veritable man of fashion, without creating suspicion. Still though he may manage to pass free in a crowd, and frequent fashionable assemblies without being suspected by the public, the professed thief-catcher is rarely to be deceived by appearances. As the hunter marks his quarry by peculiar signs known only to his craft, so the detective can at once ascertain whether the fine gentleman walking carelessly along is 'wrong,' as the slang term is, or a respectable character.

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The principal sign by which a thief may be distinguished in any assembly is the wandering of his eye. Whilst those about him are either listening to a speaker or witnessing a spectacle, his orbits are peering restlessly, not to say anxiously around. When the thief-taker sees this he knows his man. One of the detective police who attended at the laying of the foundation stone of the Duke of Wellington's College, thus explained to us the capture of a gentlemanly-looking person who was present on that occasion:—

'If you ask me to give my reason why I thought this person a thief the moment I saw him, I could not tell you; I did not even know myself. There was something about him, as about all swell mobsmen, that immediately attracted my attention, and led me to bend my eye upon them. He did not appear to notice my watching him, but passed on into the thick of the crowd, but then he turned and looked towards the spot in which I was—this was enough for me, although I had never seen him before, and he had not to my knowledge attempted any pocket. I immediately made my way towards him, and tapping him on the shoulder, asked him abruptly, "What do you do here?" Without any hesitation, he said in an under tone, "I should not have come if I had known I should have seen any of you." I then asked him if he was working with any companions, and he said, "No, upon my word, I am alone;" upon this I took him off to the room which we had provided for the safe keeping of the swell mobsmen.'

This was a daring stroke, but it succeeded as it deserved. If the man had been really honest he would have turned indignantly upon the person who questioned him, but pickpockets are essentially cowards both morally and physically, and they generally come down at once to save trouble, when the officer has his eye upon them, as the opossums were wont to do when they espied that dead shot Colonel Crockett. There is a striking example of this weakness of their tribe in the amusing work of the 'Englishwoman in America.' The scene is an American railway-carriage.

'I had found it necessary to study physiognomy since leaving England, and was horrified by the appearance of my next neighbour. His forehead was low, his deep-set and restless eyes significant of cunning, and I at once set him down as a swindler or pickpocket. My convictions of the truth of my inferences were so strong, that I removed my purse—in which, however, acting by advice, I never carried more than five dollars—from my pocket, leaving in it only my handkerchief and the checks for my baggage, knowing that I could not possibly keep awake the whole morning. In spite of my endeavours to the contrary, I soon sank into an oblivious state, from which I awoke to the consciousness that my companion was withdrawing his hand from my pocket. My first impulse was to make an exclamation; my second, which

which I carried into execution, to ascertain my loss; which I found to be the very alarming one of my baggage-checks; my whole property being thereby placed at this vagabond's disposal, for I knew perfectly well, that if I claimed my trunks without my checks, the acute baggage-master would have set me down as a bold swindler. The keen-eyed conductor was not in the car, and, had he been there, the necessity for habitual suspicion, incidental to his position, would so far have removed his original sentiments of generosity as to make him turn a deaf ear to my request, and there was not one of my fellow-travellers whose physiognomy would have warranted me in appealing to him. So, recollecting that my checks were marked Chicago, and seeing that the thief's ticket bore the same name, I resolved to wait the chapter of accidents, or the re-appearance of my friends. . . . With a whoop like an Indian war-whoop the cars ran into a shed—they stopped—the pick-pocket got up—I got up too—the baggage-master came to the door: "This gentleman has the checks for my baggage," said I, pointing to the thief. Bewildered, he took them from his waistcoat-pocket, gave them to the baggage-master, and went hastily away. I had no inclination to cry "Stop thief!" and had barely time to congratulate myself on the fortunate impulse which had led me to say what I did, when my friends appeared from the next car. They were too highly amused with my recital to sympathise at all with my feelings of annoyance; and one of them, a gentleman filling a high situation in the East, laughed heartily, saying, in a thoroughly American tone, "The English ladies must be 'cute customers if they can outwit Yankee pickpockets."

The quickness and presence of mind of this lady was worthy of the practised skill of the detective who marked his man at the Wellington College ceremonial. That same gathering afforded another example of the cowardice of the swell mob. Immediately they came upon the ground fourteen of them were netted before they had time to try the lightness of their fingers. They were confined in a single room with only two policemen to guard them, yet they never attempted to escape, although their apprehension was illegal, but waited patiently until the crowd had dispersed. When the doors were thrown open they immediately made a rush like so many rats from a trap, and never stopped until they were well out of sight of the police. The rapidity with which they bolted was caused by their desire to avoid being paraded before the assembled constables, a measure which is often taken by the police, in order that they may know their men on another occasion. If, however, the swell mobsman's eye is for ever wandering in search of his prey, so also is that of the detective, and instances may occur when the one may be mistaken for the other. At the opening of the Crystal Palace, a party of detectives distributed among the crowd, observed several foreigners looking about them in a manner calculated to rouse their suspicions.

pitions. These individuals were immediately taken into custody, notwithstanding their strong and vehement expostulations made in very good French. When brought before the inspector, it came out that they were Belgian police, sent over at the request of our Government to keep a look out on the *mauvais sujets* of their own nation.

The swell mobsmen proper, generally work together at races in gangs of from three to seven, those who 'cover,' as it is termed, making a rush to create pressure, in order that the pick-pocket may use his hand without being noticed. In taking watches it is generally supposed that the ring is cut by a pair of wire nippers. This is rarely the case; thieves have no time in operating to use any other implement than their own nimble fingers and the ring of the watch is wrenched off with the utmost ease, as the purchase upon it is very great. A police magistrate, of large experience, suggests that the way to baffle the fraternity would be to *make the ring work upon a swivel*. Inferior classes of thieves work in smaller 'schools,' say of a couple of women and a boy, whose little hand is capitally adapted for the work. Whilst one woman pushes, the lad attempts the pocket of the person nearest him, and the third 'watches it off,' as it is called; if she observes that the youth's attentions have been noticed, she immediately draws him back with a 'Ha Jhonny, why do you push the lady so!' Look to your pockets, good reader, when you see forward little Jhonnies about—especially at railway stations. Such places are the chief resort of this class of pickpockets, and we hear that theatres and churches, just as the people are coming out, are favourite haunts—the women creating a stoppage at the door, and the children taking advantage of it. Women's pockets are much more easily picked than men's, for the reason that the opening through the dress to it is larger, and it hangs by its weight free of the person. In a crowd the operation is easy enough, as the general pressure masks the movement of the depredator's hand; when the victim is walking a more artistic management is required. The hand is inserted at the moment that the right leg is thrown forward, because the pocket then hangs behind the limb, an essential condition for the thief, as the slightest motion is otherwise felt upon the leg. The trowser-pockets of a man are never attempted in the streets: but in a crowd, as at a race, he can be cleaned out by a school of mobsmen of everything in his possession, with little fear of detection. The first step is to select their victim; to do this demands some caution; and if they cannot see whether he carries a purse, and if they have had no opportunity of watching him pull it out, they will feel all his pockets. The 'Spotter,' as he is called,
passes

passes his hand across the clothes seemingly in the most accidental manner; sometimes twice when he is in doubt. The fact that there is booty being ascertained, the confederates surround him, and wait for the coming off of a race. Just as the horse is at the winning-post there is a rush forward of the crowd: of this the mobsmen take advantage, while the victim, perhaps, for better security, keeps his hand over his pocket, but in vain. At a critical moment the man behind tips his hat over his eyes, instinctively he lifts up his hand to set it right, and the next moment his pocket is hanging inside out. Few betting men who attend much at races have escaped being thoroughly cleaned out. It is rarely that Londoners are robbed in the streets; they are too busy, and move on too fast. Country people form the chief game of the light-fingered gentry: as they stare about, they instantly betray themselves to their watchful enemy, and in the midst of their admiration at everything about them, fall an easy prey. The thief in search of purses or handkerchiefs always makes his way trout-like against the stream. There are places, which, to carry out our piscatorial analogy, seem 'ground baited' for these fishers. Temple Bar, St. Paul's Churchyard, the Shoreditch end of Bishopsgate, Holborn, Cheapside, and other crowded thoroughfares, all afford excellent sport for the pickpockets, and any one acquainted with their 'manners and customs' may occasionally see them exercising their craft at these localities, if he watches narrowly. They look out for a temporary stoppage in the stream of people, and a horse fallen in the highway, an altercation between a cabman and his fare, a fight, a crowd round a picture-shop, are all excellent opportunities, of which they instantly take advantage.

The May-meetings at Exeter-hall, however, form the most splendid harvests for the pickpocket. If the members of the various religious denominations who flock thither escape the hustle on the hall stairs, they are waited upon with due attention in the omnibus. Ladies and gentlemen who attend these May-meetings are well known to be 'omnibus people:' they lodge or visit, for the short period of their sojourn in town, either at Islington, Clapham, or Camberwell, and the 'Waterloos' and the 'Victorias' are followed by the fraternity as certainly as a sick ship in the tropics is followed by the sharks. Omnibuses are generally 'worked' by a man and a woman; the woman seats herself on the right-hand side of the most respectable-looking female passenger she can see, and the man if possible takes a place opposite the individual to be operated upon. If she be a young person, the man 'stares her out of countenance,' and, whilst confused by his impertinence, the 'pal,' by the aid of a cloak thrown over her
arm,

arm, or, if a man, by passing his hand through the pocket of his cloak made open on the inside for the purpose, is able to rifle her pockets at leisure. If the victim be a middled-aged or elderly lady, her attention is engaged in conversation whilst the clearing out process is going on. The trick done, the confederates get out at the first convenient opportunity. It is very rarely that a pickpocket pursues his avocation alone; but a case has been reported lately in the newspapers, which proves that a clever artist can work single-handed. A man named William Henry Barber was charged at the Worship-street court with robbing a lady of her portemonnaie in a Stoke Newington omnibus: he was well known to the police, but had generally escaped by his adroitness. His manœuvres were thus described by a lady, a resident of Stoke Newington, who had been robbed by him on a previous occasion:—

‘She had got into an omnibus,’ she said, ‘at Kingsland, several weeks back, to convey her to town, and found herself next to a gentlemanly-looking stout man, who was dressed in sober black, with a white neckerchief, and apparently a Dissenting minister. The gentleman gradually encroached upon her, and pressed upon her, but she thought nothing of it, as he was very intent upon reading a newspaper the whole way—so intent, indeed, that she did not see his face, and he did not seem to notice that his newspaper several times partially covered her dress. The stranger shortly after got out, and she did so also in a few minutes, and upon then placing her hand in her pocket to make some purchase she found that her purse had been stolen, and with it seven sovereigns and a quantity of silver.’

The ‘Dissenting Minister’ had evidently worked the Stoke Newington road regularly, and no doubt the ‘sober black’ and the white handkerchief was assumed with a perfect knowledge of the ‘serious’ class of passenger he was likely to encounter in omnibuses running to that suburb. Robberies of this kind have enormously increased of late. The security with which pickpockets can work, withdrawn as they are from the surveillance of the police, is a great incentive to thieves to take to this particular line of business.

The earnings of what is called a ‘school’ of boys, who pick pockets in concert, under the eye of a master, must be considerable, for we were shown, some time since, a bill made out by one of those Fagins for the board and lodging of his hopeful youths, from which it appeared that the regular charge for each was two guineas a week! This person was well known some years since on the Surrey side of the water, as Mo Clarke. He attended races, dressed in the deepest black, with his young assistants in jackets and turned down collars; and the whole
group,

group, to the eye of the general observer, presented the sad spectacle of a widower left with a family of young children to lament the loss of an attached mother. Their appearance disarmed suspicion, and enabled them to empty the pockets of those around them at their leisure. The subsequent fate of two of the children, though nursed in hypocrisy and vice, proves that the old saying, 'once a thief always a thief,' is not invariably correct, for they are, at the present moment, flourishing cab and omnibus proprietors.

The advantage of working out of sight of the police has lately led some of the swell mob to go to church, prayer-book in hand, and pick pockets either in the pews or while the congregation is coming down the aisle. Women are the greatest adepts at this kind of thieving, and they are constant attendants at confirmations, plundering in sight of the most touching rite of the Church. The dress of these females is perfect enough, but with them, as with most other members of the swell mob, the finish is entirely on the outside; they scarcely ever have any education, and the moment they open their mouths they betray themselves. This fact is of especial service in detecting another large class of thieves—the shoplifters. A lady cannot go into the shop of any silkmercer or linendraper without being struck with the rude manner in which the shopman clears the counter immediately the purchaser takes her seat. The plundering to which they are subjected is some excuse for their suspicions, for the assistants cannot tell at first who the customer may be, and if expensive goods were left exposed while their backs were turned serious robberies would inevitably occur. The value of the manner of speech, as diagnostic of character, was exemplified not long since at Messrs. Swan and Edgar's, where a lady-like person asked to look at some 'wallenciens;' a watch was kept upon the 'lady,' and she was speedily detected secreting a card of valuable lace.

The extent of pilfering carried on even by ladies of rank and position is very great; there are persons possessing a mania of this kind so well known among the shopkeeping community, that their addresses and descriptions are passed from hand to hand for mutual security. The attendants allow them to secrete what they like without seeming to observe them, and afterwards send a bill with the prices of the goods purloined to their houses. Jewellers' shops are especially open to a class of thieving termed 'palming.' One of the gang goes in first, and engages the attention of the assistant, then another drops in and makes inquiries for some article which is on the other side of the shop; then perhaps a third, without recognising his companions, follows

lows and asks for something, saying he is in a hurry, as he has to be off by a certain train, and at the same time pulls out his watch to show his eagerness to be served. The shopkeeper's attention is thus diverted from the confederates, who rob the trays before them of their valuable contents. Some of these fellows are so dexterous that if they perceive any person watching them they can 'palm' back the goods they have secreted, and, on being accused, put on an appearance of injured innocence which makes the tradesman believe that his own eyes must have deceived him. The higher order of thieves will sometimes 'ring the changes,' as it is called. This must be ranked among the fine arts of swindling. They will call on first-rate houses and request to be shown valuable pieces of jewellery, such as diamonds, necklaces, and bracelets, which are kept in cases. Having noted the case they go away, promising to call with 'a lady.' A case exactly similar is then made, with which they call a second time, and ask to see the identical bracelet they before admired, and substituting the empty case for that containing the jewels, depart with an apparent inability to decide upon the purchase. Many robberies to a heavy amount have taken place in this manner. Jewellers are liable to be attacked from without as well as from within. From the narration communicated by a prisoner to Captain Chesterton, when Governor of Cold-bath-fields Prison, we extract the following method of procedure in what is termed 'starring the glaze':—

'One or two parties divert attention while another "stars." This is either done by a diamond, or by inserting a small penknife through the putty, near the corner of a pane, and cracking it; the wet finger carries the crack in any direction; an angle is generally formed. The piece is wrought to and through, and then removed; if necessary another piece is "starred" to allow of the free ingress of the hand. In a retired neighbourhood an opportunity is taken of tying the door, in order to prevent any one coming out, and on passing of a heavy carriage the hand is driven through a square of glass, upon which has been laid a piece of strong paper, coated with treacle, to prevent noise from the glass falling, and then articles of value are removed. This is termed spanking the glaze. At other times the parties intending to star go a night or two before and break one of the lower squares of glass, a watch is then put upon the shop to know when the square is renewed, which, of course, the putty being soft, can be removed at pleasure; a piece of leather, upon which is spread some pitch, being applied to the square to prevent it falling when pushed in, much time is saved this way.'

We often hear of the march of intellect in thieving, and the height to which its professors have carried it in these latter days.

days. There could be no greater delusion; all the tricks of card-sharpers, ring-droppers, purse-cutters, &c., are centuries old, and it does not appear that they are performed a bit more adroitly now than in the days of Elizabeth. Mr. Charles Knight, in his charming paper on London Rogueries, gives examples of the tricks of the Shakspearian era, which prove, as he observes, that pickpocketing in all its forms was taught as cleverly in the days of the Tudors as by Fagin and his boys in 'Oliver Twist.' His account of a school of thieves discovered in 1585, is an instance:—

'Among the rest they found one Wolton, a gentleman born, and sometimes a merchant of good credit, but fallen by time into decay. This man kept an ale-house at Smart's Key, near Billingsgate, and after, for some misdemeanour, put down, he reared up a new trade of life; and in the same house he procured all the cut-purses in the city to repair to his house. There was a schoolhouse set up to learn young boys to cut purses. Two devices were hung up—one was a pocket and another was a purse. The pocket had in it certain counters, and was hung about with hawk's bells, and over the top did hang a little scaring bell; the purse had silver in it, and he that could take out a counter without any noise was allowed to be a public Foyster; and he that could take a piece of silver out of the purse without noise of any of the bells, was adjudged a judicial nypper, according to their terms of art.'

The tricks we have enumerated all require cunning, lightness of hand, and address, rather than strength and courage. As the swell-mobsmen stand at the head of this school, so the cracksmen or housebreaker stands on the highest pinnacle of the other great division of crime which attains its ends by force and courage. Since the ticket of leave system has been in action this department has flourished to an alarming degree. The released convict re-enters the community with the enlarged experience of the hulks and with a brutal disregard of danger. Suddenly thrown upon his resources, with a blasted character, society leaves him no better means of livelihood than his old course of crime. One fellow who was brought up to Bow-Street had committed no less than four burglaries within three weeks after he had been liberated! Bands of ruffians, with crape masks and with deadly arms, stand by the bed at dead of night, and, after robbing and terrifying their victims, leave them gagged and bound in a manner that would disgrace banditti. It is true these burglaries are confined to lonely houses situated in the country; but housebreaking has been on the increase of late even in the metropolis. Some of the craftsmen have become so expert that no system of bolts or bars is capable of keeping them out. It
may

may be as well to state, however, that a sheet of iron, on the inside of a panel, will often foil the most expert burglars ; and all operators of this class who have opened their minds upon the subject to the prison authorities admit that it is totally impossible, without alarming the inmates, to force a window that is lightly barred with a thin iron bar and supplied with a bell. A shutter thus protected, and which gives a little with pressure, will not allow the centrebit to work without creating a motion which is sure to ring the alarm.

Most burglaries of any importance, especially those in which much plate is stolen, are what is termed 'put up,'—that is, the thieves are in correspondence with servants in the house, or with those that have been discarded. Many robberies, that appear to have been accomplished in a most wonderful manner from without, are committed from within. In 'put up' robberies, however, the thieves seldom allow the confederate in the house to know when the robbery is to come off, for fear of what is termed a 'double plant,' that is, lest the person who originally 'put up' the robbery should, from the stings of conscience, or, for other reasons, have officers in waiting to apprehend them. It is quite sufficient for adroit burglars to know where the valuables are kept, and the general arrangements of the house. We are indebted to the Yankees for an extremely clever method of gaining entrance to hotel bed-chambers, even when the inmate has fastened the door. The end of the key which projects through the lock is seized by a pair of steel pliers, and the door is unlocked whilst the traveller sleeps in fancied security. Several robberies of this kind have lately taken place. The most ingenious pilfering of the 'put up' kind we ever heard of occurred many years ago in a large town in Hampshire. A gang of first-rate cracksmen having heard that a certain banker in a country town was in the habit of keeping large sums of money in the strong box of the banking-house in which he himself dwelt, determined to carry it off. For this purpose the most astute and respectable-looking middle-aged man of the gang was despatched to the town, to reconnoitre the premises and get an insight into the character of their victim. The banker, he ascertained, belonged to the sect of Primitive Methodists, and held what is termed 'love-feasts.' The cracksmen accordingly got himself up as a preacher, studied the peculiar method of holding forth in favour with the sect, wore a white neckhandkerchief, assumed the nasal whine, and laid in a powerful stock of Scripture phrases. Thus armed, he took occasion to hold forth, and that so 'movingly' that the rumour of his 'discourses' soon came to the ears of the banker, and he was admitted as a guest.

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His foot once inside the doors, he rapidly 'improved the occasion' in his own peculiar manner. The intimacy grew, and he was speedily on such terms of friendship with every one in the house that he came and went without notice. He acquainted himself with the position of the strong box, and took impressions in wax of the wards of the locks. These he sent up to his pals in town, and in due course was supplied with false keys. With these he opened the strong box, made exact notes of the value and nature of its contents, and replaced everything as he found it. A plan of the street, the house, and of the particular chamber in which the treasure was kept, was then prepared and forwarded to the confederates in London. He persuaded his kind friend the banker to hold a love-feast on the evening fixed for the final stroke. A few minutes before the time appointed for the robbery, he proposed that the whole assembly should join with him in raising their voices to the glory of the Lord. The cracksman laboured hard and long to keep up the hymn, and noise enough was made to cover the designs of less adroit confederates than his own. The pseudo-preacher, to disarm suspicion, remained with his friend for a fortnight after the theft, and on his departure all the women of the 'persuasion' wept that so good a man should go away from among them!

In a large number of cases the servants are only the unconscious instruments in the hands of the housebreaker. We will venture to say that more house robberies are committed through the vanity of servant girls than from any other cause. A smart young fellow, having heard that plunder is to be obtained in a certain house, manages to pick up an acquaintance with one of the female domestics, and makes violent love to her. We all know how communicative young women are to their sweet-hearts, and the consequence is that in a short time he gets from her every particular that he requires, the habits of the family, the times of their going out, the position of the plate-chest, and the fastenings of the doors. Where only a servant-of-all-work is kept, the process is more simple. The lover calls in the absence of the family at church, proposes a walk, and takes charge of the street-door key, which, unseen to the girl, is passed to a confederate; and whilst the polite lover and his lass are enjoying the cool of the evening, the house is being ransacked. An investigation took place at the Lambeth Police-court a few months ago, where the poor girl, who had been made the tool of the housebreaker, attempted to commit suicide in order to escape the consequences of her folly. Her account of the manner in which the 'plant' was made upon her, affords a good example of the style of 'putting up' a house robbery:—

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'The young man with whom she had casually become acquainted called after the family had gone out, and she asked him into the back parlour. He then asked her to dress and go out with him, and he remained in the back parlour while she dressed. While in the back parlour he asked her if she could get a glass of wine, and she told him she could not, as the wine was locked up. He said it did not matter, as they should have one when they went out, and that he expected to meet his sister at the Elephant and Castle. They then left the house and went for a walk, and on reaching the Elephant and Castle remained there for some time, waiting for the young man's sister, but did not see her. They next proceeded to a public-house, where they had a glass of brandy and water, and the young man accompanied her to the end of the street, where they parted, with the intention that they should meet at 1 o'clock on the following day and spend the afternoon together. On going to unlock the door, she found it ajar, and on going in found that the house had been robbed. On discovering this she did not know what to do, but thought she would make up a story about thieves having got into the house, and took up the knife and chopped her hand; but after this, not knowing how to face her master or mistress after being so wicked, she took up the knife again, intending to kill herself, and inflicted the wound on her throat.'

This confession was enough for the officers, and her 'young man,' with his confederates, were caught and convicted. The frequency of these robberies should put housekeepers on their guard as to what followers are allowed, lest the 'young man' should turn out to be a regular cracksman in disguise. We bid the housekeeper also beware of another danger that sometimes threatens him, when he has an empty house for a neighbour. Thieves always, if possible, make use of it as a basis of operations against the others. They creep towards the dusk of the evening, when the inmates are generally down stairs, along the parapet and enter successively the bed-rooms of the adjoining tenements. As many as half-a-dozen houses have thus been robbed on the same occasion. Police constables always keep a careful watch upon these untenanted houses, by placing private marks on some part of the premises; and if any of these signs are disturbed, they suspect that something is wrong, and make a further examination. In the City, where an immense amount of valuable property is stored in warehouses, the private marks are much more used than in other portions of the Metropolis, and are continually changed, lest they should become known to thieves and be turned to their advantage.

Professional beggars are almost, without exception, thieves, but as they are generally recruited from the lowest portion of the population, they never attain any of the higher ranks, but confine themselves

themselves to petty acts of filching, or to cunning methods of circumventing the honest. The half-naked wretch that appears to be addressing the basement floor in piteous terms, has a fine eye for the spoons he may see cleaning below, and the shipwrecked sailor just cast ashore from St. Giles's, would be an awkward person to meet with in a dark suburban lane. Professional beggars are migratory in their habits. They travel from town to town, not in the filthy rags we are accustomed to see them in, but in good clothing; the rags are carried by their women, and are only donned when they are nearing the place in which they intend to beg.

There is an audacious class of thieves, termed 'dragsmen,' who plunder vehicles. At the West End they chiefly operate upon cabs going to or coming from the railway stations. As this kind of thieving is carried on under the very eyes of the foot-passengers, it is rarely attempted except in the dusk of the evening. The dragsman manages to hang on behind as though he were merely taking a surreptitious ride, but in reality to cut leather thongs and undo fastenings, and be able at any convenient moment to slip off a box or parcel unobserved. The carelessness of the public is the best confederate of this sort of thief. In the case of Lady Ellesmere's jewels the box was put not inside, but *outside* the cab in which the valet rode, and not in the middle of other boxes, but the *hindmost* of all—just the place in which the dragsman would have planted it. It is now known that the robbery was effected between Berkeley-square and Grosvenor-square, as a man was seen with the package standing at the corner of Mount-street, Davies-street, bargaining with a cabman to take him to the City. The man and his booty were driven to a public-house, but the box must have been shifted immediately; for in two hours from the time it was lost it was found rifled of its contents in a waste piece of ground in Shore-ditch. It might perhaps for a moment be suspected that this was a 'put up' robbery, but we are precluded from adopting this view of the case, as it is, we believe, suspected that the man sold the jewels, which were worth perhaps 25,000*l.*, for a very trifling sum. He must have been entirely ignorant of their value, and having by a chance stroke obtained a magnificent booty, threw it away for an old song. Not many weeks after this extraordinary robbery, a plate-chest of her Majesty was stolen from a van between Buckingham Palace and the Great Western Railway. There were persons walking alongside the vehicle, and it seems marvellous how it could be possible to remove unseen a heavy chest under such conditions; but every facility was given in this case, as in
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the former, for the plunderers to do their work unmolested. In the first place the box was put in such a position that its bottom came flush with the ledge of the van. Next the journey from Buckingham Palace to Paddington was in the driver's idea too far to go without baiting on the way: therefore bait he did at a little public-house, and every person in charge of the property went inside to drink. According to their own account they did not stop more than a minute; this minute was enough—like Laertes, the thief might have said, 'twill serve.' In this instance also the box was found empty in a field at Shoreditch, and it is believed that a ticket-of-leave man had a hand in both robberies.

The habits of thieves have been somewhat modified since the institution of the new police, and the adoption of the principle of prevention instead of detection, in dealing with the criminal population. In the time of the old Bow-street Runners the different classes of thieves had their houses of call, in which they regularly assembled. The arrangement was winked at by the magistrates, and approved by the officers, as useful to them in looking after offenders that were wanted. John Townsend, when speaking of the supposed advantage of these flash-houses, said, 'I know five-and-twenty, or six-and-twenty years ago, there were houses where we could pop in, and I have taken three or four, or five or six of them at a time, and three or four of them have been convicted, and yet the public-house was tolerably well conducted too.' Perhaps officers who lived upon the capture of thieves had good reason for maintaining these flash-houses, in which most robberies were concocted; the case is far different now that the police are paid by day rather than piece-work, by weekly salary rather than by blood-money, and all known flash-houses have long been discontinued. Some fifteen years since a few still remained in the Borough, but Superintendent Haynes broke them up, and rooted them out. Thieves cannot meet now in respectable houses, for if they did the constables would become aware of the fact, and the landlord would speedily lose his licence. The passing of the Common Lodging-House Act has also assisted in dispersing the desperate gangs, one of which, known under the name of 'The Forty Thieves,' infested the town a few years since. It may be asked, what sort of mutual fellowship exists among these outcasts who live below the surface of 'society?' Of the seven or eight thousand thieves in the metropolis very few are acquainted with each other; they are in fact divided into as many sections as are to be found among honest men. Beyond their own peculiar set they do not associate with their kind. The swell mobsman is as distinct a being from the cracksman as a Bond-street dandy from a South-Sea islander; they do not even

talk the same slang, and could no more practise each other's art, than a shoemaker could make a table. These natural divisions of the under-ground world of rogues immensely facilitate the operations of the police. The manner in which they do their work is also in some cases a pretty good guide to the detectives. Skill and individuality is evinced in unlawful as well as in lawful pursuits—in the manner in which a door is forced, as much as in the style a picture is painted; and a clever officer, after carefully examining a door or window, will sometimes say, this looks like 'Whiteheaded Bob's work,' or 'Billy-go-fast' must have had a hand in this job.

The leading swell mobsmen are the only class of thieves who 'touch,' if we may so term it, the ordinary society of better men. The practitioner in this line must dress and be as much like a gentleman as possible, in order to pursue his avocation without suspicion. Accordingly, he lives with a woman, who passes for his wife, in genteel lodgings, and generally in the drawing-room floor. As his earnings are often very large, he has everything about him of the most expensive kind; his style of living is luxurious, and he drinks nothing less than hock and champagne. He sometimes keeps a banking account, and one man named Brown, lately apprehended, had a balance at his banker's of 800*l.*! As the members of this fraternity work wholly in the daytime, going out in the morning and returning in the evening, the landlady believes that they are engaged in mercantile pursuits, and have business in the city; and as it is part of their game to pay their way liberally, she esteems them to be model lodgers!

The domestic habits of thieves are all pretty much alike; fluctuating between the prison and the hulks, they exhibit the usual characteristics of men engaged in dangerous enterprises. They mainly pass their time when not at 'work' in gambling, smoking, and drinking, and in listening to the adventures of their companions. It must be remembered, however, that the professed thief, even if he drinks, is never *drunk*; he is employed in desperate undertakings which require him to have his wits about him quite as much, if not more than the honest man. When a pickpocket is flush of money he spends it in the most lavish manner—takes a tour with his female companion to the Isle of Wight, or to any other place he has a wish to see, and puts up at the best hotels. In some of these trips he thinks nothing of spending 30*l.* in a fortnight, and when the money is gone he comes back again 'to work.' Thieves are generally faithful to each other; indeed the community of danger in which they live develops this virtue to an unusual extent. If a 'pal' is apprehended, they cheerfully put down their guinea a-piece to

to provide him with counsel for his trial, and if he should be imprisoned they make a collection for him when he comes out. A curious circumstance is the rapidity with which news of any of the body having been arrested travels among his companions. We are assured that no sooner is a young thief captured and taken to the station-house, although he may have been plundering far away from his home, than some associate brings him his dinner or tea as a matter of course.

The best class of swell mobsmen sometimes act upon the joint-stock principle 'with limited liabilities.' When a good thing is in prospect—a gold-dust robbery or a bank robbery—it is not unusual for several of them to 'post' as much as 50*l.* a-piece in order to provide the sinews of war to carry on the plan in a business-like manner. If in the end the job succeeds the money advanced is carefully paid back to the persons advancing it—several of whom have lived for years on plunder thus obtained, without the police being able to detect them. Often the receivers make these adventures in crime, and plot the robbery of a jeweller's shop with as much coolness and shrewdness as though it were an ordinary mercantile speculation, and the produce is disposed of in the same business-like manner. Watches are what is termed, 're-christened,' that is, the maker's names and numbers are taken out and fresh ones put in; they are then exported in large quantities to America. All articles of plate are immediately thrown into the crucible and melted down, so as to place them beyond the hope of identification. In many cases when the receiver cannot thoroughly depend upon the thief, it is, we believe, customary to employ intermediate receivers so as to render it impossible to trace the property to its ultimate destination. It must not be supposed that the passion for gain is always the sole incentive to robbery. 'Oh how I do love thieving! If I had thousands I'd still be a thief;' such were the words uttered by a youth in Coldbath-fields Prison, and overheard by the Governor.*

If the machinery for preventing and detecting crime has so vastly improved within this present century, the same may be said for the method of dispensing justice. Up to as late as 1792, the magistrates of Bow-street—the first 'police-office,' as it was then termed—were paid in that most obnoxious of all modes, by fees, which were often obtained in a manner so disgraceful that the magistrates got the name of 'trading justices' and 'basket justices.' Our old friend John Townsend, whom we

* We have extracted this anecdote from the very interesting work just published by Captain Chesterton, entitled 'Revelations of Prison Life.'

must summon once more to our aid, gives an insight into their proceedings, and he knew them well. He said, 'The plan used to be to issue warrants, and to take up all the poor devils in the streets, and then there was the bailing them, 2s. 4d., which the magistrate had. *In taking up a hundred girls, that would make, at 2s. 4d., 11l. 13s. 4d.* They sent none to jail, *for the bailing them was so much better!*' The old Bow-street worthy then draws a picture of the magistrate settling the amount of these ill-gotten fees with his clerk on the Monday morning. The 'basket justices' were so called, because they allowed themselves to be bought over by presents of baskets of game. These enormities were so glaring that, according to Townsend, 'they at last led to the Police Bill, and it was a great blessing to the public to do away with these men, for they were nothing better than the encouragers of blacklegs, vice, and plunderers. There is no doubt about it.' In 1792 seven other 'offices' were established, namely, Queen-square, Great Marlborough-street, Hatton Garden, Worship-street, Lambeth, Shadwell, and Union Street, each office having three magistrates, who did the duties alternately. These, by the addition of the suburban courts, have since been augmented to eleven. They form the judgment-seats to which all offenders in this great capital of 2,500,000 inhabitants are brought either to be punished summarily, or to be remanded to the sessions to take their trial.

The police-courts may be likened to so many shafts sunk in the smooth surface of society, through which the seething mass of debauchery, violence, and crime, are daily bubbling up before the public eye. A spectator cannot sit beside the magistrate on the bench for a couple of hours without feeling that there are currents of wickedness flowing among the population as fixedly as the trade-winds in the tropics. A panorama of sin passes before his eye which he shudders to think is only like a single thread drawn from the fabric of vice which underlies the whole system of elegant, punctilious, and accomplished metropolitan life. On every case that comes before him the magistrate unassisted has to decide rapidly and justly, unless he desires to call down upon his head the thunders of an ever-watchful press. In addition to his judicial duties, he has to answer numberless questions, and to give advice upon law points to distressed persons: and all this amid a pestilential atmosphere which is calculated to depress both body and mind. Nevertheless, the work is done admirably, and justice, as speedy as that dispensed by cadis in Eastern tales, and much more impartial, is dealt to the throng brought before him.

From

From an analysis of the Criminal Returns of the Metropolitan Police, it is apparent that crimes have their peculiar seasons. Thus attempts to commit suicide generally occur in the months of June, July, and August, and rarely in November, according to the commonly-accepted notion; comfort, it is evident, is considered even in the accomplishment of this desperate act. Common assaults and drunkenness also multiply wonderfully in the dog-days. In the winter, on the contrary, burglaries increase, and, for some unknown reason, the uttering of counterfeit coin.

The character of the cases brought before the police-courts varies, in some degree, according to the neighbourhood and other causes. Bow-street still maintains the pre-eminence over the other courts which it exercised in the old days, when the horse-patrol and the detective police, known as the Bow-street runners, were in existence, and this it does in consequence of its special jurisdiction over persons who are amenable to foreign law. The cases of this class—arson, murder, or bankruptcy—are heard in private, generally by the chief magistrate, and the depositions are forwarded direct to the Foreign Office. Ticket-of-leave men who have committed fresh offences, are here deprived of their tickets, and apprehended by a warrant from the Home-Office. All Inland Revenue and Post-Office cases, such as stealing from letters, are adjudicated upon exclusively at Bow-Street, which is, in fact, *the* Government office.

The Thames Police deals with mutinies and murders committed on the high seas, and all disputes under the Mercantile Marine Act come as a matter of course to this court, together with the major portion of the criminals the scene of whose offences is in the docks and on the river. Drunkenness, the vice of the sailors, and the insubordination arising out of it, form a very large portion of the charges of the district. Worship-street is famous, or rather infamous, for wife-beaters. The reason is curious, and supplies a hint to philanthropists to reform the dwellings of the poor, rather than pass harsh acts of parliament against the husbands, which in many cases only serve to aggravate the evils arising from their brutality. The majority of the wife-beaters come from Bethnal-green, where there are a great number of large old mansions let out to the working-classes in floors or flats. Sometimes as many as twenty families live in the same house. The children play about in the passages as a neutral ground, disputes arise, and the mothers take the parts of their respective offspring with discordant fierceness. This drives the men to the public houses, where they drink their porters *iced* and listen to more pleasant sounds in the shape of gratuitous concerts.

concerts. The wives in turn are driven to the tavern doors to seek their mates, with words not too conciliatory, and are brutally assaulted by the drunken husbands, who are taken up the next day and get six months' imprisonment, *the family being in most instances irretrievably broken up and ruined thereby.* Some of the magistrates, seeing the baleful working of the system, have attempted a solution of the difficulty by making the husband promise to allow the wife to receive his weekly wages from his master, whose consent to the arrangement has been given. In many instances this plan has worked well, since the husband knows that on the slightest infringement of the agreement his spouse may give him six months' imprisonment, judgment in the case having been only suspended. But this power again is often abused by the woman, and it is a common thing for them on the least threat of their mates to say, "Mind what you are about, or I will give you "a sixer."

Cases of Begging are principally heard at the Marlborough-street Police Court, as the rich streets in its neighbourhood are the main scenes of the nuisance. Blind beggars especially affect Regent-street, Oxford-street, and Piccadilly, the most thronged thoroughfares in the West End. We warn our readers against their charitable tendencies for these people. If the truth was known, the cry, "Pity the poor blind!" far from exciting their pity, would arouse their disgust. Blind beggars, as a class, are the most profligate scoundrels in the metropolis, thinking of nothing but their grosser appetites, and plundering the charitable for their satisfaction. One of these men lately taken into custody was discovered seated at the breakfast-table with ham and fourteen poached eggs before him! At the Westminster Police Court the foot guards are continually visitors against their will; but it is remarked as extraordinary that not one of the horse guards has been charged here for years.

A custom has grown up of making the police magistrates the almoners of the public in cases which have attracted the attention of the charitable through the medium of the press. Many a poor forsaken creature has suddenly found himself not only famous, but comparatively rich, by the simple process of telling his tale in one of these courts. The news of it flies through the country in the pages of the 'Times,' and in the course of two or three mornings the magistrate is oppressed with post-office orders for the benefit of the sufferer, the donors simply requesting that their gifts should be acknowledged in the public journals. The annual receipts at the different courts for special cases must amount to a large sum; and there is in addition a constant flow of small sums towards the poor-box, the contents of which are distributed

distributed at the discretion of the magistrate. The annual income from this latter source is about 300*l.* per annum at Marlborough-street, and at Bow-street respectively, the greater portion of which is given to deserving objects whose cases have come before the court, and the remainder is dispensed at Christmas to the poor of the neighbourhood in the shape of coals and candles. We are particularly anxious to make this fact known, in order that the charitable may be aware that their gifts are well bestowed. The magistrates do not, we believe, encourage these donations, as they consider that the distribution of alms is incompatible with their office; but, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that a vast amount of temporary aid is thus given to persons whose needs cannot be satisfied by the Union workhouse. Deserving people are often furnished with the means of obtaining a livelihood, workmen whose tools have been burned in a conflagration supplied with new ones, and in some cases women left behind by their husbands under circumstances of peculiar hardship have been provided with a passage to Australia. The thousands in England who only want to know where genuine misfortune exists, to hasten to its relief, have a greater guarantee that they will not be imposed upon by these cases at the police-courts than by private solicitations, as the magistrates have the means of sifting the statements of applicants. Nevertheless even these astute public servants are now and then deceived, and comparatively large sums have been received by them for persons who have afterwards been ascertained to be unworthy of relief, and in instances where the discovery took place in time, the money by the direction of the donors has been transferred to truer objects of charity.

The fees, penalties, and forfeitures received at the eleven metropolitan police courts and by the justices of the exterior police districts are very considerable; in 1855 they amounted to 11,315*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.* This sum goes towards defraying the expenses of the courts, which, together with the salaries of the officers and other items, amounted in the same year to 63,021*l.* 0*s.* 5*d.* The expenditure may be considered reasonable, when it is remembered that 60,000 cases are annually disposed of, many of which require a minute knowledge of statute and of common law. The chief improvement required is the improvement of the buildings. The Thames Police Court is the only one at all suitable for its purpose. An enclosed yard is attached to it, in which the police-van can draw up and discharge its prisoners without exposing them to the public gaze, an important point in times of public excitement. Clerkenwell and Westminster are the next best arranged courts, but both want space and air; Lambeth,

Lambeth, though lately built, is a complete failure; many of the other courts are held in small private houses; and in those of Marlborough-street and Hammersmith, the business is transacted upstairs. In the latter court it is a common thing to hear it said of persons who have been taken before the magistrates—'he has been up the forty steps.' With the common people, with whom these institutions have mainly to deal, justice should be dispensed with a regard to appearances; there should be the formality of the superior courts, and somewhat of their show. A magistrate sitting in a plain black dress like an ordinary gentleman, and a lawyer dispensing justice in his wig and gown, are two very different things to the lower classes, whatever they may be to educated persons; and the want of all official costume, and the huddled style of doing business inseparable from the present confined space, is not calculated to inspire the people with much respect. The police should at least be put upon a level with the county courts. The latter have to deal with less momentous interests. Questions of paltry debt cannot be put in comparison with questions involving the liberty of the subject; the power of committing to prison for six months with hard labour is far more important than that of adjudicating in money disputes under five pounds. It is not enough that justice is administered; it is the opinion which the people have of it that produces the effect, and until the judgment seat is rendered dignified, and those who sit on it are clothed with the habiliments which distinguish the magistrate from the man, the law, by losing most of its impressiveness, will lose its moral power over delinquents. The vulgar terror of punishment may remain, but the lesson which is conveyed to the feelings by the solemn stateliness of the tribunal is entirely gone.

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- ART. V.—1. *Mémoire présenté par M. le Préfet de la Seine à la Commission Municipale.* Paris, 1854.
 2. *Résidences des Souverains.* Par C. Percier et P. Fontaine, Paris, 1833.
 3. *Rapport sur les Marchés Publics en Angleterre, en Belgique, &c.* Paris, 1846.

NO sovereign ever reigned who, in the same space of time, has rivalled Napoleon III. in the combined magnificence, utility, and extent of his public works. Of the great undertakings in progress, the most vast is the junction of the two royal or imperial palaces, the Tuileries and the Louvre, and the consequent completion of an edifice which will surpass
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