

CROOKS AT THE BIG FAIR

The Chicago Police Preparing for Criminals in 1893.

THEY WILL BE UNWELCOME GUESTS

Chief McClaughey Organizing an International Detective Bureau and a Commission of Criminals—Arbitrary Arrest to Be the Weapon of Repression.

Among the countless thousands who will flock to Chicago during the period of the great Columbian exposition, there will be from five to ten thousand professional criminals. Every city on the American continent will contribute its quota; the London "swell snob" will be largely represented; a huge emigration from the bawls of Paris will swell the gathering; German professionals will be represented "by a large majority," and in a less degree all the other capitals of Europe will send specimens of their recalcitrance as an official exhibit, so to speak.

The fair managers know this, and so do the Chicago police. They are preparing for the visitation, and if their plans do not miscarry they will receive the designation of the "crooked" fraternity with most discouraging hospitality. The preparatory work is already well under way. Three months ago the fair commissioners delegated Commissioner Frank to take charge of it, in conjunction with General Superintendent Robert Wilson McClaughey, of the Chicago



ROBERT WILSON McCLAUGHEY, Gen. Supt. of the Chicago Police Department, police force. These two at once drafted a plan for an international bureau of detection. The city authorities gave the chief full power to go ahead with the work; money was placed at his disposal, and he at once went at his task with characteristic skill and vigor.

There is no better man in the country than Maj. McClaughey to perform this great service to the public—not even the far-famed Inspector Byrnes, of New York. He is a man of unusual qualifications for his work. He has not only a vast personal acquaintance with criminals and an invaluable experience in dealing with them, but also the education and enlightenment which are necessary in laying out new fields of work. In the problem of the world's fair he has the opportunity of a life to make a record, and from the steps he has already taken it seems pretty safe to say he will get all the glory out of the occasion that is afforded.

The first step was to write to the police authorities of all the European countries to interest them in the work. The Scotland yard organization, the Paris police force and the chief of the Berlin secret police were, in particular, urged to aid in the work. England, France and Germany are the countries from which the largest number of thieves and swindlers will flock to our shores. There are six thousand professional criminals in Paris alone. In England there are probably ten thousand more who make their living by preying on their fellows. Germany has at least ten thousand professional criminals. It is probable that the three countries aggregate at least thirty thousand thieves, cheats, blackmailers, blacklegs and other scoundrels, any of whom would be glad to take advantage of the multitudes who will converge in the fair city to ply their avocation. It is estimated by experts that from five to seven thousand foreign "crooks" visited Paris during the exposition of 1889, and the wonderful police system of that city was taxed to its utmost to curb the carnival of crime which would have prevailed but for the sternest repression.

Maj. McClaughey next undertook a personal tour of propaganda to all the leading cities of this country and Canada. A couple of weeks ago he was the guest of Inspector Byrnes in New York. Then he went to Philadelphia. He had already been to Boston, and his plan is between now and next summer to visit every important criminal center, to go to as many of the principal prisons as possible, and to communicate with all the rest, so that every chance of getting information about the criminal class may be utilized. The first product of all these efforts will be an international census of criminals, such as has never before been compiled. This will contain the record of every known crook. It will be reinforced with photographs, personal descriptions and accurate measurements when they can be obtained.

When the fair actually opens the major hopes to have in Chicago, cooperating with his officers, at least one detective of wide experience from every foreign country and from every leading city in the United States, Canada, Mexico and South America. This he considers will be a most important aid in detecting and identifying visitors of the right-handed persuasion. Aided by the records and collection of pictures and the constant information regarding the movements of criminals, which the police of the entire world will constantly contribute, he thinks these visiting officers can make it impossible for foreign criminals to remain in the city undetected.

It is not merely the strong that makes the danger. The vast accumulation of wealth is an irresistible attraction to thieves. The bustle, the hurry, the movement of travelers and their baggage give the criminals their opportunity. Then the conditions are favorable to various special sorts of dishonesty. The power of forged checks and counterfeit money; rumors of "gold" buried not to speak of "valuable" gemstones, pearls, rubies and diamonds; hundreds of hotels and

thousands and thousands of men are sure to reap a harvest unless put down with the strong hand. The bunco stealer will be on hand to catch the "joys," and the female sharper will be there to amuse the foolish of all ages. Given a crowd and a fuss, and the crook always has a chance. And what a crowd that will be. Every known type of greenhorn and hayseed will be represented in it, and even the astute frequenter of Broadway and Dearborn street will be off his guard in the midst of such a hurly burly.

But what are the police to do? Suppose they spot every sharper who enters the city, how are they to prevent them from operating?

The only method seems to be by resorting to arbitrary arrest. This is unquestionably the plan that will be pursued in Chicago. The moment a crook is positively identified he will be arrested on suspicion, locked up, remanded and remanded again as often as the law can be strained, or until he gives up in disgust and consents to leave town.

It is believed that this system of repressing will quickly drive all the professional offenders out of the city. The great danger, of course, is that mistakes may be made. Great care must be exercised, especially in respect to foreigners, but it is believed that the risk of error is not great enough to materially affect the working of the plan. Certainly it can be applied to such well-known criminals as Hungry Joe, the bunco stealer; Holly Hoey, the shoplifter; Bertha Hayman, the confidence queen; George Stacy, the Peoria kid, or other birds of like celebrity, without danger. The plan was tried in a mild way during the Philadelphia exposition of 1876, and criminals were pretty well kept off the grounds by it, though theft and swindling were fearfully prevalent in the city while the crowd lasted.

Hearing of Maj. McClaughey's conferences with Inspector Byrnes, I called on that official at the Mulberry headquarters and had quite a talk with him. Among other things he said: "McClaughey is an able worker. He has a tremendous job on his hands, but he is big enough for it. He is right to start early so as to be ready to check the wave of crime the minute it begins to move on his city. I have promised to give him all the aid in my power and I will."

"How many crooks will head for Chicago in 1893?" I asked.

"Oh, thousands," answered the inspector. "It will be the Mecca of all the criminals in the world." I also spoke with Recorder Smythe, the famous presiding judge of New York's criminal court, on the subject. "The police officials of Chicago," said he "are taking wise measures to protect the visitors to the world's fair. The chief of the Chicago police is a very able man, fully competent to meet the requirements of the situation. He knows criminals thoroughly. His experience as warden of Joliet prison has given him a unique experience."

I then broached the subject of arrest and detention. "That is a very important point," said the recorder. "During the centennial in Philadelphia a great raid was planned by the police. All the crooks and thieves were remanded till the police could secure evidence. The method was similar to that in vogue in New York. If a person is arrested on sus-



MEASURING THE LENGTH OF THE EAR. picion here the police go before a magistrate, who, if he sees it is a proper case and that the police officer has good reason for his suspicion that a crime has been committed or planned, will remand the prisoner for a reasonable time.

"What do you regard a reasonable time?" "Well, ordinarily one day, but circumstances alter cases. If a prisoner is held without good cause he can employ counsel and at once get a writ of habeas corpus."

"What do you think of the justice of punishing on a suspected criminal the moment he arrives in Chicago?" "That is a question which I wouldn't care to answer positively. I might say this much, that the circumstances will probably warrant strong action for the protection of the many thousands of people who will visit the fair. The arrested person can be detained, you know, but for a limited time. He can employ counsel and get a writ of habeas corpus at any time."

"But that involves trouble and expense." "Yes, that is so, but it is one of the misfortunes of being a suspected criminal." KEVIN JAMES.

—One of the famous wisps of New York, quoted the country over, was the late John R. Traverser. It seems that Gen. Sherman and Mr. Traverser were classmates at the West Point Military academy, although Mr. Traverser did not graduate because of the impediment in his speech. He couldn't give the order to fire. The way he put it was: "Ready! Aim! F—f—f—Shoot!"

THE HOLLAND FRUIT STORE. CHICAGO, Ia., Nov. 19.—The Mississippi closed its open business for the season at this point Tuesday night, the ice extending entirely across Wednesday morning.

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