

Scotland Yard's Big Six Vindicated While Under Fire of Critics

BY C. PATRICK THOMPSON.

SCOTLAND YARD, London's famous ancient organization, is feeling everlastingly on a certain cloud. A police constable had been murdered while attempting to make an arrest. His assailants had sent bullets crashing through the pupils of his eyes—and then had sped to safety in a stolen automobile. All England was stirred—and called for the swift punishment of the murderers.

Scotland Yard set to work on the case, but nothing happened. Month after month went by without an arrest being made; without even a clue being found, so far as the English public knew.

Many were the criticisms that were leveled at the slow, laborious methods of crime detection, though for years these methods had held England's annual crop of murders to a very small minimum and had reduced the number of unsolved murders virtually to the vanishing point.

Many were the entreaties for the Yard to abandon its time-worn method of keeping everlastingly on a certain track. "Introduce modern methods," "Get your man!"

And then, just when it looked as if Scotland Yard had been licked, that it had been sticking stubbornly to a wrong scent—two arrests were made and two convictions were obtained. Scotland Yard had vindicated itself and its methods.

It is a thrilling story—the story of this vindication, but before we launch into that, let's glance at the men who have brought it about—"the Big Six" of Scotland Yard.

Come with me behind the scenes of the great red-turreted building on Thames-side, by the Houses of Parliament, and meet these six superdetectives, the men who are chiefly responsible for the fact that out of a year's total of 114 murders (this in a population of 38,000,000) only two remain unsolved.

FOREMOST among them stands the vulture-headed Chief Constable Wensley, chief of the criminal investigation department. Normally he is responsible for the detection and suppression of crime among the 7,500,000 persons in the metropolis. Actually, he is the chief detective of England, always liable to be called in by the police chiefs outside his area for the solution of some major crime.

He directs operations on every major crime and presides at the daily conference of the big six. His men make about 150,000 arrests a year, 15,000 of these being for indictable offenses ranging from arson, rape, counterfeiting and wounding to robbery with violence and murder.

He is the master elucidator, probably the most efficient and experienced detective functioning today, and one of the world's remarkable men. His face, with its great black eyes, a stony, trap mouth and basilisk eyes, is stony in its calm.

He used to be a "footlocker," an ordinary patrolman; now he rides with his powerful shoulders and big vulture head slouched against the cushions of a huge limousine.

In the 40 years intervening between one state and the other he has acquired a marvelous knowledge of the underworld and its ways, and has become a collector of murderers, counterfeiter, forgers, robbers, gang chiefs and other criminal fry as you or I might collect stamps—naturally, expertly, interestedly, yet detachedly.

He thinks crime is a disease. But when he is after a man there is no softness about him. He is tenacious as a bulldog, cunning as a fox, and as a hawk, relentless and merciless.

He has his human side. He is without vindictiveness. He is on hand—shaking terms with criminals, criminals, forgers, robbers, gang chiefs and other criminal fry as you or I might collect stamps—naturally, expertly, interestedly, yet detachedly.

There was a time when the chiefs of the East Side gangs he was engaged in breaking up swore that his life was not worth a moment's purchase. But he went about the crime quarter unarmed and unscathed—and lives.

He made his name in the service by gang smashing, and his name with the public by solving two extraordinary murder mysteries.

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First he asked himself what sort of person would be likely to commit such a crime; he estimated the mental and psychological aspects of the case; and then he examined the known characters who might have done the thing.

He asked three main questions: Who was the last person seen with the victim? Who were the victim's friends? Where was the instrument used in the crime purchased?

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Criminal Investigators Are Led by Man Who Is Credited With Being World's Most Efficient and Experienced Detective. Relentless Methods Are Combined With Complete Freedom From Vindictiveness.



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Early on the morning of September 27 Wensley had a telephone call from the police of Essex, the adjoining county to London. One of their men, Gutteridge, had been found dead in a lonely lane. He had received a fatal shot, had staggered back and fallen, and as he lay he had been shot again through each eye. Wheel tracks showed that an automobile had stopped at that spot. The dead man had pencil and note book out.

Detectives were dispatched. While they were busy the discovery of an abandoned, blood-stained car in a cul-de-sac on the outskirts of the city enabled Wensley and his colleagues to reconstruct the crime in its principle features.

Gutteridge, on patrol at night, had recognized the doctor's car approaching (the car had been stolen from the doctor's garage), seen it occupied by strangers and had halted it. No doubt he had blown his whistle and the thugs had stopped. Gutteridge had started to ask awkward questions, and the bandits, seeing long terms of penal servitude ahead, for carrying loaded firearms and driving down with a heavy hand on the armed criminal with a bad record, had decided to make a dash for it.

Why had they then pursued him to the roadside and sent bullets crashing through each eye? Doubtless because they had a superstitious dread, an impression of themselves appearing on the retina of the dead man's eyes.

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They also had a description of the doctor's instruments which had been in the car, and which had disappeared. They knew the type of gun from which some, at least, of the fatal bullets had been fired.

AND here Sir Wyndham Childs, the chief of the secret political police and counter-espionage, an ex-army officer, butted in and made a significant discovery. Childs is lean, polite, a narrow-eyed lynx of a man. He was a musketry expert in the army. He examined cartridge case, bullets and photographs of the shot-riddled fife and found that (a) the case was that of an obsolete Mark IV cartridge withdrawn from the army soon after the war started, (b) one of the bullets fired through the eyes had been propelled by black powder, a detonation for cartridges not used since 1894, and (c) the other had been propelled by cordite.

It was thus established that two men, one of whom had a mixed assortment of ammunition, were concerned in the crime; and Childs could further say that when a revolver was found the breach shield of which duplicated the peculiarities in the fatal cartridge case—marks now known to be as infallible as fingerprints—that would be the weapon with which the constable was murdered.

In the process of testing these theories the Yard chiefs examined over 3,500 revolvers, and spent days firing bullets into wood and examining the effect under the microscope. That would have taken friend Holmes quite a time, even with the assistance of Dr. Watson.

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The vulture-headed Wensley sat in his office by the old river and, in the course of months, saw his search narrow down to six suspects. One was a habitual criminal named Browne. Even Dartmoor, where they tame tigers, had not been able to tame him, and he had served every day of his last sentence of four years. Browne had eluded all search.

SUDDENLY enter chance, the incalculable factor. In Sheffield, the steel city of the Midlands, a recklessly driven car collides with a local car and goes on. The aggrieved local man manages to note its number as it shoots away. It is a London registration number.

The Sheffield police ask the London police to look it up. The latter report back that the name is not known at the address. It looks like a fake number. Will Sheffield inquire further and report?

Sheffield gets busy and finds that a local man was in the mystery car as passengers. This man is an ex-convict. He is questioned and discloses that the driver was Browne. Browne has a garage at Brixton.

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Moses Gets Houston Warning

"This Smith Party Is in the Big League. Brother, When It Comes to Sitting the Enemy Down With a Single Paragraph," Says Rogers—Always Excitement at a Democratic Anything.

BY WILL ROGERS.

WELL, all I know is just what I read in the papers, and what I see as I prowled over the old Commonwealth. Here we are down here in Houston, all getting set for another Dog Fight. I think we are going to have a lot of fun down here. There is always excitement at a Democratic anything. Of course it don't look like there is any way to keep from nominating Al, but that don