

TELL-TALE THUMB-PRINTS.

FINGER MARKS OF CRIMINALS LIFE LONG AIDS TO THEIR DETECTION.

Individual Finger Marks Permanent Through Life—Adoption of System for Identification of U. S. Soldiers and Sailors.

A few weeks ago Inspector McLaughlin of the New York City Detective Bureau received remarkable evidence of the value of thumb-print identification. A letter was brought to him through the mails from London containing the picture and record of a noted criminal whose thumb-print, with his name and description, was sent to London to test the efficiency of this new method of recording distinguishing marks of criminals. By means of the thumb-print alone, the English police identified the criminal captured by the New York police, whose record in England includes eight imprisonments on charges of larceny. The prisoner was caught by Inspector McLaughlin in the corridor of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in April. There were no charges against him in this country at the time, but the Inspector decided that his captive was an English "crook." It was found that two patrons of the hotel had been robbed and the prisoner was detained for a thorough investigation of his case. Meanwhile the Inspector sent the thumb-print to London and the reply brought a photograph of the "crook" and a duplicate photograph of his thumb-print and his record.

THE BERTILLON SYSTEM.

For some time the criminal bureaus of prominent cities have been using the Bertillon measurement system which also includes making two photographs of the suspicious character, but the French system and photography have fallen short in many cases, as a scheming criminal can adopt various subterfuges to cheat the law, but there is no way of changing the character of his thumb-print, for there are no two people whose thumbs are exactly alike, and each person has his own individual thumb-print whose character remains the same from the day of birth to the end.

OLD AS THE HILLS.

There is nothing really new in this mode of identification, as from time immemorial the Chinese have known

stage of their career, and the fingerprint system is the only means of identification yet devised that makes this practicable.

Not only is it virtually impossible that any man's ten finger-prints, one after the other, should resemble in more general mathematical form each of those of another man, the chance against any such coincidence being calculated by Professor Francis Galton, the eminent anthropologist and mathematician, as one hundred and sixty-four million against one, but it is equally impossible that any two finger-prints should be identical in every detail.

Recently the United States government has also adopted the thumb-print system for identification of the sailors and soldiers in service, as this might become useful not only in cases of desertion, but also to more readily identify the bodies of those who have fallen on the field of battle.

SHERLOCK HOLMES.

what I should do if some sporting kind of publisher were suddenly to stride in and make me a bid of forty shillings or so for the lot?" When the book at last fell into the hands of Mr. Andrew Lang, then acting for Messrs. Longmans, Green & Company, the success of Micah Clarke was assured, and its author's literary career placed on a firmer footing. The "Sign of the Four" followed in 1889, in which story Sherlock Holmes, who had made his bow to the public in "A Study in Scarlet," reappeared and increased Dr. Doyle's rising reputation. His heart, however, was in the historical novel, and in 1890 he followed up the success of Micah with "The White Company," in the preparation of which he read one hundred and fifteen volumes, French and English, dealing with the fourteenth century in England. His delight in the work is expressed in his own words: "To write such books," he once said, speaking of Micah Clarke and The White Company, "one must have an enthusiasm for the age about which he is writing. He must think it a great one, and that he must generously to work and reconstruct it. Then is his a splendid joy."

STUDY IN SCARLET FOR \$125.00.

However, Dr. Doyle may prefer to write historical romances, and whatever his personal estimate of his great detective may be, the fact remains that in Sherlock Holmes he has created a character whose exploits are as familiar as household words, and who has entered into the very fibre of Anglo-Saxon life and literature. It is actually said that at times Dr. Doyle has expressed a wish that Mr. Watson had never met Sherlock Holmes. It is on record that he thought so little of "A Study in Scarlet," the story in which Sherlock Holmes first appeared, that he sold it outright for \$125. The value of Sherlock Holmes has gone up since those days, however.

Dr. Doyle acknowledges some indebtedness to Dupin, the detective in Poe's short stories, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Purloined Letter." This is the more interesting for the reason that in "A Study in Scarlet," Sherlock Holmes is made to speak rather contemptuously of Dupin's skill and acumen. To quote Dr. Doyle again: "In work which consists in the drawing of detectives there are only one or two qualities, a which one can use, and an author is forced to hark back upon them constantly, so that every detective must really resemble every other detective to a greater or less extent. There is no great originality required in devising or constructing such a man, and the only possible originality which one can get into a story about a detective is in giving him original plots and problems to solve, as in his equipment there must be of necessity an alert acuteness of mind to grasp the relation which each of them bears to the other."

CONSTRUCTION OF SHERLOCK.

Dr. Doyle went to work, therefore, to build up a scientific system in which everything might be logically reasoned out. Where Sherlock Holmes differed from his predecessors was that he had an immense fund of exact knowledge upon which to draw, in consequence of his previous scientific education. He was practical, he was smart, he was logical, and his success in the detection of crime was to a result, not of chance or luck, but of his characteristic qualities. "With this idea," says Dr. Doyle, "I wrote a book on the lines I have indicated, and produced 'A Study in Scarlet.' That was the first appearance of Sherlock; but he did not attract much attention, and no one recognized him as being anything in particular. About three years later, however, I was asked to do a small shilling book for Lippincott's Magazine, which publishes, as you know, a complete story in each number. I didn't know what to write about, and I thought occurred to me, 'Why not try to rig up the same chap again?' I did it, and the result was 'The Sign of the Four.' Although the criticisms were favorable, I don't think that even then Sherlock attracted much attention to his individuality." But this shows Mr. Doyle's modesty.

GET INTO GOOD COMPANY.

We are preparing for publication in this Magazine Section a treat for our readers, and will very shortly present to you that most interesting novel of Sir A. Conan Doyle's, "THE WHITE COMPANY," full of excitement and adventure, with a pretty love story running through it, which ends "just right" and leaves everybody feeling good. JOIN US NOW AND GET READY FOR THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

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Crocuses in March.

BY EDITH DUNN.

"Annel! Whatever in the world—" The speaker, her fur coat white with snow, stood transfixed in the doorway. "Crocuses!" she gasped. "Crocuses—in early March—with the snow outside in an inch deep and more to follow! Crocuses!"

Words falling her, she stepped inside the heavy curtains and regarded the scene before her with astonished eyes.

It was a pretty room and long, with a blazing fire of pine logs at one end; a room that bespoke warmth and home and comfort. But the newcomer saw none of these. It was the mahogany table in the centre at which she gazed hypnotically, where masses of yellow crocuses glowed in reckless profusion. They raised tremendous golden heads from a big brass bowl; they nodded from long, slender vases; they flamed over the edges of a pewter jug in riotous confusion.

The girl standing beside the table looked the last slender green stalk into place, and, stepping back, regarded her work with new triumph. She turned a flushed face toward the doorway.

"The only trouble," she said, impressively, "was to be made him believe they grew."

"Grew?"

"Yes, grew, naturally," with a vague wave of her hand in the direction of the window and the softly whirling flakes of snow that fell outside. "Who would believe it?"

"He has the crocus hobby as seriously as daddy, and they kept at it until in a moment of wild enthusiasm Daddy in March, Ontario, crocuses came up in March. One day he crocuses came up in March. One day he crocuses came up in March."

"But who—" began Dora again.

"Daddy saw he doubted it, but he didn't care, for by that time he had begun to believe in himself, even when he said he was coming to New York in March he invited him out, insisted, set the date and all. This is the date, and," Anne dimpled, "here are the crocuses."

"Insisted her chum, firmly, 'will you please stop saying 'he' and 'him' and tell me who and what you are talking about?'"

"John Rexall," essayed Anne. "The man daddy met in camp and liked so well he wanted to believe he really grew."

The door at the further end of the room opened to admit a gray-haired man, rugged but kindly featured, who came down the room, watch in hand. Anne smiled at him across the crocuses.

"You may just as well put that watch out of sight," she cried, as she placed a bowl of flowers on the piano. "No more calls to-night, Daddy, in this storm, and 'company comin', too."

Slipping her arm through her father's, she led him close to the window, the blossoms. "Pretty fine crocuses—for March," she said, her eyes dancing with mischief, as she reached up and bestowed a kiss upon him so vigorous as to leave him very little breath for protest. Dr. Nelson pretended great indignation. "Tut! tut! It isn't fair to take advantage of an old man," he chuckled, but his eyes were full of tenderness as Anne laid her cheek softly against his.

"You remember Milligan, the flagman?" Dr. Nelson said at last, again glancing at his watch.

Anne nodded.

"He has been seriously hurt—is dying. I must go at once. I shall be late."

"There is always somebody—" began Anne.

"Exactly!" Dr. Nelson thrust his watch back into his pocket and smiled at her disappointed face.

Anne took the envelope from the outstretched tray and opened it.

"Whom is it from?" queried Dora.

Anne twisted the missive into a little yellow ball and threw it defiantly among the crocuses.

"Who is it from?" John Rexall, she answered, with as much indignation as if that young man had just been convicted of some heinous crime, "and it says that great and august personage is delayed by the storm and will not be."

"And you will be left alone—"

"There are the servants. I do not mind," returned Anne.

"But this house is so isolated and the grounds so large," Dora deliberated. "I will send John to stay with you," she announced, with the relief of one who has solved a knotty problem.

Anne protested faintly.

"Yes, I will," Dora insisted. "He is only eighteen, but he will be company." "Of course I should like it," agreed Anne.

Dora swept a parting glance over the room. On every side flowers gleamed in yellow splendor.

"I am going to see these wasted March crocuses," began Dora.

Anne giggled. "And the artist's bill for the same."

At this Dora gave way and relapsed into a helpless fit of laughter, whereupon she rushed to her door, and, without a backward glance, slammed it shut. "It is a judgment—because I wanted him to stay with you," cried Anne, wiping her eyes.

An hour later Anne descended the wide, open staircase. Her trailing gown hung in soft, straight lines; a row of tiny pearls clasped her throat; some crocuses were tucked in her belt, and one crocus nestled in her hair.

"At the bottom step Johnson waited. 'Gentlemen to see you, Miss Anne. I done put him in de library.'"

"What is his name?"

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present before you order the coffee. What is the use of paying 25 to 35 cents a pound for coffee that may not be as good as Arbuckle's Ariosa!

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her entrance—a bull's-eye lantern throwing its powerful rays on the floor beside him—meant the late arrival of her father's friend—before her father's safe.

Facing her, beside a window, from whose curtains recesses he had evidently just stepped, covering the other with the point of a gleaming pistol-barrel, stood her nameless cavalier of the early evening. His eyes, bright and steady, were immovably fastened on the man before him.

"Hands up!" he said.

An inarticulate sound came from the other man's throat; his face grew livid. He flung up his hands, palm outward. "Who the devil are you?" he cried, beneath his teeth. His eyes were fixed with deadly hatred upon his foe.

For a moment no sound but that of the falling embers of the dying fire disturbed the stillness that reigned within the library.

Anne stood motionless, her heart thumping wildly, wondering what the end would be. Then, suddenly the silence was broken by the distant sound of horses' hoofs coming nearer. A noise of wheels on the gravel outside, a quick-spoken order to the driver, and some one came along the porch, through the hall and into the room. Anne gave a quick little cry of relief and joy.

"The surprise," she cried, "is over!"

"He stopped in amazement, looking from the men to Anne, and then from Anne back to the men. The nameless one did not relax his vigil. He was rather pale, but perfectly self-possessed, and kept his eyes on the man before him, but at Anne's glad cry of 'Daddy!' a slight smile crossed his face.

Then suddenly, unexpectedly, across the grim quiet of that awful silence came an unmistakable chuckle, and the doctor's voice.

"Nothing surprising, Rexall, I warned you things were pretty lively here—in March."

The day, begun so strenuously, was fast drawing to an end. The shadows closed softly in on the white world outside; inside the bright light of the great pipe fire streamed cheerily over the room.

Anne tucked herself comfortably in one corner of the hugeavenport. "If this thing keeps up much longer," she announced, dramatically, "I shall lose my voice."

"As bad as that?" laughed John Rexall.

"Every bit. This last harrowing recital to Tom makes the third since luncheon."

"I understand," she went on, reflectively, "that that man might have gotten hold of your telegram in some way, either at the station or on the road, and so discovered that you were expected and delayed, and in that way conceived the idea of impersonating you. That part is clear enough. But what I cannot understand is how he knew we did not know you by sight."

"His face was familiar. I have seen him somewhere before. Probably he was hanging around the camp last fall, and judged I would know only the doctor. He had to take some risks—probably conceived the whole idea at once when he saw the doctor leave. Sort of 'spontaneous inspiration,' as it were."

"His weak point was in not knowing you had come."

"He did not know it at first. I fancy he had a fairly clear idea of my presence later in the game."

"But is he—"

"Never mind him now," he pleaded. "By your own statement you are in danger of losing your voice over him; and I want you to save your voice," he continued, softly, "for better purposes."

Anne looked up at him. "Yes?" she queried.

"I want you to save it to talk to me—to promise me something," he went on, earnestly.

A wave of delicate color dyed Anne's face from brow to chin. Her eyes fell before him.

"To let me know you better—to write to me. Then, perhaps, next year, when the crocuses come again, you'll promise me more—when you know me."

His face was very grave.

"Well, perhaps," Anne's dimples showed in sudden mischief—"in March."

Anne added, "when the crocuses come in March—again."—The Star.

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