

LE 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 identification, as from time immemorial the Chinese have known



used thumb marks showing distinguished lines that every man carries on his tips the proofs of his identity, supports in the Celestial land consisted of a government-issued piece of old paper on which a traveler has to record his digital before setting forth on his way. So in India, where deeds were long have for centuries been signed among the illiterate by a thumb-mark. Within a few years the government of India has extended this native custom to its police force, and in Bengal, civil pension certificates, contracts, mortgages on crops, and other transactions of false personation has to be guarded against or an authenticated acknowledgment of money received is to be made. Naturally, also, the system was promptly adopted for the identification of criminals, and it was a Indian police officer, E. H. Henry, inspector-general of police in Bengal, who carried to England his experience in the work, and when appointed



THUMB ARE NO TWO THUMB PRINTS ALIKE.

Chief commissioner of police in London, introduced the method into New

land and England.

FINGER PRINTS NEVER CHANGE.

Finger-marks continue permanent through life. Injuries may partially destroy them, but as the injury heals the original lines reassert themselves as before. In growing youth the ball of the finger enlarges; so does the pattern, but its distinctive tracings are entirely unchanged, whereas the Bertillon method is applicable only to adults, when bone measurements have become fixed. Yet youthful criminals, for their own sake, as well as for the sake of the law, are worth watching at every

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.

(Continued from preceding page.)

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 the story of 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 then he must go deliberately 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 what over 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 an odd 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, 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 scientific, he was logical, and his success in the detection of crime was the 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 arrest 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 the 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 DOANE.

"Anne! Whatever in the world—"
The speaker, her fur coat white with snow, stood transfixed in the doorway. "Crocuses!" she gasped. "Crocuses—early March—with the snow out and 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 large, 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 center at which she gazed appositely, where masses of yellow crocuses glowed in reckless profusion. They raised tremendous golden heads from a big brass bowl; they nodded and bowed, as if to greet her, and over the edges of a pewter jug in riotous confusion.

The girl standing beside the table looked the last slender crocus stalk into the room, and, as if by magic, her work with fine triumph she turned a flushed face toward the doorway.

"The only trouble," she said, impressively, "will be to make him believe they grew."

"Yes, grew, naturally," with a vague wave of her hand in the direction of the window and the softly whirling flakes outside. "He won't believe it."

"Who won't believe it?"
"He has the crocus hobby as seriously as daddy, and they kept at it until in a moment of wild enthusiasm Daddy insisted that his crocus came up in March. Once," she apologized—"we did have a crocus the last day of 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 it himself, so 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."

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

"Grew," answered Anne. "The man daddy met in camp and liked so well that he chummed with him, even though he shot more game than daddy did himself. He has money and good looks."

"Crocuses," suggested Dora.
Anne dimpled again. "If only I could make him believe they 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 the window as to place 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 nodding 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 with a bright red nose. 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 he laid her cheek softly against his.

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

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

"There is always somebody—" began Anne.
"Dr. Nelson thrust his watch back into his pocket and smiled at her disappointed face.

"Explain it to John Rexall, and take good care of him. With him to look after you I shall not worry as to your safety." And with a quick goodby he was gone.

The sound of his departing horse's hoofs had hardly died away when Johnson stepped into the room. "For do doctah, Miss Anne," he announced.

Anne took the envelope from the outstretched tray and opened it.
"Whom is it for?" queried Dora.
Anne twisted the mischievous little yellow ball and threw it defiantly among the crocuses.

"It is from Mr. John Rexall," she answered with much indignation as if that young man were a great benefactor of some heinous crime, "and it says that great and august personage is delayed by the storm and will not be here to-day."

"And you will be left alone—"
"There are the servants. I do not mind," returned Anne.

"But this house is so isolated and the roads so large," Dora deliberated. "I will send word to get the car, if you announced, with the relief of one who has solved a knotty problem."

Anne protested faintly.
"Yes, will you be so kind," he said, only slightly, but he knew his company. "Of course I should like it," agreed Anne.

Dora swept a parting glance over the room, in every side flowers gleamed in the snow splendor.

"When I consider these wasted March crocuses," began Dora.
Anne giggled. "And the florist's bill for the same."

"Daddy gave way and relapsed into a helpless fit of laughter, whereupon Anne laughed, too, half hysterical, helpless to stop herself—laughed until the crocuses shook in their tall vases after you I shall not worry as to your safety, and then stepped forward, offering his hand in easy, pleasant greeting, and then stood speechless.

A vision in soft shimmering white pressed close to his side—his hand, his arm, was grasped in a warm though unmistakable hug. "You were a dear, good boy to come," the vision said.

"I—," he began helplessly.

The next moment an embarrassed young man faced an equally embarrassed young woman with crimson cheeks and indignant eyes.

"Why didn't you speak?" she demanded wrathfully. "I thought it was Tom." She stopped in a vain search for words which to annihilate this presuming interloper. "You know I thought you were Tom," she added indignantly.

"Would that I were," fervently thought the new comer.

Curiosity overcame the wrath in Anne's eyes as she raised them to the face above her. The face of a gentle-

man, evidently—and extremely good to look at. Just now amusement struggled with admiration in the clear-cut features, as he stepped forward and again laid out his hand.

"Please forgive me," he began, quite as contritely as if he really were to blame. "I did not know—it was so insufferably stupid of me—He stopped. ("You are altogether charming," said his eyes.)

Anne's face softened.
"I am sure Dr. Nelson will intercede for me," he went on, pursuing his advantage.

Anne smiled. "Dr. Nelson is not at home. I am his daughter," she said simply.

"Then we are already old friends," declared the man eagerly. "In camp last September your father—but first allow me to present myself. I am—"

"Mistah Rexall," announced Johnson, at the library door, bowed politely to a slender, dark-eyed man, who advanced a step into the room and then stood uncertainly in the dim light.

The surprise on Anne's face was quickly by that of the man beside her. He turned with a quick start, glanced sharply at the newcomer, then stood motionless in the shadow.

With a most unreasonable sense of disappointment Anne advanced to welcome the new arrival.

"Father will be delighted. He has counted so on your coming—we were quite distressed over your telegram. So glad you managed to get here, and all." She forced herself to the usual conventionalities.

So this was John Rexall, this man whom she instinctively dreaded—perhaps the grim quiet of that awful silence was quick by that of the man beside her.

She touched a bell. "A light, Johnson," she commanded, half nervously. "Mr. Rexall, allow me to present—Her words trailed off into a convulsion. The room behind her was empty. A door closing softly at the further end where the erstwhile admirer had gone.

One o'clock chimed the tiny time-piece on the mantel. Outside the sound of the heavy Davenport, in the distance to graver, deeper tones. Anne shivered. Two hours had passed since the household had settled into silence, but so far no sleep had come to her eyes. She had not even closed, but still sat upon the hearth rug in front of the fire in her cozy bedroom, staring into the glowing coals.

It was dreary waiting, but some vague, fear kept her away from the door, listening anxiously for the first sound of his horses' hoofbeats on the gravel outside. Indeed, if he did not come she would have to go. In vain she tried to reason it away, sitting, her face in her hands, her eyes on the clear glowing coals. What matter if she instinctively distrusted the man her father had found companionable? Was that such an extraordinary thing? What if the man she had found congenial—"for you know you did like him," she said to herself, "over the hill." Here her cheeks supported by the slim hands grew unaccountably hot.

What if this man had chosen to take his departure suddenly?
"That is a strange? He had come to see her father, and she herself told him that her father was not at home. But reason as she might, the vague misgiving remained.

At the sound of the clock she shivered slightly, and getting up from her position she drew back the curtains of her window. The storm had ceased, and the snow lay lightly on branch and wall; the night was brilliant with moonlight clear as day, full of hallowed softness.

She stood for a while, spellbound by the glory of the scene before her, then turned again toward the fire. The crocuses she had won that evening in her belt, now lying on her dressing table, caught her eye. "I forgot to look at the flowers—if the fire dies down the library will be too cold for them. I will attend them now; anything is better than waiting here."

She left her room and walked swiftly along the hall, her soft slippers making no sound on the floor.

As she reached the staircase a little sensation of fear ran through her; she hastened her footsteps and ran hurriedly along the lower hall, which was as empty as light as day. It was the eerie time of night. Not until she was close to the library did she notice a tiny gleam of light creeping from beneath the door.

"Johnson has left a light for daddy," she thought, going steadily on and decidedly cheered by the thought that gloom did not await her.

Pushing open the door very gently, she entered the room.

At first the light dazzled her sight. She advanced a few steps, unconsciously treading lightly, as she had done all her life, and she woke some member of the household, and she passed her hand over her eyes, looked leisurely up. The fire was nearly out. She turned her head, and then—she uttered a faint scream and grasped the back of a chair to steady herself.

With his back to her—all unaware of her entrance—a bull's-eye lantern throwing its powerful rays on the floor beside him—kneel the late arrival—her father's friend—before her father's safe.

Facing her, beside a window, from which 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, 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 the sound of a door opening, and 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.

"Daddy!" she cried.

He stopped in amazement, looking from the man to Anne, and then from Anne back to the man. 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 pine fire streamed cheerily over the room.

Anne tucked herself comfortably in one corner of the large Davenport. "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 can 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."

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

"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 his.

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

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