

THE COPS OF NEW YORK

BY STANLEY WALKER

IT WAS a cold night in January, 1918, and John F. Hylan was entering upon what was to be a period of eight fabulous years as Mayor of New York City. Hylan, the former motorman who at that time had a curious hold on the electorate, lay a-tossing with his dreams in the darkness of his bedroom in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn. It was five years later, in a speech, that he confessed what happened that night, and it was this: a voice came out of the foggy Freudian borderland, calling insistently and with authority:

"Get rid of Bugher. He will make trouble. Enright . . . Enright is the man."

That is how it came about that Mayor Hylan, known with tolerant affection as Red Mike, supplanted Frederick H. Bugher, who had held the office of Police Commissioner for three weeks, with Richard E. Enright, a talkative and extremely ambitious police lieutenant with a mop of curly gray hair which had brought him the nickname of Silver Dick. Enright lasted eight years. He was replaced as one of the first genuinely constructive acts of the new Mayor, James J. Walker, of sainted memory.

It is by such insubstantial things as dreams, the chance suggestion of a reporter, the desire to reward an old friend, or the whisper of a political boss at a dinner, that Police Commissioners in New York are often made or broken. The wonder is that the town occasionally gets a good one.

But it is a difficult job, and few of the good ones last long. Always the Police Department, when the hot and cold winds of civic and political righteousness begin to blow, is the whipping boy of the reformers. It may be an unsolved murder, or bribery, or brutality, or booze, or gambling, or prostitution—whatever it is, the police are always open to attack, whether rightly or wrongly. The head of the department thus occupies the most vulnerable spot in the administration. He can't begin to please everybody. Most citizens don't understand his job, know nothing of the law, and have an ingrained opposition to cops anyhow.

And yet New Yorkers, for all their snarling at the police, and regardless of who is Commissioner, still have a certain fondness for the force. The department now has, roughly, 20,000 men. It is hampered some, as always, by Tammany interference, but not so much as many persons believe, and certainly not so much as in the old days. The recruits in recent years have been of an increasingly sounder type. Promotion is usually pretty much on merit. In ordinary decency and courtesy to the harried plain citizen there has been a vast improvement. Physically, the cops are among the best specimens to be found anywhere; mentally, though few among them are giants, they have come a long way from the dumb and surly flatfeet one used to know. It takes definite ability to pass an examination for promotion into the higher ranks.

In such a large group there are, of course, both hold-up men and heroes, yellow-bellied sneaks and the bravest fellows on earth, double-crossers and men who are more to be trusted than the average bishop, philanderers and home boys, drunkards and teetotalers, stupid oafs and readers of good books, bullies and gentle souls. They are all there on the force which some admirer long ago called the Finest. Two of them recently were charged with helping some gangsters kidnap a bootlegger and hold him for ransom. But the work of the seventeen detectives who caught the gangsters goes a long way toward answering the complaint that there is no really high-class detective work being done any more.

What a job the cops have on their hands! New York has its overtones of true splendor, its full complement of really decent citizens, and all that sort of thing, but it also has the most appalling aggregation of conscienceless cut-throats and ravening hyenas ever turned loose on a rich and supine city. Worse than Chicago? Well, there never has been anything quite like Chicago's St. Valentine's day massacre, but for all-round thuggery the New York boys, if they wanted to make out a case for themselves, would have little trouble proving their superiority.

It is possible, to be sure, for a citizen to live a long life in New York without molestation either from the underworld or the police (that is, if he is insensible to the various forms of extortion and racketeering which indirectly affect his pocketbook), but there is no use denying that a large part of the population of the town is made up of as sinister, reckless, perverted and hopelessly damned individuals as may be found anywhere. They range from the smart Broadway gunman, who would take his own grandfather for

a ride if there was anything in it for him, to the utterly depraved rat in his Harlem cellar; from the unnaturally smart madam of the infamous mansion in the Fifties to the shoplifting little chippy in Union Square.

Bank robbers, murderers, racketeers, bomb-throwers, brothel-keepers and confidence men have been shown, time and again, to have an interest in night clubs and speakeasies where nice people go to have their idea of good clean fun. In many cases it has been shown that the police themselves were in on the play. New Yorkers, to say nothing of the out-of-town people who visit the city and help give it its infamous reputation, want their alcohol and their amusement, and the harpies will continue to give it to them, just as they always have. About the best that New Yorkers can hope for is that some of Mayor Gaynor's old ideas of outward order and decency will remain, that the more glaring crimes will be punished quickly, that the cop found grafting will be kicked off the force, and that the Commissioner will remain the type of man in whom the people have some degree of confidence.

Out of the mess of minor crimes, thievings and skullduggery there sometimes comes a day when business is a little brisker than usual. Such a day was last December 15, when the Associated Press sent out the following summary:

The crime wave which led Police Commissioner Mulrooney to issue a shoot first order to his force yesterday, after the slaying of a patrolman, continued today with the following developments:

Five bandits robbed a bank of \$15,000, threw tear-gas bombs, and escaped after a long chase.

Four robbers held five persons at bay with pistols and escaped with \$1,000 from an apartment-house safe.

The proprietress of a Brooklyn boarding-

house was found beaten to death in her locked room.

Two bandits bound and gagged a Brooklyn dentist and escaped with \$20 in cash and a medical kit.

A bomb damaged the home of a retired Brooklyn furrier, who had been involved in labor troubles.

Dr. William J. Walsh, physician to the New York Giants, died from bullet wounds inflicted by a "patient," who killed himself when escape was cut off.

Truly a sad business. But in fairness to the police it should be set on record that in the case of the bank robbery, the thugs identified as having been responsible were rounded up a few days later by good police work. They were the usual sort of young gunmen, of the type which abounds in great numbers in almost every American city of any size and which gives the police their greatest problem. It is amazing that so many of them are caught and sent to prison when one considers the many possible avenues of escape.

II

What are the cops like? I have dealt with them as a newspaper man for many years, beginning with the days when I cooled my heels in police stations and fumed until a detective condescended to tell me why he thought the Polack put the girl in the furnace, or how that arson suspect really spelt his first name, or why that little mug he brought in a while ago got those black eyes. There have been many not very exciting experiences, but last year my advice was asked on a matter of crime prevention, and the Commissioner and I, if anyone cares, call each other by our first names.

Cops have refrained from socking friends of mine who probably deserved to be socked. They have been very stern indeed with a few scoundrels who have committed

crimes against my noble and beautiful profession. They have been grateful for tickets, and kind words, and sympathy, and an occasional bit of helpful publicity. They have stood at bars with me and told me of their starved boyhoods, their outlandish ideas, and their little griefs. Once, when I told one of them of a man who had attempted to do a frightful thing to me, I had to restrain him from performing, in his misguided friendship, an unmentionable deed of revenge, for I was not that angry.

Therefore I suppose I am a sort of police buff, and I like the cops, for all their occasional stupidity and venality. That is one reason why, as I grew older and feebler and gave out assignments to young reporters with good legs, I was always puzzled by the fact that so few newspaper writers have any genuine liking for police and crime stories. I have also wondered why there are so few outstanding police reporters. There are such reporters of many years' experience who cannot name twenty patrolmen and detectives with whom they are really well acquainted.

The reason, I imagine, is that the run-of-mill material of crime news, after a time, has a certain sameness to it, and would bore anybody, and that the atmosphere of station houses becomes very depressing after one has smelled it for a few years. Even so, the doings of the cops always have seemed to me to be full of rich stuff, and though friends of mine, veterans of newspaper work, have gone to their deathbeds screaming that there never was a good cop, I'd still rather have dinner with any half-dozen detectives I could name than with the American Academy of Arts and Letters in full regalia.

The cop, man and beast, will repay the careful study of anyone who cares to set himself to the task. In general, it will be

found that they are uniformly brave when facing danger, that they have a brutal contempt for the lower types of criminal, that they regard extra money received from certain sources as entirely legitimate, that they will stick together and lie their heads off if necessary when one of their number is in trouble, that they are more than ordinarily susceptible to flattery, that they have their favorite lawbreakers whom they designate as right guys, and that they are likely to fawn on any man of wealth, even though that man may be no better than an ordinary thug. That is to say, they are somewhat like everybody else in America. As persons, they exhibit the same variations and contradictions which might be found in any other group of men of that size. Some individual examples:

There is a New York detective who is so kindly that he was once caught sitting on a doorstep helping a little Italian boy with his algebra lessons. This same man, beside whom, when aroused, a mad lion seems like a pansy, was once charged with beating up a prisoner and then throwing him from the second-story window of a tenement.

A police sergeant, known among his fellows as a master of chicanery, and never notable for his civic spirit, was walking down a side street one night when he saw a ten-year-old boy knock over a can of garbage. He asked the boy very politely to help him put the mess back where it belonged, and then delivered a kindly lecture on the beauties of clean streets. The youngster was flabbergasted.

The first Negro on the New York police force, Sam Battle, was subjected to an unmerciful hazing during his early days. But he took it patiently, proved his competence and bravery, and his white colleagues became his good friends.

A detective was fined thirty days' pay

and put back in patrolman's uniform after he had been found guilty of associating at a social affair with criminals, of failing to report promptly the ensuing robbery of the party, of entering a place on the suspect list, and of carelessness in betraying to the robbers that he had a pistol, which was taken from him. This man, who had a record of considerable valor back of him, has since distinguished himself by working hard on difficult cases while off duty.

A patrolman reported that he had saved the life of a longshoreman who had fallen into the Erie Basin. He received a reward of \$100 from a newspaper and was cited for bravery by the honor board of the department. But strange rumors reached headquarters. Finally, investigators threw the cop into a pool of water seven feet deep. He couldn't swim a stroke. He was dismissed from the department, but was reinstated by the next Commissioner.

One of the swankiest speakeasies, owned by old offenders against the laws of God and man, and patronized by some of the smartest detectives on the force, was raided on the complaint of a neighbor who could not be ignored. Some of the cops got behind the onyx bar and acted as bartenders for an hour or so, and then departed with some of the liquor they had found in the place. The joint was open for business as usual later that night. Nobody cared.

As a general rule, it may be found that the traffic patrolman who is most abusive to the motorist who passes a red light will exhibit the greatest consideration to old women and blind people at dangerous crossings.

There was a mounted policeman who appeared utterly callous to the ordinary courtesies and niceties of life. He was the sort of man who causes editorial writers to run frothing into their coops to write

blazing pieces about Cossacks. But when he had to give up his favorite horse, which he had ridden for many years, he went on a monumental bender and embarrassed everybody at the bar by his sentimental tears.

There is a very tough detective who will break a rowdy's arm, slap the faces of killers in a night club without fear of a comeback, or charge a mob with his bare fists. He will also give his money, sometimes when he can't afford it, to unfortunates, and his love for his family has been commented upon favorably by all who know about it.

One of the best detectives in the department was put in evening clothes and assigned to keep watch over the baubles at a wedding celebration at the home of a family of great wealth. When no one offered him a drink, he became so enraged that he went down the block to a speak-easy, where he passed an hour before resuming his duties.

A bartender said to me: "I see there's a new cop on the street this week." The bartender was enthusiastic. "A fine fellow," he went on. "Minds his own business. Comes in here once a day, gets his shot of rye and his five dollars, and that's the last we see of him."

III

James J. Walker, as a power in politics, is as dead as Bill Sulzer and the brontosaurus. He quit as Mayor of New York when, after an amazingly slipshod and inept defense to the charges brought against him before Governor Roosevelt by Samuel Seabury, counsel for the legislative committee investigating New York City, he saw clearly that he had no chance to avoid removal. There were too many things he couldn't laugh off. He became, rather sud-

denly, a tired and lovesick little man, a symbol of a vanished era.

But whatever may have been James's other aberrations, there was one point on which, with a few exceptions, he was consistently sound. He really wanted to keep the Police Department clean, to have it run in a fashion that would not leave his administration open to attack on that quarter. He knew, as a lawyer-politician who was reared in New York must know, that the hounds of Heaven, given the scent, will always bay first at the cops.

The men he picked to head the department were George V. McLaughlin, banker and apostle of harshness, who got sick of the job because the Tammany district leaders got sick of his men raiding their clubhouses for gambling; Joseph A. Warren, Walker's former law partner, a well-meaning ineffectual little man who finally cracked up and who never should have had the job in the first place; Grover A. Whalen, a department-store executive whose chief trouble was a liking for showmanship, though he did some good things for the department, and Edward P. Mulrooney, who has been a policeman all his life and who still heads the department. When Enright was Commissioner under Hylan, the complaint was made frequently that it was bad policy to have a man from the force in the job—a point of view which may be upheld with many persuasive arguments. But under Mulrooney, who has held the place for almost two years, there has been no such complaint.

The difficulty, in theory, about having a cop boss the cops is that he is likely to have too much of the police viewpoint and not enough regard for the attitude and needs of the citizenry. Although there has been an increase in some types of crime, Mr. Mulrooney, taking one thing with another, appears to be the most satisfactory

Commissioner the city has had, certainly in modern times, and that goes back to the incumbency of Theodore Roosevelt, who headed the department when Mulrooney joined the force. Even the more vociferous reformers, always kicking about something (and Lord knows, there is plenty to kick about in New York) have refrained from booting Mulrooney. The higher council of Tammany says that, with all the other troubles plaguing the Hall, it would be suicide to replace him.

Although he is, naturally, a thorough-going cop, who wears his gun even when he lies down to take a nap, he appears to have none of the weaknesses which sometimes bring ruin or ridicule upon unformed men who achieve positions of great authority. He is devoid of swank and, so far as anyone knows, has no political ambitions. Enright's flourishes and ruffles, his bombast and his posturing—all these are outside Mulrooney's scheme. He does not announce, as Arthur Woods did when he was Commissioner under the late John Purroy Mitchel, that "the gangster and the gunman are practically extinct"—a statement made in the period which was getting ready to spawn mobs of gorillas beside whom the oldtime gangsters seemed only amiable roughnecks! Nor does he complain, as the theorizing civilian Woods did, that the Commissionership is "the graveyard of promising careers." If there is an increase in stickups he admits it. If a newspaper goes wild over the details of a crime, he seldom complains. He announces no spectacular drives against gunmen, nor does he use the old phrase, "An arrest is expected within twenty-four hours," when he knows very well that there may never be an arrest.

Mulrooney, moreover, avoids the most dangerous pitfall of them all: he doesn't put his foot into trouble by making

speeches which contain injudicious or inflammatory threats or wisecracks about the powerful amount of law in the end of a nightstick. The Commissioner, poor fellow, has to make a great many speeches, and it is a lucky man who can make his public remarks read sensibly when set down in cold type. Enright's speeches were remarkable for their fustian and for their denunciations of the Interests, the press and everybody else who differed from his policies. Whalen, the great welcomer, made a pleasant speech but, boiled down, about all that he ever said was that the cops were all right and that New York was a great city. Mulrooney does much better.

Most of the improvements under him have been accomplished quietly. The Reds still have their meetings and parades, and Mulrooney doesn't care; his men see to it that there is no disorder, but there is no headcracking and hell-raising such as delighted Moscow when Whalen was Commissioner. He has actually made the police more courteous, and has told them plainly that they cannot expect the support of the people by insolence and misconduct. He has little patience with the weak business man, often a grasping crook at heart, who lets himself be preyed upon by racketeers. He doesn't fall for the guff that beer, even if stronger than 3.2%, will have any effect upon stopping the racketeering in alcohol. At his office he sees almost everyone who wants to see him, including a few nuts. Under his direction the police, without fanfare, have carried on much unemployment relief.

It is always a temptation for a Police Commissioner to make a great many innovations. Few of these folderols ever do much good. For example, Arthur Woods organized a rifle club, a signal corps, a police militia and machine-gun squadron,

a glee club and a corps of marine divers. He brought over Belgian police dogs. He approved a junior police force, thus setting loose a horde of offensive little squirts to annoy the citizens. And yet Woods is remembered as a pretty good Commissioner; some experts regard him as the best the city ever had. He improved the criminal identification system, made a little headway in making the cops polite, and insisted that the pot bellies be taken off.

Enright also was fond of gewgaws, especially such things as the annual police parade and the police glee club. When McLaughlin succeeded him he abolished most of this stuff, including Enright's amazing collection of honorary cops, whose chief function was to crash police lines with their badges. He also forbade the use of the police band at private functions, which would seem a sensible enough reform. Indeed, when McLaughlin left office there was considerable regret. He had been strong for immediate rewards and quick punishments for the men under him. However, some of his public statements led one to wonder if he was not a bit warped in his understanding of "due process of law."

Whalen, who will live long in the memory of New Yorkers who were lucky enough to see him perform during the great welcoming days, had many good traits as Commissioner. He improved the handling of street traffic, insisted upon a certain military trimness in the force, and was a good enough judge of men to detect Mulrooney's ability and place him at the head of the detective force, from which job he was promoted to the commissionership when Whalen decided (some say with the enthusiastic approval of Walker) to go back to his department store.

Mulrooney, like all Commissioners, abolished a few of the pet notions of his prede-

cessor and installed a few of his own. Probably the most effective of the Mulrooney innovations was the organization of a radio alarm system. Under it tremendous man-power can be brought within a very few minutes to any spot where serious trouble is reported. Fast police cars equipped with radios already have proved their effectiveness.

IV

The most shocking aspect of crime in New York—that is, the thing which attracts the greatest attention—is the failure of the police to solve the murders of well-known underworld figures. Why, it is asked, if detective science is worth anything at all, are not more of these cases cleared up?

The list is long: Frankie Uale, Sicilian leader who was shot down in Brooklyn; Arnold Rothstein, gambler and pawnbroker for the underworld, who was found dying at the side entrance of a hotel; Jerge the dope peddler, killed in an automobile on Broadway on a Sunday afternoon; Vannie Higgins, murdered outside a dance-hall in Brooklyn; Vincent Coll, the reckless, gat-goofy youth who was killed by a machine-gun while in a telephone booth in the Chelsea district; Joe Masseria, the famous Joe the Boss, whose violent ending may have been brought about for any one of a number of reasons; Frankie Marlow, who was lured from a restaurant in the West Fifties and taken for his final drive into Queens county.

There are so many others, big and little, that the record becomes appalling. The truth is that in some of these cases the police knew perfectly well who did it, but had no proof which would mean anything in court. Most of the more prosperous and powerful of the mob leaders (although they are for the most part ignorant, un-

couth apes) have a certain jungle cunning which makes them, for all practical purposes, immune to prosecution.

Their profits, of course, are mostly in alcohol. They learned long ago that, while counterfeiting and forgery and bank robbery and payroll snatching may be all right in their fashion, there is more money and less danger in making, cutting and distributing booze. As a corollary, if their incomes from liquor were cut off, the boys would go back to the old standard trades. New York is tolerant, even proud, of its better speakeasies, some of which are preferable in many ways to anything the old-time barrooms had to offer. But murder, especially murder by machine-guns, bombs, sawed-off shotguns and this new-fangled method of trussing them up and leaving them in a sack (the last one was left in a sack in a car abandoned at the door of Police Headquarters, much to everybody's embarrassment) sometimes gets a bit thick even for New Yorkers.

What to do about it? The closing up of all the speakeasies would hardly help; that itself would lead to an outcry that would wreck any administration. The attitude of the police toward the speaks is that the selling of booze is none of their business (New York having no State enforcement law) unless liquor is found while they are in pursuit of some other offense. At the same time they have been very harsh with a few of the tougher joints, particularly with any proprietor who was caught selling bad liquor. Some of the more forward-looking thinkers say that repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment and the substitution of some system of liquor control will bring order out of chaos. Maybe so, but one thing is certain: unless places are allowed to be open where liquor, hard liquor at that, may be sold openly over the bar, then there will be a beautiful fight among

the mugs who will try to control the inevitable multitude of illegal bars.

Better detective work might help the present situation. The detective who expects to match wits with a smart racketeer must be a man of considerable character and ingenuity. The difficulty is that the detective will become too friendly with the very persons he should be watching. Rothstein, for example, was a close friend of many of the cops. Owney Madden, who has been described as the supreme boss of New York's rackets, though this estimate may be exaggerated, has scores of friends among the detectives and patrolmen. Indeed, Madden, and with considerable reason, as he is a firm believer in peace, is regarded by some of the cops as a good influence. Up at Sing Sing, where he was sent recently as a parole violator to complete an old term, Warden Lawes finds him of great help in keeping the inmates of that great recreational and educational institution reasonably well behaved. Parole officers have told me that he has delivered many a severe lecture to young men who showed signs of going wrong. All this sounds upside down, but it is true. The men who are regarded by the public as malefactors, and lumped together in one class, are divided by the cops into right guys and wrong guys.

And yet, here is the sinister part of it: Suppose two experienced, handsome and intelligent detectives from headquarters, with perfectly honest intentions, frequent a high-class speakeasy run by a man whom they regard as anything but a criminal. Suppose they become friends, accept favors from him, and drink his booze. Then suppose it turns out that the great man is wanted for crimes far more serious than selling liquor. Well, such a delicate situation, though hardly the regular thing, is far from unknown.

On the other hand, how are the detectives to know anything about serious crime, or, more particularly, the conjunction of forces which are likely to cause serious crime, if they don't frequent such places? It is a problem as old as police work itself. Whalen created a sort of secret service, made up of young detectives whose faces were not known to the bosses and patrons of what he called "breeding places of crime." These boys were supposed to get at the very marrow of the secrets of the underworld. The scheme worked in a few cases, but it was not notably successful.

Only recently Mulrooney abolished another of Whalen's creations, the so-called gun squad, consisting of thirty-seven men. This squad had been formed on the theory that the gangster evil might be abated by having these men visit speakeasies, pool-rooms and other resorts where gunmen were suspected of assembling. By searching suspects and arresting those upon whom weapons were found, the squad was supposed to stop a lot of shooting before it started. "It did not justify its existence," was the Commissioner's explanation of its abolition.

New York detectives do not have the reputation for efficiency and sagacity which is attached, rightly or wrongly, to the men of Scotland Yard. It may be that, with so many potential lawyers, doctors and other educated youngsters out of work, some of them can be recruited for

the police force, there to solve all the crimes which now baffle the old-line detectives. But it is a rather forlorn hope, and it is not by any means improbable that the present system results in about as high an order of detective work as we shall ever get. The boys let a lot of them get away, but sometimes such New York detectives as McVeigh, Horan, Fitzgerald, Sheridan, Owens, Moore, Broderick and Cordes, who are an extremely practical group of men, turn out jobs which would get the admiration of the great stars of Scotland Yard.

New Yorkers, disgusted with the long trail of slimy testimony brought out two years ago, when the vice squad was put on the rack for framing women, nevertheless still believe that the force is sound at bottom. The cops have their troubles. After contending with the ordinary police business, they have to contend with the District Attorneys' offices of the five counties which make up New York City. In only one of those counties, the Bronx, where Charles B. McLaughlin is District Attorney, has the prosecutor's office done any work in helping suppress the criminality associated with racketeering which has called forth any public comment. The cops get steadily better, but the prosecutors still make New Yorkers yearn for another William Travers Jerome.

As for some of the judges—ah, well, no matter. No use getting too steamed up over sin.

THE AMERICAN THEATRE GOES BROKE

BY ARTHUR MANN

THE current theatrical season has set a new economic low for the American drama. Not since 1905, a year of acute indigence among stage people, has the theatre been in so perilous a state. And there is no immediate hope of recovery. The optimists of today are simply pessimists who have stumbled upon temporary successes.

At the peak of the season now drawing to a close there were 6,000 darkened theatres throughout the country. About half of them were abandoned legitimate theatres which had been wired for talking pictures. This total has mounted in the past three months, and it will be further increased with the coming of Summer.

The empty theatres hold the vanishing hopes of some 8,500 unemployed actors and actresses. They are monuments to the folly of countless bankrupt producers and owners. Up to five years ago there were 410 cities in the United States and Canada in which dramatic and musical productions could be played for from two or three days to two or three weeks. Today there are only twelve cities outside Greater New York to which a Broadway play may be sent. These dozen spots represent what is left of "the road."

Until five years ago there were 165 stock companies in the United States, twelve of which were in Greater New York. Today there are fewer than thirty-five in the whole country. In 1928 a total of 152 tent-shows were roaming the land, employing

more than 2,000 people. They presented standard productions, and were not to be confused with circuses and medicine outfits. Only fifteen of these tent-shows remain.

Five years ago the Actors' Equity Association had a membership of 10,000 performers, 8,500 of whom were in good standing—that is, had their dues paid up. Today there are barely 3,500 in good standing, and only 2,500 of this number obtained employment on the legitimate stage during the past season. The New York theatres, which employed more than 600 union stage hands, carpenters and electricians five years ago, employ fewer than 200 today.

The Shubert Theatre Corporation, the most powerful organization in the legitimate field five years ago, has collapsed. The corporation's assets were finally reduced to a string of dark theatres, control of which had been assumed when the boom of 1925-29 was at its height.

The once powerful association of producers and managers, the P.M.A., organized to combat Equity, has frizzled away to nothing. It is no more than a name now. Most of the leading managers of a few years ago have either gone bankrupt or retired from the field. The majority of the New York theatres are in the hands of mortgage-holding banks. One of them was recently taken from its owners to satisfy a judgment of \$200,000; they had refused \$1,000,000 for it only a few years ago.