

The Crime Wave in America

THE so-called "crime waves" recently reported from all over the United States represent the natural consequence of war. For some years after the close of the Thirty Years' War in 1648, Europe was terrorized by outbreaks of crime. Similarly after 1815 England and the Continent experienced grave difficulties in this direction—difficulties which finally led to the passage of the Metropolitan Police act in England in 1829 and to the reorganization of the municipal police throughout France. The close of our own Civil War brought a tremendous increase in the volume of crime, and one who glances over the old files of the newspapers in Boston, New York and Philadelphia during the period from 1866 to 1869, will see expressions of outraged public opinion strikingly similar to the newspaper comments of today.

The present "crime wave," therefore, is by no means confined to the United States. It is world wide. The police statistics of London, Paris, Berlin, and Madrid, all show an unprecedented volume of crime since 1918, and similar conditions are reported from far-away places like Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. In London, for the first time in the history of the Metropolitan Force, the police have been armed with pistols because of the increase in crimes committed with violence. In Paris the police force has been greatly augmented and special administrative machinery has been set up to deal with the phenomenon. Germany, whose crime rate before 1914 was among the lowest in Europe, is today racked with disorder, and special arrangements have had to be made to deal with the unprecedented number of juvenile delinquencies and of crimes committed with violence.

Of all the countries afflicted with this inevitable post-war disease, the United States is probably in the most serious position. In normal times our crime rate greatly exceeds that of European countries. Indeed in the average American city there are, under ordinary circumstances, from seven to ten times more crimes of a serious nature committed each year than are committed during the same period in English, French and German municipalities of similar size. These crimes include homicide, burglary, robbery, assault, and other felonies. New York City frequently has more burglaries in a given year than all England and Wales put together. Chicago in 1918 had twelve robberies for every one robbery in England, Wales and Scotland. In other words, in ordinary times, life and property are far less safe in the

United States than they are in most other countries—certainly in the countries of western Europe. In abnormal times, such as we are living in at present, these conditions become exaggerated; crime seems to beget crime, and the volume increases in geometric proportion. Paris with all its added thefts since 1918 can find no parallel to the startling series of hold-ups which New York has furnished in the last three months, while Chicago with its record of a murder a day leaves London gasping far in the rear.

Why should this difference exist? Why should crime be rampant in America, so that a period of abnormality like this sends our statistics to heights undreamed of in European countries? An easy answer is that ours is a *new* country where individualism has not yet learned to subordinate itself to social obligations, and frontier habits of thought still prevail. But if this were true Australia and New Zealand would be similarly circumstanced, and yet these countries have scarcely one-fifth of the crime per hundred thousand of population that we have. Obviously this reason cannot be seriously pressed. Another theory advanced is the heterogeneity of our population as compared with the homogeneity of most European countries and of such dominions as New Zealand and Australia. Here we are undoubtedly on firmer ground. Homogeneity simplifies the task of government. It tends to develop traditions of order and standards of public conduct. Out of it grow accepted customs and practices which smooth the rough edges of personal contact, and a fixed set of group habits by which conflicting interests are more readily comprehended and adjusted.

This sort of thing is impossible in America. We have none of the social solidarity and cohesiveness which come only from a common language and a common heritage. A settled habit of order, handed down as a tradition from one generation to another, is utterly lacking. We are a heterogeneous mixture of races, sprung from radically different environments. When the official census proclamation of 1920 was issued in New York City it had to be printed in twenty-two languages.

This lack of standards which heterogeneity induces is shown in many ways. For example, the streets and parks of American cities are invariably dirtier than the streets and parks of cities like Berlin, Vienna, Paris and London. New York's Central Park on a Monday morning in summer is littered with the debris of the crowds that have

swarmed there the day before. Newspapers, boxes, banana skins, and other evidences of a reading and picnicking public are scattered far and wide. The same thing is true in Jackson Park, Chicago, and in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. On the other hand, 100,000 people bring their lunches to the Gruenwald near Berlin every pleasant Sunday and leave it as clean and clear of rubbish as when they entered. In Vienna the Prater is constantly thronged with holiday crowds from the city, but it is as spotless as if it had just been picked up. Vandalism is practically unknown. Conditions largely similar prevail in the Bois de Boulogne in Paris, and in the picknicking stretches along the Thames. While not as immaculate as the public grounds of Germany and Austria, they are nevertheless kept in a far cleaner condition by the throngs that use them than are similar places of recreation in this country. Order is a group habit. Respect for law and for the amenities of social intercourse is in no small degree governed by tradition and custom.

But our heterogeneity is not the whole reason for our greater comparative propensity to crime. A more immediate cause is to be found in the complete breakdown of the administration of criminal law in the United States. On this point there can be little question. A parasitic growth of technicality and intricacy has thwarted and choked our whole criminal process, while the delay and uncertainty of punishment and the vicious grip of politics easily justify Mr. Taft's sweeping verdict: "a disgrace to our civilization." On this point Mr. Maclay Hoyne, former State's Attorney for Cook County, Illinois, has recently given eloquent testimony. He lists the following cases in which under his administration the prosecution was defeated: a chief of police, an indicted alderman, a political crook, a plain murderer, a well-known man indicted for arson, a gangster killer, a wife slayer, an anti-trust conspiracy case, and many others. "In all of these cases except one," he goes on to say, "money, influence or influential connections overcame all of the efforts of the state."

"The wonder now is not that so many guilty men escape," said a prominent member of the Philadelphia Bar, "but that under our present system any guilty men are ever convicted. Where they have money enough to employ the most able counsel and to take advantage of every delay and technicality available, they practically never are convicted."

In the wide-spread panic engendered by the present crime wave many of our state legislators have cudgelled their brains for an effective remedy. In not a few cases the remedy proposed has been

an increase in the maximum sentences of convicted felons. Suggestions have been made to raise burglary and robbery to forty and fifty years instead of fifteen and twenty, and proposals have been brought forward that are even more drastic. The futility of such a course is obvious. Certainty of punishment rather than the severity of it is the cure for crime. It is far better to make a fifteen-year sentence swift and sure than to have a forty-year penalty spasmodically inflicted. Juries will be less inclined to bring in verdicts of guilty where savage penalties are to be imposed than they would be if the penalties were in rational proportion to the offenses. To revert to an eighteenth century conception of crime and punishment is to get nowhere with the disease with which we are now afflicted. The cure is not found in harsh penalties; it involves nothing less than the regeneration of our whole system of administering justice.

But in looking about for the causes which have brought us to our present state, one factor stands out perhaps more prominently than any other: the inadequacy and demoralization of our police machinery. The whole situation can be summed up in the word *politics*. There is scarcely a city in the United States where the police department has not been used as the ladder by which political organizations have crawled to power. Obstacles in the way of complete dominance by party machines have been overcome by the easy processes of law, and police departments have been revamped and reshaped, not in the interests of public service, but to facilitate the operation of the spoils system or strengthen the grip of some political machine. Examples of this are legion; no state in the country has been free of it. The struggle for party dominance; the desire of "jobs" for the faithful, the determination to control the machinery of elections—this is the story of our police service in the last seventy-five years. It has been stunted and dwarfed, with no opportunity for the development of an effective technique. It has been shaped as a tool of party success rather than an instrument of public service. Regarded as the legitimate spoils of victory at the polls, it has been prostituted to base and selfish purposes.

From such a government service with such a history what can we expect? We have sown the seed in apathy and corruption, and now when the crime epidemic comes we reap the whirlwind.

This is why the post-war disease of crime has not ravaged the countries of Europe as it has the United States. They were prepared for it. In England, France, and even in Germany the mechanism of the police department is the product not of political expediency but of painstaking care

and deliberation. It has been thoughtfully put together as an instrument of vast public usefulness. The best brains obtainable have been devoted to the task. When the growing needs of the department have indicated the necessity for change, it has been brought about carefully and conscientiously, with the single idea of producing a better machine. As a result we find such admirably articulated organizations as Scotland Yard in London, and the Præsidium in Vienna, with years of efficient police service to their credit. No tinkering patchwork has checked their development; no sacrifice to political necessity has interfered with the orderly operation of their administrative machinery. Planned deliberately on a basis of efficiency, the product of unselfish ideals of public service, they have run for years without hitch or breakdown.

A group of well-intentioned gentlemen has recently suggested that a World's Exposition of Democracy be held in the United States in 1926 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The Exposition would be limited to nations with a "democratic" form of government, and they would be invited to exhibit in some concrete and dramatic fashion their governmental machinery. It is further proposed that suitable medals and prizes be awarded.

What would the United States exhibit in such an Exposition? Of course there would be Mayor Hylan, Mayor Thompson, and the scores of similarly-minded gentlemen who administer the affairs of many American communities. Perhaps they could best be represented by wax figures. Then, too, there would be all the antiquated junk which constitutes much of the machinery of our municipal governments. A few samples from Pittsburgh or Atlanta would be highly illuminating.

I suppose too—if the exhibit were really to be representative of conditions in America—we should have to show our hopeless confusion of politics and administration, as a result of which we identify the policy-determining functions of government controlled in a democracy by popular will, with the technical business procedure by which the policies are put into effect. This could be illustrated by graphic charts showing how we put a periodically shifting line of untrained managers to run such complicated departments of our public work as police, health, and public institutions. Perhaps this could be made vivid by exhibiting the photographs of the laundryman who was head of the police force in San Francisco; of the hay and feed merchant who served Chicago in a similar capacity; of the harness-maker who was commissioner of health in Elgin, Illinois; of the horse-shoer who was commissioner of streets and bridges in Hous-

ton, Texas; of the ice-man who was chief of police in San Antonio; of the groceryman who was commissioner of streets in Kansas City, Kansas; of the typesetter who was commissioner of finance in Lynn, Massachusetts; of the barber who was commissioner of public utilities in Topeka, Kansas; of the house-mover who was commissioner of parks and sanitation in the same city; of the undertaker who was commissioner of health in Jersey City and of the traveling man for a tea and coffee house who served Salt Lake City as chief of police.

We should have to find some way, too, in this Exposition, of portraying the political fears and superstitions which we have inherited from frontier conditions of life, and our determined prejudices against an "office-holding class" which have been handed down as part of the Jacksonian fetish, and which, by limiting tenure of office and writing into the laws all sorts of provincialisms, make it impossible to place the administrative service of the specialized departments of government on a permanent expert basis. This could be illustrated perhaps by charts showing that whereas London has had seven police commissioners in ninety-one years, New York has had twelve in nineteen years, while Chicago has had twenty-five superintendents of police in forty-nine years. Charts could be used, too, to show that where London kept Sir Edward Henry as commissioner of police for fifteen years, Sir Richard Mayne for thirty-nine years, and Sir Edmund Henderson for seventeen years, we kept Arthur Woods in New York a little over three years, while L. T. Steward in Chicago lasted two.

As a matter of fact our exhibit in such a World's Exposition of Democracy would undoubtedly show the United States on a lower plane in point of local government than any other civilized country in the world, ranking far behind England, France, Germany, and Austria, and in many respects behind Italy and Spain. This would be our contribution to the Exposition of Democracy at the 150th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

President Harding in his inaugural address spoke of our American representative government as the highest expression and surest guarantee of civilization, and pictured the world as riveting its gaze "on the great truths on which the founders wrought." He said: "In the beginning the Old World scoffed at our experiment. Today our foundations of political belief stand unshaken, a precious inheritance to ourselves, an inspiring example of freedom and civilization to all mankind."

Mingled with the applause which followed the recital of these lofty words was another sound. It was the gods on Olympus in a paroxysm of mirth.

RAYMOND B. FOSDICK.

Queen Victoria

II

The Girlhood of Victoria

[The Duke of Kent, Victoria's father, is dead, and the Duchess is living with her children in Kensington Palace.]

IN 1827, the Duke of York, who had found some consolation for the loss of his wife in the sympathy of the Duchess of Rutland, died, leaving behind him the unfinished immensity of Stafford House and £200,000 worth of debts. Three years later George IV also disappeared, and the Duke of Clarence reigned in his stead. The new Queen, it was now clear, would in all probability never again be a mother; the Princess Victoria, therefore, was recognized by Parliament as heir presumptive; and the Duchess of Kent, whose annuity had been doubled five years previously, was now given an additional £10,000 for the maintenance of the Princess, and was appointed Regent, in case of the death of the King before the majority of her daughter. At the same time a great convulsion took place in the constitution of the state. The power of the Tories, who had dominated England for more than forty years, suddenly began to crumble. In the tremendous struggle that followed, it seemed for a moment as if the tradition of generations might be snapped, as if the blind tenacity of the reactionaries and the determined fury of their enemies could have no other issue than revolution. But the forces of compromise triumphed: the Reform bill was passed. The centre of gravity in the constitution was shifted towards the middle classes; the Whigs came into power; and the complexion of the government assumed a liberal tinge. One of the results of this new state of affairs was a change in the position of the Duchess of Kent and her daughter. From being the protégées of an opposition clique, they became assets of the official majority of the nation. The Princess Victoria was henceforward the living symbol of the victory of the middle classes. . . .

The Duchess's own liberalism was not very profound. She followed naturally in the footsteps of her husband, repeating with conviction the catchwords of her husband's clever friends and the generalizations of her clever brother Leopold. She herself had no pretensions to cleverness; she did not understand very much about the Poor law and the slave trade and political economy; but she hoped that she did her duty; and she hoped—she ardently hoped—that the same might be said of Victoria. Her educational conceptions were those of Dr. Arnold, whose views were just then be-

ginning to permeate society. Dr. Arnold's object was, first and foremost, to make his pupils "in the highest and truest sense of the words, Christian gentlemen"; intellectual refinements might follow. The Duchess felt convinced that it was her supreme duty in life to make quite sure that her daughter should grow up into a Christian Queen. To this task she bent all her energies; and, as the child developed, she flattered herself that her efforts were not unsuccessful. When the Princess was eleven, she desired the Bishops of London and Lincoln to submit her daughter to an examination, and report upon the progress that had been made. "I feel the time to be now come," the Duchess explained, in a letter obviously drawn up by her own hand, "that what has been done should be put to some test, that if anything has been done in error of judgment it may be corrected, and that the plan for the future should be open to consideration and revision. . . . I attend almost always myself every lesson, or a part; and as the Lady about the Princess is a competent person, she assists Her in preparing Her lessons, for the various masters, as I resolved to act in that manner so as to be Her governess myself . . . When she was at a proper age she commenced attending Divine Service regularly with me, and I have every feeling that she has religion at Her heart, that she is morally impressed with it to that degree, that she is less liable to error by its application to her feelings as a Child capable of reflection." "The general bent of Her character," added the Duchess, "is strength of intellect, capable of receiving with ease, information, and with a peculiar readiness in coming to a very just and benignant decision on any point Her opinion is asked on. Her adherence to truth is of so marked a character that I feel no apprehension of that Bulwark being broken down by any circumstances." The Bishops attended at the Palace, and the result of their examination was all that could be wished. "In answering a great variety of questions proposed to her," they reported, "the Princess displayed an accurate knowledge of the most important features of Scripture History, and of the leading truths and precepts of the Christian Religion as taught by the Church of England, as well as an acquaintance with the Chronology and principal facts of English History remarkable in so young a person. To questions in Geography, the use of the Globes, Arithmetic, and Latin Grammar, the answers which the Princess returned were equally satisfactory." They did not believe that