

their names shouted out, and they are brought down from one tier of cells to another, for trial or discharge. The buzz of talk is heard, the yawning of the weary, the prisoners mocking or imitating the preacher, and blending with all this is the yell of the maniac and the howl of the victim of delirium tremens. The contrast between the Catholic service in prison and the Protestant is very marked. The Catholic worship is made attractive and enjoyable. Pleasing Sisters of Charity take charge of the services, and able priests minister at the altar. The Protestant worship is as bare, tedious, and unattractive as can be imagined. There is little in it that is tender, affectionate, or winning. It can be, and ought to be, at once improved.

XVIII.

POLICE FORCE OF NEW YORK.

THE OLD SYSTEM. — ATTEMPT AT REFORM. — UNIFORM REBELLION. — METROPOLITAN SYSTEM. — GENERAL SUPERINTENDENTS. — THE POLICE AT THEIR WORK. — THE HARBOR PRECINCT. — HEADQUARTERS. — THE FULL POLICE FORCE. — THE OFFICIAL STATEMENT.

THE OLD SYSTEM.

No city in the world, except London and Paris, has a police which, in efficiency, discipline, and character, equals that of New York. It took many years, many experiments, and many changes, to perfect the system. Previous to 1844, New York was guarded by the "Old Leather-heads." This force patrolled the city at night, or that part of it known as the lamp district. They were not watchmen by profession. They were cartmen, stevedores, porters, and laborers. They were distinguished by a fireman's cap without front (hence their name, *leather-heads*), an old camlet coat, and a lantern. They kept out of harm's way, and did not visit the dark portions of the city. Thieves and rogues were advised of their locality by their crying the hour of the night. The whole city above Fourteenth Street was a neglected region. It was beyond the lamp

district, and in the dark. Under Mayor Harper an attempt was made to introduce a municipal police, uniformed and disciplined, after the new London system. Popular sentiment was too strong to make the attempt a success, but it was a step in the right direction, and produced good results. The old watch system was abolished, and a day and night police created for one year as an experiment. The force had miscellaneous duties to perform. Policemen were to keep the peace, light the street lamps, be dock-masters, street-inspectors, health-officers, and fire-wardens. The police were in the hands of the mayor and aldermen. They did the will of as unscrupulous and corrupt a band of men as ever held power — men who were unscrupulous partisans and politicians. The guardians of the city were the tools of corrupt and designing men: a terror to good people, and an ally of rogues. Citizens slept in terror, and all New York arose and demanded a reform.

ATTEMPT AT REFORM.

Mr. Havemeyer became mayor. His first work was to rescue the police from the hands of politicians. He was a Democrat, and did not want the odium of failure to fall on his party. Selecting good men from all parties to be on the police, he wanted the government to be composed of Whigs and Democrats also. Of the newly-constructed force, George W. Matsell was made the chief. Rigid rules were made for the appointment of policemen. Applications must be made in writing, with recommendations from well-known citizens. The antecedents of candidates were inquired into, and they were examined in reading, writing, and physical sound-

ness. A vigorous and efficient body of men became guardians of the city. The police wore no uniform or badge of authority except a star.

After a number of years the police force became, as before, the tool of corrupt politicians. Their fidelity was tampered with, and their efficiency marred. The board of aldermen, the most corrupt that New York ever knew, made the force an instrument of their will. The police were in their power, and they could break them at will. The aldermen interfered directly with the execution of justice. They were magistrates as well as aldermen. The rogues of the city were their friends. If the police made arrests, the aldermen discharged the prisoner, and probably punished the officer. Nothing was safe in New York, and general alarm prevailed. Great crimes were openly committed and unpunished. The people cried to the Legislature for relief, and the police were taken out of the hands of the Common Council. They were put into the hands of a commission, composed of the recorder, the city judge, and the mayor.

UNIFORM REBELLION.

The new commission decided to uniform the force. The police refused to wear it. They were no serfs, they said, and would wear no badge of servility to please any one. Politicians, mad that their power was gone, fomented the discontent, strengthened the rebellion, and promised to stand by the police in their defiance of law. An indignation meeting was called, and the arbitrary and servile order denounced. Mayor Westervelt and Recorder Tillon, the commissioners,

were men not to be trifled with. They dismissed at once every man connected with the meeting. The refractory men denied the right of the commission to dismiss them. They appealed to the court, and after an exciting and almost turbulent hearing, the dismissal was sustained.

While honest men filled the office of mayor, recorder, and judge, the force was efficient; but when bold, unscrupulous, and corrupt men bore rule, the worst days of the police came back, and they became again mere tools of personal and political ambition. The people again, without distinction of party, cried to the Legislature for relief.

METROPOLITAN SYSTEM.

It was necessary to take the police out of the hands of New York officials, who depended on rogues and rascals for their nomination and election. The low foreign population of New York, keepers of dens of infamy, the depraved, the dissolute, and the violators of law, who, in the vilest places, nominated the highest officers, and who could elect men or defeat them, would not be much afraid of officers who could be dismissed or discharged at the beck of their friends. So the Metropolitan District was created, including the City, Brooklyn, Richmond, King's, a part of Queen's, and Westchester counties, making a circuit of about thirty miles. The authority was vested in a board of commissioners, composed of five citizens, and the mayors of New York and Brooklyn, the board to be under the control of the Legislature. Fernando Wood was mayor of the city. He saw the aim of the new law, and resolved to resist it. The old board held over, and re-

fused to resign. Mr. Wood inaugurated civil war on a small scale. He gathered the old force into the City Hall, and resisted unto blood. The old police, having nothing to hope from the new order of things, joined Mr. Wood in his defiance of law. The resistance took a political shape. The whole city was excited. It was said that the gutters would run with blood. A riot broke out in the Park. The Seventh Regiment, marching down Broadway to embark for Boston, were halted in front of the City Hall, and grounded their arms, ready for a general fray. The case was taken into the courts. Charles O'Connor, who defended Wood, pledged his professional reputation to the crowd that the Court of Appeals would sustain his client. The police bill was pronounced constitutional, and Mr. Wood appeared and took his seat at the board as one of the commission.

GENERAL SUPERINTENDENTS.

The efficiency of the new order of things would depend very much upon the general superintendent, who was the executive officer. The choice fell on Frederick A. Talmadge, formerly recorder of the city, an upright, honest man, but with scarcely an element that made him fit to command a force of eighteen hundred of the shrewdest men in the state. Mr. Amos Pilsbury succeeded Mr. Talmadge. He was in charge of the State Penitentiary at Albany. As a manager of criminals he had no equal. The penitentiary of which he was warden was the model penitentiary of the land. His power over desperate men made him famous in all quarters of the civilized globe. Men came from the principal cities in Europe to examine

this wonderful institution. The penitentiary was as neat as a Quaker seminary. No millionaire could boast of a more elegant garden. The discipline was marvellous, and the economy by which the institution was managed exceeded all praise. The State Pauper Establishment, at Ward's Island, was conducted in a most extravagant style. Captain Pilsbury was called down to reform the concern. He produced a change as by magic. He knew to a farthing what would support life, how much a pauper ought to eat, how many should sit around the keeper's table, and what it should cost to supply it. He bought every cent's worth that was used on the island. He set hearty, fat, and idle paupers to work. He made everybody earn his own bread. The sick and the indolent he banished. His success in infusing economy on the island was marvellous. He flitted back and forth between Albany and New York; and to his position and pay as warden he added the emolument and authority of keeper of Ward's Island.

Mr. Pilsbury was elected superintendent of police. If he could manage desperate men in prison, and make money out of a thousand paupers, what could he not do with a police force of eighteen hundred men? He refused the appointment, for his double position and double pay were far better than the three thousand dollars offered by the commission. He was allowed to retain his position at Albany and at Ward's Island, with the compensation connected with each office. To this was added three thousand dollars a year as superintendent. If the whole did not amount to ten thousand dollars a year, the balance was to be made up to him by the commission. His appointment was hailed with

delight. The Harpers published a portrait of the coming man, with a vigorous life-sketch. His progress from Albany to New York was telegraphed. His connection with the force was a lamentable failure. In prison discipline and pauper economy he had no rival; but he had no ability to control a large body of men, shrewd and intelligent. In an hour they measured him, and rode over him rough shod. He divided the board to checkmate Mr. Wood, and formed a ring within a ring all against himself. He took men into his confidence who were agents of his enemies, and who betrayed him. Unable to carry the board with him in his measures, Mr. Pilsbury resigned. He had no chance to display his peculiar talents. As an economist he was not wanted. He handled no money, and his order to the value of a dollar would not be recognized. To marshal men, to move and control them, he had no ability.

John Alexander Kennedy was appointed superintendent in 1860. Important changes had been introduced into the law. The commission was reduced to three. The superintendent, the inspectors and patrolmen had their duties assigned to them. But complaints were made against the discipline of the force. They went without uniform; could not be found when wanted; lounged, smoked, and entered houses to rest; visited drinking saloons, and committed other misdemeanors. A new rank was created. Inspectors were placed over the captains, and made responsible for the good conduct of the men while on duty. They went everywhere, and at all times; watched the captains, examined the books and the station-houses, and reported

every breach of discipline that they saw. Their coming and going were erratic. They turned up unexpectedly, and made summary complaints in all cases where officers or men neglected their duty.

With the new order of things, Mr. Kennedy commenced his official duties. He was offered the position fifteen years before by Mayor Havemeyer. Of Scotch-Irish parentage, small in stature, unobtrusive in his manner, and of few words, he has tact, executive ability, is quick in his perceptions, prompt in his decisions, and of indomitable pluck, and is eminently fitted for his position. He is not a man for show. He seldom wears uniform, or any badge of distinction. He is the last man who would be picked out in a crowd as the Chief of Police. He assumed command before the new law worked smoothly, when it was maligned, when politicians, who found crime profitable, attempted to make the new system odious. He turned neither to the right nor to the left, but discharged his duties faithfully. He has changed public sentiment, infused military discipline into the corps, so that they move to a riot in solid columns with the obedience and force of a brigade. The uniform is no longer regarded as a badge of servility, but as an honor and a protection.

THE POLICE AT THEIR WORK.

The London police dare not touch a man unless he has committed some offence, or the officers have a warrant. Well-known thieves and burglars walk defiantly by the guardians of the law, and know that no man can lay finger upon them unless they ply their profession. A dozen robbers and pickpockets may go into a

crowd, or into a place of amusement, and though the police know what they are there for, they cannot touch one of them unless they actually commit some crime. A mob of ten thousand may gather in St. James's Park, with the intent of sacking Buckingham Palace, yet, until they begin to tear down the fence, or do some act of violence, the police or troops have no power to arrest or disperse them. A royal proclamation might do it. So sacred is personal liberty in Great Britain. But our police can arrest on suspicion or at pleasure. They scatter a mob, and bid loiterers pass on or go to the station-house. If a notorious fellow enters a place of public resort, though he has purchased his ticket, yet he will be ordered to leave at once or be locked up. At a great public gathering in the night, say Fourth of July, when tens of thousands of all characters and hues gather together, among whom are the most desperate men and women in the world, the crowd will be orderly as a church, and go home quietly as an audience from the Academy of Music. In the draft riots of July, the police marched in solid column against the rioters, and obeyed orders as promptly as an army. They broke the prestige of the mob with their locusts, and scattered the miscreants before the military arrived. The Prince of Wales and Duke of Newcastle expressed astonishment at the ease with which the police controlled the masses. At the reception of the Prince and Princess of Wales in London, the mob overpowered the police, seven persons were killed, and hundreds of men, women, and children crushed. At the exhibition of the Great Eastern in England, pickpockets swarmed by hundreds, and thousands of pounds were stolen. On

the exhibition of the Great Eastern in New York, she was visited by thousands of people, only six policemen were on duty, and not a dollar was lost.

The Metropolitan Police is not large. Besides the officers, the force numbers two thousand one hundred men. In uniform and soldierly bearing; neatness of dress, manliness, and physical vigor; intelligence and courteousness; promptness and energy in the discharge of duty, often unpleasant and perilous, the police of no city in the world can excel the Metropolitan Police of New York.

THE HARBOR PRECINCT.

The police on the water have a precinct by themselves. It renders a most valuable service. Its headquarters are on a steamboat. This boat can be signalled at any moment. It keeps the peace of the harbor, quells mutiny, puts out fires, tows vessels on fire away from other vessels, and rescues vessels in peril. It arrests dock-robbers, and makes river-thieving dangerous business.

HEADQUARTERS.

For many years the headquarters were in the basement of the Almshouse in the Park. Mr. Matsell had one room — damp, dark, and small — and one clerk, and these were enough for the service. A large marble building on Mulberry Street, running through to Mott, five stories high, is the present headquarters. It was built expressly for the police. It contains every convenience that taste, talent, and liberality can suggest, and is the most perfect building of the kind in the world. System, order, quiet prevail, and everything moves like a well-adjusted door on oiled hinges.

Every man has his place, and must be found in it. Thousands daily visit the rooms — officers from a circuit of thirty miles to make reports and take orders; victims to make complaints; men and women, robbed and wronged, to get redress; officers of justice from every city in the Union; detectives from the Old World in search of rascals; policemen on trial, with witnesses and friends; reporters, newspaper men, and citizens generally. But all is quiet. Loud talking and profanity are prohibited. Smoking and the use of tobacco are not allowed. You get a civil answer to a question, and the officers are courteous.

Within reach of the chief's chair is a telegraph, which communicates with every room in the building, with every station-house in the city, with every office in the district, Brooklyn, Staten Island, and Westchester County. Before the robber has done up his bundle, the finger of the chief orders an up-town policeman to make the arrest. On the breaking out of a riot, men are instantaneously marched from every station-house to the gathering. Lost children are found at headquarters. Within an hour after a new counterfeit appears every storekeeper in the city is notified by the police.

Nearly a quarter of a century has passed since the old watch system was broken up, and the old Leatherheads disappeared forever. The present system is the growth of years. The severe but necessary discipline to which the present force is subjected makes it the security and pride of our people. New York is the home of the most daring and desperate criminals, who come from all parts of the world. Over two

thousand men, efficient, brave, and well disciplined, who often face danger and death, guard our homes, make life safe, and property secure. Desperate men know with what vigilance New York is guarded. Should they overpower the police, they know that the electric wires, numerous as the veins in one's body, would communicate with headquarters, and a few sharp strokes on the bell of the City Hall would bring ten thousand bayonets, if needed, to sustain the civil force. To the untold blessings of a strong government New York owes much for her tranquillity and greatness.

THE FULL POLICE FORCE.

The official statement of the entire Metropolitan Police force is two thousand five hundred and sixty-six. Of this number, two thousand one hundred and two are employed in New York. This force is divided into one superintendent, four inspectors, eighteen surgeons, forty-five captains, one hundred and seventy-seven sergeants, ninety-one roundsmen, two hundred and eighty-nine patrolmen on special duty, one thousand eight hundred and forty-eight patrolmen on general duty, ninety-three doormen. Of this force, all but four hundred and sixty are in the city of New York. The incidental duties of the police for a single quarter are thus summed up: Lost children delivered to parents, two thousand nine hundred and ninety-six; abandoned infants delivered to Alms-house, thirty-six; animals found, six hundred and eleven; accidents reported, one thousand two hundred and seventy-two; buildings found open and secured, one thousand three hundred and eighty-six; fires at-

tended, two hundred and sixty-two; reported violations of law, sixteen thousand five hundred and eight; destitute persons lodged, twenty-five thousand eight hundred and nineteen; money received from lodgers when they were able to take care of themselves, one hundred and seventeen thousand two hundred and fifty-five dollars; stolen and lost property in charge of the property clerk, three thousand five hundred and forty lots.