

Policemen are not selected on account of their mental but their physical proportions. Intellectual policemen are few, and they seldom get promotion or pensions. Intellectuality hampers them in the execution of their duties, and is always getting them into trouble with their superior officers. It was proposed at one time to recruit the police from the discharged criminal class, but the principle didn't work well. It was found that while criminals could easily be trained up to the requisite standard of honesty, they could not be trained down to the official standard of stupidity and brutality. They were too clever and vigilant; they discovered crimes which the authorities did not wish discovered, and arrested criminals whom the authorities did not want arrested. They were much too civil towards the common people, and not sufficiently obsequious towards the rich; while their indiscreet avowal of the truth in giving evidence tended to sully the prestige of the police and sap the foundations of public order.

I often chasten my moral pride by thinking that I might have been a policeman myself!—that instead of being a Socialist, endeavouring to put down crime, I might have been a policeman promoting and encouraging it. I can never forget the circumstance that a boy who was born next door on the same day as myself is now a policeman!

Sometimes policemen may be seen everywhere, and at other times nowhere. On bright sunny days, when the toilers are locked in factories and fields under the surveillance of their masters, and when rich thieves are peacefully pursuing their calling in offices and exchanges and poor thieves are hiding in their dens—the police seem legion. Alike amid the throng of our cities and the quiet lanes of our villages their blue coats and tin-plate mounted helmets shine conspicuously, like thistles in a quarry-pit. Their decorative effect, as well as their utility, appears to be indispensable to civilised life. They are paraded on all state and civic occasions. They are stuck on either side of our theatres, public halls, art galleries, general post offices, and sometimes our churches. They are placed with flower-pots at the doors of the city residences of lords and gentlemen during important receptions. Together with lamp-posts they are the sole decoration provided at public expense on our streets; and they divide with public urinals the glory of ornamenting the junction of important thoroughfares.

Policemen perform many offices which they are not compelled to do by statute. They watch shebeens lest detectives pounce upon them unawares; they procure half-pint bottles of whisky in the night-time for belated swells on

payment of a trifling commission; they assist the Society for the Suppression of Vice by levying taxes upon prostitutes and brothel-keepers; they render thieving a less remunerative profession by exacting blackmail from thieves and re-setters; and they save the public the cost of extending police-office accommodation by taking "tips" from respectable criminals and permitting them to go home to their own more commodious and comfortable mansions.

The marvellous gift which policemen acquire of being able to testify as eye-witnesses concerning occurrences which they have not seen, has been frequently noted and commented upon. The fact that this faculty becomes so objective or *hylo-ideal* that they aver to having witnessed incidents which never occurred, has brought it and the police themselves into disrepute with matter-of-fact people. But it should be borne in mind, in all fairness to the police, that the disadvantages which result from the possession of this gift are not infrequently balanced by the possession of another of an opposite tendency, which prevents them seeing—or at least recollecting having seen—incidents which transpired before their eyes, and in which they themselves prominently participated. This peculiar mental endowment is the one intellectual characteristic which gives policemen an advantage over their fellows, and it inspires in common people more terror than even their truncheons or big boots. Divested of it, they would be as Parliament without party, or newspapers without advertisements—their dominion over the people would speedily perish.

The notion that policemen are bigoted upholders of law and fanatical respecters of public order has been somewhat shaken by recent events. There never was, indeed, the slightest foundation for such an opinion. As a matter of fact, the police are, and always have been, practical Anarchists in their own way. They break the law in private as naively as they break the heads of the citizens in public; and half-a-dozen of them placed in a crowd will produce more anarchy in five minutes than all the foreign sections could do in five years. Wherever two or three policemen are gathered together, riot and disorder dwell in the midst of them.

Policemen have no political principles, and they belong to no political party. They are not Socialists, but neither are they Tories, or Liberals, or Radicals—they are simply policemen. They are not opposed to Socialism; they are simply opposed to Socialists. They are not in favour of landlordism or capitalism; they are simply in favour of landlords and capitalists. They would club down Liberals and Tories, landlords and capi-

talists, as jauntily as they do Socialists, crofters, and tenant farmers if their pay and pensions depend upon their so doing;—and perhaps they shall some day.

J. BRUCE GLASIER.

(To be concluded.)

## THE "DAILY CHRONICLE" ON THE LABOUR COMMISSION.

We hear, with much regret, that the prevailing opinion on the Labour Commission is opposed to any large and searching investigation of women's labour by the Sub-Commissioners whom it has, with reluctance, consented to appoint. We may say at once that in our view such an attitude is very far from creditable, while it is phenomenally unwise. The whole proceedings of the Commission in regard to this branch of the labour question have indeed been calculated to throw the gravest discredit both on its competence and its seriousness. The Commission was met from the first with the difficulty arising from a mass of unprepared, irrelevant, and ill-assorted evidence. As it has proceeded, it has shown increasing inability to get at the root facts, to ask the right questions, and to extract any strikingly novel or even pertinent material.

### "A BASTARD SLIP."

An Eminent Lawyer on the Game Laws.

Hunter never ceases to wonder at the apathy of the people.

Mr. Hugh Macdonald, solicitor, Aberdeen (not, mark you! the unearther and editor of Professor Ogilvie's "Birthright in Land," but another Mac who does not seem quite satisfied with the *status quo*), has been writing to Dr. W. A. Hunter, M.P., with reference to the operation of the Scotch Game Laws as illustrated by the recent case of Michael Davelin, who died at Craiginches Jail, Aberdeen, while undergoing a period of 14 days' imprisonment for "illegal possession of game":—

"Dear Mr. Macdonald—I am favoured with yours enclosing cutting from a newspaper as to the tragic end of Michael Davelin. It is a cruel illustration of a cruel and iniquitous law—'a bastard slip,'—as Blackstone well described it, of the Forest Laws.

"The apathetic indifference with which the people seem to tolerate the infamy of the Game Laws is to me a never-ceasing wonder.—Yours very truly, (Signed) W. A. HUNTER.