



Test Tubes Answer Tommy Guns



CRIME does not pay. Take the profit out of it and the heroics, the sense of adventure, the sense of superiority which flaming headlines give to the criminal, strip it to its sordid bareness, and its solution to a considerable extent, is in sight. After all, there is nothing very glamorous about handcuffs, prison bars, long penitentiary sentences, or capital punishment. The penalties when imposed, make the criminal look like a sap.

In place of the old-time, bruiser-type criminal the modern enemy of society employs finesse and as a class, loves to appear as a gentleman of keen brain and wit. Arrayed against him are other men equally keen, devoted to law enforcement. Many of them have been trained in the laboratory for their life work of crime suppression and the apprehension of the criminal. More and more these men are employing modern inventions in their work—photography, microscopy, ballistics, X-ray, chemistry, finger printing, psychology, medicine, keen perception, and a knowledge of the law.

Realizing all this, it was particularly interesting when one of our party said "We're going over to Elizabeth, N. J., to meet a member of the police force—a man who is doing unusual police work in his laboratory."

Instinctively, we pictured this man as big, husky, and firm of jaw, wrestling with a variety of problems that would be almost certain to arise in that densely populated metropolitan area.

Pulling up before a comfortable home we were met at the door by a cultured gentleman with a charming voice and the manner and face of an artist, who ushered us upstairs to a laboratory and office.

SERGEANT Gustave Rudolph Steffens, we were soon to learn is skilled as a law enforcement officer and really is an artist, having spent several years in the study of music. In his laboratory he wrestles with a variety of problems, but the rest of our picture of him was all wrong. Here is a crime fighter who employs finesse and science.

For six years Mr. Steffens studied music and harmony, plays the cornet, and is wonderfully well informed on bands and band music. This is an avocation—a source of relaxation. The rest of the time he is active as an exponent of the new order in crime detection, unravelling mysteries in his laboratory and filing away a surprising lot of information in those record cases of his down at headquarters.

Born in Germany in 1887, he came to New York City when a boy of 16, got a job in a grocery store in Brooklyn and was a grocer's helper for a number of years until the longing to see the old home finally got the better of him. So, one day he set sail for a visit to Germany and remained to serve two years in the army before coming back to the United States, where he again worked in the grocery store and gave more of his spare time to the study of his beloved music. He was bound to do this, for a mind like his must reach out and beyond the narrow, routine boundaries of canned goods and fresh vegetables in order to be satisfied.

Being of a studious nature, and yet obliged to work, Mr. Steffens enrolled for a commercial course provided by a correspondence school in Scranton, Pennsylvania, which makes it possible for ambitious men and women to continue with their work and to study in their spare time. "From that course," he says, "I really learned English." Was there ever a time when he didn't know the language, we wondered, for he speaks with a nicety that should shame most of us who are native born.

In 1918 Mr. Steffens became a member of the police force of the City of Elizabeth. Early in his work on the force he realized the importance of a knowledge of law, so again he enrolled for a course in commercial law, got his second diploma—and kept right on studying more and more of the law that applies to crime and police work; kept on until his library, today, might easily be mistaken at first glance, as that of a successful lawyer. He studied law, did Sergeant Steffens, so that finally he was able to write on the subject with such authority that his contribution on "Law a Police Officer Should Know" is part of a well known manual that is widely distributed and is highly regarded by thousands of police officers the nation over.

That's about enough for one man to know, you might think. But no, Officer Steffens had other ideas, and a third time he turned to school for training in chemistry. That inquiring mind of his is forever reaching out for more facts, more information. It's only stolid minds that stagnate; lazy minds that lapse into idleness. His diploma in chemistry also hangs on the wall of his office, right next to the door into the laboratory.

THIS is the background of the man who with several outstanding citizens of the State, established, in 1933, the Crime Detection Laboratory of New Jersey—a corporation not for profit, numbering among its officers and staff members, doctors, a judge, and many professional men. The work is organized with competent men in charge of branches covering chemistry, toxicology, medicine, microscopy, ballistics, ultra-violet rays and X-rays, photography, automobile identification, locks and safes, questioned documents, finger prints and identification, mineralogy and geology, criminal law and procedure. Sergeant Gustave Steffens is President.

On the bench in his laboratory today, on almost any day, you will find envelopes and other containers with specimens for analysis. Each presents its own intriguing problem. Each finds its way to his test tubes and powerful microscopes where the solution is sought with meticulous care, for his findings will go far toward convicting the guilty or freeing the innocent. Note the italics. We emphasize this because Mr. Steffens holds that a crime laboratory can serve quite as effectively in protecting the innocent as in convicting the transgressor.

"ISN'T it true that you got your knowledge of chemistry from a correspondence school?" a lawyer for the defense inquired recently when Mr. Steffens was on the witness stand for the prosecution.

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"What school?"

"International Correspondence Schools."

"I object to this testimony Your Honor." This from the attorney.

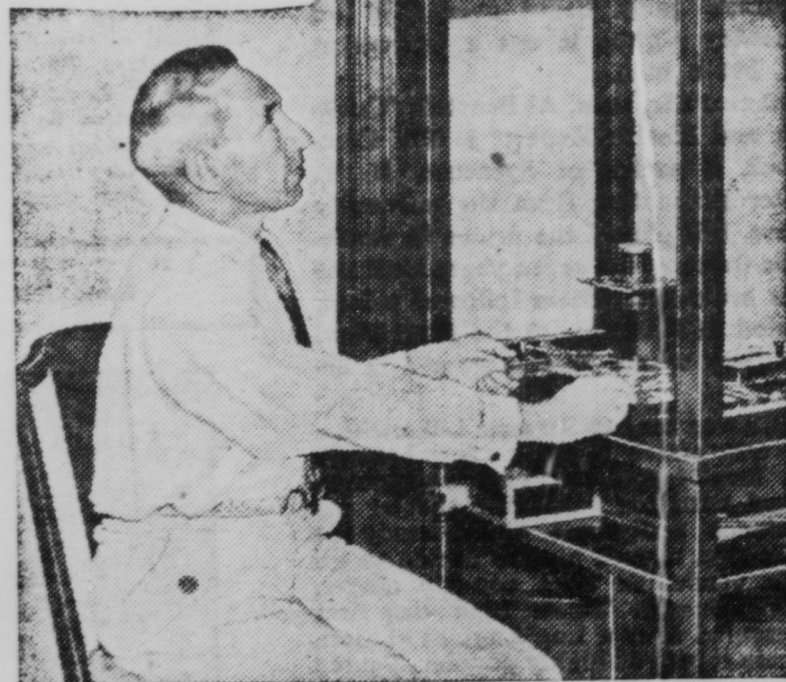
"Objection overruled," His Honor replied. "I don't see that it matters where the learning was secured, so long as a man knows it and has practiced so successfully as Mr. Steffens has." And so, Sergeant Steffens and his I.C.S. training not only won the point, but won the commendation of the court as well. Upheld in court! There's always satisfaction in that.

In his department is a very unique

awoke your friend had departed together with all the cash, so you weren't held up at the point of a gun at all, were you?"

"I guess that's the way it happened,"

Sergeant
Gustave R.
Steffens, with
his scientific
training and
equipment makes
the way of the
transgressor hard
and precarious



and accurate single-finger-print system of recording.

Dealing with problems of such interest, seeing daily evidence of the vast possibilities in chemistry, is it any wonder that both Mr. Steffens' sons are going in for chemistry too? He is educating his family, living comfortably, and having a good time doing his daily work.

"Wish you'd analyze this, Sergeant," one of the detectives remarked one day, handing Mr. Steffens a bottle in which there remained a small amount of a well known soft drink. "This man was on night duty and claimed he was held up and robbed, but somehow his story sounds fishy to me."

In the laboratory Steffens identified a heavy dose of a common drug in the contents of the bottle. On calling a member of the staff of the Crime Detection Laboratory, he was told that the mixture would induce heavy sleep. "You were asleep and when you

the youth replied. So another crime was a step nearer solution, and the laboratory had won another victory. Out of this laboratory come dozens of incidents like this.

"Wood alcohol," Mr. Steffens remarked, pointing to a test tube on the bench. "Enough to keep a car from freezing all winter. No mystery about it. Just drank wood alcohol, that's all. poor fellows. Dead? Oh yes, of course."

"Finger prints?" Why, in Sergeant Steffens' office is an instrument that will enlarge them to the size of a map of Texas, and so arranged that comparisons are made so clearly and minutely that even a novice like this writer can understand how positive identification is made.

Crime does not pay. Sergeant Gustave Rudolph Steffens is one of the modern authorities who is taking the profit out of it with his science and his laboratory.