

CRIME IN INDIA

*A Brief Review of the more Important Offences
included in the Annual Criminal Returns with
Chapters on Prostitution & Miscellaneous Matters*

BY

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PREFACE

THIS book cannot lay claim to be in any sense an exhaustive survey of the crime committed year by year in India. Such a work would fill three or more volumes of tolerable size, and would in parts be extraordinarily dull. For the ordinary crime of a minor character, which appears in the annual police reports and schedules, is very uninspiring, and, if we allow for differences of race, religion and climate, differs little from offences of the same type in other countries. I have, therefore, confined my remarks to the major offences common in India, endeavouring to illustrate their nature, frequency and special characteristics by concrete cases, chosen from the annual official reports of crime during recent years. Inasmuch as the book deals solely with modern crime, all reference to the notorious criminal organizations of a vanished age, such as the Thags, has been omitted, and for the sake of simplicity the headings and contents of the first three chapters have been based on the classification followed in modern Indian statistics and reports.

The fourth chapter deals briefly with the history and present features of Prostitution in India, which, though it cannot be properly described as a criminal offence, is nevertheless closely connected with crime and police work. Moreover, I am not aware that this subject, which of late years has attracted the increased attention of Indian reformers and European administrators, has been discussed and explained in any single and easily accessible work. The article of Dr. W. Crooke, in Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and*

Ethics, gives a succinct and valuable *résumé* of Indian prostitution in past centuries, upon which I have drawn freely in my remarks on the historical aspect of the question; while the facts in regard to modern prostitution are based upon the knowledge acquired as the head of an important urban police force.

In the fifth chapter I have included a variety of miscellaneous matters which are more or less directly connected with crime in India. I consider it unnecessary to deal separately with political crime, as those who wish to understand the lengths to which the Indian anarchist or agitator will go, if unchecked, can consult such authoritative records as the Report of the Rowlatt Committee on Sedition, published in 1918, and other official publications. I have, however, drawn pointed attention, wherever necessary, to the effect upon crime of the deplorable political agitation of the last few years, and have also laid stress in the final chapter on the gulf which lies between the aspirations of the Indian *intelligentsia* and the mental and moral outlook of the general body of the population. I shall consider myself amply compensated for the labour of compiling this modest volume, if it serves to enlighten the ignorant on the important and wholly admirable part played by the Indian police, under their European superintendents and Indian officers, during the grave disorders of the last few years.

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CHAPTER I

OFFENCES AGAINST THE STATE

COUNTERFEIT COINING

THE manufacture of counterfeit rupees and coins of smaller value is a constant offence in India, and is often carried out by tribes or gangs of professional false coiners, such as the Baurias, who wander all over India, and the Chhapparbands, who were notorious in the Bombay Presidency until the Government commenced an attempt to reclaim them from their criminal habits. The style and finish of the counterfeit coin varies considerably. At times false rupees have appeared in circulation, which almost required the eye of an expert for their detection; on the other hand, some of the coins made in rough moulds by the nomadic criminal tribes are so poor that only the ignorance and gullibility of the ordinary villager renders their circulation possible. The police wage perpetual war against false coiners and forgers of currency notes, and are frequently successful in seizing collections of false coins, moulds and apparatus. In the United Provinces in 1921, 59 cases were placed before the courts; in Rangoon in the same year the police discovered 1,500 counterfeit rupees, 50 moulds and 3 sets of apparatus; in the Panjab there were 20 cases, in one of which a gang of Bauria coiners was betrayed by a jealous woman of the tribe, who boasted that her clan were counterfeiting coin all over India in the disguise of *fakirs* and *sadhus* (*scil.* Musalman and Hindu professional mendicants). The Bombay