

insist upon it, and on the 11th March, 1909, a further request for its production was made. On the 16th March the constable stated, "I respectfully report I have wrote to England for my birth-certificate. I received a reply back stating they could not trace it, and asked for fuller information, which I have sent.—J. HOLBROOK, Constable No. 1436." In view of the real facts as afterwards shown, this was a palpable lie; but, as he had been allowed nine months' grace to get it, and had been in the Force during the whole time, he evidently thought that nothing more would be heard of it.

But here comes the extraordinary part of the story. In 1906 a letter was received by the police from a woman in England, and to show the exact position I shall quote this letter in full:—

"34 Kingsdown Parade, Cotham, Bristol, March 28th, 1906.

"DEAR SIR,—

"I am taking the liberty of writing to ask you if you could help me in my great trouble.

"I was married three years ago, and, two months after, my husband deserted me and left England with another woman. With the help of the Great Western Railway and steamship companies, I have traced them to Wellington, New Zealand.

"They sailed under the name of Weight, his name being James Halbrook. I have enclosed photo. He is about 5 ft. 10 in., rather high square shoulders, brown curly hair. At the time of the South African war he was in the Mounted Police. The woman he has with him is about twenty-seven years of age, dark, and tall. Her name is Hilda Hayman.

"I am a fatherless girl and have to earn my own living, and, as I cannot afford to pay for advice, thought perhaps you could assist me in tracing him.

"Hoping I am not asking too great a favour, I should be grateful if you would do your best for me. They sailed in the 'Ionic,' Jan. 14th, 1904, from Tilbury Docks, London.

"Thanking you in anticipation of a reply, I remain, dear sir,

"Yours respectfully,

"LOUISA HALBROOK."

Accompanying the letter was a cabinet-size photograph, showing very distinctive features, and the face shown much larger and plainer than usual.

Inquiries were at once set on foot as for a "missing friend." On the 7th July, 1906, the usual "missing-friend" notice was published in the *Police Gazette*, giving the particulars as supplied by the wife. This was some two years before the man's enrolment.

About the 10th May, 1909, about eleven months after his enrolment, Inspector Ellison wrote a memorandum to the Commissioner of Police informing him that Constable James Holbrook, 1436, was identical with the "missing friend" James Halbrook, *alias* Weight, and that he had admitted the truth of all the statements made by his wife. The Commissioner minuted this, "INSPECTOR ELLISON,—Please call upon Constable Holbrook to tender his resignation at once, as we cannot retain the services of such men in the Department.—W. DINNIE, Com'r. 11/5/09." The man then tendered his resignation and left. He received a refund of half his contributions to the Police Provident Fund, amounting to £3 18s. 2d.

It must strike any one reading these particulars as remarkably strange that the man should have secured admission to the Police Force in spite of the Department, and practically every constable in the Dominion, being aware of the description of the "missing friend." The same Christian name, the similar surname, the personal description, the distinctive photograph, the exact date of leaving London, the service in the Cape Mounted Police, the failure to produce birth-certificate—it seems perfectly extraordinary to me that none of these points of identification ever struck any one, if the inquiries as to candidates are as thorough and searching as I am asked to believe.

It only remains to be added that on his resignation this man of deceit, and wife-deserter, received the following testimonial:—