

Harry SÖDERMAN
Policeman's lot, 1956.

Edition, annotation et présentation de Joseph GRIVEL © 2005

Harry Söderman est né le 28 août 1902 à Stockholm. Il est mort à Tanger le 16 mars 1956.

Sa vie entière a été consacrée à la criminologie. Sa formation est internationale (Allemagne, Asie, France, Suède, Etats-Unis entre autres). Elle l'a notamment conduit à devenir l'un des fondateurs d'Interpol.

Il rend compte de cette riche expérience professionnelle dans *Policeman's lot. A criminologist's gallery of friends and felons* édité en 1956 par l'éditeur new-yorkais Funk & Wagnalls l'année même de sa mort. L'ouvrage a été traduit dans de nombreuses langues. La traduction française, *Quarante ans de police internationale*, est publiée la même année par les Presses de la Cité. L'édition allemande paraît en 1957 sous le titre *Auf der Spur des Verbrechens. Lebenserinnerungen eines Kriminalisten*, chez Kiepenheuer & Witsch, à Cologne. L'édition italienne, de 1959, intitulée *Policeman's lot. Memorie dell'ispettore di polizia Harry Soederman*, est éditée par Vallecchi à Florence. Il existe aussi une édition hollandaise, *Hier politie! De memoires van een internationaal vermaard politieman*.

Edmond Locard est l'un des deux dédicataires de l'ouvrage. Cet ancien directeur du Laboratoire de police technique de Lyon est en outre l'auteur de la préface de l'édition française, reprise dans l'édition italienne. Harry Söderman était entré comme assistant dans son laboratoire en 1926, à 24 ans. A cette époque, les découvertes de Glozel commencent juste à être médiatisées. Elles ont le soutien de la Faculté des Sciences de Lyon. Et Söderman est invité par Edmond Locard à s'associer aux experts lyonnais du Comité d'Etudes que sont Charles Depéret, Fabien Arcelin et Frédéric Roman et à participer à leurs fouilles de contrôle du 12 au 14 avril 1928.

Harry Söderman consacre un chapitre de ses mémoires à cette participation : « The Glozel affair », 17^e chapitre de l'édition anglaise, « L'affaire de Glozel », chapitre XIV de la Première partie de l'édition française, « Die Glozel-Affäre », 17^e chapitre de l'édition allemande, « Un poliziotto fra gli archeologi », chapitre XIV de l'édition italienne.

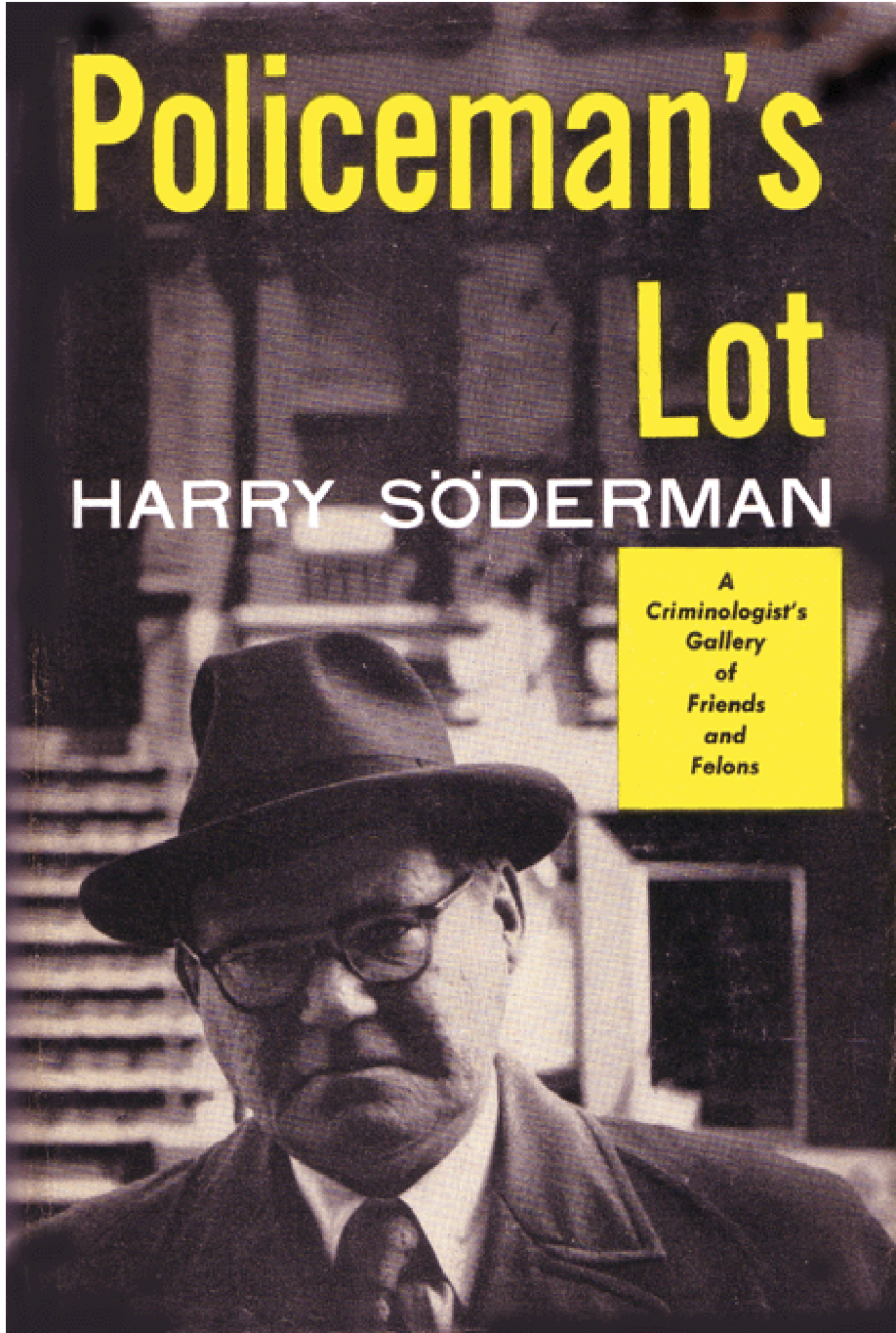
Le texte diffère d'une édition à l'autre et le lecteur, même s'il n'est pas polyglotte, pourra tirer profit de la consultation des quatre éditions. Des photographies illustrent les éditions anglaise, française et italienne. L'édition anglaise comporte de surcroît des reproductions au trait d'objets de Glozel. L'édition française offre un texte écourté aux dépens notamment du récit par Locard de plusieurs cas de fraude (mystification de Chasles par Vrain-Lucas, faux moabites, manuscrit de la Bible...). L'édition italienne est la seule à rendre compte de la tentative infructueuse de faire dater par le radiocarbone des objets de Glozel à l'Université de Columbia.

En 1928, Harry Söderman quitte le Laboratoire de Police technique de Lyon. Resté en contact avec Antonin Morlet, il intervient à plusieurs reprises comme intermédiaire pour des travaux d'analyse dans des laboratoires étrangers : en 1928 à Stockholm auprès du professeur Hall pour l'analyse en coupes minces de racines fossilisées dans des céramiques, en 1930 toujours à Stockholm auprès du professeur Blix pour une analyse osseuse et en 1954 à l'Université de Columbia auprès du professeur Kulp pour des datations d'objets en os par le radiocarbone.

Policeman's Lot

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*A
Criminologist's
Gallery
of
Friends
and
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by HARRY SÖDERMAN

Funk & Wagnalls Company

New York

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THE GLOZEL AFFAIR

Toward the end of my Lyons apprenticeship, I became involved in a case which I still regard as the most interesting investigation problem I ever came across. It was not, actually, a criminal case, although one of its cast of principal characters was murdered and another, possibly more than one other, might have been guilty of fraud. The affair is still not wholly cleared up, and perhaps it will never be brought to a close. Certainly my own interest in it continues, and more than anything else in my experience as a criminologist it has served to enrich my personal life.

One day I was summoned to Locard's office. *Le Patron* was leaning back in his chair and studying a letter.

"Sit down, Harry," he said. "I have an assignment for you." He smiled faintly. "An assignment very different from what you have been doing. You will be moving in most distinguished circles. Yes. Distinguished is the word."

Locard did not usually commence in quite this fashion. My anticipation began to be colored with something like wariness. I did not like the way he kept on looking at the letter instead of me.

"Anything you say," I replied.

"Well," he went on, "this is not a matter for inexperience. I shall have to send a good man." He laid the letter down finally and looked directly at me. "You have of course heard of the Glozel affair?"

Who hadn't? It had been a newspaper sensation for two years, and my heart sank as I heard Locard name it. The thing had started four years earlier in a small hamlet named Glozel, about twenty kilometers southeast of Vichy. Near Glozel was a farm which had been cultivated for some generations by a family named Fradin. One March day in 1924 Emile Fradin, then about twenty, was working in one of the fields when he uncovered two bricks which seemed out of the ordinary. After the day's work he went back to the field and did some more digging. His labors brought to light a shallow, oval pit about three meters long and a meter wide. The pit was lined with stones and the soil in it contained pieces of pottery. In general construction some authorities later considered that it might have been an ancient glass furnace of a sort not too uncommon in the region, but Emile was no antiquarian and knew nothing of this possibility. The next day he continued digging, perhaps in the hope of finding something valuable, and a few feet from the pit he came on another brick, or clay tablet. On this one there was a clearly visible series of markings.

Now the Fradin family had been working the farm since 1870, or over fifty years, without becoming rich in the process. The soil in this section of France is not so fertile as it is in many other regions, and Glozel was a small community with few opportunities even for the most diligent. Still, the Fradins were attached to their land. Both the young man and his grandfather, old Père Fradin, over seventy, felt excited by the thought that their meager acres might contain vestiges of some ancient culture. Certainly it was something to talk about in a community where every other topic had been talked out years before.

When Père Fradin told his neighbors about Emile's findings, a number of them began to make the farm the objective of their evening strolls. The more they came, the more they talked, and in a fortnight the matter came to the ear of a Mlle. Picandet, the schoolteacher of the parish. She took her pupils over to have a look at the excavations. By this time Emile had succeeded in unearthing additional brick tablets with markings on them and even the imprints of human palms, and a small stone hatchet.

Mlle Picandet was much impressed with what she saw and made a report on it to her superiors. They in turn forwarded her letter to a Citizens' Committee which had been organized to promote tourist and business interest in the Bourbonnais region, where Glozel is situated. The Committee sent a representative to the Fradin farm, but the Fradins, whose field was a part of their livelihood, asked fifty francs for the privilege of two days' further digging. The Committee refused, on the somewhat specious ground that they had no funds for such a purpose. Things dragged along, and the Fradins began to discuss the advisability of plowing the field again. It had been lying in fallow pasture for several years and was now ready for another crop.

At his point Dr. A. Morlet intervened. He was a physician in Vichy and apparently a faithful reader of the reports of the Citizens' Committee. In the latest issue he had come upon an account of the Glozel matter. His own hobby was the archeology of the Gallo-Roman period in his region and, when he read that the Committee had refused to spend fifty francs for a dig, he went to Glozel himself to have a look at the site. According to his account, there was nothing Gallo-Roman about the artifacts. They were obviously far more ancient. He talked to the Fradins and learned one interesting detail from them. Clear back in 1870, the Fradins said, when their family had acquired the farm, the man who sold it to them had told of burying a dead animal in the field and uncovering an earthenware jar covered with strange signs. He had taken it home and put it on the mantelpiece, where it had remained for years. Many of the villagers recalled having seen it, the Fradins said, but after their family had moved in, it was thrown away.

This story and the artifacts themselves excited Dr. Morlet. Shortly afterward, Emile Fradin and his sister came to see him and told him that their grandfather had decided to plow the field. In antiquarian alarm Morlet offered to rent the field for nine years at two hundred francs a year, plus extra recompense to the Fradins for whatever work they might put in. He reserved the right of first purchase on whatever might be found and, even more important to such an enthusiast as he was, the exclusive right to reproduce and publish accounts of the discoveries.

So it was arranged, and from this innocent beginning there sprang a perfect tempest of controversy conducted with Gallic intensity.

When Dr. Morlet commenced his digging, he uncovered a great number of objects, particularly carved bones* and many more of the odd brick tablets with their indecipherable markings. These artifacts did not attract much initial attention, but one day the spade turned up a bone with the image of a reindeer on it. It was obvious that the carver must have seen a reindeer with his own eyes. Further digging brought to light some reindeer teeth and panther teeth.

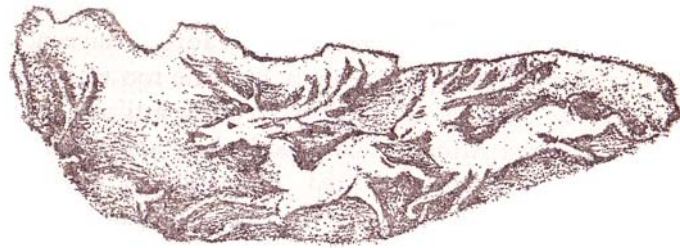
To understand the resultant furor it is necessary to realize that paleontologists were agreed that there had been no reindeer in France since the end of the Paleolithic or Old Stone Age. At that time the sheet of glacial ice which once covered all Scandinavia and portions of the northern part of the Continent had melted and receded. For a long time, however, the climate was supposed to have been cold enough for reindeer to survive in central western Europe, until they too followed the ice and retreated to Scandinavia.

The second half of the Old Stone Age is divided into three main parts, of which the last, or next to last if the Azilian be included, was the Magdalenian. In this era, in certain parts of France and Spain, the inhabitants were cave dwellers, primitive people with a magnificent talent for art. It was during their age that the great Dordogne, Altamira, and other similar cave paintings were made. The work was done with candor and beauty. But the Paleolithic gave way to the Neolithic, or New Stone Age, and the great cave paintings became a lost art.

At first Morlet judged that the artifacts he was bringing to light at Glozel were wholly Neolithic, but the reindeer discoveries and a number of other circumstances made him revise his estimate and date them at about the close of the Magdalenian epoch. This

* The drawings for this chapter were specially made for it by Mamie Harmon. They were prepared from actual Glozel artifacts.

instantly threw him into conflict with established scholarship, which held that the descendants of the Magdalenians had lived on as primitives with a debased culture until more refined people, developing further East, had brought new light to the barbarian savages of the West. The finds at Glozel contradicted this established theory. If the great cave art had vanished, the descendants of the artists had at least shown great cultural vitality by inventing something which looked, on the evidence, to be a written language. Morlet was convinced that the rows of scratched marks on bones and bricks could be nothing less than the oldest known writing. Either Glozel was a hoax, or it was one of the greatest archeological discoveries of the age.



When Morlet advanced his findings in 1926, the battle was instantly joined. Some of the critics declared that young Emile Fradin was a forger and faker. The difficulty with that was to explain how a twenty-year-old, half-literate peasant boy could have invented a whole prehistoric culture and manufactured the approximately 1700 objects which were dug up at the Fradin farm. Where did he get the reindeer bone and the teeth? The critics claimed that the lad had copied the magnificent drawings out of textbooks in archeology, but there were no such books at the farm, and it seemed doubtful that Emile had ever read anything except his prayer book and an occasional newspaper.

Other skeptics contended that Dr. Morlet had not conducted his digging in a thorough, careful, and scientific manner. There was a measure of truth in this. At the outset the excavating was conducted somewhat as a family outing and picnic. But the counterclaim to this criticism was also valid: a number of the critics were themselves guilty in this regard. Early in the operation, savants arrived at the site and demanded the right to dig independently to satisfy their doubts. Dr. Morlet had no choice but to comply, knowing well that any refusal on his part would make him suspect and subject to criticism. In consequence, dozens of more or less planless diggings took place.

After a barrage of scholarly articles – and a great deal of lurid stuff in the newspapers – the International Institute of Anthropology appointed a commission of scholars to inspect Glozel and render an opinion on what had been unearthed there. The worldwide stir which the case was occasioning also prompted the French government officially to declare the site one of scientific importance. This gave it the protection of the law, which began to find its hands full of Glozel problems. In early 1928 a surgeon who, like Morlet, had archeological leanings, but who was violently opposed to anyone claiming authenticity for these artifacts, went to the regional District Attorney and deposited an application for a formal finding of fraud committed "by person or persons unknown" at the Fradin farm. Guided by this gentleman, the police searched the farm and impounded about a hundred objects.

Eventually these objects were forwarded to no less a figure than Edmond Bayle, and at the time of my mission they were under analysis in his Paris Police Laboratory. Bayle issued no report for a full year. Meanwhile, scholars' passions and public interest were white hot. The background of the case and every least detail were matters of current journalistic prominence, and all this flashed through my mind as I listened to Locard handing this assignment to me.

"Sir," I said to him, "this is a very hot potato."

He avoided my eye. "The Lyons Police Laboratory has been invited to send a delegate to Glozel. There is to be an international committee to study it thoroughly from the

standpoint of authenticity. Dr. Salomon Reinach who is, as you probably know, a world authority on prehistory and ancient languages, will come down from Paris. Then there will be Depéret from our own University of Lyons as the expert on geology and paleontology, and a number of others. As I said, you will be in distinguished company."

"I can see that, sir. But I think it would be wiser if you went. Your findings will surely carry more weight."

"Alas," said Locard, "it is impossible. There is the pressure of my duties here to consider."

This assignment was very different from merely going along with the police on criminal cases and conducting laboratory tests. While I suspected Locard of wanting to stay clear of the whole Glozel controversy and of selecting me to accompany the Committee because I was not only young and unknown but a foreigner whose future career would not depend upon French officialdom, I had also to admit that it was an honor to be chosen. The very uniqueness of the problem appealed strongly to me.

"Now, my young friend," Locard was saying, "let us talk for a moment of what it is you will be getting into. You know already how passionate these archeologists can get over their researches. They are supposed to be scientists with impartial detachment, but in actuality many of them are impulsive innocents of the first water. If a lot of them weren't so gullible, there would not be so many fakers preying on them. Indeed, sometimes scholars seem to be more foolish than any ignorant peasant. Let me tell you about the amazing case of the great mathematician, Michel Chasles."

In the middle of the last century Chasles was a professor of mathematics at the Sorbonne, a distinguished man who had discovered numerous techniques in analytical geometry. As a hobby he collected autographs, and in the pursuit of this interest he fell in with a dealer named Vrain-Lucas, a rascal who seems to have been only a clumsy forger at best. In seven years Professor Chasles bought from this fellow about twenty-seven thousand letters and autographs of famous persons. Vrain-Lucas' story was that the collection belonged to a nobleman who had drowned. The collection included everything – letters from Newton, Galileo, Mary Stuart, Vercingetorix (the famous Gallic chieftain), Julius Caesar, and even Cleopatra. There was one letter from Cleopatra to Caesar which read: "My dearly beloved: Our son Caesarion is okay. I hope we will soon be able to endure the voyage from here to Marseilles." This was written on paper, not papyrus.

All these documents, in fact, were written on regular paper which had been treated with smoke. On close inspection it was even possible to make out the watermark of the modern papermaker. Out of the myriads of things which Professor Chasles bought, not more than a hundred were authentic. When Vrain-Lucas was brought to trial, he told the court that he only wanted to remind France of her great men and her great historic past, which she so often forgot. The court reminded him of some of the present statutes by giving him a sentence of two years.

No less remarkable was the discovery just outside the walls of Jerusalem of a cache of thousands of vases, urns, tablets, and statuettes, all modeled in clay and baked. These objects were alleged to be Moabite in origin and most of them were liberally covered with markings like the ancient writing of the Phoenicians. Amid this mountain of trash there was even the smoking pipe which had belonged to Astarte, the Syrian-Phoenician goddess of love and fertility. What she smoked in it was not clear, but it cannot have been tobacco which reached Europe and the East only after the time of Columbus.

Implausible as it may seem, a German scientist succeeded in talking the Prussian government into purchasing the entire lot at a stiff price. A famous German archeologist immediately commenced work on a tome about Moabite culture in the light of these objects, but a French scholar and diplomat, Charles-Simon Clermont-Ganneau, was able to prove that so far as the Moabite culture of the collection was concerned, it existed only in the imaginations of some illiterate Arab fakers.

This Clermont-Ganneau appears to have been a man of skeptical mind. Eleven years later, in 1883, he heard the astonishing news that the British Museum had secured an original portion of the Bible in manuscript. This priceless treasure was known as the Bible of

Shapira, after its discoverer. The name Shapira rang a gong in Clermont-Ganneau's mind; he recalled that it was this same Shapira who had led the Prussian scientist to the hoard of Moabite fakes. The dauntless savant immediately set out for London to inspect this Bible, but the officials of the British Museum would not allow him to examine it. He had to do his inspecting along with the general public from the other side of a pane of glass. Even so, he quickly spotted the fact that it was another fake, written in ink on an ancient Torah scroll. Shapira fled to Rotterdam, where he blew out his brains.

"I could go on all day with stories like these," Locard said, shaking his head sadly. "There was that famous tiara that was supposed to have belonged to some Egyptian or Syrian queen. The Louvre paid a fabulous lot of francs for it. Seven years later it was proven to have been made by a gifted goldsmith in Odessa. And so on and on. Be on your guard at Glozel, Harry. There are fakers everywhere in this world – even on farms."

With these disquieting stories in mind, I took out our file of newspaper clippings on the Glozel affair to refresh my memory. As I read them at one sitting, I began to feel that I had been given a war correspondent's assignment. The controversy was incomparably the hottest ever fought. Like the American Civil War it had set father against son and brother against brother. Accusations and recriminations were thick as raisins in a pudding; public interest was at fever pitch. I began to feel definitely uneasy and, when my colleagues at the lab learned where I was going, their hypocritical condolences did nothing to console me.

What should I take with me when working on such a case? At the usual afternoon snack period, I got a good deal of advice on this point.

Old Chevassus said that I had better take a fingerprint outfit, adding, "You know, you never can tell if you'll have to fingerprint some of those fellows for our police files. Personally, I am very skeptical about the whole affair."

It was certainly not necessary, my friends thought, to take a pistol with me; archeologists are not known to shoot their way out or to resist arrest. Kindly old Grangeversannes, the police photographer, went so far as to lend me the smallest camera in the place, which was the apple of his eye, and he also gave me several packs of photographic plates. After much discussion, some small surgical instruments, such as scalpels and scissors, were added to my kit, along with a strong magnifying glass and a flashlight.

Finally I myself put a pair of handcuffs into the portfolio. Now, I find it hard to explain why I took those handcuffs along; perhaps it was merely to keep up my self-confidence as a detective. Then, too, the handcuffs had been acquired only the preceding day.

The day before that I had received a special delivery letter from Paris which said that the writer was a retired police officer who had invented a wonderful new handcuff which he called *les melonnettes*, since his own name was Melon. This was a pleasant play on words, for the French word for handcuffs is *menottes*. M. Melon added that he would be in Lyons the following morning and asked me to give him an interview because he wanted to introduce his handcuffs to the Scandinavian market.

He proved to be a small man, burning with the inventor's zeal. In a bombastic manner he told me how superior his handcuffs were to anything that had been previously manufactured in this line. They were very light, being made of aluminium; very easy to apply; very difficult to pick; so dainty that no one should be ashamed to wear them. They sounded almost like jewelry as he talked about them. He ended his sales talk by presenting me with a pair and two keys. I did not want to get mixed up in the enterprise, but I gave him the addresses of a few Scandinavian wholesale houses which supply the police with this sort of thing. M. Melon went away apparently satisfied.

There were the handcuffs I put into my portfolio for Glozel.

The following morning I called on Professor Charles Depéret, Dean of Science and member of the Geology Department at the university. He seemed pleased to have my collaboration and told me we were to leave for Vichy, the nearest station to Glozel, the following day. Professors Roman, Mayet, and Arcelin were to accompany us.

Though I was not studying under him, I knew Depéret quite well because he was one of the most popular professors at the university. A tiny, frail, stooped man of seventy-four with a pointed mustache, he wore a bowler hat on all occasions. Earlier in life he had been a military surgeon, and only in his leisure time an amateur geologist. Incidentally, there are a surprisingly large number of such scientific amateurs among French military surgeons. Eventually, Depéret had become a full-fledged geologist, and a famous one. During the last decades of his life he concentrated on paleontology, and among his most famous discoveries were the prehistoric horse teeth at Solutré, not far from Lyons.

The expedition for Glozel left on the noon express. My learned companions and I had a compartment almost to ourselves; the only other passenger was an elderly lady who soon became as silently fascinated as I by the conversation of the four savants. It was really awe-inspiring. World-famous names flashed by our listening ears. Stretches of hundreds of thousands and even millions of years obviously were bagatelles to these men dedicated to studying the origin and development of the human race. The talk had a scale and a sweep to it which I found exhilarating. Nothing like it had come within my ken before.

It was a five-hour journey from Lyons to Vichy. I said practically nothing, but listened intently to my companions. Finally Dean Depéret turned to me and asked how my chemistry studies were coming along and about my work at the Police Laboratory. This led to some talk about fingerprints, and I opened my portfolio to show him my fingerprinting outfit. He examined it with interest. Catching sight of the *melonettes* lying at the bottom of the portfolio, I picked them up and showed them to him, explaining proudly that they were the latest invention in the handcuff field. Depéret asked me to put them on his hands, explaining that he wanted to feel for once what it was like to be handcuffed. I put them on him, and the instant those infernal things closed around his fragile wrists a fearful doubt swept over my mind. Had I brought the keys with me?

I had not. A minute search of my portfolio and all my pockets revealed this awful fact. When the truth began to dawn upon poor Depéret his kind smile gradually became melancholy and his face grew haggard. In about twenty minutes' time we were due to arrive at Vichy, where scores of journalists, press photographers, and newsreel men would be waiting for us on the station platform.

What to do? What to do? A cold sweat broke out all over my body while I racked my brains as to how to get out of this situation. In French railway carriages there are always a few tools – at least a pickaxe, a small shovel, and the like – stored in a glass-covered case for use in emergencies. But a glance at delicate old Depéret convinced me that he could never endure harsh treatment. Next I thought of the locomotive. The engineer certainly must have tools, but he would be difficult to get to. Still, something had to be done. I was planning to perform the circus stunt of climbing over the fender to reach the locomotive.

The elderly lady, our fellow passenger, who had been observing the goings-on while busily knitting, suddenly said, "Why don't you try one of my hairpins? I have read in several detective novels that hairpins are very good for picking locks."

She drew a hairpin from her hair and handed it to me. God bless that clever lady! Contrary to the bragging of their inventor, those wretched *melonettes* were easy to pick. In a short while, I had opened one of them. And high time too, because the train was already slowing down for the Vichy stop. One of the cuffs was still around poor Dean Depéret's wrist. I tucked the rest of the gadget up into his sleeve and, to make assurance double sure, fastened it with a piece of string, also supplied by the amiable lady, who fished a length out of her big handbag. When I pulled the sleeve down, there was no outward sign of the handcuffs.

Smiling genially, we alighted from the train and were interrogated by the world press. The handcuffs remained out of sight, and the reporters missed a scoop. As soon as we got to the privacy of the hotel, I picked the other lock and freed Dean Depéret completely. I felt sure he would never again want to try on handcuffs. For myself, I still shudder when I think of what could have happened if that clever lady had not been in our compartment.

In Vichy, we met the great Dr. Reinach of whom I had never heard until now. That is not too surprising in the light of the fact that I had not hitherto moved much in the world of

the liberal arts. Salomon Reinach, the archeologist, was the middle one and sole survivor of the three famous Reinach brothers who, around the turn of the century, played so great a role in French cultural life. When I met him in Vichy he was seventy years old, a small, fiery, gray-bearded man with piercing eyes and a high-arched nose. In spite of his age he was still active as Director of the Musée St. Germain in Paris and frequently contributed to journals in his special fields of philology and archeology. His wife was with him and I learned that in her youth she had been a Russian revolutionary. When she fled to France she met her husband, who was then studying medicine.

Our task force was much augmented at Vichy by a further constellation of learned gentlemen. There was the famous Professor Loth, at that time regarded as one of the greatest authorities on Celtic languages, and his son William, an engineer. Another member of the committee was M. Audollent, Dean of the Faculty of the School of the Humanities at the University of Clermont. He was a well-known Latin scholar, and I was informed that his specialty was the deciphering of medieval Latin incantations used by magicians. From Belgium the International Institute of Anthropology had sent Professor Bayet of the Academy of Medicine, an enthusiastic amateur archeologist. There were also Dr. Foat, an English specialist in Hellenic cultures; Dr. Arcelin, another French amateur archeologist; Dr. van Genep of Belgium; and Professor Tricot-Royer of the University of Louvain, a specialist in the history of medicine. If the artifacts of Glozel held any secrets, I decided, this committee would surely bring them to light.

The committee assembled at once for a short preliminary meeting in a Vichy hotel room. It was up to me to define the precautions which would render our investigation immune to later criticism. I made my plan, which was approved by the group, as clear and foolproof as possible. My reasoning was that if the objects found in the farm soil were fakes, they would have had to be planted. I could not think of any way to plant the things except by disturbing the soil. Therefore, our digging must be conducted vertically, and no object found as a result of horizontal trenching or shovelling should be considered authentic beyond dispute. But if we first made a trench and then dug down vertically along its open walls, whenever we came upon an artifact we could study it as it lay in its own surroundings, *in situ* as the archeologists say. Such a technique, I felt, would expose any tampering with soil levels or other traces of fakery. All the members of the committee were in agreement that this was the way to proceed.

We were to spend four days at our digging. Late in the day though it was by now, we journeyed out to the farm to have a preliminary look. We were welcomed by the Fradin family, headed by old Grand-père Fradin himself. He was a small, old man with a drooping white mustache, dressed in a faded blue blouse, large, loose trousers, and wooden clogs. His grandson, then about twenty, was also short and slight, but his mustache was black and merely budding. He wore the same typical peasant garb. Grand-mère Fradin seemed to me the most impressive member of the family, a woman of seventy with a face seamed and marked by a lifetime of drudgery but with the innate dignity of the French peasant woman.

The family led us to the field where the discoveries had been made. It was a small field and looked as if it had been bombed. It was pocked from edge to edge with the pits of the former diggings. It had taken a lot of work to make so many and such deep holes, and the field bore eloquent witness to the intensity of the scientific quarrel we had come to settle. The Fradins also showed us a sort of rough museum they had made in a barn. There, on plank shelves, were laid out hundreds of tablets, stone hatchets, carved and incised bones, and other artifacts. In the absence of the hundred specimens which had been impounded and sent up to Paris, the number of these surprised me then and surprises me to this day.

Next morning we selected a virgin piece of ground and set to work. First, a couple of laborers dug a trench about six feet deep and several yards long. When it was complete all of us could see plainly the anatomy of the Glozel soil. Its layers were as sharply defined as if they were layers of a cake. The top layer consisted of gray humus, a foot or foot and a half thick. Below was a layer of yellow clay mixed with small stones and sand, two to three feet thick, and that was the layer in which all the objects had been found. Innumerable roots of

different plants penetrated deeply the layer of gray humus, reaching into this dark yellow clay. Below it was a stratum of more compact clay of a lighter yellow. I saw at once that if we came upon anything in the course of our vertical excavating it would be easy to ascertain whether the object had been deposited recently.



Luck was with us. In the four days at the site we found a piece of black slate on which had been engraved a running reindeer and some markings which looked like writing of some kind. We also came upon a piece of bone, highly fossilized, which was marked with similar signs, a small clay lamp, and a number of other objects. There was one clay tablet, the soil above it totally undisturbed, with the root of a bush penetrating it. That old dead root seemed to me an impressive piece of evidence. What better proof of authenticity could we ask? At least, if the artifacts had been planted, the fake was committed long, long ago. Even so, it was hard to see how such a job could have been done without marring the knife-sharp line of separation between the humus and the clay.

I also examined the contents of the museum and found baked into one tablet a fingerprint of its maker. I took the fingerprints of the whole Fradin family and of Dr. Morlet as well, but none was similar to the print on that brick. Subsequently, I published a paper about this fingerprint, which may possibly be the oldest in the world.

Every evening I spread plaster of Paris around our trench to prevent anyone from trying to dig near our excavation during the night. I also mounted guard. Late the second night, I took a taxi from Vichy to the vicinity of Glozel and walked out to the farm. It began to rain, and I spent a miserable night at the field. Perhaps, though, it was just as well I was there. The next morning a young college student named Vergnette came poking about the excavation. We ordered him to leave but he went over to the farm house and handed old Madame Fradin a small parcel addressed to Dr. Morlet. When we opened it we found that it contained some pieces of slate. One of them was carved and others bore cabalistic signs. In the package, too, there was a card on which young M. Vergnette had written: "With the compliments of the author." This evidence of the bitterness of the anti-Glozelians was an indication that the controversy had reached a stage where some of the parties had lost their reasonable restraint.



A few weeks later the committee published its report. As it had to do in the light of the evidence we had personally uncovered, the report affirmed that the Glozel findings were authentic. The anti-Glozelian faction received this report in the spirit in which a duck's back receives water. They were utterly unimpressed and continued their attacks unabated. Meanwhile, the whole scientific world was waiting for the report of M. Bayle, the head of the Paris Police Laboratory.

His report, when it came later that year, proved to be a stunning surprise. Locard read it without comment except for a slight, wry smile; I suspect he had a private opinion of its author which he never voiced. There had always been tension between the Lyons and Paris laboratories.

At this time Edmond Bayle was about fifty years old. He had been head of the Paris Police Laboratory since the close of World War I and was the almost direct successor of Alphonse Bertillon, who had died in 1914. For a few years the laboratory had been headed by a man named David, one of Bertillon's staff, but then Bayle had replaced him. His appointment was somewhat unexpected since he had been a physicist at the Pasteur Institute until then.

As might have been expected, Bayle placed great emphasis on the use of physical and optical analysis in police work. To him and an old German scientist named Jeserich goes the credit for introducing spectography to police science – the use of photographs of light spectra. In his own field he had a rather impressive reputation, but he was also known to be an overbearing and cynical man.

Bayle had taken more than a year to make his examination of the objects sent to him from the Glozel farm, and he claimed to have brought to light some remarkable discrepancies. In one of the brick tablets he had found a cotton thread dyed with an aniline dye (a matter which could be established by spectography, by the way), and in another he had identified a potato sprout. The bricks, he said, had not been baked but merely shaped and dried, which accounted for the survival of such vegetable matter.

The anti-Glozelians emitted loud sounds of triumph. As the *New International Year Book* for 1928 summarized the matter, "M. Bayle turned out to be an excellent detective... Thus Glozel becomes a hoax and ranks among the most famous in history."

The faction which believed in authenticity was momentarily thrown into confusion, but it was unwilling to concede defeat. The immediate objection which they raised to the Bayle report was a criticism of the seizure of evidence which had resulted in the submission to Paris of the hundred-odd impounded artifacts. They pointed out that the Fradins had not been allowed to be present at this official event. Still worse, the objects had not, as the law prescribed, been separately sealed and wrapped and identified, but had been bundled up higgledy-piggledy and rushed off. A few of the weaker-spirited faithful discussed the possibility that young Fradin might have enriched the bonafide archaeological treasures with a few contributions of his own, but this defensive theorem never attained much currency.

Personally, while I sought to keep an impartial mind, I was not convinced by the Paris report. The matter of young M. Vergnette stuck in my mind as a small but ugly episode. I also remembered those clean-cut earth surfaces in our trench, with the objects still embedded in them. Bayle had not accounted for them, nor for the obvious characters of the Fradins themselves and the vast number of artifacts whose production would have required a small factory. The sweet and lovely lines of the reindeer drawings were an example of genuine artistic talent, it seemed to me, and who was the artist, or where were the books from which the drawings had been derived? What about the fingerprint?

The pro-Glozelians set to work to undermine the case of the opposition. Examination of baked bricks in many different places – Lyons, Brussels, Oslo, and Stockholm – proved that a clay brick might contain fossilized roots which had penetrated even after the brick had been baked. That weakened Bayle's point about the vegetable matter. In spite of a contention to the contrary, no evidence that metal tools had been used in marking the bones and tablets was ever established. Bayle claimed that there were traces of marrow in the

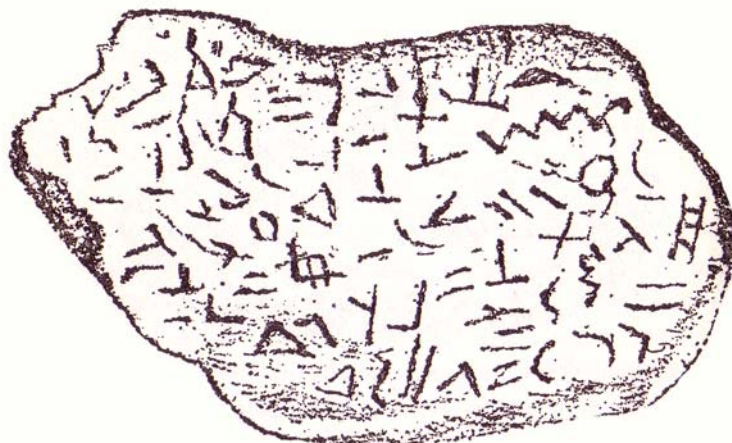
bones, but experts claimed that the bones were definitely fossilized and extremely ancient. Unlike the famous British Piltdown case of recent years, the Glazel bones were very light in color and did not look as if anyone had attempted to make them look ancient.

A year later, while the controversy was still lively, an event occurred which provided fresh ammunition for the Glazel faction. On the 16th of November, 1929, Edmond Bayle was killed in the Palais de Justice of Paris by two revolver bullets fired by a man named Philipponnet.



The cause of the murder was relatively trivial: Philipponnet had paid 30,000 francs to the owner of a building in order to get a flat he wanted in it. (Even then, the housing shortage in France was acute.) Later, the owner of the house asserted that he had received only 12,000 francs from Philipponnet. A civil suit ensued, and an expert on questioned documents testified that the receipt had originally been written out for the full sum and that ink eradicator had been used to lower the amount. He added that with the aid of a powerful glass he could still see the original integers of the 30,000 francs figure.

The owner of the building thereupon took the receipt to Bayle himself for examination, presumably under the usual fee system for expert opinions. In a learned report, Bayle asserted that no ink eradicator had been used on the document and that the original sum had been 12,000 francs only. He regretted that in making his experiments he had been compelled to destroy that part of the receipt where the amount had been written. So great was Bayle's reputation in the Paris courts that Philipponnet lost the suit. His response was to shoot Bayle, who was immediately regarded as a martyr to the cause of justice and buried at the expense of the French government. The Glazelians, however, smelled a rat in the destruction of the relevant portion of the receipt and set to work to scrutinize Bayle's whole career. Many peculiar matters were brought to light, but I am in no position to judge them. The matter will have to be left to the Last Court.



The Glozel case brought me something more precious than any fee. This was a friendship with Salomon Reinach and his wife. The childless old couple lived in a small chateau in the Bois de Boulogne outside of Paris, surrounded by books and flowers. I don't think I ever met another man who so thoroughly understood the art of living well in his old age. To sit with him and his wife, having luncheon on the terrace of the chateau on a mild spring day when the first green leaves were on the trees and the sun was shining as gently as it shines only in France, was something a man would never forget. Nor could one forget the luncheon, brought out from the house by the old cook, a very important member of the household.

In time I became so close a friend of the Reinachs that whenever I visited Paris during the early thirties I stayed with them as their guest. Salomon Reinach opened a new world to me, the world of the humanities. His opinions were an intermingling of indefinable French finesse, clarity of spirit, and humor.

But Salomon Reinach could be as terrible an antagonist as he was a good friend. His judgments were merciless. Once, when the Glozel battle was at its height, some specialist in prehistory expressed the opinion that Glozel was a fake, saying that prehistory was established on the solid base of sixty years' experience and the study of thousands of excavations. He asked, how could this pyramid of scholarship be overturned by the sole testimony of the doubtful Glozel? And he ended by saying that all specialists in prehistory resisted the Glozel evidence in the names of science and common sense alike.

Retorted Salomon Reinach: "This gentleman has a perfect right to speak in the name of the specialists in prehistory, who are just exactly that and nothing more. When a man knows neither Greek nor Latin, neither German nor English, nor yet Italian, when he does not know how to write his own language correctly – in one word, when he does not know anything – he turns to prehistory. The exceptions are very few, and there are hundreds of these specialists in prehistory to every good philologist."

In the years after I left France for Sweden, we kept up a correspondence. One day in the middle thirties I received a letter from France in a hand unfamiliar to me. In it were the tidings that Reinach had died suddenly and that his beloved wife had followed him the same afternoon.

*They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead;
They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter tears to shed.
I wept, as I remembered how often you and I
Had tired the sun with talking and sent him down the sky.*



