WARD’s conviction, like many others, was due to mistaken identity. Ward’s reluctance to testify, and his fear that he would lay himself open to all kinds of questions and that his criminal record would bring about a harsher sentence, were not unjustified. The English rule limiting the asking of questions on past record (supra, p. xvi) might wisely be adopted in the United States. Inspector Knox, now dead, deserves commendation for his energy in verifying the truth of Ward’s statement that he was not in Massachusetts on the day of the crime and of Mahoney’s story that Dooley was the guilty man. It does not appear that compensation was ever offered to Ward.

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James Willis
CALIFORNIA

In broad daylight, at three o’clock on the afternoon of March 19, 1927, in the streets of Sacramento, California, young Robert Richardson, driving a Buick coach, was approached by a determined-looking man and, at the point of a revolver, was forced to accept the man as a passenger and to drive him about the city for over an hour, the passenger meanwhile imbibing the contents of a whiskey bottle. Finally, Richardson was ejected from his car on the outskirts of the city and the bandit drove off. Shortly thereafter, the bandit held up Paul Winstead, operator of the Union Oil station at Tenth and F Streets, Sacramento, tak-
ing about $30. He then proceeded to a service station owned by Oscar G. Jones, whom he shot three times in the arm and once in the back after an argument over money. He then drove off.

Soon after, the Buick was found abandoned near the Sacramento Police Station. It was learned that the shooting of Jones had been done with a .22-caliber pistol. Each of the three victims supplied the police with a description of the fugitive. They arrested as a suspect James S. Willis, twenty-seven-year-old son of a prominent Stockton physician. Willis fitted the description well, and while young Richardson would not identify him, the victims Winstead and Jones did. Furthermore, the police knew that Willis had a police record, having been twice convicted in the state of Washington, was a drug addict, and at that very time was under a charge of having a short time earlier burglarized an office in Stockton from which whiskey and two .22 revolvers had been stolen.

On April 8, 1927, Willis was indicted by a Sacramento County Grand Jury on charges of first-degree robbery and assault with intent to commit murder. Willis repeatedly denied that he was in any way connected with the Sacramento crimes charged.

On April 12, 1927, he was arraigned before Judge J. F. Pullen of the Superior Court of Sacramento County. The defendant was represented by Mr. Coale of Stockton, engaged by the prisoner's father, who was also present. To both of these men, James stoutly denied his guilt; but when it came time for him to enter his plea, he answered, "Guilty." He was consequently convicted, and was sentenced and committed to the State Prison at San Quentin for an indeterminate term of from five years to life on the robbery charge, and from one to fourteen years on the other, the sentences to run consecutively.

At about this same time, twenty-three-year-old Vincent Bohac walked into a police station in Detroit, Michigan, and stated that he had shot a man the previous month in Sacra-
mento, California, and that although he didn’t know whether his victim had died, he wished to return to California to pay the penalty. The California authorities, on being notified, sent for Bohac; he arrived in Sacramento on May 7, 1927. He at once made a complete confession, going so far as to lead the police to the spot where he had buried the pistol and some of the loot. It was still there. As soon as Richardson saw Bohac he immediately identified him, and so did Winstead and Jones. The latter two freely admitted that their earlier identification of Willis was wrong. Bohac and Willis had the same general appearance. Bohac did not know of the conviction of Willis, and he had surrendered solely to clear his conscience.

In the third week of May, 1927, Bohac pleaded guilty to the crimes of first-degree robbery and assault with intent to murder, and he was accordingly sentenced and sent to San Quentin. Thereupon, the district attorney of Sacramento County brought the facts to the attention of Governor Young, who, because of Willis’ prior record, referred the matter to the California Supreme Court for recommendation, which was given forthwith. Accordingly, on August 18, 1927, Governor Young granted Willis a pardon upon the express ground of his innocence.

The Governor’s official comment upon Willis’ “guilty” plea is interesting:

Willis, realizing that, in general, he answered the description of the man who committed the offenses charged against him, confronted with his previous criminal record, faced with a burglary charge pending against him in Stockton, and being unable to satisfactorily account for his whereabouts, evidently pleaded guilty in the hope of obtaining some consideration, although maintaining his innocence at all times to his father, his attorney, and the prosecuting and investigating officers.

But for Bohac’s voluntary and completely corroborated confession, Willis might have served out his sentence. The plea of guilty is accounted for by District Attorney McAllister by the suggestion that Willis, confronted with an apparently hopeless case, wanted “to get it over with.”
evidence against him consisted solely of identification by the
victims, which rested on no better foundation in this case
than in many others. Yet the identification would doubtless
have sufficed to convict. Probably the voluntary plea of
guilty, however it may be explained, would, under the Cali-
ifornia statute, bar Willis’ claim for compensation. Governor
Young in his pardon expresses the belief that both young
men are capable of rehabilitation.

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Luigi Zambino
NEW JERSEY FEDERAL

COUNTERFEIT money is a great problem for the
secret-service agents of the United States Treasury
Department. When one visits the offices of this ser-
vice, let us say in New York City, the piles of paper and
metal money on tables carry one back to the stories of the
medieval countinghouses—until it is observed that each
piece of money has a criminal history attached to it. The
agents who operate for the Federal Government from this
office are alert to pick up bits of information which lead to
persons who are manufacturing counterfeit money or know-
ingly passing it.

In the latter part of December, 1905, one Frank Manfra
was caught in the net of the Secret Service in New York
City. On him, at the time of his arrest, were found fifteen
counterfeit United States five-dollar silver certificates.
Manfra, caught with the evidence, confessed to the authori-
ties. In his confession he implicated Luigi Zambino, whom,
he said, he had met in Paterson, New Jersey, in November,
1905. Manfra said that Zambino proposed that they go into
the business of “passing money.” He said that they did so,