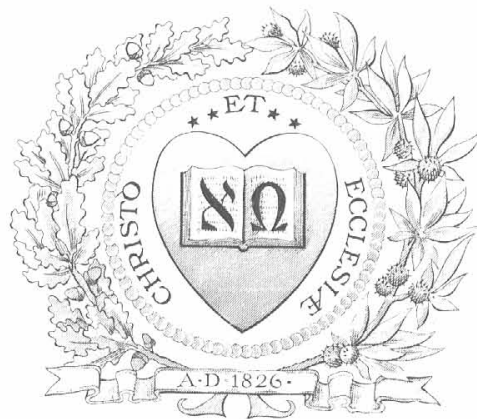


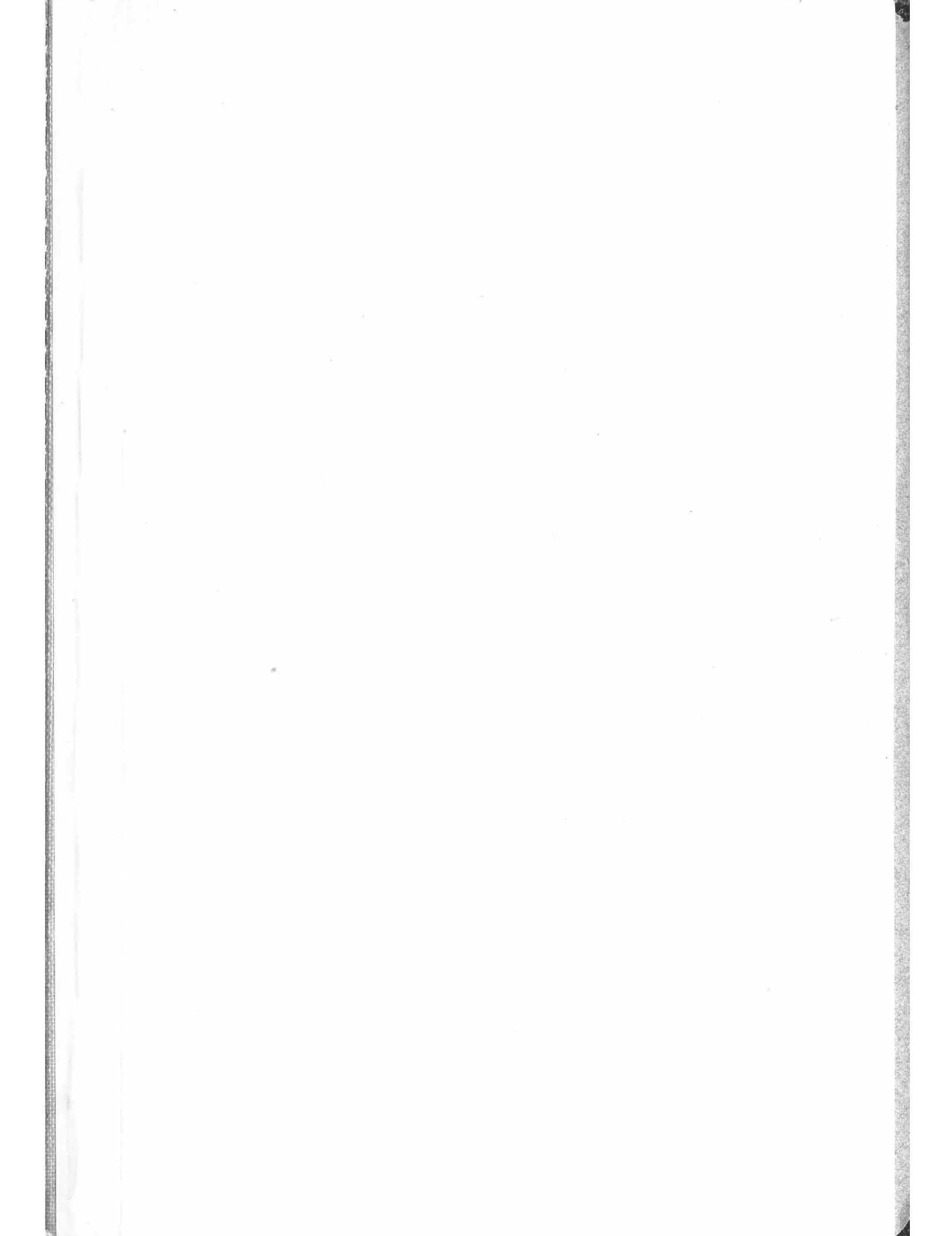
352.2

K79



Library of Adelbert College
of
Western Reserve University





A GOLDEN RULE

(COMMON SENSE)

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY

Fred Kohler, Chief of Police

OF

CLEVELAND, OHIO

AT CONVENTION OF

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF CHIEFS OF POLICE.**

352.2
K'D

e
Address discussed; accepted and ordered printed
in convention held at Detroit, Michigan,
June 3rd, 1908.

a. G. L.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE.

"A Golden Rule."

(By Fred Kohler, Chief of Police, Cleveland, Ohio.)

Mr. President, Brother Chiefs, Ladies and Gentlemen:

For a great many years in Cleveland, practically always, certainly throughout the period of my service on the force, the police had done as the police do everywhere with drunks and disorderly persons, petty thieves, bad boys and small offenders generally, we ran them in. It was the custom in Cleveland; it is still the custom of practically the whole police world, and customs—ground as they are into the very fibre of men's minds—are hard to break. But we have broken the custom of the world and the ages in Cleveland. We are treating men as men; even when they are drunk; even when they disturb the peace; even when they insult the dignity of a policeman. We often make arrests, but even then we deal with our prisoners as citizens; as human beings. And we all like the change; not only the offenders, but the police. It works, humanity does—the results of our so-called Golden Rule Policy are good.

For many years I have given confused study and some not very enlightening observation to the numerous arrests made for minor offenses. I couldn't see that these wholesale arrests did any good. The number of them did not diminish; it increased. And I found that the arrests not only did not produce good results; they did harm. They brought disgrace, humiliation and suffering to countless innocent persons in no way responsible for the acts of a thoughtless, careless, mischievous, or even if you will, a malicious first of-

fender. Think a moment, and you will see out of your own experience how true this is. Certainly it was borne in upon me, something was wrong.

I found daily at these stations relatives and friends in seeking the release of some prisoner, who, when I inquired, proved to be not so very, very bad. In Police Court the next day I saw and feeble parents, weeping wives with crying babies in their arms and very often other children clinging at their sides—all there to witness the degradation of those they loved. And what was the result? A hasty trial, and since the offense was usually trivial the prisoner was discharged. Good! But all that suffering was in vain. Sometimes it was worse than vain. Sometimes a friend interceded in the prisoner's behalf and he was released. Perhaps a letter in "pull". Perhaps the prisoner and his friends perjured themselves—you know how often that happens—and a greater crime was committed. Again sometimes the offender was fined. That was the result," but who paid? The weeping mother and children; they were robbed of the necessities of life and the only gain was a paltry dollars paid into the City Treasury. Was there one particle of real good accomplished by this process? Watching it all day after day, I answer "no", and I say now emphatically, "no".

Now, questioning these unfortunates, it struck me that most of them did what they did through thoughtlessness, natural passion or in a spirit of frolic or mischief. It seemed to me that this should be understood. It didn't seem at first to be the policeman's duty to study the cases and to use discretion. That was the judge's duty. But following the cases from the time the persons were thrown into prison to their arraignment before a Police Magistrate, I noticed that, as a rule, the bench showed little sense of the character, little knowledge of the habits and environment of the offender. The judge has not, of course, seen the offense committed, and he could not comprehend the exact situation or the conditions. Or perhaps

was a politician; in that case the arresting policeman was the person put on trial, censured and insulted. There was a misunderstanding all around. And gentlemen, misunderstanding is injustice.

The "very best result" achieved in all this process was that the offender, who may previously have been of good character and reputation, was given a police court record. He was discouraged and his family and relatives mortified and disgraced.

Then I remembered that all persons are not arrested who commit minor offenses and even larceny. Many escape detection and are not exposed. Their escape did not hurt them or society; it was an advantage.

I know, and you know, men who have erred thus in youth, and yet later have become good citizens; yes, some of them are the leading business men of the country. Some of them are Chiefs of Police. As we all know with some crime is a disease; with others it is a lack of proper education, training and healthy environment; and with yet others, it is weakness—inability to resist temptation. Now, I finally concluded, that it was our duty not to help these unfortunates on their downward course, but to save them. It seemed to me it was up to the police to learn to know the difference between a thief and a mischievous man or boy. And why not? Of all men, who is so able to judge whether an arrest is necessary as the policeman, if given the opportunity, who knows the neighborhood, who is first on the scene, who has all the facts and circumstances at first hand—before there has been time to destroy or make up evidence.

Upon these observations and thoughts my policy was formed. Firm in the belief that some remedy was necessary, I decided to experiment. I determined to have my policemen use their best human instincts. I proposed that my men should exercise that discretion which the judges did not always exercise.

To insure the successful operation of the plan, it was necessary of course, that every member of the force should understand it.

They must be made aware of the principle involved and the benefits to be derived from the policy. To that end I personally met with every division of the officers and men and, in an informal discussion considered with them every detail. Every misdemeanor and crime was carefully dissected and we decided together just how far the policy was to be applied.

First: Juveniles were never to be placed in city prisons. They were to be taken home or the parents sent for and the child turned over to them with a warning for parental correction.

Second: Intoxicated persons were to be taken, or sent home, unless it seemed necessary for the protection of their lives or their property, to confine them until sober, and in that case they were to be allowed to plead guilty and, by signing a waiver of trial, let go without appearing in court. And for your information I might add, that under this system of so-called Sunrise Court, during the year of 1907 there were 7738 persons released by signing such a waiver without any further punishment.

Third: Juvenile and intoxicated persons are cited only because they appear to be in the majority, but apparent offenders of any misdemeanor charges are warned and released by simply taking their name and address, unless, it can be shown that the offense was committed with malice and forethought; with the intention to injure the person or property of another. And I might add, that this policy has also been applied even where it seemed apparent felonies had been committed.

The force was shown how by conscientiously carrying out this policy, they would save many hours' duty in court, a matter of great importance to the officers on night duty, and to the public when officers are on day duty. They would save to the city thousands of dollars in witness fees; much work for the police judges, police clerks and court attaches; wear and tear of all police apparatus. And they would cut politicians and shyster lawyers out of their

source of revenue, and drive them back to good, honest work—maybe.

The force became thoroughly interested, and, though there were a few mistakes to correct at first, the policy has proved a success during the five months of severe trial which we have given it.

To show this I quote from our reports the number of arrests for the first five months of 1907 and 1908:

January, 1907, 2158; January, 1908, 911; February, 1907, 2257; February, 1908, 829; March, 1907, 2711; March, 1908, 939; April, 1907, 2434; April, 1908, 907; May, 1907, 2731; May, 1908, 888.

These figures show that arrests have decreased 68 per cent.

Reports and complaints have diminished at a corresponding rate. Officers, detectives and patrolmen are able to devote more time to the pursuit of the habitual criminal and crimes of a serious nature; to suspicious persons and to those whose livelihood depends upon the swindling and robbing of the honest citizen. This in turn has resulted in driving from our city practically all these vultures, and those that remain are under such close surveillance that it is almost impossible for them to operate successfully. I think I can truthfully say that Cleveland is well pleased with the result.

I believe in my policy. I believe that if it is properly and generally carried into effect, it will put the American policeman in the position he should occupy. He will learn that the people he has to deal with are human beings, not machines; liable to make mistakes and failures, but not therefore lost souls. And I believe that the patrolman should be the friend and parole officer of these laggards. I believe that the best policeman is he who manages all offenders against the law with the least show of authority, with the least personal pride, with the greatest sense of human justice.

At our last meeting I described to you our policy of "Police Repression," and I explained that the purpose of it was to prevent violations of the law instead of waiting for them to occur. That

policy in connection with this, the "Golden Rule Policy" has really made Cleveland a good city to live in.

And, to take a broad view, I submit that we police can help to make the world a better place to live in. It has been said, and you, gentlemen, with your long experience in police business, you know that the police, unwillingly and unwittingly, perhaps we nevertheless hasty—have been instrumental in making as many criminals as any other agency, poverty, heritage and association excepted.

This we have done by making these numerous arrests of first offenders; by exposing and branding them with Police Court and Prison records.

We have discouraged men. We have driven young and weak men to the haunts and association of habitual and expert criminals who have taught them the ideals and practices of crime. We have punished, we have NOT PREVENTED CRIME. The time has come to change all this and I believe we in Cleveland have found the way to do it.

FRED KOHLER,
CHIEF OF POLICE.

FREIBERGER LIBRARY
Case Western Reserve University

DATE DUE	DATE RETURNED

CWRU LIBRARY SYSTEMS

3 9156 00549918 6

Photomount
Pamphlet
Binder
Gaylord Bros.
Makers
Syracuse, N. Y.
PAT. JAN 21, 1908

