

Source B

A Fearful State of Things in South Lambeth – Roughts Rule the Roost

This article is from the *Illustrated Police News* of 30th July 1898.

Gangs of young men have been making a community in south London fearful because they have been stealing from shops and attacking and robbing individuals.

1 For years the organised gangs of young ruffians who infest the neighbourhood have been getting worse and worse, until now it is no exaggeration to say that the more respectable portion of the community go in fear of their lives.

5 Probably the worst part of Lambeth is the New Cut and the streets immediately surrounding and it is from her that these pests of South London are mostly drawn. Sometimes they move about in gangs, dodging the police from street to street, and at other times go round in twos and threes **waylaying*** anybody and everybody who looks as if
10 he might have – to use their own expressive phrase – anything “wuth pinchin’.”

An *Evening News* representative has seen a man who quite recently was the victim of one of these outrages.

“I am a barman,” he said; “and the other night, after the house had
15 closed, I was on my way home through Stamford Street. Up comes a chap and asks me for a light, and while I was feeling for the matches, another one comes up behind, blows out the light, hits me across the head with something sharp, and then they both sat on me while another one went through me.”

20 As an evidence that the story is not the outcome of a vivid imagination, the man bears a deep scar over the eye, which is still black from the force of the blow. This is not an isolated case, for the man’s employer informed our representative that he knew many people who had been similarly **waylaid*** late at night.

25 A favourite occupation of the younger members of the gangs is to throw the newspaper placard-boards into the small shops which abound in the neighbourhood, and then if the shopkeeper dares to say anything he will probably have a stone put through his window. “It never used to be so,” said an Oakley Street shopkeeper. “I’ve been here thirteen years, but lately
30 the place is unbearable. In the evening I can’t leave my shop a minute or I