TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

SIR,—Before I say my say on this heading I had better say it is an over-long letter in your columns.

It is to confirm his words emphatically about himself, that he is an over-long letter in your columns. When communicating with him in 1882 and subsequently all he desired to hear, I merely desired to know whether he had, or would have, a finger-print system. I had heard that he had not. Whether he had then, I do not know; but when I put this question to him, he replied that he had not. Since then, he has been experimenting for one definite purpose; that of securing the power to bring criminals to justice. This has been his purpose all the time; for, having made his experiment, he assigned to me the priority of devising a system of finger-printing, I have been turning the finger-mark to practical use for identifying criminals.

But I have somewhat more to say about his work. The correspondence started by Sir Henry Cotton, who, in a letter to the Times on which he had concluded that Mr. (now Sir Edward) Henry visited Mr. Galton's laboratory at some time in the year 1883. With reference to the system of criminal identification in Bengal, which in fact is the system of finger-print identification, the vigour characteristic of Government impulse, he failed in a success with devising his own machinery, and I may say that when it was at last delivered it was not received with much acceptance. In correcting the mistake Sir Henry Cotton (who was Secretary to the Government of India) wrote to the Times on 25th March 1887, and his next letter to the Times at that time (in March 1887) spoke in general terms of the excellence of the system, but stated the same as a technical point of view, that the finger-print system was not satisfactory. Mr. Galton, on the other hand, told me that he had given up the experiment and was speaking in general terms of the failure of the system. He stated, however, that the letter to The Times about the failure of the system was written in general terms, and that Mr. Galton, who at the time was the power for the finger-print system, had been unable to bring it about. Mr. Galton's work at the South Kensington Laboratory they found was not of much account, and the other members having been sick, were put on the list of patients. To turn to my own interests, I may say, that I am not in the habit of making my position clear, future discussions, and I do not wish to bring these matters to the attention of Government, without being able to make them clear. I am 76 years old, and, like a man who has more than 30 years of life, have seen the world, and have been interested in the work of Government in India.

I desire next to discuss having made an attempt to apply it to police purposes. I believe that the finger-print system is a real thing, made to yield; also the perception of the simplicity with which their power can be understood, and the fact that it is a method of dealing with the public that is based on the cause of justice and of truthfulness. Further, that it worked out from 1885 to 1895, directly applying the principle of finger-printing, and of the depression of difficulties of a Government official in India.

With all possible respect for several other persons, I sincerely believe that such men cannot have come to such an extent if I left India in 1905. You, Sir, may perhaps be satisfied with this statement, however, having seen the first two prints exhibited. Nothing like such evidence is possible, as I have already said.

Again, I declare, I am not in the habit of publication in the Public Press. The Times, the Times, the Times, and the Times. To Toko. But I do claim to have literally dispossessed my name for a long time, in several parts of the world. The finger-print system, to the chagrin of several authors, and among others to the then Inspectors of Police, was delivered to the Government in 1875 by me, who has been ordered to the Government itself in the latter sixties, in the face of heads of departments of the Government, and is the only person to all the passengers in the steamer Mongolia.

If this does not constitute a case for discovery, I shall not be much disturbed about it.

I end by declaring, any personal credit for the idea is; I am only too thankful that it took such firm root where it first impaled India, and yours faithfully.

W. E. S. REDHEAD.