

THE WHITECHAPEL MURDER

Up to a late hour last evening the police had obtained no clue to the perpetrator of the latest of the three murders which have so recently taken place in Whitechapel, and there is, it must be acknowledged, after their exhaustive investigation of the facts, no ground for blaming the officers in charge should they fail in unravelling the mystery surrounding the crime.

The murder, in the early hours of Friday morning last, of the woman now known as Mary Ann Nicholls, has so many points of similarity with the murder of two other women in the same neighbourhood -- one Martha Tabram, as recently as August 7, and the other less than 12 months previously -- that the police admit their belief that the three crimes are the work of one individual. All three women were of the class called "unfortunates," each so very poor, that robbery could have formed no motive for the crime, and each was murdered in such a similar fashion, that doubt as to the crime being the work of one and the same villain almost vanishes, particularly when it is remembered that all three murders were committed within a distance of 300 yards from each other.

These facts have led the police to almost abandon the idea of a gang being abroad to wreak vengeance on women of this class for not supplying them with money. Detective Inspectors Abberline, of the Criminal Investigation Department, and Detective Inspector Helson, J Division, are both of opinion that only one person, and that a man, had a hand in the latest murder. It is understood that the investigation into the George-yard mystery is proceeding hand-in-hand with that of Buck's Row. It is considered unlikely that the woman could have entered a house, been murdered, and removed to Buck's Row within a period of one hour and a quarter.

The woman who last saw her alive, and whose name is Nelly Holland, was a fellow-lodger with the deceased in Thrawl Street, and is positive as to the time being 2:30. Police constable Neil, 79 J, who found the body, reports the time as 3:45. Buck's Row is a secluded place, from having tenements on one side only. The constable has been severely questioned as to his "working" of his "beat" on that night, and states that he was last on the spot where he found the body not more than half an hour previously -- that is to say, at 3:15.

The beat is a very short one, and quickly walked over would not occupy more than 12 minutes. He neither heard a cry nor saw any one. Moreover, there are three watchmen on duty at night close to the spot, and neither one heard a cry to cause alarm. It is not true, says Constable Neil, who is

a man of nearly 20 years' service, that he was called to the body by two men. He came upon it as he walked, and flashing his lantern to examine it, he was answered by the lights from two other constables at either end of the street. These officers had seen no man leaving the spot to attract attention, and the mystery is most complete. The utmost efforts are being used, a number of plainclothes men being out making inquiries in the neighbourhood, and Sergeants Enright and Godley have interviewed many persons who might, it was thought, assist in giving a clue.

On Saturday afternoon Mr. Wynne E. Baxter, coroner for the South-Eastern Division of Middlesex, opened his inquiry at the Working Lads' Institute, Whitechapel Road, respecting the death of MARY ANN NICHOLS, whose dead body was found on the pavement in Buck's-row, Whitechapel, on Friday morning.

Detective Inspectors Abberline and Helston and Sergeants Enright and Godley watched the case on behalf of the Criminal Investigation Department.

The jury having been sworn and having viewed the body of the dead woman, which was lying in a shell in the Whitechapel Mortuary.

Edward Walker, of 16 Maudswood-road, Camberwell, deposed that he was now of no occupation, but had formerly been a smith. He had seen the body in the mortuary, and to the best of his belief it was that of his daughter, whom he had not seen for two years. He recognized the body by its general appearance and by some of the front teeth being missing. Deceased also had a scar on the forehead which was caused by a fall when she was young. There was a scar on the body of the woman then lying in the mortuary.

His daughter's name was Mary Ann Nichols, and she had been married quite 22 years. Her husband's name was William Nichols, a printer's machinist, and he was still alive. They had been living apart for seven or eight years. Deceased was about 42 years of age. The last time witness heard of the deceased was about Easter, when she wrote him a letter. He produced the letter, which was in the handwriting of the deceased. It spoke of a situation she was in, and which, she said, she liked very much. He answered that letter, but had not since heard from the deceased.

The last time he saw deceased was in June, 1886, when she was respectably dressed. That was at the funeral of his son, who was burnt to death through the explosion of a paraffin lamp. Some three or four years previous to that the deceased lived with witness; but he was unable to say what she had since been doing.

Deceased was not a particularly sober woman, and that was the reason why they could not agree. He did not think she was "fast" with men, and she was not in the habit of staying out late at night while she was living with him. He had no idea what deceased had been doing since she left him. He did not turn the deceased out of doors. They simply had a few words, and the following morning she left home.

The reason deceased parted from her husband was that he went and lived with the woman who nursed his wife during her confinement. Witness knew nothing of his daughter's acquaintances, or what she had been doing for a living. Deceased was not 5ft. 4in. in height. She had five children, the eldest of whom was 21 years of age and the youngest eight or nine. She left her husband when the youngest child was only one or two years of age. The eldest was now lodging with witness.

He was unable to say if deceased had recently been living with any one; but some three or four years ago he heard she was living with a man named Drew, who was a house smith by trade and had a shop of his own in York Street, Walworth. Witness believed he was still living there. The husband of the deceased had been summoned for the keep of the children, but the charge was dismissed owing to the fact that she was then living with another man. Deceased was in the Lambeth Workhouse in April last, when she left to go to a situation. Her husband was still living at Coburg-road, Old Kent Road, but witness was not aware if he was acquainted with his wife's death. Witness did not think the deceased had any enemies, as she was too good for that.

Police constable John Neil, 97 J, deposed that on Friday morning he was passing down Buck's Row, Whitechapel, and going in the direction of Brady Street, and he did not notice any one about. He had been round the same place some half an hour previous to that and did not see any one. He was walking along the right-hand side of the street when he noticed a figure lying in the street. It was dark at the time, although a street lamp was shining at the end of the row.

He walked across and found the deceased lying outside a gateway, which was about 9ft. or 10ft. in height and led to some stables, was closed. Houses ran eastward from the gateway, while the Board school was westward of the spot. On the other side of the road was the Essex Wharf. The deceased was lying lengthways, and her left hand touched the gate. With the aid of his lamp he examined the body and saw blood oozing from a wound in the throat. Deceased was lying upon her back with her clothes disarranged. Witness

felt her arm, which was quite warm from the joints upwards, while her eyes were wide open.

Her bonnet was off her head and was lying by her right side, close by the left hand. Witness then heard a constable passing Brady Street, and he called to him. Witness said to him, "Run at once for Dr. Llewellyn." Seeing another constable in Baker's Row, witness despatched him for the ambulance. Dr. Llewellyn arrived in a very short time. In the meantime witness had rung the bell of Essex Wharf and inquired if any disturbance had been heard. He was told "No." Sergeant Kerby then came, and he knocked.

The doctor, having looked at the woman, said: -- "Move the woman to the mortuary; she is dead. I will make a further examination of her." They then placed deceased on the ambulance and removed her to the mortuary. Inspector Spratley came to the mortuary, and while taking a description of deceased lifted up her clothes and discovered she was disembowelled. That had not been noticed before. On the deceased was found a piece of comb and a bit of looking glass, but no money was found. In the pocket an unmarked white pocket handkerchief was found. There was a pool of blood where the neck of deceased was lying in Buck's Row.

He had not heard any disturbance that night. The farthest he had been that night was up Baker's Row to the Whitechapel Road, and was never far away from the spot. The Whitechapel-road was a busy thoroughfare in the early morning, and he saw a number of women in that road, apparently on their way home. At that time any one could have got away. Witness examined the ground while the doctor was being sent for. In answer to a juryman, the witness said he did not see any trap in the road. He examined the road, but could not see any marks of wheels.

The first persons who arrived on the spot after he discovered the body were two men who worked at a slaughterhouse opposite. They stated that they knew nothing of the affair, nor had they heard any screams. Witness had previously seen the men at work. That would be a quarter past 3, or half an hour before he found the body.

Mr. Henry Llewellyn, surgeon, of 152, Whitechapel Road, stated that at 4 o'clock on Friday morning he was called by the last witness to Buck's Row. The officer told him what he was wanted for. On reaching Buck's Row he found deceased lying flat on her back on the pathway, her legs being extended. Deceased was quite dead, and she had severe injuries to her throat. Her hands and wrists were cold, but the lower extremities were quite warm. Witness examined her chest and felt the heart.

It was dark at the time. He should say the deceased had not been dead more than half an

hour. He was certain that the injuries to the neck were not self-inflicted. There was very little blood round the neck, and there were no marks of any struggle, or of blood as though the body had been dragged. Witness gave the police directions to take the body to the mortuary, where he would make another examination. About an hour afterwards he was sent for by the inspector to see the other injuries he had discovered on the body. Witness went, and saw that the abdomen was cut very extensively. That morning he made a post mortem examination of the body.

It was that of a female of about 40 or 45 years. Five of the teeth were missing, and there was a slight laceration of the tongue. There was a bruise running along the lower part of the jaw on the right side of the face. That might have been caused by a blow from a fist or pressure from a thumb. There was a circular bruise on the left side of the face, which also might have been inflicted by the pressure of the fingers. On the left side of the neck, about 1in. below the jaw, there was an incision about 4in. in length, and ran from a point immediately below the ear.

On the same side, but an inch below, and commencing about 1in. in front of it, was a circular incision, which terminated in a point about 3in. below the right jaw. That incision completely severed all the tissues down to the vertebrae. The large vessels of the neck on both sides were severed. The incision was about 8in. in length. The cuts must have been caused by a long-bladed knife, moderately sharp, and used with great violence.

No blood was found on the breast, either of the body or clothes. There were no injuries about the body until just below the lower part of the abdomen. Two or three inches from the left side was a wound running in a jagged manner. The wound was a very deep one, and the tissues were cut through. There were several incisions running across the abdomen. There were also three or four similar cuts, running downwards, on the right side, all of which had been caused by a knife which had been used violently and downwards. The injuries were from left to right, and might have been done by a left-handed person. All the injuries had been caused by the same instrument.

At this stage Mr. Wynne Baxter adjourned the inquiry until this morning.

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