

THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS

Two arrests were made yesterday, but it is very doubtful whether the murderer is in the hands of the police. The members of the Criminal Investigation Department are assisting the divisional police at the East-end in their endeavours to elucidate the mystery in which these crimes are involved. Yesterday morning Detective Sergeant Thicke, of the H Division, who has been indefatigable in his inquiries respecting the murder of Annie Chapman at 29, Hanbury Street, Spitalfields, on Saturday morning, succeeded in capturing a man whom he believed to be "Leather Apron." It will be recollected that this person obtained an evil notoriety during the inquiries respecting this and the recent murders committed in Whitechapel, owing to the startling reports that had been freely circulated by many of the women living in the district as to outrages alleged to have been committed by him. Sergeant Thicke, who has had much experience of the thieves and their haunts in this portion of the metropolis, has, since he has been engaged in the present inquiry, been repeatedly assured by some of the most well-known characters of their abhorrence of the fiendishness of the crime, and they have further stated that if they could only lay hands on the murderer they would hand him over to justice. These and other circumstances convinced the officer and those associated with him that the deed was in no way traceable to any of the regular thieves or desperadoes at the East-end.

At the same time a sharp look-out was kept on the common lodginghouses, not only in this district, but in other portions of the metropolis. Several persons bearing a resemblance to the description of the person in question have been arrested, but, being able to render a satisfactory account of themselves, were allowed to go away. Shortly after 8 o'clock yesterday morning Sergeant Thicke, accompanied by two or three other officers, proceeded to 22, Mulberry Street and knocked at the door. It was opened by a Polish Jew named Pizer, supposed to be "Leather Apron." Thicke at once took hold of the man, saying, "You are just the man I want." He then charged Pizer with being concerned in the murder of the woman Chapman, and to this he made no reply. The accused man, who is a boot finisher by trade, was then handed over to other officers and the house was searched. Thicke took possession of five sharp long-bladed knives -- which, however, are used by men in Pizer's trade -- and also several old hats. With reference to the latter, several women who stated they were acquainted with the prisoner, alleged he has been in the habit of wearing different hats.

Pizer, who is about 33, was then quietly removed to the Lemn Street Police station, his friends protesting that he knew nothing of the affair, that he had not been out of the house since Thursday night, and is of a very delicate constitution. The friends of the man were subjected to a close questioning by the police. It was still uncertain, late last night, whether this man remained in custody or had been liberated. He strongly denies that he is known by the name of "Leather Apron."

The following official notice has been circulated throughout the metropolitan police district and all police stations throughout the country: -- "Description of a man who entered a passage of the house at which the murder was committed of a prostitute at 2 a.m. on the 8th. -- Age 37; height, 5ft. 7in.; rather dark beard and moustache. Dress-shirt, dark vest and trousers, black scarf, and black felt hat. Spoke with a foreign accent."

Great excitement was caused in the neighbourhood of Commercial Street Police station during the afternoon on account of the arrival from Gravesend of a suspect whose appearance resembled in some respects that of "Leather Apron." This man, whose name is William Henry Pigott, was taken into custody on Sunday night at the Pope's Head publichouse, Gravesend.

Attention was first attracted to Pigott because he had some bloodstains on his clothes. Superintendent Berry, the chief of the local police, was communicated with, and a sergeant was sent to the Pope's Head to investigate the case. On approaching the man, who seemed in a somewhat dazed condition, the sergeant saw that one of his hands bore several recently-made wounds.

Being interrogated as to the cause of this Pigott made a somewhat rambling statement to the effect that while going down Brick Lane, Whitechapel, at half-past 4 on Saturday morning he saw a woman fall in a fit. He stooped to pick her up, and she bit his hand. Exasperated at this he struck her, but seeing two policemen coming up he then ran away. The sergeant, deeming the explanation unsatisfactory, took Pigott to the police-station, where his clothing was carefully examined by Dr. Whitcombe, the divisional surgeon.

The result of the scrutiny was an announcement that two shirts which Pigott carried in a bundle were stained with blood, and also that blood appeared to have been recently wiped off his boots. After the usual caution the prisoner made a further statement to the effect that the woman who bit him was in the street at the back of a lodging-house when seized with the fit. He added

that he slept at a lodging-house in Osborne Street on Thursday night, but on Friday was walking the streets of Whitechapel all night. He tramped from London to Gravesend on Saturday. He gave his age as 52, and stated he was a native of Gravesend, his father having some years ago had a position there in connexion with the Royal Liver Society.

Subsequently Pigott told the police that he had been keeping several publichouses in London. As the prisoner's description tallied in some respects with that furnished by headquarters of the man wanted, Superintendent Berry decided to detain him until the morning. In response to a telegram apprising him of the arrest Inspector Abberline proceeded to Gravesend yesterday morning, and after hearing the circumstances of the case decided to bring the prisoner at once to Whitechapel, so that he could be confronted with the women who had furnished the description of "Leather Apron."

A large crowd had gathered at Gravesend railway station to witness the departure of the detective and his prisoner, but his arrival at London-bridge was almost unnoticed, the only persons apprised beforehand of the journey being the police, a small party of whom in plain clothes were in attendance. Inspector Abberline and Pigott went off in a four-wheeled cab to Commercial Street where from early morning groups of idlers had hung about in anticipation of an arrest.

The news of Pigott's arrival, which took place at 12 48, at once spread, and in a few seconds the police-station was surrounded by an excited crowd anxious to get a glimpse of the supposed murderer. Finding that no opportunity was likely to occur of seeing the prisoner, the mob after a time melted away, but the police had trouble for some hours in keeping the thoroughfare free for traffic. Pigott arrived at Commercial Street in much the same condition as he was when taken into custody. He wore no vest, had on a battered felt hat, and appeared to be in a state of high nervous excitement.

Mrs. Fiddymont, who is responsible for the statement respecting a man resembling "Leather Apron" being at the Prince Albert publichouse on Saturday, was sent for, as were also other witnesses likely to be able to identify the prisoner; but after a very brief scrutiny it was the unanimous opinion that Pigott was not "Leather Apron." Nevertheless, looking to his condition of mind and body, it was decided to detain him until he could give a somewhat more satisfactory explanation of himself and his movements. After an interval of a couple of hours, the man's manner becoming more strange and his speech ore incoherent, the divisional surgeon was called

in, and he gave it as his opinion that the prisoner's mind was unhinged. A medical certificate to this effect was made out, and Pigott will, for the present, remain in custody.

Intelligent observers who have visited the locality express the utmost astonishment that the murderer could have reached a hiding place after committing such a crime. He must have left the yard in Hanbury Street reeking with blood, and yet, if the theory that the murder took place between 5 and 6 be accepted, he must have walked in almost broad daylight along streets comparatively well frequented, even at that early hour, without his startling appearance attracting the slightest attention.

Consideration of this point has led many to the conclusion that the murderer came not from the wretched class from which the inmates of common lodging-houses are drawn. More probably, it is argued, he is a man lodging in a comparatively decent house in the district, to which he would be able to retire quickly, and in which, once it was reached, he would be able at his leisure to remove from his person all traces of his hideous crime. It is at any rate practically certain that the murderer would not have ventured to return to a common lodging-house smeared with blood as he must have been. The police are\ therefore exhorted not to confine their investigations, as they are accused of doing, to common lodging-houses and other resorts of the criminal and outcast, but to extend their inquiries to the class of householders, exceedingly numerous in the East-end of London, who are in the habit of letting furnished lodgings without particular inquiry into the character or antecedents of those who apply for them.

A visit to Dorset Street, which runs parallel with Spitalfields Market from Commercial Street, reveals the fact that nearly every house in the street is a common lodging-house, in which wretched human beings are, at certain seasons of the year, crammed from cellar to roof. The streets leading into Dorset Street, where the woman was last seen alive, are also occupied by lodging-houses. In Hanbury-street, Deal Street, Great Garden Street, and several smaller thoroughfares houses of the same sort are located and are frequented by the poorest class of the "casual" community.

Some of these places have been searched and inquiries made as to their recent inhabitants, but so far nothing has been discovered to lead to the supposition that any regular frequenter of these establishments committed the murder. The woman Chapman was known by appearance to the policemen on the night beats in the neighbourhood, but none of those who were on duty between 12 and 6 on Saturday morning

recollect having seen her. It is ascertained that several men left their lodgings after midnight with the expressed intention of returning who have not returned. Some men went to their lodgings after 3 o'clock, and left again before 6 in the morning, which is not an unfrequent occurrence in those houses.

None of the deputies or watchmen at the houses have any have any memory of any person stained with blood entering their premises, but at that hour of the morning little or no notice is taken of persons inquiring for beds. They are simply asked for the money, and shown up dark stairways with a bad light to their rooms. When they leave early, they are seldom noticed in their egress. It is then considered quite probable that the murderer may have found a refuge for a few hours in one of these places, and even washed away the signs of his guilt. The men in these houses use a common washing place, and water once used is thrown down the sink by the lodger using it. All this might happen in a common lodging-house in the early morning without the bloodstained murderer being noticed particularly. The conviction is growing even, that taking for granted that one man committed all the recent murders of women in the Whitechapel district, he might in this fashion, by changing his common lodging-house, evade detection for a considerable time. Whoever the man may be -- if the same person committed the last three murders -- he must on each occasion have been bespattered profusely with bloodstains. He could not well get rid of them in any ordinary dwelling-house or public place. Therefore it is supposed he must have done so in the lodging-houses.

The murderer must have known the neighbourhood, which is provided with no fewer than four police stations, and is well watched nightly, on account of the character of many of the inhabitants. On Saturday morning, between half past 4 o'clock and 6, several carts must have passed through Hanbury-street, and at 5 o'clock, on the opening of the Spitalfields Market, the end of which the murder occurred was blocked with market vehicles, and the market attendents were busy regulating the traffic. In the midst of the bustle it is admitted that two persons might have passed through the hall of 29, Hanbury-street, and in consequence of the noise of passing vehicles, any slight altercation might have occurred without being overheard. Although at first, from the contiguity of Buck's Row to a slaughter-house and the neighbourhood of the Aldgate Shambles, suspicion fell on the butchers employed in those establishments during the night, the suspicion is disappearing, inasmuch as the names and addresses and the movements of all those engaged in the occupation are known.

A meeting of the chief local tradesmen was held yesterday, at which an influential committee was appointed, consisting of 16 well-known gentlemen, with Mr. J. Aarons as the secretary. The committee issued last evening a notice stating that they will give a substantial reward for the capture of the murderer or for information leading thereto. The movement has been warmly taken up by the inhabitants, and it is thought certain that a large sum will be subscribed within the next few days.

The proposal to form district vigilance committees also meets with great popular favour and is assuming practical form. Meetings were held at the various working men's clubs and other organizations, political and social, in the districts, at most of which the proposed scheme was heartily approved.

From inquiries which have been made in Windsor, it seems that the deceased was the widow of a coachman in service at Clewer. While the deceased lived at Clewer she was in custody for drunkenness, but had not been charged before the magistrates.

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