

BOOK I

DAYS SPENT WITH THE SPECIAL AND
CENTRAL BRANCHES OF SCOTLAND YARD

CHAPTER I

GUARDING KING EDWARD.

IN the year 1910, there occurred a red-letter day in my career as a police officer. Up to this time I had served as a constable in the "V" Division of the Metropolitan Police, but now I was promoted to become a member of the Special Branch of Scotland Yard. It was the realisation of my hopes. Often as I had patrolled my beat in the Battersea, Putney, and Richmond districts, had I longed for the day when I might exchange my somewhat monotonous routine (as I thought at the time) for the more exciting life of a Scotland Yard detective.

I was elated when my step came. I had worked hard for it. I had studied to improve my education, and had read all the works on criminal detection which were regarded as classics on the Continent and in America, as well as those published here.

Now I had left behind me the routine which was becoming so monotonous to take up work of a very special and secretive nature.

Incidentally, let me say here that it is an excellent rule that no detective can enter the specialised departments of Scotland Yard without graduating through the ranks as a constable. All my experience has gone to prove the invaluable character of the experience gathered in the comparative obscurity of the uniform period. It is a probation which all the great heads of the Yard have at some time or other been thankful to have undergone.

What is called the Special Branch is now absorbed in the four main divisions of the Metropolitan Police. At the time of which I am writing, Sir Patrick Quinn, M.V.O., K.B.E., was its head, and its Chief Inspector was the late Superintendent John Macarthy, while its Senior Inspector was the present Superintendent J. McBrien.

The Special Branch was formed primarily to watch the activities of certain undesirable visitors to these shores. The open door which it was Britain's boast to keep for all, the asylum which this country provided for the oppressed of other countries, and for refugees of all nationalities, was not without its very serious attendant dangers. There occurred many incidents which never had publicity and which sometimes

placed the country in bad odour with foreign governments—these sometimes arising from anarchist plots and such things concocted here ; and it was decided to keep a sharper eye on the undesirable alien.

Especially was this necessary when a series of outrages occurred on the Continent during the visits of foreign potentates and monarchs. Frequently it was found that some of these alleged “oppressed” refugees were, indeed, criminals of a very desperate order, well known to the police of various continental countries, but unknown to Scotland Yard, and had, therefore, received no attention from our police. There was, in those days, much less interchange of information and ideas between the continental capitals and Scotland Yard than there is to-day, and, without the special machinery of the new department to supervise adequately these desperate characters, it would have required agents of Scotland Yard to have been posted in every capital and practically on every important railway.

Apart from the necessary temporary supervision to prevent outrages against visiting kings and personages, it is obvious that some check must be kept on definitely anarchistic activities and subversive propaganda.

That this work is tremendously exciting and interesting, despite its lack of limelight, needs no stressing on my part. It is, as a matter of fact, coveted by detectives in all branches throughout the country.

I considered myself exceedingly fortunate. I was only twenty-four years of age, and it was something of a compliment to be considered qualified to take part in that much-envied department's activities.

Being small for a police officer, and dapper in appearance, I was as little like the conventional detective pictured in fiction as you could imagine. This was greatly in my favour, for it enabled me to carry out my duties in many cases without attracting the slightest suspicion—a point of prime importance in this class of work.

During my activities in the Special Department I came into contact with men whose names are household words. Kings whom I have guarded at some time or another include the late King Edward, King George, the King of Greece, the King of Spain, the King of Belgium, the ex-Kaiser, and many other royalties, about all of whom I have interesting stories

to tell, some of which I will relate as occasion serves through the subsequent chapters of this book.

To the Special Branch was given absolute charge of the arrangements for securing the safety of travelling monarchs and other distinguished visitors ; a task, I can assure you, that was occasionally exceedingly onerous when certain fanatics and political refugees who were known to be dangerous, arranged for their visits to synchronize with those of their particular *bêtes noires* !

Thus it will be seen at the outset that the work of the Special Department was a thing apart, quite distinct from the ordinary criminal detection departments, and, whilst shadowing had to be effective, it had to be so unobtrusive as to be quite unsuspected.

Necessarily there is a great deal of routine work in the department also, for to be forewarned is to be forearmed, and much of the detective's work in the Special Branch is to report from day to day on a certain district or a certain number of individuals however little there may seem to be to report. Apart from acting as a bodyguard the Branch is expected to "know" if any attempt upon a distinguished visitor or Royal personage is even contemplated. As I shall show, the Special Branch is singularly successful in getting to "know" these things.

An important part of the Department's activities is to keep a complete record of every movement of every person known to be ill-disposed to the Crown, to the order of things as they are, to statesmen, or to visiting personages ; and this is done with an accuracy and a thoroughness that has frustrated more than one calamity.

It has been my lot to guard also at different times the late Mr. Asquith, or the Earl of Oxford as he became, Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Winston Churchill. During this time I also came into contact with the greatest revolutionaries or anarchists from men whose memory is quite pleasant to me, like that of the late Prince Kropotkin, to villains like Peter the Painter—of whom I shall relate the full story—never before written.

It is not generally known that, in addition to guarding our Royalty from attack, another and possibly more difficult task, for the accompanying detectives, is to keep back over-zealous and over-enthusiastic loyal subjects and also presenters of petitions.

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People with grievances have tried all manner of tricks to get into personal touch with the King and the incident I recall was such an attempt, an attempt which nearly succeeded.

King Edward was an ideal person for what is technically known as "protective surveillance." He frequently drove about the town in his brougham and it was much easier to keep in unobtrusive touch than if he had used a motor-car.

I shall never forget the last days of King Edward. I reported one day at Buckingham Palace and was informed that the King was ill but that, nevertheless, he purposed to attend the command performance at Covent Garden. It was a great night at the famous Opera House.

Nor shall I forget the tremendous ovation that greeted His Majesty as he moved to the front of the Royal Box. I don't know whether some shadow of the sad event which was coming so shortly was conveyed to the great audience as they gazed on the august face of their beloved monarch, but the cheering that night was far greater than usual. Again and again the standing throng cheered King Edward and I saw a gratified smile pass over his kindly face, paler than usual that night.

Little did that great assembly realise the anguish their smiling Monarch was even then enduring!

A few days later England awoke to find itself bereaved. The universally-beloved King Edward the Seventh was dead!

CHAPTER II

HOW KING EDWARD WAS EXPLOITED

FROM a detective's point of view, our present King George is easy to keep under observation. Some of my most vivid recollections of him are of guarding him as he rode in Rotten Row.

Although we did not make ourselves known to those whom it was our duty to guard, unless circumstances made it policy so to do, yet an observant man like our King very soon got to know us by repeatedly seeing our faces near at hand and watching our discreet movements in the offing, ready for any emergency.

In connection with this I can tell a rather disconcerting story. The late King Edward prided himself upon his excellent memory for faces. He had beyond doubt a positively uncanny gift of picking out people whom he had seen before, and reminding them of the circumstances. Also he was exceedingly quick to arrive at a conclusion and, having made up his mind about a thing, there the matter ended so far as he was concerned. Once, I can assure you, he made a very serious mistake, and the incident was not without its humour.

There suddenly appeared upon the scene, whenever the King moved about, a rather tall, well-dressed, aquiline-featured man. Invariably he got as near to the Royal carriage as he could and I saw the King glance at him more than once, though he never acknowledged him. We made enquiries and he was traced to a first-class West-end hotel. His name was Y——, and he was an American citizen.

In view of the fact that he seemed to take a strangely keen interest in the movements of the King, he was specially watched, and enquiries regarding him were intensified, but apparently there was nothing wrong. He seemed to be a travelling American, obviously wealthy. He had some interests in Morocco, it was gathered, and was floating some sort of a syndicate to exploit them.

One morning I saw him accompanied by two other gentlemen, and my suspicions were practically allayed, for

one was a man whose name is still regarded in two hemispheres as one of the greatest living financiers. This seemed to set the seal of the utmost respectability on the debonair Mr. Y—. On this particular morning he pushed nearer the Royal carriage than usual, then, just as it appeared, made a movement side-ways and glanced at the crowd in very much the same manner that one of us would have done had we been stationed at that point. The King had evidently become used to seeing him, and, taking him for one of us, gave him a nod and a smile, leaned forward slightly and said "Good morning" as the carriage passed. The stranger promptly doffed his hat and smiled back, then pronounced the astounding greeting :

"Good morning!" The carriage had passed and it is very doubtful if the King heard the words, but *I* heard them all right and reported the matter. We all laughed about it, taking it for a piece of American sturdy democracy according to tradition ; but it had a more sinister significance a few weeks later.

A complaint was made that two wealthy Americans had been made the victim of a peculiarly audacious confidence trick when in London. The name of one was never divulged, but from certain circumstances arising at the time, I had no difficulty in identifying the great international financier whom I had seen with Mr. Y— when the latter had so informally responded to King Edward's greeting.

The name of the other was given. He was a Mr. Z— of Philadelphia. He had met Y— at the West-end hotel where they both had stayed and Y— had put up a certain proposition to float a syndicate to promote his Moroccan interests.

Many plans of mines and prospective railways were shown and glowing reports from engineers had been tabled in due course. Then came Y—'s crowning move. The country was unsettled, and all commercial ventures in Morocco were very risky. What was wanted were well-guaranteed concessions, and the ingenious Y— had a remedy, even for that.

He had produced a quantity of alleged "secret correspondence" between the Sultan of Morocco and the British

Foreign Office. This correspondence purported to show a tentative arrangement for the development of the country of the Sultan under British control. This was so startling that it altered the face of all American and French interests in Morocco. Obviously, anyone getting in on the ground floor, as it were, before the information became generally known, would make a fortune—but what was the guarantee that the negotiations would come to anything?

Again Y— had been more than equal to the occasion. He had a letter from the King—*his friend*, guaranteeing that he would use his great personal influence to see that Britain undertook the suggested control. The letters were couched in such familiar language between Y— and the King that the two men with whom he was dealing could scarcely believe the evidence of their own eyes. He evidently saw the doubt that existed so he arranged for them a little demonstration.

With amazing audacity and ingenuity he deliberately set himself to copy a *shadowing detective*. Evidently he knew the methods. He was so successful that the result was what we have seen; he got his cheery regal "Good morning" and then he replied "Good morning!"

The result had been all that he could have possibly desired. A man whom the King could pick out in a crowd and speak to, and who could reply familiarly as he had done, was obviously a man who could claim the King's friendship. All remaining suspicions were disarmed and the two American financiers parted with their cheques jointly for fifty thousand pounds to "hold down" the syndicate until full arrangements could be made. Mr. Y— cashed his cheque and following the excellent advice given in the Book of Proverbs that "A wise man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself," made himself so scarce that neither the police of this country nor America ever heard of him from that day to this—but *I heard of him again!*

My last and only meeting with Mr. Y— since then was during the War when I was in the Secret Service at Boulogne. We had a visit from a man who had astounded the secret service of France, America and ourselves by his audacity and brilliance. He had actually got into the household of a German general attached to the Great Headquarters Staff and had obtained information of unparalleled value. He came to us for an interview to give us certain important information. I shall never forget my astonishment and

amusement when the man was announced and Mr. Y— walked in. He did not know me. It is very doubtful if he had ever seen me. I said no word about my knowledge in the presence of a third party, for, after all, the man had performed such tremendous services to the Allied cause that the question of his prosecution would have been absurd. Neither England nor America would have tolerated the suggestion.

I waited until we were alone, then, as we went into a café I said jokingly to him:

"Well, Mr. Y—, how is your syndicate getting on in Morocco?"

"Hell!" he replied, and for a moment was at a loss for further words. "Say—what do you know about that, boy?"

"Almost everything there is to know. I was there when you claimed the King!" I could not help grinning as I watched his chagrin. Of course I gave him my assurance that the matter was dead so far as I was concerned and we parted good friends. Again I could not help smiling when I saw announced later that the French, American, and Belgian Governments had all marked their appreciation of his great services!

But to return to the subject of guarding Kings. I well remember an exciting experience with the ex-Kaiser in London.

As will be remembered the ex-Kaiser came over *via* Harwich for the funeral of the late King Edward, and I was one of the officers specially detached to guard him. Greater importance was attached to his surveillance than to that of any other visiting monarch because already feeling was becoming strong between the two countries. The Yellow Press of both countries were preaching hatred and stirring up thoughts of war. During this visit, I thought, by the Kaiser's general bearing and by his very human expressions of grief at the catafalque of his dead uncle, that he tried to make a definite contribution to the forces of peace. I may have been mistaken, and probably it will be argued that it was supreme hypocrisy on his part, but near him as I was I could not help but get a certain impression, and that impression has remained with me. Whatever happened to change him in 1914 I am firmly convinced that in 1911 the Kaiser stood for friendship with this country.

Well, the long-drawn-out arrangements at last came to an

end, the Royal funeral was over and the ex-Kaiser made ready to depart. He travelled by special Royal train from Liverpool Street Station to Harwich where the *Hohenzollern*, his private yacht, was lying. Truly of all monarchs of his day Wilhelm looked the part in a strangely striking manner. I can picture him now as I saw him standing there on the platform chatting to the assembled group of great personages who had come to see him off. There was an arrogance in his bearing that sometimes melted into a very human smile. He had a most animated face and when he smiled his whole face lit up.

The train was due to depart, but no one dared tell the Kaiser that he was keeping the train waiting. He chatted on for a few minutes, then turned to an equerry, who pointed to the station clock. The Kaiser gave a look, nodded, then put out his hand and began to say farewell to his friends.

It was then that the incident happened. A man suddenly pushed his way through the crowd and with great agility leapt a barrier and made straight for the Kaiser. An officer standing between him and myself grabbed him and pulled him back. The little crowd about the Kaiser looked in amazement at the scuffle that occurred before he could be pulled out of the way, but the Kaiser was the least troubled of the lot. As soon as he saw the man rush he slightly turned towards him and by a movement that seemed to be involuntary he gripped a stick which he held.

"Come on—I'm ready for you!" was the look on the Kaiser's face. I always remembered that absolutely fearless, slightly excited look and marked it up to the Kaiser for righteousness. Certainly I remembered it more than ever when I read that the Kaiser had deserted his armies in the field and fled to Holland. I have a little suspicion at the back of my mind that, when the full history of the War is ultimately written in proper perspective, it will be found that the Kaiser personally had less to do with the starting of it than has been assumed and that he departed at the end in response to representations made to him that he was serving his country better by doing so. The man who stood before me at Liverpool Street might have been a dangerous autocrat; pride might have been his dominant factor, but—*he was no coward.*

Men are betrayed by emergencies—the Kaiser was ready. The man was searched but had no weapons about him and

when he calmed down he said that he had merely wanted to pay his respects to the Kaiser, as he was a German. In his pocket he had a large piece of iron-ore. It is just possible he was going to use the sample on the Kaiser. He was allowed to go. What might have been the course of European history if that man had rushed through unprevented?

About this time, or very shortly afterwards, I remember the ex-Crown Prince came over on one of his very unofficial visits to London. When high personages were travelling practically incognito it was still the duty of the department to keep vigilance, because malcontents have an amazing way of finding out the movements of Royalty. Generally speaking this is not difficult, for Kings and Princes do not, as a rule, move about outside certain well-defined limits. The King of Spain, for instance, though most democratic of monarchs, is quite easy to guard. He will stroll along Piccadilly, Bond Street, take lunch, visit his tailors, buy a few ties, call at a jeweller's, visit a personal friend and return to his hotel. He is never out of one's sight for a second.

A very different pair of shoes is His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. I believe he takes a positive delight in throwing his shadows off the scent. But, far worse was the German Crown Prince! He was simply diabolical in his skill. He picked out the detectives shadowing him in very quick time; then, before he began his programme, he religiously got rid of his escort.

I recall that two of us shadowed him one day when he made three distinct attempts to throw us off. He drove to the Bank of England. Quick as lightning, knowing that there were two doors, I left my friend at the one by which he entered and dodged round to the other—just in time. The Crown Prince had walked straight through the Bank—in at one door and out at the other. He had a friend with him upon that occasion, a Baron whose name I forget. My friend was left behind, of course, and I followed alone. Next he went to Charing Cross Station, on the Embankment, dodged through with his friend and took another taxi. I still kept him in view.

Then he played an exceptionally good card. He drove to Oxford Circus Station and booked tickets for himself and his friend and descended to the trains. I followed. He waited until the train had stood a second or so, then he and his friend stepped in. I got into the coach behind. The doors clanged

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and just then the Prince and his friend darted up and just got through the doors as the train began to move. I jumped to the door of my carriage but it was closed and the conductor had his back to me. I was a prisoner to the next station. I looked along the platform as the train gathered speed and there, an amused grin on his face, was the ex-Crown Prince !

But I knew my man and had a good idea where to pick him up again. I got out at the next stop which was Tottenham Court Road and drove to the Café Royal. There in the Brasserie were our two friends.

CHAPTER III

THE "WILD WOMEN"

MY earliest days in the Special Department were contemporary with the growing Suffragist agitation and I have some exceedingly lively memories of my battles with some of those doughty Amazons whilst I was protecting the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lloyd George.

Of course all Ministers were protected at the time but, for some reason which I could never understand, it was against Mr. Lloyd George that the main attack was directed. I know at the time I had a theory that although the leaders of the feminist movement were undoubtedly very honest women and men, there certainly was a large number of the political enemies of the outspoken Chancellor who used the movement as a whip with which to lash him.

In addition to this, of course, there is no doubt that a tremendous number of young girls hailed with delight the opportunity of having a perpetual rag; but I can assure you it was no fun for me.

As the agitation developed and the attacks became more and more frequent, so also our preventive arrangements became more highly organised until the time ultimately came when we were able to account for almost every person in a hall with a seating capacity of thousands, where a Minister was due to speak.

I shall never forget one meeting held in the Pavilion in the Mile End Road. The hall was simply packed, but detectives were at every door and reports filtered through that, so far as anybody could possibly guarantee, the meeting was clear of any undesirable elements. The crush was simply terrific. I had a frightful struggle in getting Mr. Lloyd George pushed through the crowd to the stage door and on to the stage. The Chancellor's eyes sparkled, for he loved tremendous crowds and the spice of danger which undoubtedly existed in those days seemed to add zest to his mercurial personality. He positively revelled in the abuse and the opprobrium which were directed at him.

That afternoon he was accompanied by Mrs. Lloyd George, the late Rt. Hon. C. F. G. Masterman, the late Master of Elibank, and the Attorney-General, Sir Rufus Isaacs, as he

was then. The Chairman opened the meeting and before long the great Statesman was on his feet addressing the meeting. He was greeted with round after round of applause and some minutes elapsed before he could make a start. Then, in response to the electric atmosphere of the great crowd, preponderantly sympathetic, the Chancellor proceeded, great periods of rhetoric following simple expressions that might have gone to the hearts of children. Undoubtedly Mr. Lloyd George is a "spellbinder" if ever there was one.

For a while, I suppose, I was as carried away by him as were all others; then I remembered my job and set about playing a pair of binoculars over the rows and rows of faces, from the wings. At last I gave a start. There was a man there who undoubtedly belonged to the men's section of the Women's Suffrage Movement. I could not possibly get near him, but I at once asked a colleague to get as near to him as possible and requested him to let two stewards work their way to his side. The speech was perhaps half-over when our friend of the men's section of the Suffragette Movement began to perform. He lifted a very fair-sized bag of pepper and made ready to hurl it at the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Just as his arm was raised it was seized by the stewards who had reached him, and the attempt was foiled. They hurried him out of the meeting but not before some of the enthusiastic supporters of Mr. Lloyd George who had been near enough to see the incident, put a few marks on him.

That was the failure, as a rule, of the men's section of the Suffragette Movement. Whenever these men came into contact with the police the public invariably took the side of the police, but it was a very different matter where the girls were concerned. After some most diabolical outrage, when it has been necessary for the police to take a dozen of them into custody, I have seen a pretty little thing shamelessly exploiting the feminine frailty she denied in her speeches as her rightful heritage, utter a pathetic cry for help, and men of all types would glower at the police and sometimes actually obstruct the movements of the officers and effect the rescue of the girls. It is noteworthy that the belligerent old ladies did not get the same support when they fell foul of the authorities!

Upon another occasion I remember accompanying Mr.

Lloyd George and Mr. Masterman, who was nearly always at the side of Mr. Lloyd George in those days, and Mr. Whitehouse, M.P. who at that time acted as Mr. Lloyd George's Parliamentary Private Secretary. The car containing the Ministers took a circuitous route to reach the London Opera House where I think Mr. Lloyd George was to address a Mass Meeting on National Insurance.

At a crossing there was a slight halt and by the side of the road there was what seemed to be an ordinary coster's barrow. Just as the car stopped two "costers" standing by the barrow went into action with a vengeance. A huge turnip was hurled through the closed window, then, through the breach, was poured a perfect fusilade of soft and over-ripe fruit, the very reverse of the "rare and refreshing," variety. We arrested the "costers" as soon as possible and of course they turned out to be a couple of girls who cheerfully sang themselves through the police court proceedings and went with glad hearts to join their colleagues in Holloway Gaol. I remember that when I reached the car, fearful that some broken glass had cut the Chancellor, I found that he was unhurt. Mr. Lloyd George sat with unabashed amusement watching his less fortunate friends, and aiding them by the loan of gloves and handkerchief. He had passed through the fires unscathed!

Again I could see the cloven hoof of political enemies even here, for amongst the missiles which were taken from the car was a damaged "mangold wurzel"!

An amusing incident occurred when the Chancellor went to Dundee and, I think, Aberdeen, to speak, where very special precautions were taken. Up to that time the Scottish police had not had so much trouble as we had and they were rather unprepared. Some members of the Yard staff co-operated with the Scottish police to make the meetings safe. The passengers on the train on which the Chancellor travelled were carefully scrutinised and, though eight known members of the Suffragette Movement were there, certain steps were taken to make them as harmless as possible.

They attempted to get into two first-class compartments near the Chancellor's reserved compartment but in co-operation with the railway authorities we informed them there was only one seat vacant wherever they went, so ultimately, though they protested and talked of legal proceedings against



MR. LLOYD GEORGE, THEN CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, WITH HIS DAUGHTER MEGAN
AND THE LATE MR. C. F. G. MASTERMAN, IN 1910, FOLLOWED BY THE AUTHOR

the railway company, when the train actually drew out of King's Cross it carried eight resentful Suffragettes sitting in different parts of the train, all their powder having got wet, so to speak.

At every station along the route at which the train called, detectives saw to it that they did not get together and the Chancellor was spirited away to his hotel at Edinburgh without a single incident. We were jubilant. The journey to Dundee, however, was not so successful. We had information that upon the train following that of the Chancellor was a whole bevy of wild women—two hundred—and we expected some trouble; nevertheless we guarded Mr. Lloyd George well and hurried him along the wrong side of the train and "entrained" him at the very last minute. There was a rush of women from all parts of the station to reach his compartment when they saw him appear, but it was too late. Mr. Lloyd George impishly lowered his window as the train glided out and waved them a cheery "Farewell." During the journey there was a concerted rush along the corridor but we were prepared for that, and that also was defeated.

Tremendous enthusiasm and many interruptions marked the meeting at Dundee, I remember. Free fights took place all over the hall between "those against" and Mr. Lloyd George's "supporters." The Sheriff of the City said he hadn't seen the like except on "Hogmanay"!

Now we had definite information that concerted effort was going to be made to reach the Chancellor of the Exchequer on his return and we accordingly took steps to frustrate it. One of our officers was detached to accompany a man who was specially made up to resemble Mr. Lloyd George, and who was to travel by the train the Chancellor was advertised as travelling by. When he was safely entrained the idea was to rush Mr. Lloyd George across to the other station and get him on a train at about the same time. The arrangement went through without a hitch. Unfortunately for the little chap who was made up as Mr. Lloyd George his resemblance was altogether too striking to be healthy for him. Just as the train was starting there came a wild rush of girls and old ladies from every conceivable part of the station. They came across lines, they dismounted from empty standing coaches, they climbed up the off sides of platforms and swarmed up the sides of the train like a lot of monkeys. They

overbore the guard of police and station staff. They beat the detectives with their umbrellas. It was pandemonium. Hoping to get rid of most of them the station-master ordered the train to start, and it did, but not before twenty or thirty hefty Amazons entered the coach where "Mr. Lloyd George" and his guard were sitting.

They overcame all resistance and got to the actual compartment.

"You've been sold!" announced the detective. "This isn't Mr. Lloyd George at all——"

It was long before they would listen to the smiling representations of the detective who then removed a wig and false moustache from "Mr. Lloyd George."

During this time of course great care was taken to prevent possible outrages in the House of Commons itself. Great care was taken in searching the whole of the buildings at Westminster and yet, as is well-known, the Suffragettes got through all the precautionary measures and afforded several striking spectacles. I used to sit night after night in the Special Gallery watching Mr. Lloyd George and I remember one occasion when we thought the worst had happened. It must be remembered that as outrages developed, and assaults led to arson, destruction of valuable property, the disorganisation of the postal services through the destruction of pillar boxes, and that sort of thing, it was considered quite on the cards that in the natural evolution of the movement, some fanatic would cap the performances of all her colleagues by planting a bomb in the "House" or something of that sort.

Well, I saw the woman who managed to get through the centre lobby and attempted to address the "House" from the bar. She was arrested. Then there was another woman who chained herself to the grille, which was then before the women's gallery, and it took us two hours to file through the chains to remove her, during all of which time she yelled and shouted! All this was over and then came the incident which startled everybody. There was a full chamber. I remember that on the Treasury Bench sat the venerable Premier, Mr. Asquith; next him Mr. Churchill; further along Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Runciman and Mr. McKenna. Next to the Premier on the other side was the Lord Advocate.

The time came when the Ministry had to reply to the

debate and all eyes were turned to the Ministerial Bench, when a man rose in the public gallery, poised a round object in his hand and, shouting something, flung it at the Prime Minister: My heart was in my mouth. Here was the moment at last. The object just missed Mr. Asquith, Mr. Churchill ducked and it caught the Lord Advocate neatly on the side of the face bursting instantly—and covering him with—FLOUR! I shall never forget the relief I experienced when I saw it was no worse; but this was quite bad enough. It showed that even the House of Commons itself was not to be immune from flying missiles. It was a bag of flour to-day; what would it be to-morrow?

The man was arrested at once and of course he was proved to be a member of the men's section of the Suffragette Movement.

In connection with this incident I had a little side light upon the attitude of mind of two great men. It was told to me by someone in a secretarial capacity. Mr. Lloyd George was sitting on the second Ministerial Bench immediately behind Mr. Asquith and Mr. Churchill. He told my informant that after the incident Mr. Churchill turned to Mr. Asquith and said:

"You know we'll have to have a grille erected here above our heads!"

"Nonsense!" replied the imperturbable Minister. "If we did that we'd make ourselves look ridiculous to the whole of Europe!"

"Not half so ridiculous," rejoined Mr. Winston Churchill, "as we would look one second after a bomb had burst down here!"

I must not close this chapter on the Suffragette Movement without relating a particular episode which was not without its humorous side.

A number of the wild women went to Glasgow and after holding a series of meetings set fire to and burnt to the ground a historic Scottish mansion just outside the city. Of course they were arrested and brought before the Baillies. The authorities took a lenient course. The old Baillie who presided read them a homily upon their wickedness and ordered them to be bound over. The women laughed the proposal to scorn! They would not enter into any recognisances or do anything. They simply defied the Bench, so they were

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committed for trial, and transferred to Duke Street Gaol. Before they came for trial all their sympathisers and friends came round and held meetings outside the gaol walls.

At last the trial opened and the dignified and austere Lord Salversen, a Judge of the High Court of Session presided. He sat wearing his gorgeous robes, the embodiment of the majesty and dignity of the Law. He heard the evidence and began to charge the jury. He dealt with proper severity with the atrocious conduct of people who destroyed property, etc., etc., when suddenly from all over the court came a shower of apples ! The learned judge looked a pathetic figure as he sat there with his wig off, but all he could do was—dodge !

The accompanying officials similarly suffered as did the police who had to extricate the Judge from his predicament. Of course a great many more arrests were made, but the more arrested the stronger grew the movement and it is difficult to know what would have happened had not the War intervened and directed the activities of the Amazons into more admirable channels.

Again I repeat that there was a considerable undercurrent of political bias in the movement, and if you had to examine the lists of Fascist women's membership to-day, I think you would find a number of names there which were familiar in the days of the great Suffragette trouble.

CHAPTER IV

A MADMAN IN DOWNING STREET

VARIED and numerous indeed were my duties while in the "Special" Political Branch.

Being in the vicinity of Downing Street day after day for many months, I naturally got to know many people—photographers, "star" men and reporters from the various newspapers and press agencies, couriers of the Foreign Office, King's messengers, and many other interesting and important people.

There are always sight-seers in Downing Street. They come from all over the United Kingdom and other parts of the world to see the official residences of the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

To us Londoners who pass by, it is not the same as to many of these people, and the snapshots that are taken must, in the aggregate, total many thousands per year.

As I have mentioned, the Cabinet Minister whom one is shadowing and protecting knows one, naturally, as do those of his household and entourage.

Mrs. Lloyd George was always exceedingly nice to me, as also was Mrs. Asquith, and I recall vividly, among others, Miss Elizabeth (now Princess Bibesco) and Master Anthony, also Miss Megan Lloyd George, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Winston Churchill, Sir Rufus Isaacs, Lord Birkenhead and the late Lord Murray.

All these eminent people I saw very nearly every day, and upon whatever occasion I had to speak to them, they were, one and all, the personification of courtesy.

I recall a peculiar visitor in the early summer of 1911 to No. 11 Downing Street. It was Sunday, and the street was empty. Generally, my superior officer would come on from the Yard to 11 Downing Street. On this particular occasion he had gone straight in to get the itinerary of the Chancellor's movements from Mr. Bury, who was Mr. Lloyd George's special equerry. Satisfying myself that my superior, the late Sergeant T. Nalty, was in the official residence, I went outside to have a look round for suffragettes.

At that time I used to take up my station from underneath the Foreign Office main entrance, where I could watch without being observed.

There is always a uniformed constable on duty in the vicinity, and it was generally my custom to have a chat with him on sundry little matters. In fact, this constable was a particular "crony" of mine, and had a predilection for the politics of Mr. Lloyd George, whom he never failed to discuss.

"There's a funny sort of chap who's been up here twice to-day," he said, "says he wants to see Lloyd George."

Later in the afternoon he beckoned me over from No. 11 Downing Street as I looked from the hall window. I passed over and walked under the arch, he leisurely following.

"There's that chap back again," he announced, and indicated a man who was gazing intently at the official residence. In fact, he was the only person in the deserted street at the moment.

I casually walked over to him, and, in a nice way, asked if he wished to see the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

"Yes, I do!" he replied, "very urgently!"

"Have you an appointment with him?" I asked.

"No, but I know he will see me," he answered.

"Oh, and what is your name?" I enquired.

At that he looked at me very curiously, and I saw that I was speaking to a madman. He was a big man, with well-cut features, nicely dressed, and spoke with a cultured accent.

"Just a moment, I'll make an enquiry for you," I said, and, ringing the bell, was admitted by the equerry. Seeing my superior in the hall, I told him, and he immediately answered "Right, we'll run the rule over him!" We both went out together.

"This is the Chancellor's secretary," I said by way of introduction.

"Oh, is it?" he asked threateningly, and, with that, he started cursing my superior officer, Sergeant Tom Nalty.

"What about my message from Heaven?" he raved.

"Where's Lloyd George? I'm going to see Lloyd George!"

He went on in this incoherent way until I seized hold of his arm, and, with the assistance of the constable, took him to Cannon Row Police Station.

He was quite mad. He had a short piece of gas barrel on him and a knuckle-duster. He had escaped from a private asylum, and only with the greatest difficulty was he got back again.

Such are the people who might be inclined to assault or assassinate eminent public servants. I mention this incident to give an idea of the awkward possibilities of the unforeseen, especially from the point of view of the detective who is responsible.

I was also on duty in the vestibule of Gatti's Restaurant in the Strand on that memorable evening when an outrageous attempt was made to assault the Chancellor with a whip. It was my duty to scrutinise every person entering the restaurant, however harmless they might appear, for the Suffragette movement at that time had a wonderfully smart secret service of their own.

I am glad to say that I was able to recognise at once one of the more daring of the suffragists—that is, of the men's section of the movement. I quickly signalled to my superior, the late Inspector Randall, who was close to Mr. Lloyd George's table. This officer acted at once, with the result that he was able to seize the misguided man who had attempted to slash the statesman with a dog whip.

It may be remembered that Mr. Winston Churchill was not so fortunate on a similar occasion, he being assaulted by two women in the dining car coming up from the Midlands.

During my tour of special duty at the port of Newhaven, an occurrence took place which, for peculiarity of circumstances, is well worth recording and happened one night prior to the departure of the s.s. *Arundel* from Newhaven for the Continent.

I had strolled into the telegraph office some ten minutes before the arrival of the boat train from London, and had been informed there were no telegrams for me. I went on board, and, having made sure from a police point of view that all was in order, awaited the arrival of passengers.

Presently the siren sounded, and the train slowly steamed into the harbour station, while I took my customary place somewhere in the neighbourhood at the foot of the gangway.

All passengers were on board, and the last to embark was a young, well-dressed man. He, owing to the warning hoot of the steamer's siren, was talking to a porter and I heard him say, "Now look after her and I'll call upon you when I come back," and as he said the words he handed the porter a brown Pomeranian dog.

I attached no importance to such an incident. There are

always happenings at ports, and as the boat swung out from the quayside to sea I leisurely walked into the telegraph office.

"Here's something for you," said the official, "I'm taking it off now." And with that he passed me the telegram just received. It was from Headquarters, Scotland Yard, and read as follows :

"Stop and detain X——."* Then came the description, but the ominous words were :

"Left by boat train from Victoria, carrying a brown Pomeranian dog, with the word 'Dolly' inscribed on collar."

"Why," I said, "that's the man I saw hand that dog to the porter just now. Still, it's not my fault the wires arrived too late."

Presently, the machine started ticking again and the clerk said : "Here's another for you," and with set face he recorded the message, which ran :

"Re X—— arrest for murder of Dolly W—— known as 'Bristol Dolly,' wire and repeat immediate action."

It did not take me long to find the porter, who, it appeared, was asked to look after the dog until the wanted man should return.

There was no doubt about it.° The dog bore the name of Dolly and the man had given the porter his name as A——. Within a very short space of time the man was arrested by the French police in Paris and brought back for trial.

It would appear that he had been cohabiting with a woman named Dolly W——, or Bristol Dolly as she was better known.

They had quarrelled in their flat and the man, in a fit of ungovernable temper, had seized the woman by the throat. Suddenly he realised that he had strangled her, and, with the terrible realisation of the consequence, there and then decided upon flight.

That he was fond of her was demonstrated by his action at the subsequent trial, because the dead woman's dog was, he said, the last thing he could ever have which they both loved.

The case was reduced to manslaughter under great provocation and he was acquitted.

* As this man was acquitted, it seems fairer not to give his name.

CHAPTER V

DID "PETER THE PAINTER" ESCAPE

ALL movements which permit of the use of illegal and anti-social methods to assist in achieving a desired end, suffer from two prime disabilities: they not only attract to their ranks the hysterical and the fanatical elements which normally chafe beneath the restrictions of convention, but, in a more serious way, they attract criminals who represent the reverse of the often high-minded organisers of the movements.

During my years in the Special Department at Scotland Yard, I saw this fact illustrated over and over again.

It was so with the Suffragette Movement, and with the gatherings of foreign anarchists in London, whose activities it was part of my duty to observe. Again, at a later date, was it so in connection with the Irish trouble; and so it is to-day with the Communists.

Definitely criminal elements creep in and use the movements as tools to bring about their desired ends.

In actual practice there is little difference between the hysterical fanatic and the definitely criminal. Indeed, of the two evils, the criminal is often the lesser, because, as a rule, he does not resort to violence and murder where such extreme measures can be avoided. I propose to illustrate here two examples of the activities of these inevitable excrescences on the bodies of disaffected movements.

First I will take the hysterical—the fanatical.

When the Suffragette movement was at its height there appeared two women who were for a long time the very life and soul of the militant section. These women lived at Hampstead, and, in days when wild threats were frequent, they easily put in the shade all the other women, wild as they were, by their bloodthirsty demands and mad preachings of hate and even murder against the statesmen who were responsible, in their view, for withholding the vote from the "fair" sex.

It was on the direct inspiration of these two women that a member of the militant section laid herself down before the King's horse at Tattenham Corner at Epsom in the never-to-be-forgotten Derby of 1913.

These women inspired church-burnings, the firing of

pillar-boxes and endless outrages, not the least being, of course, the attack upon Mr. Winston Churchill with a horse-whip.

For some considerable time the whole women's movement thrilled with excited joy at two such acquisitions, but after a while a reaction set in. If they were welding together the unscrupulous militant section they were alienating a vastly more important majority of women who were becoming disgusted and ashamed of the unspeakable outrages committed, in the name of women. So the time came when they were actually discouraged from headquarters, greatly to their chagrin. They pretended to bow their heads meekly to the decision of the leaders and ostensibly changed their methods—but it was only an ostensible change.

By means at the disposal of the Special Department a complete surveillance is constantly maintained upon all who are suspected of being disaffected against the State or the Law or any individual statesman or dignitary. The degree of surveillance differs according to the peculiar demands of each case, of course, but in the case of these two women it was absolutely complete.

Their letters were opened secretly, sealed up again and reposted after delay. Their every movement was noted and checked. Every telephone call they had was "tapped." Even their known friends and acquaintances were continually observed and it is well that this observation, extreme and intensive as it was, did not stop with their apparent cessation of hostilities.

It was ascertained that they took an amazing interest in Mr. and Mrs. Asquith, and their family. By means at the authorities' disposal it was found that when they met daily, which they did at a little café at Hampstead, almost their whole conversation was the comparing of notes of the movements of the Premier, the arrangements of his household and a thousand and one small and apparently unimportant facts about the *ménage* at 10 Downing Street. It was discovered that they had even succeeded in getting a woman who had been in their employment in to the Prime Minister's household as an outside help and by means of her they were able to get a great deal of intimate information about the domestic arrangements. This strange business went on for several months. Openly they were submissive to the

demaunds of their headquarters, yet they still breathed fire and slaughter in their letters. The watch was maintained and daily they met at the tea-shop and daily were in touch with the woman they had got into the Premier's household.

Then a colleague of mine made a dramatic discovery. He found that one of the ladies had very cunningly and by devious circuitous routes purchased a quantity of poison. The information was confusing and indirect, but at last the authorities had sufficient to go upon and raided the house of the woman who had made the purchase. A cake was found which, upon analysis, was shown to contain a quantity of poison quite sufficient to prove fatal to anyone who ate a small slice!

In a locked box was discovered a great number of newspaper cuttings dealing with poisoning crimes, including that of Dr. Lamson, the medical man who poisoned his brother at Wimbledon by means of aconite concealed in a Dundee cake.

Very prompt but discreet action was taken. No attempt was made to proceed publicly. To do so might have had the very worst possible effect. Many grotesque murders have been committed by unhealthy suggestion in the murderer's mind. It is a well-known axiom in criminal investigation, especially in political crime, that an unfinished crime is an automatic challenge to other fanatics!

In those days also the Prime Minister was over-burdened with cares. The Irish trouble was boiling up to a dangerous proximity to civil war and those behind the scenes knew that the German menace was approaching a crisis. So very wise action was taken with the two fanatical women. One was advised to go abroad. The method of "advice" left nothing to be desired in ensuring that the "advice" would be followed! The other was certified and placed in a lunatic asylum.

Just before I leave this subject I would make the following observation. It is a difficult subject to write about, but it is so important and so true that I must mention it. Since the war there has been a marked increase of women who adopt a belligerently bachelor mode of life—in a word, men-haters. This phenomenon is ascribed to the war and to the rapid emancipation of women, with their greater horizon in the business and professional worlds. It is widely considered a passing expression of "independence."

In my humble opinion it is in great part the result of the neurotic, pernicious doctrine of hate of all things masculine which was preached by a few fanatical women in the years just before the war. It is a harvest of tares!

Now to deal with the definitely criminal associate of subversive and secret movements. The best example of this type I can think of is Peter the Painter.

The siege of Sidney Street on January 3rd, 1911, is surely ensured of immortal memory. Had we not the spectacle of the Home Secretary, as Mr. Winston Churchill was then, coming down himself and directing operations against the house in which Peter the Painter, Vogel, Svaars and Max had barricaded themselves?

I, personally, am firmly convinced that Peter the Painter never did barricade himself in the house, but that the others did. Peter the Painter was an anarchist right enough, but he was a criminal first, last, and all the time. His anarchy was used entirely as a cloak to ensure certain support of a great underground organisation for the carrying out of his nefarious plots.

Over and over again Peter the Painter was the directing figure in burglaries and various other outrages in the East End. Evidence was forthcoming of his shadowy figure behind many a warehouse robbery, and his immunity was guaranteed by the unswerving loyalty of his fellows. Why?

For the simple reason that Peter the Painter never organised a burglary or other robbery without emphasising to his comrades a political angle to the proposed scheme. This man must be robbed because he is a sympathiser with a certain oppressive government. Another man because he assisted in the betrayal of Comrade So-and-So long ago, and so on *ad infinitum*. Peter the Painter was never without an excellent reason for every proposed crime. Nor, for that matter, would he have had much difficulty in convincing his associates. As a matter of fact there was a considerable degree of criminal element always in the Anarchist movement. Extreme poverty and conscious inferiority are always forerunners of crime.

The story of the Sidney Street siege has been too often told to need anything but passing mention here.

A jeweller's shop in Houndsditch—Harris's—was entered, and the thieves, disturbed, made their escape as far as a house

in Sidney Street where their retreat was cut off and there they stood at bay. Armed with guns and revolvers they kept a steady fire on the besieging forces which had to be ridiculously increased. As a matter of fact the whole affair developed on such lines as to render us a spectacle in the eyes of the Continent.

Half a dozen armed detectives and a fire-engine could have dealt with the matter perfectly easily and probably arrested them alive as soon as darkness fell. However, history will ever tell of the great "siege" and, of course, the end was that the place became ignited and, after the flames died down, the charred remains of Svaars and Vogel were discovered, but of Peter the Painter there was no trace at all nor ever has been from that day to this.

Wild stories have been told of his return to Russia, of how he became a bloodthirsty executioner of the Soviet—and a thousand and one stories, all of which rest on nothing beyond the curious legend which has been built round every famous criminal from Cain to Crippen.

Peter the Painter would not have been more *persona grata* with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics than he was with the Czar's government. He was one of the "rogue rats" of society, and, just as a "rogue rat" is sooner or later the object of the concentrated rage and vengeance of the whole colony of rats, so Peter the Painter would sooner or later have found himself driven out of any society. He was simply a born criminal.

He never stayed to fight in that Sidney Street house. Driven into a corner he might have fought to the death, but he would have to be perfectly certain first that there was no easier way of escape.

As nearly as anything in this life can be certain, I will tell you what happened to Peter the Painter, and I am writing in this matter from information which has never been fully published.

During the few weeks immediately subsequent to the Sidney Street affair I was chiefly engaged in the East End amongst Russians, Poles, Lithuanians and various other races amongst whom at that time was a great undercurrent of anarchism, and I had unique opportunities for tracing some parts of the curious trail of Peter the Painter. There are spies in every organisation, traitors in every camp. If this

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were not so society could not stand. It is a strange paradox, but absolutely true, that the occasional stone of evil is necessary to the strengthening and maintaining of the general fabric of good! So amongst the associates of Peter the Painter there were men who, for a price, were willing to tell and prove certain things.

What happened is probably that Peter the Painter escaped before his associates found themselves hemmed in and got to the house of friends where he lay low until the hue and cry had considerably died down; then he escaped to France.

Now just note this series of coincidences.

On the 21st of December, 1911, two bank managers in France were shot and robbed by alleged "motor bandits." The French police worked with frenzied activity to run to earth the desperate criminals who had challenged the very safety of the Paris streets. They combed out the whole of the Paris underworld, their spies were active in every apache haunt of Montmartre and their female spies in every resort of women of the underworld!

Although they had no success for a time, ultimately they found an abandoned car near Dieppe which had been used by the criminals. Then the French police propounded the convenient theory that the outrage had been committed by English crooks who had come across specially for the purpose, done their work and gone back again across the Channel. Of course we had to co-operate with them and make all the investigations possible in London and this country generally. The theory was obviously weak. It was no proof to say that the thieves were returning by the way they had entered. It merely indicated a way of possible escape but it served, I suppose, to excuse the French police their lack of success.

Then a whole series of most atrocious crimes were reported, their details unprintable, their commission only possible by men lost to all sense of humanity.

Public panic was the only expression which can be used to describe the attitude of the French people towards these crimes. Newspapers filled their sheets with accounts of them and they made attacks upon their impotent police.

M. Lupine, Chief of Police, redoubled his efforts and at last it was found that a man called Julius Bonnot was concerned. After a long search the police ran him and an associate named Dubois to earth in a garage at Choisy le Roi. There they were

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surrounded by a great force of military, police and detectives, all acting under the personal direction of M. Lupine and a very similar state of affairs to our pantomime in Sidney Street developed. At last, after bursts of firing from both sides and the arrival of artillery, the building caught fire and from the ashes were taken two dead men.

It is noticeable that the same desperate methods were used, the same heavy-calibre revolvers, the same readiness to shoot on sight as had distinguished our Houndsditch gang. From photographs which I have examined, from exact Bertillon measurements of every part of one of the dead men, I have no hesitation in saying that Julius Bonnot was none other than Peter the Painter.

Thank Heaven there was a traitor in his camp, for this man was definitely without the least scruple. He had brain power, was a born organiser, could inspire loyalty, and collect arms and ammunition for his fell purposes with greater ingenuity than any other criminal I have ever heard of.

CHAPTER VI

GUARDING THE CONNAUGHT WEDDING GIFTS

JEWELS have a strange fascination for many people, while crooks, of course, take a professional interest in the "sparklers," as they call them. Therefore, when gems are displayed, there the enemies of law and order will gather, if they can. It may be that the chance of stealing anything is fantastically remote, but the lure is so great that the thief will, by hook or by crook, linger around and try to think out some scheme whereby a coup can be effected.

There are times when it is most desirable that detectives should observe without being observed—when success demands unobtrusiveness; but, on the other hand, there are occasions when the only course to take is to let those against whom we are engaged at the time see that we are "up and doing"—to make ourselves known and perfectly clear to the enemy.

An occasion like this occurred when I was on duty at St. James's Palace in September, 1913.

It may be remembered that the magnificent presents given on the occasion of the wedding of Prince Arthur of Connaught, were displayed to the great public in the Throne Room at the Palace. A thing unprecedented. The reason for so doing, however, being to charge a fee, and thus raise a huge fund for the relatives and sufferers of one of the most terrible colliery disasters in this country.

I refer to the Senghenydd disaster in Wales, when hundreds of lives were lost.

Crowds four deep queued from St. James's Palace along the Mall, Buckingham Palace Road, Victoria Street; in fact, almost to Whitehall from early hours of morning till night.

The police marshalled and regulated the queue which commenced slowly moving at 9 o'clock and stopped at 6 o'clock at night. This went on for seven days and during that period the amount collected ran into a very considerable figure.

There were jewels from the Tsar, the Kaiser, and other European monarchs. There was a gold-inlaid box, worth a vast sum, given by the Mikado. There were costly articles of all kinds, the total value being somewhere in the neighbourhood of three-quarters of a million.

I was on duty in the Throne Room with three other officers, standing right next to the jewel-case containing the most costly of all the presents. The crowd went round in a long queue, being kept constantly on the move owing to the crush. This crush, and the fact that there was but one door, caused thoughts of possible danger to be ever present in our minds.

As we watched the people go by, and scrutinised their faces, we saw, on various occasions, practically every one of the more dangerous international male and female crooks inspecting the gems. Their eyes absolutely flashed with cupidity, and we had little doubt that schemes were working through their minds as to how they could lay their hands on some of the brilliant gems there displayed.

It may be thought that not even the most daring jewel-thief would make an attempt in the midst of such a crowd, but we were aware of the possibility of those "swell mobsmen" raising, say, a cry of "Fire!" and stampeding the crowd with an engineered scare, seizing the opportunity in the confusion, arising from lack of sufficient exits, to get away with the jewels.

Our plan, therefore, was to make such an opportunity exceedingly remote by letting all the crooks who came to the Palace know that we were there in force, and that their presence was noted. The result was that nothing untoward happened. I do know, however, that one woman at least was trying to work out some method of making a "coup."

She was a Continental jewel-thief of the cleverest kind—a woman who dressed and spoke like an aristocrat, and who could easily pass herself off as a member of the nobility. She visited the displayed wedding-presents three times, and on each occasion was with a different man, all three of whom were dangerous crooks.

I am of opinion that she was trying to find a partner for some audacious manœuvre, but that each fought shy after looking over the situation.

There is another interesting fact about this woman, suggesting another line of business. Followed one day from the Throne Room to St. James's Palace, she was seen to enter a car which was waiting for her in the Mall. In this car was another woman, as fashionably dressed as she was.

What was her connection with the jewel-thief, if any, I cannot say, and certainly she was not mixed up in this sort

of crime ; she had a branch business of her own. She was none other than that strange woman who became notorious at a later date, who risked her life in London for her German paymasters—Eve de Bouronville, the spy, who was imprisoned during the war, and only recently sent out of the country. She was, perhaps, better known as “ Eve the Swede.”

Eve belonged at times, under an assumed name, to several ladies' clubs in London, and it is possible that it was in one of these that she fell in with the crook. It is more than probable that they recognised one another as likely to be useful partners one day, and were “ holding in ” for the time being in case anything turned up.

Eve was busy then, as were other spies. “ Der Tag ” was looked for, and at that time I myself often heard the toast to “ The Day ” drunk by German officers of the Reserve at the reunion dinners in a restaurant in Regent Street. I remember that when I was on duty at Newhaven in the critical days of the Agadir crisis, I saw hundreds of German Reservists leaving the country, having been summoned to the colours. They thought then that “ Der Tag ” had come.

THE MISSING MILLIONAIRE

While on the subject of women crooks I must describe one of the most audacious cases I have known. The story rightly belongs to a subsequent part of my narrative, but as a woman played a conspicuous part and the features of the case are so unusual, I will relate it here.

Some of the characters in my account are still living and I will therefore allude to them under fictitious names. Otherwise all details of the story are strictly correct.

Upon the instructions of a firm of lawyers whose enquiries I handled, I found myself in the Mayfair mansion of a prominent City man, whom we will call Mr. Drake.

I was shown into a room where sat a tall, very beautiful woman of perhaps thirty-five years of age. She was in evening dress, her magnificent Parisian “ creation ” of flame and gold, her wonderful diamonds, her coiffure—the work of an artist—all contributed to make her a perfect model of British elegance. Mrs. Drake was considered one of the most beautiful women in England and one of London's most popular hostesses. She smiled as I entered the room :

"You are the detective—Mr. Woodhall?" she asked, and motioned me to a seat near her. Then in very few words she outlined the position.

Mr. Drake was reputed to be a millionaire several times over, and was popular. He had no worries so far as his wife, his solicitors, or business associates knew. This was the position two days previous to my call. He had left home in the morning at his usual time of 9.45, and had been driven down to his office. The chauffeur had been instructed to call again for him at half-past four.

He left the offices at 1 p.m. for luncheon but from that time had completely disappeared. Enquiries at his club and usual restaurant revealed nothing—he had not been seen.

The car waited a while for him in the evening and then returned. At first Mrs. Drake had not been at all nervous. She thought her husband might have been called away on some urgent business and that a message from him might have miscarried. She felt certain an explanation of his absence would be forthcoming in the morning.

But again on the next day there was no word. His partners had been in touch with his wife and told her they were amazed at his absence in view of the fact that urgent and important business was awaiting his personal attention. His absence was calculated to inspire the most disturbing rumours. For that reason the strictest secrecy was maintained. Indirect and tactful enquiries were made at places which might provide even the slenderest clue as to his whereabouts. But nothing satisfactory was learned. The whole of that day and the next went by without a sign or word from him, and now the silence was broken.

His bank-manager had rung up Mr. Drake at his office to ask for instructions about meeting an open cheque for forty thousand pounds which had been presented for payment by a uniformed janitor. The millionaire's banking account was such that a cheque for that amount could be met at a moment's notice whatever the state of his accounts—he had three—because he always kept at the bank a large block of securities which could in emergency be held by the bank as collateral security.

But as Mr. Drake had never before given an open cheque for anything approaching this enormous sum, the bank feared an irregularity and required confirmatory instructions from

Mr. Drake personally. A partner had gone at once to the bank to interview the janitor, but the latter refused to give him any information beyond stating that a gentleman had sent him with the cheque, telling him to say nothing to anyone. The man pressed further, said that he would bring some one to the bank who could give more information. He left before anyone could be detailed to follow him and was not seen again. After consultation with the solicitors, it was decided to appoint a private detective to see if the mystery could be unravelled without scandal.

"I have my own opinions," said Mrs. Drake, and I pressed her to state them. After great hesitation she said :

"I recognise, Mr. Woodhall, that it is necessary to take you into my confidence, but the necessity is humiliating. The simple facts are that on more than one occasion I have had to remonstrate with my husband about his friendships with undesirable types of women." As she said the last word she made a little frown of contempt and distaste. She said that on Tuesday evening—the day before he disappeared—there had been words between them. It appeared that she had found in her husband's pocket a letter of a compromising nature.

At first he denied any guilty acquaintance with the girl and said that he was merely receiving the letters for a friend who dare not receive them at home. But at last, after she had threatened to see the girl, he confessed. She forgave him but told him frankly that any open scandal would be followed by divorce proceedings.

"You see, Mr. Woodhall," she said, "this is not the first first time there have been these sordid intrigues. But I have two children to consider and for their sake I cannot bear even to think of scandal. I am certain that if you find this girl—here is her letter"—she handed me a blue scented envelope—"then you will find my husband somewhere in the background. But I tell you quite frankly, and you can tell him—because I haven't the slightest doubt you will find him—that I am going to make arrangements to go away for a while !"

Obviously the lady was labouring under a sense of outrage. I told her it was quite possible that her husband might be suffering from a temporary loss of memory. She smiled.

"I have thought of that already," she said. "I certainly think that will be his excuse when he turns up. It seems the only one possible to me and of course he will back it with the

certificates of three or four doctors. But if the whole Medical Council signed certificates I fear I should still be sceptical ! ”

I saw it was useless arguing. After all, the main thing was to find her husband, and after promising to keep in touch with her I left the house and commenced my enquiries. I read the letter from the girl. It was too incriminating for words. No wonder Mrs. Drake expressed her contempt !

In my own mind I was inclined to Mrs. Drake's theory. I have known men before, strong in business, great in politics, who occasionally seemed to take a physical, mental, and moral holiday all at the same time. I have known men, whom the outside world is accustomed to venerate as paragons of proper conduct, occasionally conducting sordid intrigues with impossible little drabs, uneducated, unrefined, and sometimes not even good-looking !

From what Mrs. Drake told me I thought this might very possibly be the case with Mr. Drake. I went to the theatre where a lady whom we will call Jane Doe was appearing in the chorus and asked for her after the performance, but was unable to interview her. However, the door-man pointed her out to me leaving the theatre with a tall man in evening dress—not Mr. Drake. I went to “ Jane's ” address, which was in Bloomsbury, and waited until about two o'clock in the morning, but she did not return. I called again at nine in the morning, but still she was not back. Nobody there could give me any information. My next visit was to the bank in the City to try to get a description of the janitor who had called to collect the forty thousand pounds.

I got a rough description from the cashier, but he was not certain if he could recognise him again. I next visited Mr. Drake's offices and met his partners.

“ We might as well be perfectly straight with Woodhall,” said one of them, a little, short, jolly man. The other was a tall, ascetic individual who raised a lean hand and quickly ejaculated :

“ Well, well ! Be discreet, now, be discreet ! ”

“ We've got to tell Woodhall the truth to help him,” said the little fat man. “ It's women, Woodhall, that's what it is—women ! ”

“ Oh ! Tut-tut ! Tut-tut ! ” exclaimed the ascetic-looking partner. “ I say, Henry, I say ! ” He looked the picture of

outraged dignity as he rose and walked to the window as though completely to disassociate himself from his partner's blunt comments.

I had some further talk with the little man and then left. He obviously took the same line as Mrs. Drake. I called again at the Bloomsbury house. This time I saw "Jane Doe." She was a tall blonde, affected in her way, and aping the ultra-modern woman of Society.

I asked her one or two questions about Mr. Drake, but she haughtily questioned my right to ask them. I knew there was only one way to deal with a woman of this type and that was to bluff and bluff hard.

"Well now," I said, "I am a detective. We know of Mr. Drake's association with you. He was with you the other day. This is your letter." I held up the letter. "Now, you stole something from Mr. Drake upon that occasion, and though everybody would like to avoid scandal, unless you will agree to state all the facts so far as you know them, you will find yourself at the police station. Perhaps we had better go round now. Come along, put your hat on!"

The effect was magical. Within two minutes I was listening to the tale of "Jane Doe." To put it briefly, "Jane" said she met the millionaire about once a week, they supped at a night club as a rule and then stayed at a private hotel. She had last met him on Monday night but had made no future arrangement. After careful questioning—designed to make her trip herself—I found that the next appointment was made upon the occasion of each visit. Why not this time?

Who was the man who was with her on the previous night? She was with no man, she said, but had stayed with her sister at Bayswater.

Like a shot I drove straight to Bayswater in the hope that I might get to the sister before "Jane" had communicated with her on the telephone. I got to Bayswater, but there was no sister at the address—"Jane" had lied.

I went back to Bloomsbury, but the girl had gone out. I determined to keep watch and in the meantime rang up the solicitors to see if there were any developments there. I was instructed to go to the bank with all haste as a telephone message had been received from Mr. Drake. I went as rapidly as a taxi could thread its way through the maze of City traffic. I was informed that Mr. Drake had spoken to the manager,

instructing him to meet without question the cheque for forty thousand as soon as it was presented.

He had also said he was in a most dangerous position, and that in no circumstances were enquiries to be made, nor was the messenger presenting the cheque to be followed, or his life would be endangered. He had repeated, almost in a panic, his instructions and then had rung off. The messenger was awaited. It now looked as though the position were more complicated—Mr. Drake was apparently held by rascals who were exacting a ransom.

Nevertheless, though the voice was that of Mr. Drake and his panic very real, both his partners and the bank-manager were reluctant to part with forty thousand pounds to the messenger. There were several ways of looking at that. Supposing the forty thousand was given—what guarantee was there that the criminals, assuming him to be held by criminals, would release him? Was it not possible that they might try to do away with him?

On the other hand, what if refusal to pay actually caused the millionaire's death?

We discussed the matter for some time and then I proposed getting half a dozen detectives for special "shadow" work. These men were to form a chain outside the bank, observe most carefully the man who came to present the cheque, see if he signalled to anyone else and endeavour to trace the messenger as well as anyone to whom he signalled.

These preparations took several hours, but by the time the messenger arrived, which was about half-past one, everything was ready. The banker, acting upon the instruction of the two partners and myself, had placed blank sheets in an envelope. There was a risk in this procedure, but I was staking all on being able to trace the messenger.

He appeared and was recognised by the cashier as the same man who had come before. He presented the cheque, and after a delay and the ostentatious counting of bank-notes, the cashier returned from a back counter with the envelope which he sealed before the messenger's eyes and handed it to him.

The messenger placed the envelope in a bag which he carried on a chain and left the bank. He was followed carefully. He walked along towards the Mansion House, still being followed, then, like a flash, the unexpected happened. Two men appeared as though from nowhere and jostled him.

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The janitor's silk hat was off in a second, he shouted, stumbled and fell.

I left some one else to attend to him and chased a man across the crowded thoroughfare. I had seen him run at the moment the janitor fell. It was hopeless, he was lost in the crowd. The police were quickly on the spot and the janitor made a statement. He was taken to the police station where he stated that the bag had been snatched from his hand and the chain cut. I told the officer in charge that there was nothing in the bag and sent him round to the bank for confirmation. It was intimated to the police that the utmost secrecy was desirable, compatible with the requirements of the law.

All the police knew was that a bag had been snatched from a messenger by two men who could not be described and, as they knew the bag was empty, they paid very little attention to the matter.

I definitely suspected the janitor as being a party to the conspiracy. I questioned him very closely and found he had been employed at a block of flats for seven years. Previous to that he had been with a firm for twenty years. In the block of flats was a restaurant, frequented by two men who, he said, had sent him to the bank. The men were in the early forties, well-dressed, apparently well-to-do and were certainly not the toughs who had attacked him at the Bank crossing.

I went to the restaurant and left a man there to watch, but the two men who were supposed to be waiting for the janitor were not there. It was perfectly clear they had arranged the attack on the messenger to defeat a pursuit.

Late that afternoon came another call from Mr. Drake. This time he was in a real panic. He cursed the manager for not cashing the cheque, told him he had suffered tortures, and implored him to carry out the instructions.

"This is literally true," he finished, giving emphasis to every word. "If that money is not paid by to-morrow, I shall be in the sea. I mean that."

It was agreed to pay the money. The risk of withholding it was too great. But I *knew* in my heart that the key to the position was the pretty girl in the Bloomsbury house. Why had she lied? Why had she sent me to a false address?

I went back to the address in Bloomsbury—she did not come all day, neither did she appear at the theatre. I asked her landlady for particulars of her friends and that day interviewed

four chorus girls, gleaning certain information. The man whom I had seen leaving the theatre with her on the previous night was often in her company, one of the girls told me, and she had had tea with him and "Jane" at the restaurant in the block of flats served by the janitor. This girl knew him only as Frank, but she knew he was acquainted with a man, Major X——. I knew X——. He was a shady sort of man, half-crook, half man-of-means, ready to enter into any shady transaction that was fairly "safe."

There was only one way to tackle X——, for he was a past-master in the art of dissimulation. I interviewed the lawyers and came away with a bundle of bank-notes, then I took the chorus-girl friend of "Jane" with me and gave her certain instructions. She played her part excellently. I had ascertained where X—— was to be found, gave the girl a five-pound note, and sent her into the place where he was staying.

She suggested a stroll and then asked him if he would do her a service. She gave him the five-pound note and invited him to meet her a little later in the lounge of a certain hotel. I was seated behind a palm which shaded the seat to which she went by arrangement with me, X—— was almost on her heels. Then she related to him an amazing story of how the man whom he had seen with "Jane" and herself had stolen valuables from her. If only he would tell her how to find him she would give him a hundred pounds—he could have twenty now.

"Oh! that's easy!" replied X——. "You mean Tom Y——. Come along." He set off with her on a round of visits to West End haunts of the underworld. All the time I followed with two men behind me. At last he discovered that Tom Y—— was out of town, but a waiter had his address at some remote farmhouse in Essex. I felt certain I was getting on the right track now and left the girl—who was getting just a little cheerful—with X——. She had a further twenty pounds in her bag, so I have no doubt they spent a festive evening together.

Accompanied by three other private detectives I went down to a place on the Essex coast and enquired for the farmhouse. I found it three miles from a station, lonely and desolate. After being unoccupied for several years it had been taken and partly furnished by a gentleman from London—obviously Tom Y——. The name by which he was known there was

Harrison, and he kept no staff beyond a Chinese servant who attended to all his wants.

We approached the farmhouse, of which only one room seemed to be lit up. I placed a man at the front and a man behind, then knocked at the door. The Chinese servant answered and I asked for Mr. Harrison.

"No can do!" replied the Chinese with a shrug. "Him alle same London!" But I had reason to believe Mr. Harrison was not in London, and I grabbed the Chinese, who gave a blood-curdling yell—evidently to sound an alarm.

Three men instantly appeared at a door, the light in the room behind them throwing their faces into shadow.

"Who is there?" cried one.

"I want you, Y——. I hold a warrant for your arrest!" I called. Instantly the light went out in the room, the window near us opened, and two men jumped out, fled across the garden and ran along the road. A signal whistle from behind told us that some one was leaving the house from the back also.

Along the road the men ran and we could hear a motor-car being started up—evidently a way of retreat already arranged.

Carefully we entered the house, and with a flash-lamp, examined all the rooms. In one of them a figure was lying on a couch. It was Mr. Drake, bound hand and foot, and with a gag tied over his mouth.

The millionaire had a long story to tell. First of all he pledged me to secrecy, then he told me that on the fateful Tuesday morning he received an urgent message at his office from "Jane Doe." She was in trouble, would he meet her without fail about half-past one? He went to an address in Kensington and was ushered into a sitting room. As he passed inside the door something was flung over his head and he remembered no more until he found himself lying on that couch in the Essex farmhouse. He did not see "Jane." The kidnappers actually flogged him with a stick when he refused to sign a cheque, and they showed him the distant sea, over the marshes, in which he would be thrown if he did not get the money without trouble following for them!

A dark, foreign-looking girl, scantily clad, had been brought and made to pose in various ways about him, the idea being that when he had advanced the money he, confronted with those photographs, would not have dared to invoke the aid of

the police. I saw several of the photographs—they were truly terrible. Certainly, as Mr. Drake said, if his wife saw one of them, nothing on this earth would have stopped divorce proceedings.

Mr. Drake, like many other philanderers of his kind, had some sort of love for his wife which made divorce as unpalatable to him as it was to her, and then, of course, there were the children, his social position, and his business in the City.

So forty thousand pounds was saved and after a few days "Jane" was appearing at the theatre again as brazenly as ever, but she never rang up Mr. Drake again.

I told Mrs. Drake the story of the kidnapping—and he had the bruises to show.

"But why did you go to the address in Kensington?" she asked her husband sweetly.

"Well, you see," he said. "An old school-friend of——"

"Oh, I see!" interrupted Mrs. Drake, "an old school-friend? I just wondered what you would say." She turned to me with a gracious smile. "Thank you, Mr. Woodhall. I sincerely hope my husband will be more careful in his choice of—er—school-friends in the future. They are sometimes so costly!"

CHAPTER VII

A SPY INDEED

A VERY significant change took place in the activities of the Special Department soon after I joined it. To begin with, although its activities were wide and its ramifications great, the prime object had been to guard those foreign personages, visiting these shores, who might be menaced by disaffected elements. At the same time, it was primarily concerned with guarding our own Royalties and statesmen from attack by fanatics, anarchists, suffragettes and other dangerous people who increased in those years before the war.

Then came the change. In this country, even in the most excellently-informed circles in the Army and Navy, as well as in the Secret Service, we paid very little attention to espionage, but circumstances arose which brought the German menace to the notice of several departments almost at the same time and completely changed our outlook on that most important danger.

First, I would observe that our own Secret Service was far more efficient than most people believed. It is, at this distance of time, safe for me to reveal that we, in this country, always paid greater attention to what might be called "Diplomatic" secret service than to military and naval affairs. I mean by that that it was of more importance to the Foreign Office to know that certain conversations had taken place between the Turkish Minister in Berlin and the German Foreign Secretary than it was to learn that the German Navy had made certain improvements in submarine construction. Against the great secrets, the secrets upon which might be built possible groupings and alliances of nations, we were ever able to arm by counter-measures and though much might be said against the dangers of secret diplomacy, the fact remained that, in the world more or less governed by it, we had to accept the same methods.

As for what might be called the Naval and Military departments of the Secret Service there was really little of importance that we did not know. We knew—everybody knew—that on emergency the Germans could mobilize five million men and overwhelm France, but we also knew that provided the Russian armies maintained manœuvre standard, they, in conjunction

with France, were more than sufficient to deal with the united German and Austrian armies. The Italian attitude, despite the Triple Alliance, was as well-known in Whitehall as it was in Rome before the war clouds began definitely to gather.

Again with regard to the Navies of the two prospective main belligerents, we knew perfectly well that whatever craft the Germans developed we were able alone to account for the German Navy.

Apropos this I quote a paragraph taken from Sir Philip Gibbs's *Adventures in Journalism*.

"That night I had an exciting narrative to dictate over the telephone to the office of the *Daily Chronicle*. But in the middle of it the sub-editor, MacKenna, who was taking down my message, said :

" 'Cut it short, old man ! Something is happening to-night more important than a strike in Liverpool. THE GERMAN FLEET IS OUT IN THE NORTH SEA AND THE BRITISH FLEET IS CLEARED FOR ACTION ! ' "

"When I put down the receiver I felt a shiver go down my spine and I thought of Stead's preposterous story of war in August.

"Had it happened ?

"There was nothing in next day's papers. Some iron censorship closed down on that story of the German Fleet, true or false. As we know, it was true. The German Fleet did go out on that night in August, but finding the British Fleet prepared they went back again."

It was in August of another year that Germany put all to the great hazard.

The only serious miscalculation we made there was in the matter of cruising radius capacity of submarines. I may say here that in the submarine matter the Germans were more than usually cunning. In order to protect the important secrets which they had for the construction of the super-submarine, they deliberately confined the secret to several men beyond reproach and never built a single super-submarine until the war was actually started.

But even in those departments, what might be termed the departments of technical knowledge, we were not so ignorant as has been thought. It is safe to say that the secret of the super-Zeppelins was being carefully examined by War Office experts in Whitehall when the actual machine was being tried at Geneva !

Now the German method of obtaining knowledge was far different from ours, and was strictly in accordance with the German temperament. They moved cautiously at first and then, seeing no apparent opposition, they logically concluded that we were a race of fools and increased both the numbers and the activities of aircraft and, happily, the indiscretions of their Secret Service staff.

Shortly after the arrest of a Naval official in 1913, which, by the way, was the first pre-war case of espionage to be tried in this country and which revealed some dangerous and unhealthy penetration into naval secrets on the part of foreign spies, a number of other incidents occurred. Some important plans were temporarily lost by a great firm of North of England armament manufacturers. There was a considerable hue and cry, and I and several officers went down to assist in the investigation. Twenty-four hours after the plans disappeared they reappeared behind a drawer in a safe that could only be approached by some half-dozen trusted employees. So great was the relief that the papers were returned that there was an inclination on the part of the firm to drop the matter, but such importance was attached to it by the authorities that very discreetly we intensified our search. By a process of elimination we worked down to one man who made frequent journeys to London, but beyond the fact that he became a suspect no evidence could be brought up against him.

To illustrate the blatant open-ness of German methods in military and naval espionage no incident is better than that of the man whom the military authorities arrested at Dover in 1913, for taking photographs of certain alterations in the fortifications and of the harbour.

He stated volubly and indignantly that he was an ordinary visitor, interested in the place, and that he had merely taken several photographs as souvenirs of his visit. Perhaps he had been indiscreet—perhaps foolish, but it was in ignorance he had offended. He had never given a thought about possible offence.

At that time, of course, it must be remembered that the Official Secrets Act 1911, had not been amended to permit of the military authorities taking action, as they were later empowered to do by The Defence of the Realm Act 1920.

He had given an address in London. Within an hour of the affair we, at Scotland Yard, got the information, and official annoyance was great when it was found that he had been

allowed to go, because we had some rather interesting information at the moment of the movements of a certain great personage in the German Secret Service, whom we knew to be somewhere in England. He was the most slippery customer in the whole eel-like fraternity.

I was sent immediately to the given address to keep him under surveillance until the next steps were taken. I discovered at once the fact that the address was bogus! He had never been there. This was very serious. It was now certain that we were dealing with a foreign agent and we had a pretty shrewd suspicion also that he was no ordinary spy. I was instructed to trail him, if possible, and the whole of the Special Department that could be spared were put on the job.

Now there are wheels within wheels, and traitors in every camp; and it was a very charming little "traitor" who gave me a certain clue resulting in my picking our man up again—or rather his trail—at West Croydon. I discovered the house where he had stayed and, indeed, just missed him by moments. I was told that it was his intention to go to Bowes Park.

The address at Bowes Park was that of a German, but of a man of such integrity, that no action could possibly be taken. I was reduced to methods of observation again. My superior officer, Inspector H. Fitch, had the West Croydon *ménage* and the Bowes Park house continually under observation.

In a crowded thoroughfare surveillance is the easiest thing in the world, but it is quite a different matter in a residential suburb where everything is quiet and every stranger noticed. After two days, at Wood Green Police Station, the German householder complained to the police that a "suspicious-looking man" was continually prowling about his grounds! In any case my observations were of no value for the man had got away. By what route he travelled I know not. Certainly he evaded detection at every possible port. Great was the chagrin of the Yard when we found that the Dover military authorities had let him through their hands. Greater far was it when we learnt from our agents in Germany that the man who had so openly taken his photographs and his departure was none other than the great Steinhauer, later head of the German Secret Service and personal friend of the All-Highest himself.

CHAPTER VIII

"STINIE" MORRISON'S STRANGE CASE

THERE prevails at Scotland Yard a wise principle that detectives should be as generally experienced as possible in all branches of criminal investigation, and, as frequently as exigencies demand or permit, officers are transferred from one branch to another.

Thus it was that when comparative quiet prevailed in the Special Political Branch and great demands were made upon the Central Department, I found myself transferred for a period to another most interesting sphere of work.

By far the most important matters dealt with, of course, are the tracking of murderers. The pursuit of thieves, blackmailers and all other criminals is important, but when life itself is taken, then all the concentrated effort of headquarters is focused upon the trail of the murderer.

In my time, in conjunction with other officers, I have had to deal with many murders, some of which were startling enough to engross the attention of the newspaper-reading public for weeks at a time, including such famous cases as those of "Stinie" Morrison, Crippen, the North London train murder, the tragic fate of little Eileen Bowes, the Eastbourne murder, and many others; all of which I shall speak of in some degree; but, first of all, I want to make one or two generalisations about the whole subject of murder.

In the first place murder, though rightly considered the most terrible crime in the calendar, is rarely the work of a criminal. I go further than that. I maintain from my experience that murder is rarely the work of an unscrupulous man.

Broadly speaking, I should divide murders into two classes. One, and by far the more frequent type, arises from sex problems; the other is the work of homicidal maniacs. Where murder accompanies robbery it is usually an accident. The most hardened criminals rarely resort to personal violence, much less murder, preferring actually to be captured rather than resort thereto. In my experience, where murder has accompanied robbery, there have usually been other factors playing on the situation, as, for instance, in the famous Houndsditch case, where Peter the Painter mobilised a gang of

unscrupulous anarchists with mixed motives of robbery and adherence to their peculiar creed whereby their consciences were salved.

There is just one point, however, which needs emphasis, in connection with murder arising from robbery. We are singularly free from that sort of crime in this country for two reasons. One is that the police here do not go about armed to the teeth, prepared to shoot burglars down as in the United States ; and the other is that, as a rule, heavy vindictive sentences are in the minority here. I have no hesitation in saying that, were some inexperienced persons’ recommendations to be followed, our detectives armed with revolvers and instructed to shoot on sight, then criminals would follow suit and we would soon have possession of the disgraceful records of America, with its seventy murders to our one !

The same thing applies in a minor sense to extremely heavy sentences. It is argued that the habitual criminal ought, in the interests of Society, to be perpetually confined. I quite agree that the habitual criminal presents a very grave problem, but I am persuaded that that is not the way to solve it. If a man knows that capture may mean the remainder of his life “inside,” you may rest assured he will not scruple to avoid capture—at any price !

What I wish to do now, however, is to point out some outstanding facts about murders and murder trials. It is positively amazing to one engaged on the very inside of a murder case to witness the peculiar reactions of a murder trial upon certain temperaments.

To begin with, murders nearly always are repeated by persons with a latent homicidal bent who act subconsciously at the suggestion of the committed crime. I have witnessed this over and over again—to the very details. Again, I should say that one of the greatest difficulties the police have in investigating a murder is to comb through the sack-loads of anonymous letters from people who offer clues—nearly always utterly valueless. In addition to this pest, there are quite respectable people who frequently come forward to offer evidence which is often so misleading as to be positively dangerous ; and all this evidence has to be carefully tested before it can be utilised.

Murders, and particularly gruesome murders, must essen-

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tially be an unpleasant subject for either writing and discussion and it is with no intention of pandering to morbidity that I am retailing some of the more conspicuous cases with which I have been concerned. The fact remains that as murder is, in a civilized country, the greatest menace which can confront the subject, it is only right that the subject should have an opportunity of reading, if he cares to, some facts about the means taken to vindicate the savage affront to Society when such a fell act has been committed.

It is interesting to reflect on the peculiarities of the psychological effect of murder both upon masses and upon individuals and to note the dangers which may arise through action on the part of people bordering upon hysteria. The writing of anonymous letters is a small matter compared with some of the things I have seen done, although that can be bad enough, in all conscience.

I know of one man who was hounded to his grave by anonymous letters. That was the splendid old English gentleman named General Luard, of Sevenoaks.

In that case, which has never been solved, the General was so overwhelmed by the loss of his wife, who was shot as she sat on the balcony of a bungalow, and more still by the avalanche of anonymous letters making the grossest accusations against him, that he threw himself under the boat train to end a life suddenly become too horrible for him. Of course, the clever people who wrote the anonymous letters would turn round and say: "There you are—there's guilt!"

Let them qualify their ghoulish glee by the knowledge that to those most intimately concerned with the case, whatever other theories were held, the General was perfectly exonerated.

I want now to touch upon those little understood murders, the work of homicidal maniacs, and also those arising from perverted sex mania.

I remember as if it were yesterday being called by a scared lavatory attendant at the Elephant and Castle to examine a certain parcel found in a lavatory there on the 31st May, 1908.

Earlier in the day, so the man told me, a little man with light piercing blue eyes had entered a compartment. It was customary for the attendant to examine each compartment after it was vacated, but in this case he had been too busy and some considerable time elapsed before he was aware of a curious odour. He examined the compartment and there

found a parcel which, upon examination, was found to contain the decapitated body of a little girl.

It was discovered that the body was that of a beautiful little girl who lived at Islington, named Eileen Bowes. Never from that day to this has there been a trace of the murderer of that little child.

In this class of murder must fall that of the child who was found on the North London Railway in the waiting-room in 1902, as well as that of little Willie Starchfield. Again, a similar case was that of Nellie Clark of Birkenhead and the case of Vera Hoad.

There is an added difficulty in investigating these cases in the sense that the details are often too terrible to publish in the press and so an important source of possible information is lost. What I mean exactly by that is this. Supposing it were possible to give in all detail some of these cases, then it might be possible for someone to see in it the hand of some person whom it may have been their evil fortune at some time to encounter and the information might be privately handed on to the police.

Again, nearly all these murders are the work of maniacs, and whatever else their disabilities may be, they are ultra-cunning and show amazing ingenuity in covering up their tracks. I am perfectly convinced that many murders are committed in the course of a year by this type of criminal maniac, which are never heard of because they are sufficiently cunning to use means by which murder is never remotely suspected.

While on this subject I recall a case in which I arrested a man on Putney Lower Common, S.W.

A little girl of between five and seven years had been assaulted. An old Common keeper had suspected his action, followed him and pluckily tackled him.

The poor old fellow held on, but he was no match for his younger assailant, and was on the verge of collapse when I appeared on the scene.

For a minute or so the man and I set to—but I followed him with a nicely-timed clip, on the jaw as he came at a rush. He turned out to be one of the leading hands attached to a titled man’s polo pony staff at Roehampton, and in due course came up for treatment at the C.C.C., being sentenced to nine months for assault on the Common keeper, and nine

months for the other offence, the sentences running concurrently.

Perhaps the most remarkable case of murder with which I was associated was the "Stinie" Morrison case about which so much has been written. The facts are familiar to all. Leon Beron, a middle-aged Russian Jew, was found murdered on Clapham Common on New Year's Day, 1911. He had been struck on the head from behind and his face was curiously marked by two lines made after death by a knife.

Inspector Ward, the late Chief, who has been admitted to be one of the finest detectives the Yard has ever produced, undertook the enquiry and the first steps were, of course, automatic. The Inspector established the identity of the little Jew. He was passing rich on a very few pounds a year—legitimately drawn from rents of slum hovels—was well-known at a restaurant in Whitechapel and often carried gold.

At the Coroner's Court at Battersea the police surgeon commented upon the two marks upon his face and said that to him they resembled two "S's" deliberately placed there.

"Some sign, you think?" asked the Coroner, and the doctor replied that he did think so.

During the next few days our enquiries were centred round the little man's acquaintances and friends, his habits and movements. Superintendent Wensley had now entered the enquiry and a team of us worked under Inspector Ward and himself. It was not long before it was found out that he always carried about with him a purse of gold, to be able to purchase at a moment's notice articles of property. Then it was discovered that on the last night he was seen alive he was in the company of a man called Morris Stein. This man was a tall, handsome Jew, a desperate character in a way. Of known criminal habits, he terrorized a gang of what are known as "the boys" down Whitechapel way and wielded authority by his strong personality backed upon occasion by his strong hands.

All sorts of theories were held. The two marks upon the face of the man were something of a red-herring across the trail; they pointed to the work of some secret society and it was thought that there might be a connection between the Sidney Street affair and this, but, meanwhile, we kept searching for Morris Stein, who was keeping himself singularly quiet for the moment.

His haunts were carefully watched and so it came about on Sunday, January 8th, the police picked up his trail and followed him to a restaurant in the Commercial Road, where he ordered breakfast. Inspector Wensley (as he then was) decided to arrest him.

“Stein, I want you!” said the Inspector, and before the big man could move the police closed around him. He was taken completely by surprise.

“Don’t get putting anything in my pockets!” he cried, before he was moved off into the street. By that remark he was referring to a very frequent statement made by the habitual criminal of the lowest orders when he is arrested and found with some incriminating article in his possession—that the police put it in.

As he was escorted along the road he observed:

“This is the biggest blunder you ever made in your lives!”

At the police station he was searched and note was taken that he was in possession of £14 5s. 6d. and a lady’s gold watch. There was nothing to link him up directly with the crime but we detained him temporarily and produced him before the South-Western magistrate on the following morning.

But, in the meantime, there occurred one or two things which later became very controversial points.

It was part of the Crown case later on that when we detained him no police officer said a word to him about his being detained in connection with the Clapham murder.

Now about an hour and a half after his arrest he was in the police station in charge of two constables and they swore that “Stinie” Morrison, for that was the more popular name adopted by Morris Stein, said:

“I want to make a confession. Will you write it down?”

They sent for Inspector Wensley who came, and Morrison said to him:

“You have accused me of murder.”

“I have done nothing of the kind,” Inspector Wensley retorted.

“You told me,” repeated Morrison, “that you wanted me for a serious crime and that it was murder, and I want to make a voluntary statement.”

Although Inspector Wensley effected the arrest, it being

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in his area, it was Inspector Ward's case, so Inspector Wensley suggested that it should be made to Inspector Ward. The statement was made and it was certainly no confession. It merely dealt with his movements for the last few months, referred to the fact that he had worked in a shop at Clapham and saved a few pounds. He said also that he was living with a girl called Florrie at York Road, and said that on the previous night he had stayed with a Mrs. — who lived next to a grocer's shop, as it had been too late for him to reach his lodgings.

This statement was made undoubtedly because we knew him to be a criminal with a considerable record behind him. He had served a term of five years' penal servitude amongst other sentences. His clothing was carefully examined and stains which were found to be bloodstains were discovered upon the collar and cuffs of his shirt. The murder, of course, was a week old by this time.

On the 9th, prior to the police court proceedings, he was put up for identification and picked out at once by all the police witnesses, who included waiters who had served him on the night before the murder at the — restaurant and the proprietor of that restaurant. One of the waiters was handed earlier in the evening a long parcel—which Morrison had said contained a flute—to mind for him, and this parcel was handed back to Morrison by the waiter Mintz at twenty minutes to twelve.

At this stage the police case was that he was seen by several witnesses in the company of Leon Beron at the — restaurant at times between six o'clock and midnight. The proprietor said that at a quarter to twelve Beron and Morrison left together. That was when the waiter handed back the "flute" which Morrison had given him to take care of. The waiter said it weighed more like a bar of iron than a flute.

Just after two o'clock in the morning a Mrs. Deitch met Beron in company with a strange man walking along the Commercial Road. At half-past three in the morning, which would be about half-an-hour after the murder, a cabman picked up two fares near Kennington Church and drove them to Seven Sisters Road, Finsbury Park. Now all these witnesses identified "Stinie" Morrison.

Between this and the next remand we made a very careful search amongst cabmen and taxi-drivers to try to find out how

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Beron had got to Clapham, and it was here that another important link was forged in the chain which was to convict “ Stinie ” Morrison.

Edward Hayman deposed that he picked up two men in the Mile End Road at two o'clock on New Year's morning and drove them to Battersea—Lavender Gardens to be exact. This place was quite near the scene of the murder. Again he identified “ Stinie ” Morrison.

A hansom-cab driver said that he picked up a fare at Clapham Cross in the early hours of New Year's morning and drove him to Kennington Church. He identified “ Stinie ” Morrison! This man said that he drove from there to the Elephant and Castle where, while he was having a bite at a coffee stall, he noticed the time to be twenty minutes to four. Although he could not tell what time it was when he picked up Morrison, tests were made, and it was found that the drive from Clapham Cross to Kennington Church occupied eleven minutes, and that the round-about drive by the route taken by the driver as he went that night on to the Elephant and Castle would take sixteen minutes. By these deductions it was assumed that he picked up “ Stinie ” Morrison at Clapham Cross at 3.12—or ten minutes after the murder.

The chain was definite—irresistible—except in one place. Mrs. Deitch said that it was a quarter past two when she saw Beron and “ Stinie ” Morrison, whereas the taxi-driver said it was “ about two ” when he picked up Beron and “ Stinie ” Morrison in the Mile End Road and drove them to Lavender Gardens.

The dead man's property was not found in Morrison's possession, yet a girl swore that on New Year's Day she had seen “ Stinie ” Morrison wearing a five-pound piece. Now the dead man always wore a five-pound piece on his watch chain.

Upon the next remand this girl retracted her evidence. She said that the coin had attracted her attention because it resembled an ornament worn by her father which she now found to be a two-guinea piece. An attempt was made to commit her for perjury but the magistrate refused the application, as did also the Public Prosecutor when he was applied to. Her mistake might easily have been an honest one because Morrison actually did wear a coin—a Kruger half-sovereign.

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Then another witness came forward and said that he had seen Morrison at half-past one on New Year's morning with a revolver. This man also retracted his evidence later.

Mr. Abinger was briefed to defend Morrison, and I understand generous funds were provided by a philanthropic and wealthy Jew who firmly believed in the innocence of the accused man.

At the trial before Mr. Justice Darling, it was disclosed that the ticket for a revolver, deposited in a cloak-room, was found in a bowler hat worn by Morrison and, of course, the suggestion was that fearing arrest he had made away with such an incriminating piece of evidence as to his dangerous character.

Almost at the last minute a rather strange thing happened. A police constable wrote to Mr. Abinger and said that whereas it had been stated that Morrison had never been told that he was arrested for murder, and that his own voluntary statement was the first mention of murder, he, the constable, had heard a detective-sergeant tell Morrison that it was for murder that he was detained.

Mr. Abinger attached such importance to this news that he went to the House of Commons on the night he received it and interviewed the Attorney-General and the Home Secretary, got a note to the Police Commissioner, and obtained facilities to see the constable at once. The next morning he also saw the Judge in his room before the trial recommenced and gave him the full particulars. The evidence was admitted, but the Judge, as appeared from his summing-up, attached very little importance to it.

The vigour of Mr. Abinger's defence caused some lively interludes. The word "perjurer" was used so often that it provoked an excellent example of Mr. Justice Darling's sarcasm. In referring to a witness he said :

" — has been attacked, and he has been called a perjurer. . . . So many people have been called perjurers, that — has no right to pride himself particularly on that ! "

Then occurred something which has been widely commented upon. I remember I was astonished to find the defending counsel attacking Prosecution witnesses. I believe it was on the strict instructions of the prisoner himself that this was done, but it was a mistake.

The rule is that nothing in a prisoner's past which does not bear on the case must be disclosed to a jury unless, during

the case, he or his counsel attack Prosecution witnesses. In this case a witness was asked whether or not he had once tried to hang himself. That may have been to show an unreliable mental condition, but the Judge warned Mr. Abinger that he was inviting reprisals, for suicide or attempted suicide is felony !

Again, a woman witness's antecedents were attacked and the result was that Sir Richard Muir was able to make full play with “Stinie” Morrison's chequered career—a fact which might well have decided the verdict.

The Prosecution case was by now complete. The long chain of absolutely unbroken circumstantial evidence seemed irresistible to me, but I confess I was astonished as Mr. Abinger, with skill and conviction, opened his defence.

The alibi which Morrison set up was that on New Year's Eve he was at the Shoreditch Palace of Varieties. He returned to the restaurant for the flute which he had left there at a quarter to twelve and then went to the house of his friends, the Cinnamons.

This was substantiated by the Cinnamons, who said that on that night Morrison came home about midnight, letting himself in with a key ; then the door had been bolted. The door had a noisy bolt so that if it had been withdrawn again later in the night it would have been heard. It was not withdrawn later. A next-door neighbour also swore he saw Morrison arrive. Morrison said that he saw Beron standing at the corner of Sidney Street talking to a tall man.

Two girls named Brodsky swore that they visited the Shoreditch Empire at about nine o'clock on New Year's Eve and paid a shilling each for tickets. Sitting five seats from them was “Stinie” Morrison. They saw him again as they left the theatre at a quarter past eleven and had subsequently seen him on various occasions. Indeed, he had made a present to one of them on her birthday a week later.

Against this the manager of the theatre was called by Sir Richard Muir and said no shilling seats were available at nine o'clock that night and that the seats the girls said they had been in would cost one and six !

“Stinie” Morrison accounted for the bloodstains upon his cuffs and collar as due to frequent nose-bleeding, and warders from Brixton Prison, in which place he had spent the weeks of remand, supported the fact that he did so suffer.

"Stinie" Morrison showed some discomfort in the witness-box. He told the story of the visit to the Empire, of going back to the restaurant at a quarter to twelve and having a cup of tea, reclaiming his flute and going to the Cinnamons by midnight.

Sir Richard Muir's cross-examination was intense, merciless. All the terrible past of the man came out, the larceny and the burglary. With persistence counsel sought to show that the money in his possession was the result of the robbery of the murdered man. Morrison had said he had won it gambling—could he prove it? Had he any witnesses? More than once Morrison broke down but still the merciless pursuit went on.

The Judge's summing-up was a model of impartiality and the Jury, in thirty-five minutes, returned a verdict of "Guilty."

Then Morrison made a last desperate effort.

"If I can prove," he said, "that in November I had £300 of which £220 remains will it alter the Jury's mind?"

Obviously he was referring to some burglary that he had taken part in, but the Judge took no notice. The black cap was even then being handed to him.

When, after the Judge had passed sentence, and when he came at last to the solemn final words, the invocation of the Almighty to take pity upon the soul of the condemned, "Stinie" Morrison cried:

"I decline such mercy and I don't believe there is a God in Heaven, either!"

The fight for his life went on. The appeal was fought and lost and petition after petition was widely signed. On April 12th the Home Secretary reprieved him. Then opened out for "Stinie" Morrison years of positive hell.

Ever protesting his innocence he was absolutely defiant of the prison authorities. Fight after fight with officials at Dartmoor, followed by disciplinary punishments, and long periods in the straight jacket in the padded cell, wore down his splendid physique until at last he was transferred to Parkhurst.

There his fight with authority went on. He was over-defiant, ever a rebel, ever proclaiming his innocence. When the war came along and the chaplain read out the news to the prisoners, his face lit up with glee at the list of ships sunk by German submarines—for he had come to hate the country with a terrible hatred.

When the chaplain announced that the late Chief Inspector

Ward had been killed in a Zeppelin raid, “ Stinie ” Morrison wept tears of joy and solemnly proclaimed his belief in Providence at last !

The end to his bondage came one day in 1921 when he had been undergoing another term in the terrible straight jacket in the “ Pad.” A warder glanced through the spy-hole and thought he seemed in distress. The door was opened and the straight jacket’s interminable fastenings undone, when it was seen that the unfortunate man was *in extremis*. He was removed at once to the hospital but, as a matter of fact, he actually died on the stretcher between two hospital beds before they could get him into bed ! His great heart had given out at last.

Now the question remains, was “ Stinie ” Morrison innocent or not ?

I will say quite frankly what my opinion is.

If “ Stinie ” Morrison had been hanged I should have said that the balance of evidence was in favour of the verdict.

But this is the great point which weighs with me. “ Stinie ” Morrison always persisted his innocence ! In a colony with many other “ Lifers,” many of whom had pleaded “ Not Guilty,” he alone was absolutely, definitely, passionately, persistently proclaiming his innocence. He had behaved himself pretty fairly in his five years’ penal servitude which was merited, but from the day he crossed the threshold of the prison, after the murder trial, to the day he died, he was a protesting rebel !

I fail to see how a man of his calibre could maintain that steadfastness of purpose, keep to that endless, losing fight against iron authority which ultimately killed him, unless he was inspired by a conviction of inner truth which gave him, as it were, spiritual armour. However, that is only an opinion, so at that I will leave it.

CHAPTER IX

AN EASTBOURNE MURDER

I AM now going to deal with the Eastbourne murder because it represents one of the very few cases of my career in which murder was definitely committed by an armed criminal.

Just in passing, I might remark that, by some coincidence or phenomena, certain places seem to attract murders. Thus, when little Willie Starchfield was murdered on the North London Railway, he was not the only victim to meet his death on that railway.

I was interested to see, on looking up the records at Scotland Yard, that as far back as 1864 there was a Mr. Briggs, a bank cashier, murdered there between Dalston Junction and Hackney. The records show that a man named Muller was arrested in a transatlantic liner at Liverpool and subsequently paid the extreme penalty at old Newgate Gaol.

Again, in 1902, a little boy of prepossessing appearance—just such another as Willie Starchfield—was found strangled under a seat in a ladies' waiting room at Dalston Station. This, like the Starchfield murder, remained one of our unsolved murder mysteries.

In the last fourteen years, four men have paid the extreme penalty for the crime of murder in the Eastbourne area. The first, John Williams, with whom I am now going to deal; next, two men, Field and Gray, who were hanged at Wandsworth Gaol in January, 1921, for the brutal murder on the sands of the London typist, Irene Munro. And, last of all, Patrick Mahon, author of that terrible crime at the Crumbles in which Miss Emily Kaye met her death.

Now, in the case before me, ex-Chief Inspector Elijah Bower and Inspector Hayman—whom I recall as both fine types of police detectives—proceeded, at the instruction of Scotland Yard, to Eastbourne, and listened to the amazing story from Inspector J. Parker of the Eastbourne Police, which I now relate to you.

On the evening of October 9th, 1912, P.C. Luck, in charge, temporarily, of the main police station in Eastbourne, received a telephone message.

A woman, speaking in a tense and excited voice, intimated that she was speaking from No. 6 South Cliff Avenue. She

begged the officer to come at once as there was a man lying on the porch roof above her front door awaiting an opportunity to break into her bedroom window. Promptly, Constable Luck disconnected and telephoned to Inspector Walls at his office on the Grand Parade, quite near to South Cliff Avenue.

Inspector Walls replied to Luck :

“ Right ! I’ll go at once ! ”

Three or four minutes later the same feminine voice came on to the line asking if anyone was on the way, and Luck replied reassuringly that there was.

Again there lapsed another three or four minutes and the bell rang. The same voice was again heard on the line, speaking in almost hysterical excitement, screaming, in fact :

“ For Heaven’s sake send somebody, there’s not a minute to lose. There’s murder being done ! There’s shooting ! Oh ! for Heaven’s sake, come ! ”

Inspector Pratt was then obtained and he went with all speed to 6 South Cliff Avenue. There, lying on the ground before the house, bleeding at the mouth, was his friend and colleague, Inspector John Walls. Inspector Pratt saw that he was dead and then, after looking about for the assassin, entered the house to make enquiries.

He discovered that the house was the residence of an Austrian lady of great reputed wealth, Countess Ertoray. She was known locally to possess a very great quantity of jewellery which she often wore. That night she was dining at the Burlington Hotel and it is to be presumed the murderer, knowing this, had come to try to get the jewels.

Shortly before eight o’clock a brougham was ordered to pick up the Countess and it was while the brougham was waiting outside the house that the coachman, John Potter, happening to glance up, saw a man crouched upon a leaded ledge or portico above the front door.

This portico was four feet below the Countess’s dressing-room.

With prudence the driver said nothing until he had driven the Countess some way, then he stopped his horses and told her. The Countess promptly ordered :

“ Drive back home ! ”

Arrived home again the Countess, with steady nerve, entered the hall below the very place where the man was crouching, and quietly telephoned to the Eastbourne police.

The coachman waited outside the house and saw the arrival of Inspector John Walls. The Inspector entered the house, had a word with the Countess, then, according to the coachman, came out into the garden, looked up at the portico, and said :

“ Come on down, old boy, the game’s up ! ”

Immediately, there was fired a succession of shots from the portico. Potter saw the Inspector stagger and fall, he saw the man on the portico rise to an erect position preparatory to jumping down. Then, the horses, taking fright at the reports of the shots, dashed off. Before the coachman could remaster his horses and drive back the murderer had escaped ! Upon John Potter’s return with his horses he found Inspector Pratt bending over the body of Inspector Walls.

Inspector Pratt found a soft hat in the garden but otherwise there was no trace of the murderer, and therefore Chief Constable Major R. J. J. Tearle decided to ask the State for additional assistance. Scotland Yard was communicated with, the result being the co-operation which I have previously noted.

After sifting much evidence it was discovered that a dog-cart had been seen driving very rapidly in the direction of South Cliff Avenue just before the time of the crime ; and, at first, that was all.

Doctor Benson, the East Sussex coroner, opened his inquest on the 11th.

Doctor John Adams of Chiswick Place, police surgeon, stated that he had examined the body and found a bullet wound between the Inspector’s second and third ribs on the left side, and a wound on the edge of the left lung. The bullet, in his opinion, must have been fired by someone from above, and to the left of the dead Inspector.

Evidence was also given by the coachman Potter, who simply told the Court what I have told you, and Constable Luck gave evidence about the telephone calls, whilst Countess Ektoray confirmed. Asked by the coroner if she had actually seen the man on the portico she replied that she had not. She had seen the Inspector look up there and she had heard him address someone there ; then she had heard the shots, and, while she was again telephoning to the police, she saw a man bend down for a moment over the recumbent body of the Inspector, then dash away

Inspector Pratt told how he found the body, searched the lawn and found a soft hat.

The inquest was closed with the verdict of "Wilful Murder by some person or persons unknown."

After various conferences between the police chiefs, an exhaustive process of elimination was started upon. It was obvious in a moment to the trained mind that what we had to find here was a particularly desperate type of "cat" burglar.

After a most complete reference to all records, and after combing the district and taking reports from a number of landladies of boarding houses, it was decided that the murderer had escaped to London, and the "comb-out" was continued there.

In this process of elimination there is a lot of intimate detail to be taken into consideration. In this case we had a rough idea of the type and size of the man. There was the question of "style"—the type who would lie waiting on a balcony. That was also helpful. Then there was the list of every desperate criminal who might use certain scaling methods, and then, having got that, there was to be considered the type which, in a corner, might use a firearm. For this purpose the close records of every known criminal had to be carefully gone through, so far as they were preserved, within the elimination arrived at earlier. You would be astounded how exact and complete this process is. The psychology of the criminal is taken fully into consideration. The reports of Medical Officers of Prisons regarding the type of mind, the temper, the evidences of brutality or the contrary—all these things count.

Gradually the authorities got down to this in summary :

The murderer, or the man wanted, was lissom and slim, neat and dapper in appearance, a man who could wriggle through any small aperture, could crawl, jump, crouch, and climb just as the exigencies of his "job" dictated.

It was ascertained that a man and a woman calling themselves "Seymour" had stayed at two different addresses in Eastbourne, leaving the last address at which they had stayed on the day following the murder.

Inspector Bower, after taking note of descriptions given of "Seymour," decided that he would see him wherever he was.

Now back in London, Scotland Yard was searching continually for clues as to the present address of "Seymour," and there came a time when it was discovered that "Seymour" and a man well-known in the underworld by the name of John Williams, were probably one and the same.

This information was gradual but certain. Whenever the net of elimination begins to tighten you generally find certain fish seeking to squeeze themselves through the meshes. There are frequently people who "know" but will not say, and yet if their knowledge is guilty they often, at the last moment, seek to show their comparative innocence by opening their hearts to the police. All this comes under the somewhat comprehensive term "Information Received."

Following certain information then, and after an anonymous communication from the North of London, it was found that a man called John Williams, alias so-and-so many times over, as is the fashion in the burglar section of the criminal world, had lived in the Liverpool Road, King's Cross, earlier in the year. He was known to climb like a cat, and to be desperate. He had been known to clear a bar in a low-down public-house by firing one shot at a whisky bottle.

In March he had left for Bournemouth with a woman named Florence, alleged to be his wife. Some time afterwards they had returned to Finsbury Park, but enquiries at the last address failed to discover his exact whereabouts.

Again, from "Information Received," and acting upon instructions, I found myself one day loafing around the buffet in the Metropolitan Station at Moorgate Street at about 2 p.m. Presently, I saw a man come into the bar whom I knew instinctively to be John Williams, the wanted "cat" burglar and murderer of Inspector John Walls.

Reflecting as I sit here, on my first impression of John Williams, I remember him as a short, virile, alert type of man looking about twenty-eight, though his correct age was thirty-five. His lissom, well-knit frame suggested strength, and his sharp eye alertness. As a type I would have put him down as a jockey. He had that compact athletic appearance.

Now I was under definite instructions not to arrest him personally as it was thought that he would raise very serious trouble and because Chief Inspector Bower said he did not want half the bar "shot up," so I communicated immediately with my superiors and Inspector Bower came along at once,

accompanied by Inspector Hayman and Chief Inspector Parker of the Eastbourne police. In order to avoid a "scene," Chief Inspector Bower arranged that he and Inspector Parker should enter the bar through separate doors and, closing upon the man, arrest him before he could move. They were supported, of course, by Inspector Hayman and myself, in case of trouble.

So it came about that John Williams raised a glass of whisky to his lips and found himself enclosed by the two Inspectors. He turned very pale but otherwise made no move nor gave any other sign of discomfiture. He glanced rapidly to left and right and saw that he was completely enclosed so he made no fight. Within five minutes he was at Moorfields Police Station where we charged him with the murder of John Walls.

A very disappointed crowd met the London train at Eastbourne when it was known that we were bringing the suspected murderer, for, as he stepped out of the train, his face was covered by a thin, dark blue fabric with white spots. This was, in common fairness all round, in the prisoner's interest as much as in that of any other. It prevented anyone identifying him as a result of a photograph seen in the newspapers or by a glimpse at him on his way to the police station. I remember that this precaution was much commented upon at the time, sometimes adversely. In fact the case came to be referred to as "the hooded murderer case."

His first police court appearance was on the 26th of October when he was charged before the Eastbourne Bench with the Wilful Murder of Inspector John Walls between seven and eight o'clock on the evening of the 9th.

Evidence was given by the police that from "Information Received" they kept a man and a woman shadowed on the 15th, in the vicinity of a place called "Redoubt Gardens." They were apparently searching for something which they ultimately found. They were taken to the Central Police Station where statements were taken from them, after which they were allowed to depart. The man was X of London, N., the woman, the prisoner's wife, Florence Seymour. The article found was a Colt revolver, five chamber, modern pattern, firing heavy-calibre bullets. The revolver was handed to the Bench and Dr. Adams testified that the bullets found in the murdered man's body fitted the chambers.

The landlady, Annie Frances Jones, stated that John

Williams, whom she knew as Seymour, and his wife whom she recognized as Mrs. Seymour, lodged with her. According to her the prisoner's movements on the night of the murder were that he came in at 8.30 p.m., went out again at 9 p.m., and finally returned at 10 p.m. He did not go out again that night.

On the day following the murder Mr. and Mrs. Seymour went out at ten in the morning, returning at two. At 3.30 p.m. a man called whom she now recognized as X. He left with "Seymour" in a taxi at 4.30 p.m. X returned alone and accompanied by Mrs. Seymour left the house at 7.30.

Florence Seymour then gave evidence. She admitted that she was living under the protection of Williams and that they used the name Seymour. She stated that he always carried a revolver. She admitted living with him at Bournemouth and at Finsbury Park, at each of which places he had the revolver.

Next the brother of the prisoner gave evidence. He said that on the 10th he had a letter from his brother bearing the Eastbourne postmark. The contents were :

"If you would save my life come here at once. Come to 4, Tideswell Road. Please bring some money. Very, very urgent."

Accompanied by Mr. X he came to 4, Tideswell Road and there saw his brother who, at his request, came back to London with him. On the way they discussed the recent murder and his brother, the prisoner, had made the remark :

"The man who murdered the Inspector ought to hang !"

X said that in consequence of what Florence Seymour told him, he accompanied her to Eastbourne on the 15th to search for a revolver. That was when the police arrested them.

Florence Seymour was then recalled. She recapitulated the movements of herself and the prisoner on the night of the murder. She spoke with great emotion.

On the evening of the 9th, she said, she accompanied Williams to a seat on the front at seven o'clock. He placed in her hands a brown paper parcel and left her. At 7.50 he returned—without his soft hat. She identified the hat found in the Countess's garden as that of her "husband."

When asked about the brown paper parcel she said Williams had said to her upon his return :

“ Throw it over the wall, we shan't want it now.”

A parcel about eight inches long was then shown to her and she identified it as the parcel she had thrown over the wall. The parcel contained a hempen rope with a hook in one end and a ball of silk which opened out into a ladder.

The brother of the prisoner admitted that upon an occasion his brother, the prisoner, had threatened his, the witness's wife, and so frightened her that her hair had turned quite grey. Both he and X recognised the revolver as that of the prisoner.

After much argument between Bench and Counsel the prisoner was committed to the Sussex Assizes.

When the trial opened Sir Frederick Low, prosecuting, admitted that it was essentially a case of circumstantial evidence, but in his view conclusive circumstantial evidence. He recapitulated the facts and called his witnesses. The Crown case was complete.

I remember a hush of expectation as the prisoner elected to give evidence, and proceeded from the dock to the witness-box.

Cool and perfectly collected he made the best explanation he could of the events of the tragic night. In summary it amounted to the fact that he had been at the pictures with his wife! He accounted for the discrepancy between her statements and his own as being due to pressure placed upon her by the police and another man—probably the actual murderer.

Like a lance came the first sharp stab of Sir Frederick Low: “ John Williams, I think you are what is termed a burglar ? ”

“ Unfortunately, yes,” replied Williams coolly.

In answer to the rapid fire of cross-questions he stated his reason for the possession of the rope was that he knew some crack “ cat ” burglars on the Continent and they had come over and asked him for the loan of the silk ladder for a night. He had taken it out to give them, but they had not turned up and so he asked Miss Seymour to fling it away. He maintained that at seven o'clock he went to the pictures and at 8.30, upon his return, he saw a notice that the Inspector had been shot by a burglar who had escaped. He wrote to his brother because the police knew his record and he was afraid. He hid the revolver because his finger-prints were known at Scotland Yard.

Finally, he made a dramatic outburst against the evidence of Florence Seymour, which he said was bullied out of her by X, whom he called a Judas, and the police.

Step by step Sir Frederick Low took him over the evidence and then he was replaced in the dock.

Florence Seymour was then recalled and asked about the statement that she had been at the picture show—and not sitting on the front as she had said.

Then, indeed, came a moment of excitement, dramatic and unexpected.

“I have told lies,” said Florence Seymour. “All lies. I am going to tell the truth now. What I have told the police belonged to the events of the previous night. On the 9th I did go to the pictures with the prisoner from 7 to 8.30 and that is the truth.”

When the excitement had died down and the Judge, who had leaned forward in his astonishment, leaned back again watching her closely, Counsel for the Crown asked :

“What did you go down into the Redoubt Gardens for on the 15th?”

Poor Florence Seymour was a tragic picture as she stood there, torn between her conflicting emotions, but her love for the man in the dock was paramount, and though she burst into loud sobbing she managed to say :

“I went there because X made me.”

Of course it was all hopeless. The Judge occupied an hour and ten minutes in summing up, and at twenty-five minutes past six the Jury retired.

When they returned their verdict was written upon their solemn faces.

The Clerk of Arraignment turned to the dock :

“John Williams,” he said, “You have been found guilty of Wilful Murder. Have you anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon you according to Law?”

“Yes,” said Williams, “I have. I am innocent of this crime. I am convicted upon circumstantial evidence only. It is a grave miscarriage of justice.” The black cap was placed upon the Judge’s head. . . .

“And may the Almighty God in His Infinite Wisdom have mercy upon your Soul!”

Williams heard the words without more sign than a

momentary flicker of the lips and about six weeks later he expiated his crime on the scaffold of Lewes Gaol.

Information, anonymous or otherwise, nearly always follows such a murder for the simple reason that murder is as much anathema to the criminal as to the respectable conscience. The English crook, in the great majority of cases, loathes violence. In Williams, there was brought into prominence for the first time in this country what is now familiarly termed the "cat burglar."

CHAPTER X

PRELUDE TO "THE NORTH LONDON TRAIN MURDER"

FOUND "mute of malice" consequent upon his refusal to plead, a mysterious black-bearded Armenian was at the Old Bailey in November, 1912, found insane, and ordered to be detained during His Majesty's pleasure.

The prisoner, Stephen Titus, who maintained a sullen silence throughout the protracted proceedings, was charged with the murder of two persons. They were :

Ester May Towers, the assistant manageress of the Horse Shoe Hotel, Tottenham Court Road, who was shot dead in the bar, and Thomas Morris Johns, who was fatally wounded when he attempted to stop the madman as he ran amok in the street.

Titus was also charged with shooting at Miss Ray, the barmaid, Charles Hook and John Starchfield, newsvendors, the latter when joining in the pursuit.

The case presented some unusual features. Having already been found "mute of malice" the prisoner was not called upon to plead, Mr. Justice Phillimore having entered for him a formal plea of "not guilty." The "silent man," as Titus had come to be called, sat in the dock between warders, with his hands thrust deep in his trousers' pockets, and his chin resting upon his chest. He refused to utter a word and appeared to be the only person in the crowded court who took no interest in the proceedings. He heard his fate unmoved.

The tragic story of the wild shooting was dramatically told by Mr. A. H. Bodkin, Director of Public Prosecutions. He related how Titus, who was staying at the Horse Shoe Hotel, entered the bar and without provocation shot down Miss Towers and Miss Ray ; how he fired at the other people in the bar, and during his wild rush through the street ; how, before he was captured, he fatally wounded Thomas Johns in addition to wounding John Starchfield, a newsvendor, in Tottenham Court Road, who pluckily attempted to stop him.

Counsel praised the conduct of such a brave man. "A terrible weapon," was Mr. Bodkin's description of the five-chambered revolver used by Titus, in whose bedroom a similar firearm with a bandolier of cartridges of heavy calibre was found.

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At the conclusion of the case the Judge praised all parties who had bravely participated in the arrest of this homicidal maniac.

Starchfield was not present owing to his serious bullet injuries, but the nation was very much indebted to him and he had the praises of his fellow-citizens for his sterling bravery—displayed in the interest of the public welfare.

He was glad to say that under the Act of George IV, Section 7, he was able to do something more substantial. He proposed to order the Sheriff of the County to pay John Starchfield £50.

This is the story of gallant John Starchfield, plucky London newsvendor, who tackled an armed maniac, overcoming him, and himself becoming, seriously wounded, thereby saving many helpless people.

Such is the remarkable story of one side of this brave man's life. The following pages will reveal another chapter, not unknown to the British public.

Every reader must draw his own conclusion ; but the longer he logically reasons it out, the more complicated and mysterious will the matter seem.

The murder of a little innocent six-year-old boy by strangulation in the third-class compartment of a North London Railway carriage on January 8th, 1914, still remains undiscovered.

Who did kill this helpless child ? I saw the frail little form on the mortuary slab, and the helpless, but exquisite infant beauty impressed me most strongly. I was aghast at the thought that there existed human beings who could be prompted by such cold-blooded impulses.

In front of me lay a lovely infant boy—murdered.

Who committed the atrocious crime, and in the name of all things humanly comprehensible—what was the motive ?

Was it the work of a man ? Was it the act of some fiendish woman, or again, some abnormal, mentally deficient youth ?

When was the murder of Willie Starchfield committed ? Again no definite reply can be given. It must have been committed between 12.30 p.m. and 4.30 p.m. on Thursday, January 8th, 1914, but no definite hour can be assigned.

The medical evidence seemed to suggest that the boy had been dead for some time when his body was discovered—but beyond that it is impossible to go.

The police in a case of this kind commonly base their investigations on some evidence of motive, well or ill-defined. There was absolutely no evidence of motive in the Starchfield case.

If it was not a homicidal maniac, who often has the type of mentality which combines uncanny subtlety with diabolical ingenuity, it seems more likely that it was committed by someone who had previous acquaintance with the boy.

There are all sorts of difficulties in the way of the second hypothesis—and there it must be left.

This strange and cruel murder at the time of its commission fairly gripped the intense interest of the whole community—primarily on account of the innocent age of the victim, and the circumstances under which the cold-blooded act was perpetrated.

On the afternoon of a fine day in early January, a fifteen-year-old youth named George Tillman, entered a third-class compartment on a North London Railway train at Mildmay Park Station, running from Chalk Farm to Broad Street.

At about twenty-five past four, according to this lad's subsequent evidence, he bent down to tie up his boot-lace, and while in the act of doing so, saw underneath the seat in front of him a small white human hand; horror-struck and terrified, the lad jumped up and rushed to the window, and at this moment the train ran into Haggerston Station. And the youth, shaken and deathly-white, communicated his dread information to the station-master, but before this astonished official could realize the significance of it all, the train had again started.

Telephonic communication was immediately resorted to, and, as a result, at Shoreditch Railway Station the dead body of a handsome little lad with long golden curls was found beneath the seat of a third-class compartment.

The police were informed and the child's body was taken to the mortuary. Several photographs were taken of the beautiful little shape, and as a result it was identified as William Starchfield, the six-year-old son of John and Agnes Starchfield.

The little chap, at the time of his death, was living with his mother in the Hampstead Road, N.W., while the father, John Starchfield, lived in a common lodging house situated in Hanover Court, Drury Lane.

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The husband was a London news vendor, and gained his livelihood by selling newspapers outside the Oxford Music Hall, situated in Tottenham Court Road, opposite the well-known hostelry, the "Horse Shoe." The wife, on the other hand, according to her statements, supported herself and boy in the capacity of a tailoress.

Scotland Yard was represented by Ex-Chief Inspector Gough, a brilliant and energetic detective of the modern school, assisted by Inspector Burham.

At about 12.30 p.m. on the 8th, the father of the child was seen at his lodgings, namely Hanover Court, Drury Lane, and statements were taken from him, also from others in a position to throw light upon the crime.

From this moment Starchfield was never lost sight of. And whenever he went out, or wherever he went, his movements were shadowed day and night, either by myself or by a colleague working in conjunction with me.

The police worked indefatigably in their investigations, but on every side they were confronted by barriers of insurmountable circumstances. Facts not consistent with times, appearances not correlative with facts, witnesses not commensurate with details, hindered and impeded them upon all sides.

A local canvass was resorted to in the neighbourhood where the little lad had resided, with the possible hope that some person might have recollected seeing him on the day of the murder.

The landlady where little Willie lived testified to seeing him alive at 12.35 p.m. In fact she sent him on an errand to a local shop to purchase a card bearing the words "Unfurnished Apartments." Further, the boy made his purchase as borne out by the shop-keeper and left, with the card, ostensibly to take it home.

From the house to the shop was only a few hundred yards, so it would be quite an easy matter for the child to accomplish such trivial little errands.

Therefore it would appear that Willie Starchfield was alive and well between the hours of 12.35 p.m. and approximately 12.45 p.m., the times he came to and left the local tradesman's shop.

From this time the movements of the little victim remain enshrouded in mystery, and up to this day conjecture is rife as to the possibilities of little Starchfield's movements.

The funeral of the little victim took place some time after, and Willie Starchfield's body was conveyed to its last resting place and interred at the Roman Catholic Cemetery, Kensal Rise.

Thousands of people lined and followed the route of the cortège, while at the place of interment, dense crowds packed the usually quiet and peaceful suburban cemetery, which necessitated extra bodies of police to cope with the unusual occurrence.

The boy's mother, and other relatives followed in the funeral procession behind the coffin, but the father, John Starchfield, was conspicuous by reason of his absence, but at the cemetery it was observed by all present that he had patiently been waiting in the small chapel for the arrival of his little son's body.

On Thursday, January 15th, before Dr. Wynn Westcott, at the Shoreditch Coroner's Court, an inquest was held relating to the death of one William Starchfield, age six years five months, found dead in a third-class compartment about 4.30 p.m. on the North London Railway, January 8th, 1914.

Sir Basil Thompson, Assistant Commissioner of the Criminal Investigation Department, sat beside the coroner, while other distinguished persons in the medical, press, and literary world were also present.

Evidence was taken from the father, mother, landlady, two youths, Lazzaro and Tillman, also several railway servants of the North London Railway Company.

The youth Lazzaro threw a light upon the case which suggested that Willie Starchfield was in the company of a tall strange boy about 12.30 p.m. on the day of the tragedy. He appears to be the only witness who had introduced this possible theory.

The mother, Mrs. Agnes Starchfield, was then interrogated by the presiding coroner. She stated that on the day in question she was out in search of employment, and left Willie at home in charge of her landlady, Mrs. Longstaffe. Upon her return she was told by this lady that Willie had not been seen since 12.30 p.m., so they both went out in search of him, but without result.

Mrs. Longstaffe, the landlady, informed the court that on this particular day she had sent Willie on an errand, and the next time she saw him was when she was in the company of

his mother, when at the request of the police she identified his body at the Shoreditch Mortuary.

She stated in reply to the Coroner's next questions, that no railway officials lived in her house, nor did anybody to her knowledge bear animosity towards the child, and that Mrs. Starchfield was not quarrelsome or immoral.

The mother was then recalled and asked as to her relations with her husband ; she replied, " They had been parted on several occasions, but had become reconciled. They had had three children, all of whom, including Willie, were dead." Pressed as to her husband's affection towards the dead child, she replied in an almost inaudible tone of voice that " she had reason to think that her husband disliked his son."

An Italian boy, who could speak very little English, then gave evidence, and spoke through the medium of his brother Emil Lazzaro.

This youth, a lad of thirteen to fourteen years of age swore to having seen Willie Starchfield in company with another lad. Pressed as to the age of the lad he saw, Lazzaro said he " paid no particular attention—but he knew that the lad in question was much older than Willie." Further questioning elicited the fact that he had never seen the strange youth before in his life—he knew Willie well because he often played with him.

The strange youth he saw was about sixteen years old—he was very tall, they were both playing about in the Hampstead Road, the time would be about 12.40 p.m. to 12.45 p.m.

The boy Tillman was then interrogated by the Coroner as to the finding of the body. He was a clean, nice-looking, typical type of working-class lad, and his straightforward answers assured all present. " I was sent to Mr. Davies at Stoke Newington with some wood. I went by North London Railway ; upon my return I got in at Mildmay Park. I went to do my boot-lace up and saw a white hand. I stooped low and looked underneath the seat. I saw a boy, his knees were up and his face was turned towards me. He seemed funny-looking to me, his mouth was open. I did not know what to think. When the train ran into Haggerston I jumped out and told the porter, the train went on, that's all I know."

Edward Joseph Cook, the railway porter who found the little body and took it from the compartment gave evidence as to time, etc. He saw no one leave the carriage when he

opened the door. Asked by Dr. Westcott if the body had warmth at all, he replied: "No, sir! Quite cold." He laid it in the Secretary's office until the arrival of the police.

Guard Pitt deposed to searching the train: he said he was in charge. Before it left Chalk Farm at 4.14 p.m. for Broad Street he saw nothing wrong.

The Coroner: "Did you see anyone during the course of the afternoon, more especially at Camden Town, carrying a child?"

Guard: "No, sir!"

The Coroner: "I'd like to know if a ticket or half-ticket was sold that afternoon, and if so I'd like to see it."

Chief Inspector Gough: "Every enquiry has been made in that direction but confirmation of this natural deduction has not been obtained."

John Starchfield, the father of the murdered child, was the next witness called, and great interest was aroused on all sides when he rose to answer the questions of Dr. Wynn Westcott, the coroner.

The father was a man of medium height, age about thirty-five to forty, with pale and sallow complexion, heavy black moustache and eyes deep-set with dark coloured rings beneath them.

Coming up to the leading questions of the crime, he was asked if he had seen his little son of late, and to answer exactly when? where? and under what circumstances.

Starchfield replied that he saw the boy for the last time about a month previous, when he was on his "pitch" selling his papers. Willie had been sent by his mother to receive the one pound allowed him, Starchfield, from the Carnegie Hero Fund.

His mother was accompanying him at the time. He said it was not the first time that Willie had strayed away, in fact on one occasion he had gone to the pictures with a much older boy and they had cautioned him not to do it again.

Starchfield did not know the boy, neither could he remember any facts that would go to establish the verification as to this alleged strange youth's identity.

Mrs. Starchfield corroborated this evidence.

On the afternoon of the tragedy he was in bed and did not arise until about 2.45 p.m. He was suffering from the effects of an old wound which often occasioned him much pain and indisposition.

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The first witness called in support of Starchfield's "alibi" was Jules Labarbe, a French subject and deputy at the common lodging house where Starchfield resided.

The Coroner: "Will you swear that John Starchfield was in the house at 12.30 p.m.?"

Labarbe: "No, sir, I will not swear he was in the house at 12.30 p.m."

The Coroner: "You said to the police that you saw Starchfield in the house on the morning of the 8th, and that he went out and returned at 1.45 p.m. Yet you now say you did not see him."

Labarbe: "I am not certain!"

The Coroner: "You say you looked in his bedroom?"

Labarbe: "I may have, I think I did."

The Coroner: "You won't swear you looked into his bedroom and all was as usual on the 8th."

Labarbe: "No, sir!"

The Coroner: "It's curious you told the police that Starchfield was never in bed after 1 p.m., except on a Sunday!"

Labarbe: "I have said that."

The Coroner: "Will you swear to it now?"

Labarbe: "No, sir!"

The Coroner (to the Jury): "Yet he says at the bottom of this paper, 'This statement has been read over to me and is true.'"

The name of John Tilley was then called in support of Starchfield's statements as to his movements on the 8th January.

The Coroner: "Your name is John Tilley, you state you are a news vendor and that you know Starchfield intimately, and that you sleep in the same room with him at Hanover Court Lodging House, Drury Lane. Is that so?"

Tilley: "Yes, sir!"

The Coroner: "You have sworn to the police that on the morning of the 8th you left Starchfield in bed about 8.30 a.m."

Tilley: "Yes, sir!"

The Coroner: "Yet you now swear he was in bed at 2.30 p.m."

Tilley: "Yes, I didn't leave the house until 3 p.m."

The Coroner: "How do you account for informing the police that you saw him so early in the morning when you got up?"

Tilley: "Oh! the police flurried me. They took statements from me at 3.30 a.m. in the morning and I was not so sure then as I am now."

Two more witnesses were then called on Starchfield's behalf—Joseph Payne and Thomas Stickrey.

Payne said he saw Starchfield in bed at 11.45 a.m.

The Coroner: "Then you saw Tilley?"

Payne: "Tilley says so, I don't. Any case I did not see Tilley."

Stickrey, the last witness, swore that he observed Starchfield dressing himself at about 2.50 p.m. in his room.

The Coroner at the conclusion was asked by the Foreman on behalf of the Jury if any new light could be thrown on the subject. To which interpolation the Coroner answered negatively. He remarked upon the advantages and disadvantages of publicity by Press, commented on the fact that it might be the work of a common criminal or a homicidal maniac, and deferred the inquiry for a week in hope of new evidence, also the medical testimony to be forthcoming.

At the resumed inquest on January 22nd, the first witness to be called was Dr. H. E. Garrett, divisional surgeon, who stated, "When he examined the body on January 8th the exposed parts were livid and the face was intensely dark and suffused with blood. Both lips were slightly bruised, and there was a small wound on the inner surface, caused apparently by pressure against the teeth. There were all the appearances of death from strangulation. On the neck were marks indicating the recent application of a narrow constricting band, with sufficient force and for a sufficiently long period, to cause a marked groove in the tissue in front with discolouration in the sides and at the back of the neck. Associated with this constriction were many superficial scratches at the root of the neck, in front extending over the breast bone. There was also an external bruise over the rib on the right side. The stomach contained an ounce and a half of partially digested food containing currants. He was of the opinion that death occurred between two and three in the afternoon. Death was due to strangulation by external violence.

Sir Bernard Spilsbury, at that time Dr. Bernard Spilsbury, Pathologist, St. Mary's Hospital, corroborated the expert medical testimony of Dr. Garrett and added the interesting statement that the lad was in a condition of *status lymphaticus*

and would therefore be more likely to die than an ordinary healthy boy, if subjected to sudden shock.

This condition in his view accelerated death, which probably occurred within a minute of the tight application of a cord around the neck.

In answer to the Foreman, Dr. Garrett expressed the view that the child was kneeling when the crime was committed. There were signs of pressure on the abdomen and there was a possibility that the child was on some person's knee and was held while the crime was committed.

He thought that the scratch and bruises about the neck indicated the child's human endeavour to remove with his own small hands the strangulating ligature or constriction.

An audible murmur of sympathy seemed to hum around the precincts of the small densely packed Coroner's Court as the doctor concluded the later statement of his technical account of the child's death struggles.

"Poor helpless mite!" spontaneously cried one woman, while Mrs. Starchfield and other women present were sobbing and struggling to restrain their natural emotion.

The Foreman: "What sort of band could cause death in this manner?"

Dr. Garrett: "The groove round the child's neck suggested a blind cord, a violin string, in fact any smooth strong piece of string was sufficient to cause it."

The Coroner: "Do you consider an anæsthetic was used?"

Dr. Garrett: "No, sir! There was no trace!"

The first thrill of development that took place in the North London train murder came from a highly respectable woman named Mrs. Sarah Wood.

At about one o'clock in the afternoon she saw a man and little boy in the Kentish Town Road; the child was walking in the gutter. The man was leading the little boy by the hand, and the child was munching a cake. She took particular notice of the boy on account of his prepossessing appearance, in fact the incident was so impressed on her memory that she thought of it some time after. Mrs. Wood remembered saying to the little fellow "Bless his heart;" but the man urged the boy on, by tugging his arm. She also recollected the man on account of his appearance, and in a dramatic manner this witness dropped her voice and said: "He had piercing black eyes which I shall never forget." Asked by Dr. Wynn Westcott

if she had seen the man before she replied, "No!" Also if she had seen him since, Mrs. Wood answered with an emphatic "Yes!" The Coroner asked where? and at what time, to which the witness said: "At this Coroner's Court when the crowd were waiting to go in, she saw the man in question and was absolutely certain he was the same individual she saw with the little boy in the afternoon of January 8th at about one o'clock near Camden Town Railway Station."

"Do you see him now in this court?" queried the Coroner.

"Yes! there he is," and she pointed to John Starchfield in a firm, unhesitating manner.

Immediately a stir was created by all people present and the Coroner had some difficulty in restoring comparative quietness.

I shall never forget the scene. The crowded court, packed almost to suffocation, the tense and ashen expression on the face of the witness, and the imperturbable expression of the Coroner in direct contrast to the startled faces of a great majority listening to the proceedings.

Starchfield, who was sitting between two men, jumped up and in a loud voice said, "It's a lie. Me, lady? Me?"

He was immediately restrained by his two friends, and pulled down on to his seat.

Sensation followed sensation, when Mr. J. White, a commercial traveller residing in New Southgate, N., deposed that on the afternoon of the tragedy he was in the vicinity of Camden Town Railway Station about two o'clock. It was his intention of proceeding from this station to Broad Street. Prior to going up to the booking-office he noticed a man whom he thought by his appearance might have been an Italian. He was wearing a light hat and dark clothes, and he noticed he had very dark eyes and a heavy black moustache. He observed that a little boy was with him, for he heard the man say to the child "Come here," because the little chap made to go towards the barrier.

The Coroner asked him if he had since seen the child. He replied "Yes! the police showed me a photograph and I identified it as the child I saw on the afternoon of the 8th."

Asked why he had been so long communicating with the police he stated that the matter had worried him incessantly day and night, and he was at last compelled to come forward,

as he considered it was incumbent upon him in the interests of justice.

The Coroner : " Have you seen the man since ? "

White : " Yes, sir ! "

The Coroner : " Where ? "

White : " I am sorry, but that's the man I saw," and he pointed to Starchfield.

Starchfield jumped up with astonishing alacrity, and turning to the witness said : " It's a lie, a damned lie ; there must be a man who is my double going about."

George Jackson, a signalman, was then sworn, and he related how in the afternoon of the 8th January he was looking out from the St. Pancras signal-box, on the passing of the Chalk Farm to Broad Street train at about 2.14 in the afternoon. In a third-class compartment to the front of the train, to the best of his belief the carriage next to engine, he saw a man with his face turned towards the engine, leaning over someone he took to be a female. Jackson was asked if he considered it was a boy or girl. To which question, he answered undecidedly. Upon further interrogation Jackson thought that the man whom he saw was dark and had a dark moustache.

At the mortuary he realised that the dead boy's face resembled strongly in his estimation—that of the one he had seen the dark man bending over. He was not conscientiously prepared to swear to it.

The Coroner : " How far was the train away ? "

Signalman : " About twenty-five yards, sir ! "

The Coroner : " About what length of time do you consider you were able to look into the carriage on the train passing ? "

Signalman : " No more than eight to ten seconds."

Dr. Wynn Westcott intimated that it had been put forward that a motive of revenge against Starchfield by the friends of the foreigner Titus could be a reason and that he could be impersonated. He, the Coroner, would remind the Jury not to attach too much credence to this—however, it could be taken, like all other theories, into consideration. However, it was facts they were here to deal with and the law of evidence consistent with facts. At this stage the Coroner referred to his notes, and after several comments as to the irregularities on the part of certain witnesses, both for and against Starch-

field, the Jury retired, and upon their return, the unusual announcement was made by the Foreman, that the Jury had decided in view of all evidence tendered that John Starchfield was guilty of the wilful murder of his son, William Starchfield.

The Coroner discussed briefly certain technical points with the Foreman, and proceeded to make out and sign a Warrant for the immediate apprehension into custody for "Wilful Murder" of one, John Starchfield.

The arrest was effected by the officer in charge of the case, Inspector Gough, C.I.D., New Scotland Yard, on the 29th January, twenty-one days after the perpetration of the crime.

The prisoner was escorted to Old Street Police Station in a taxi-cab, after the Coroner's Court had been cleared, and he had shaken hands with his two friends, John Tilley and Michael Ryan.

Upon the following day he was brought up at Old Street Police Court before Mr. Biron, but only formal evidence of arrest was preferred against him by the police.

A brilliant and clever solicitor in the person of Mr. Margetts, of Messrs. Lewis, Margetts, and Jenkins, appeared for Starchfield, and asked that the prisoner be allowed to see his brother, which request the magistrate acceded to.

Throughout the month of February the prisoner was remanded from time to time until the 12th March, when he was committed for trial at the Central Criminal Court on the 2nd April.

On February 10th at Old Street Police Court a sensation was caused by the statement of an additional witness for the prosecution, a Mr. John Moore. He testified that at about 1.50 p.m. on Thursday, January 8th, while passing the Tube Station, High Street, Camden Town, he saw a man whom he knew leading a little boy by the hand. Asked if he could see the man in Court, Moore turned around and said, "That's the man," pointing at the same time to John Starchfield.

The Magistrate turned to Starchfield and asked him if he knew the witness. To which he replied "No! I've never seen or spoken to this man in my life." Moore then said: "He's lying, why I've known him for years, he stands opposite the 'Horse Shoe' in Tottenham Court Road. I used to buy my newspapers off him regularly when I was working as a washer-up at Frascati's."

The Coroner asked Moore if he was referring to the well-

known restaurant in Oxford Street, and Moore replied, "Yes!"

Questioned as to the staff entrance he said it was in Hanway Street and it was at the top of this street, near the Oxford Music Hall entrance, just opposite the "Horse Shoe" that Starchfield sold his newspapers.

Asked if this was true, Starchfield replied that it was so, and that he had been there for years, but reiterated that Moore was unknown to him.

Moore went on to say that the man Starchfield was known to him because he said, "How goes it mate?" in passing and Starchfield replied, "Not so bad!"

During the police court proceedings several witnesses were brought into the case both for the prosecution and defence. Mr. Bodkin for the Crown and Mr. Margetts for the defence examining, re-examining and interrogating them all with relentless determination, according to whatever line of view the point of issue turned upon.

For the prosecution the guard was taken over his tour of duty upon the day of the 8th January, and he firmly repeated his former account at the inquest, that during the whole afternoon he had seen no man with a child enter or leave the train.

Mr. G. Rogers, a railway porter, testified to finding a cord near the up home signal box, near St. Pancras. It had a slip knot and appeared to be the ordinary type of cord used for general purposes.

Frank Gentleman, booking clerk at Camden Town, made clear to the satisfaction of the court the sale of tickets at Camden Town Station, but no evidence of the sale of a half-day ticket was recorded. He remembered Mr. White the commercial traveller depositing his bag at the approximate time mentioned, namely, about 1.55 p.m.—also he identified him when he reclaimed his property on the 12th inst. He had absolutely no recollection of seeing a man and a boy.

In corroboration his colleague substantiated Mr. Gentleman's evidence.

Mr. Walter Edward Dyer came forward and said he was a passenger on the train mentioned and that he was on the platform at this particular time, namely 1.59. He did not see many passengers upon the platform and he certainly saw no man accompanied by a child.

Walter Joseph Day, ticket collector, stated that from 5 a.m. to 2 p.m. he was on duty as ticket examiner at Camden Town Station—but at no time did he observe anybody resembling the prisoner or the murdered boy in question.

This evidence was also corroborated by his colleague who was present on duty with him.

George Evans, a carriage cleaner at Broad Street, testified that he was present upon the arrival of the train in question at 2.21.

The Magistrate asked him his duties and he said it was possible he might have missed seeing the body, as he did not always look under the seats. In fact he had not always the time. Mr. Margetts asked and pressed him as to an exhaustive search upon arrival and departure, and as stated, he admitted the possibility of a body travelling backwards and forwards on two or three journeys prior to discovery.

The guard also, upon further cross-examination, admitted this fact.

Edward Cook, already referred to as finding the body underneath the seat and taking it into the office, said "That it was in the carriage next the engine; nobody was in the compartment next to the carriage in question, in fact there were only a few passengers who got out and they were more or less at the rear of the train.

Moore then re-entered the witness-box and was closely examined by Mr. Margetts for the defence, his questions being directed towards the credit of the witness.

He repudiated the idea that because he had seen photographs of the prisoner he had come forward.

This witness said he knew Starchfield quite well. In fact he had spoken to him in "The Rose of Denmark" public house near the scene of Starchfield's "newspaper pitch." He was asked about a conversation with a Mr. Bennett, and further questioned as to his statement that he was out to get the £500 reward.

Moore admitted that he had gone to the offices of an extensively read paper, also that they had refused to entertain him, and had referred him to the police. He denied that he had informed a good many persons he was the principal witness against Starchfield.

The fact of eliciting from Moore the information that he

had gone in the first instance to a newspaper, called forth from the Magistrate severe condemnation in respect to the privileges of the Press and their abuse.

Other witnesses came forward on behalf of the prisoner. Four of his fellow inmates of Hanover Court Lodging House, all deposed to having seen Starchfield between the hours of one and three on the afternoon of the murder.

Jules Labarbe, the deputy, and a man named John Tilley testifying to seeing him in bed.

Tilley, the newsvendor, who slept in the same room swore to the fact that at 2.30 p.m. Starchfield was in bed.

Yet Mrs. Agnes Starchfield swore to seeing Tilley at one o'clock on the afternoon in question at Rupert Street, W., while another man in the lodging house said on oath that he saw Starchfield dressing at 2.50 p.m., and the fourth man stated he saw the prisoner about 3.15 o'clock in High Street, Bloomsbury.

Starchfield also stated that on the day of his son's murder he was nowhere near the scene of the occurrence, but was in bed, indisposed through the effects of an old gun-shot wound.

He did not rise until 2.30 p.m.

Chief Inspector Gough then recounted his conversation with him and related how on the evening of the crime, accompanied by other officers, he went to Hanover Court Lodging House and saw Starchfield, further that he requested the man to accompany him to Bow Street, as he wished to question him in regard to his son Willie, who was dead.

The prisoner appeared to be unconcerned, so after a few moments he asked Starchfield if he could understand the reason why he, a police officer, was interrogating him so closely, and the prisoner replied that he could not understand.

"Well, it's on account of the fact that the body of your child Willie has been found in a North London Railway train, and all the circumstances point to murder."

At this terrible confrontation Starchfield appeared to display some emotion and commenced to sob.

Mr. Bodkin took the four witnesses, Labarbe, Tilley, Payne, and Stickrey through their previous signed depositions made to the police, and elicited certain evident irregularities in regard to their respective admissions—but beyond this fact, the four remained adamant in respect to their statements

regarding the prisoner's movements between the fatal hours, namely, one and two-thirty on the afternoon of January 8th.

The defence was supplemented by the appearance in the box of three men, two being public servants and the other a small independent commercial man.

The first called was the conductor of a L.G.O.C. 'bus, who stated that on the afternoon of the eighth, in the Camden Road, a woman about 5 ft. 4½ in., aged about thirty to thirty-five, respectably dressed, got into his 'bus with a little boy, whom he since identified as the murdered child. She got off near Chalk Farm station.

This fact was corroborated by the driver, while again the independent witness, Mr. J. Wilson, stated that at about 1.45 p.m. almost outside the above-named station he observed a woman with a little boy. She was leading him by the hand.

The child he had since seen at the Shoreditch Mortuary strongly resembled the one he saw. He was not prepared to swear to it!

Other witnesses from the terminus station, Chalk Farm, were called, but none could throw any fresh light on the case. However, the long-drawn-out proceedings in the police court eventually terminated, and Starchfield on the 12th March was committed for trial at the Central Criminal Court.

On the 1st April, before Mr. Justice Atkin, with Mr. Bodkin for the Director of Public Prosecutions, also Mr. E. C. Boyd and Mr. Roome, the prisoner entered the dock to take his trial, indicted for the crime of the "Wilful murder of his son, William Starchfield."

Mr. Hemmerde, Mr. Purcell, and Mr. G. H. Jones, defended the prisoner, while Mr. B. Blake had a watching brief on behalf of an interested party.

In the initial stages one Juryman retired as he was prejudiced against any form of capital punishment, so a new member was sworn in.

I will not attempt to go through the trial. It only lasted two days.

Mr. Hemmerde brilliantly defended his client throughout the whole proceedings from practically the first opening sentence.

Deadly as the undoubted logic of the Director of Public Prosecutions was, the multitudinous incidents were too

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inconsistent for him to surmount, and on the 2nd April, Mr. Justice Atkin advised the Jury to retire and return a verdict of " Not Guilty " which, after an absence of thirty-five minutes, the Jury recorded.

John Starchfield smiled slightly, bowed to the Judge and stepped from the dock a free man.

The acquitted man left the vicinity of the Central Criminal Court in the company of his friends. As the taxi-cab slowly made off through the waiting and surging crowds outside, he was recognised, and cheer after cheer went up as John Starchfield left the scene of his terrible ordeal.

Late in June 1914, I accidentally met him in the neighbourhood of Tottenham Court Road. He appeared to be delighted to see me again, and over a cup of tea we chatted away for some considerable time. He told me his old wounds played him up considerably, and at times he suffered excruciating agony which left him very weak.

Naturally we discussed the " old affair " and resuscitated many incidents in connection with it.

It was destined to be our last meeting. During 1917 John Starchfield died as the result of his wounds received in 1912. He was conscious to the last and received the final offices and rites of the Church. No statement was made by him.

Therefore the North London Train Crime will remain one of the greatest murder mysteries of modern times.

CHAPTER XI

FOUR CASES

DURING my graduation as a detective patrol in the C.O.C.I.D. (*Commissioner's Office, Criminal Investigation Department*) I served under and came into association with many famous officers of Scotland Yard's detective headquarters. These include the late Superintendent John M'Carthy, also Chief Inspectors John Kane, Alfred Ward, and George Mercer; Ex-Superintendents Sir Patrick Quin, M.V.O., Mr. Frank Froest, M.V.O., Superintendent Hawkin S. Nicholls, Chief Inspectors W. Gough, Fowler, Dew, Cruttchet, and E. Bower—names that have figured prominently upon numerous past occasions in many notable cases. In fact, I could go on enumerating, but, for the purposes of this book, the above few names will suffice.

Out of the many wonderful cases that lie to the credit of Scotland Yard is the affair known as "THE PEARL NECKLACE CASE OF 1923."

My association with this case centred about much constant watching and weeks of tireless energy displayed by the late Chief Inspector A. Ward, in the rounding up of one of the most highly-organised gangs of international jewel thieves in this country. The story has been recounted many times, so I only intend briefly to resuscitate its history.

A wealthy jewel merchant in Paris, by the name of Salamons, despatched on July 15th, 1913, an insured packet per registered post to another well-known merchant in Hatton Garden, a Mr. Max Mayer.

The package was secured, tied and waxed with six private seals, bearing the initials "M.M." and handed in personally by Mr. Salamons at the Rue du Quatre Septembre Post Office, in Paris. The contents were sixty-one oriental pearls, with a diamond snap clasp weighing 76 grammes, and, in addition, a plush-lined morocco case containing a pearl necklace valued at £135,000.

When Mr. Mayer received the packet on the 16th, it bore no unusual signs of having been tampered with, for the waxed paper, seals, and string were absolutely intact.

Imagine, therefore, the consternation of the merchant, when, instead of the matchless pearls, there were displayed to his astonished gaze many pieces of loaf sugar and coal!

The inside story of this case will, I hope, be written by me in the near future on a more comprehensive scale, but, for present explanation, brevity of circumstance and fact must suffice. It remains, without a shadow of a doubt, paramount in criminal history for highly-organised robbery on a large scale, a masterpiece of daring, but, like all huge "coups," remains the essence of simplicity.

Joseph (alias "Cammy") Grizzard was the master mind. He bribed two post-office officials—one an outside auxiliary, the other a permanent inside postman. The necklace was handed to him as prearranged. "Cammy" had an exact replica of the seals—and there you are! Simple? Yet the intrigue, scheming and counter-scheming necessary before this audacious coup was brought off must have been boundless.

Through the instrumentality of an intermediary, who was, by the way, an expert in pearls and precious stones, touch was kept up with the gang for weeks, sometimes at the First Avenue Hotel, sometimes in Lyons' tea shops, and in many other places.

And all the time Chief Inspector Ward was fencing and countering for the opportune moment to strike—which he did. I was present with other officers on September 1st at about 3.30 p.m., when, at the Museum Tube Station, Ward arrested the gang responsible: "Cammy" Grizzard, James Lockett, Simon Silverman and Leisir Gutwirth.

After lengthy police-court proceedings and trial, they were found guilty and sentenced to long terms of penal servitude. They fell into the hands of the Law this way:

Gutwirth communicated with someone in Paris—a relation—for the sale of the pearls, for which, by this time, a reward of £10,000 had been offered. Undoubtedly the relative recognised the position—also the pearls! The owner was approached, who, in turn, informed the underwriters, and they secretly communicated with the police, who, by their own inimitable means, were able to bring the offenders to justice.

THE LIVERPOOL SACK MURDER

Prior to the war, a cold-blooded murder was perpetrated in Liverpool. The body of a woman, decapitated and tied up in a sack, was found one morning in a lock of the Mersey Canal.

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For weeks the police were baffled, but eventually a man named George Sumner was arrested, and, after a long trial, found guilty and executed.

During the hue and cry, a message was received at Headquarters, Scotland Yard, that a man named John Lyons was strongly suspected of the crime, with the request that London police should make full inquiry for the Liverpool police, and take whatever steps deemed necessary to keep the man under observation.

The inquiry was marked out to me, and eventually I found my man in the neighbourhood of Waterloo Road. As my instructions were not to effect an arrest until further orders, I decided to watch his address and keep all movements under notice.

He did not come out until about mid-day, and, as he came into the street, he stopped and looked straight across at me, as I stood apparently reading a paper on the far corner of the road.

Intuitively, I felt that he suspected I was after him, for there is a sixth sense in every trained detective that tells him when he is "tumbled" or suspected. However, he made no sign, and set off in the direction of the Strand, with me carefully shadowing him some two or three hundred yards in the rear.

When he reached the middle of Waterloo Bridge, he suddenly stopped, climbed up to the parapet, poised himself in mid-air—and, before I could restrain him, leaped into the river below, which was at high tide with a very swift current running.

Now the proper course was for me to plunge in after him—but I didn't! The reason, however, was this: at the psychological moment a Thames Police patrol boat was in the immediate vicinity, and I had just time to notice it dash off to where my man had disappeared and to catch a glimpse of him being hauled into the boat.

I soon straightened things out, and he was charged at Bow Street for attempted suicide, and remanded. Two days after, the actual murderer was arrested in Liverpool, and "my man" stood to answer his own charge of attempted "self-murder." It was very soon ascertained that there was absolutely no foundation whatever for his being suspected. He was an Australian, and had served a sentence of four years in a

French prison. Somebody—a woman—had told him that he was wanted for the Liverpool murder.

When, in corroboration, he saw me that morning, he completely lost his head and decided to kill himself. He was acquitted, and bound over to come up for judgment if called upon. I believe that during the Gallipoli affair he served with great distinction in the Australian forces. Anyway, his life was certainly not destined to end in our River of Sighs.

THE FIRST MOTOR BANDITS

At seven o'clock on the 9th June, 1914, upon the premises of A. C. Robertson, East Street, Paddington, was perpetrated the real first "smash and grab" motor bandit job in the Metropolis.

Twenty trays, containing £6,000 worth of jewels, were taken from under the eyes of the passing public and of the astonished shopkeepers.

A taxi-cab drew up. One man went to the door of the jeweller's shop and held him up, another smashed the plate-glass window with a hammer, whilst a third quickly extracted the trays. It was the work of a few moments, and the bandits had dashed off before anyone could realise the audacity of the coup.

Scotland Yard immediately realised that a new and potent factor in crime perpetration had arrived, but it took two or three more jobs, accomplished with the same daring, and by the same gang, in various parts of London, for them to take urgent steps.

After the third "smash" had been achieved with a complete get-away by this gang in the neighbourhood of Essex Road, N., Chief Inspector Ward sent for me and said: "Make up rough and get into Hoxton—you'll be wanted to round up this gang."

So, within a few hours, and accompanied by Detective-Sergeant Reid ("Tich" as he was known) we went loafing around the neighbourhood between Shoreditch Church and Kingsland Road.

I might add, that Hoxton of to-day—(and it's a bit "creamy" now)—was nothing compared with the Hoxton of my novitiate days in crime detection.

I must explain that, to get our local knowledge of the

suspected motor bandits, and, in order to get into the various streets of the neighbourhood without raising suspicion, my colleague and I used to play a street organ outside the various public-houses and in certain streets where we hoped to keep under notice the movements of the suspected thieves.

Each morning at nine o'clock we would drag a barrel-organ from the Italian quarter at Saffron Hill to the scene of our activities around Shoreditch and Hoxton, returning late or early, according to the circumstances of the day.

Disguise is a practice very favourably resorted to by certain writers of crime fiction, but, in actual detective work, no such thing occurs. What does happen is this :

Dressed to the locality one is in, and adapting oneself to its environment, it is "even money" that one will pass unnoticed. Combine this with a wide knowledge of crooks, a keen memory for faces, courage, patience, and unceasing enthusiasm, and experience will do the rest.

My colleague was a splendid detective, and, after a few days, we got down to it. But the "snag" lay in the detection of ourselves by one or another of the criminal fraternity who might know us.

We were aware that the gang met at the entrance to a small cinema at a certain time and in a certain street. We had our suspicions of whom the gang comprised, but wanted to make sure of the whole lot, so that nobody slipped through the net.

On the morning upon which the arrest took place, it was arranged that I should run down the street with a bundle of noon-edition papers. The reason for this was to convey to the waiting police officers that all the gang were in attendance. So, attired in the typical manner of a running news vendor I dashed down the street, where the thieves were fore-gathered.

I sold two papers on the way down, and had just ducked my head, with a slight turn of the eyes to my left, towards the doorway where the gang were talking, when one of them hailed me for an edition. I ran towards him to get my halfpenny, and, try as I would not to, his eyes met mine ; but the game was up.

The waiting police from Old Street and the Yard closed in upon my signal, and the gang, four of the "best men" in London, were surrounded. With their identification, trial,

and conviction, closed the first real charge of motor-bandit work in the London Metropolitan Police.

“THE MISSING FLEET-PAYMASTER CASE”

An interesting case occurred in 1913 which clearly demonstrates the importance of details to any trained professional investigator. It takes its place among the many other brilliant affairs which lie to the credit of the Yard.

The matter attracted great public notice at the time, owing to the high command held by the absconding officer in the Senior Service. I do not intend to mention either his name or that of his ship; merely to tell you the story as it happened.

An officer of high rank in the British Navy suddenly disappeared, and defalcations in his accounts to the extent of many thousands of pounds were discovered.

A warrant was issued for his arrest, and one pictorial newspaper published a full-page portrait of the missing officer, with a reward of £50 for information leading to his arrest and conviction.

Six months almost to the date of his mysterious disappearance, the evening papers came out with the startling information that the missing fleet-paymaster had been arrested by Scotland Yard, near a small village named New Milton, on the verge of the New Forest in Hampshire, by Detectives Gimblett and Solden.

Here, for the first time, is a little inside story of an affair which, for human mother love and relentless official tenacity, speaks for itself.

For months, Chief Inspector Ward had instructed various officers, including myself, to watch a certain tobacco shop in the South-East of London, where it was known that the missing paymaster had been in the habit of purchasing a particularly strong brand of tobacco. It was a remote and slender clue—but, after long watching in relays, a woman called and purchased a quantity of this certain brand, when the two officers below-mentioned were on duty.

The woman departed, with Detectives Solden and Gimblett shadowing her, little dreaming that four trained eyes of two of the Yard's best shadowers were following her every movement.

From New Cross she took a taxi and alighted at Waterloo. She managed to get just through the barrier in time, with the two detectives still following.

She reached her train, and eventually alighted about a hundred miles down the line, and, after a long ride in a local conveyance, entered a lonely house right on the verge of the New Forest.

The sequel took place when, after a long watch, the woman left the house, and the detectives settled down to a lonely night of observation.

Presently, a light appeared at one of the windows, and the missing fleet-paymaster, although very much altered, was identified by the watching officers. The arrest and subsequent proceedings are a matter of public information, but I quote the instance as an example of first-class detective vigilance.

Subsequent information brought to light the fact that the missing officer had remained in hiding at this lonely villa from the first moment of his disappearance, being supplied by the necessities of life and all the information he required by the one woman who loved him best—his mother, the all-unwitting means of bringing him eventually to what she had so long and earnestly striven to avoid.