

SOLVING A RAILWAY MURDER

By George Barton

Col. James Fraser and His Wonderful Capture of a Crook

Harried Investigation, a Trip by Night and Other Mysterious Features Are Inculcated Into Col. Fraser's Story of Arriving at Identity of the Criminal Parties—Scene Is Placed in an English Station.

THE time was an evening in July, some years ago, the place the station platform of the North London Railway company at the Metropolitan borough of Hackney. A number of passengers were there awaiting the six o'clock train from London. It arrived presently, and a bell ringing mournfully, pulled out great clouds of smoke and sparks. The moment the train came to a full stop, a man on the platform made a dash for the nearest railway carriage. He opened the door and entered, but suddenly drew back with a look of fear on his face and a cry of "Hark! I'm his."

The guard looked and what he saw robed his tongue of its gibberish. The setting sun cast a golden glow, the coach and its cushioned light revealed that the blue cushioning of the carriage was soaked with blood. Inside the coach was a man, a walking stick, and a small black leather bag.

The railway carriage was run into the station, and a doctor instantly fainted in Col. James Fraser, the head of the London police force. In the meantime, the most persistent cross-questioning failed to throw any light whatever upon the mystery of the blood-soaked cushions. The guard remembered in a hazy sort of way that two men had caused the carnage just before the train left Chancery street, London. His impression was that they were together, but he had no certain recollection of their appearance. He was nearly at a loss to understand what had occurred.

He only knew that he had a crowded train that day, and in the hurry and bustle of his work had but scant attention to individuals.

There was one clue, however, and that was of a character that could not be overlooked even in the density displayed by the railway officials. The impression of a blood-stained hand upon the door of the railway carriage, the first act of Col. Fraser was to order the guard to "ring out" a signal of service. He directed that special pains be taken to preserve the impression of the blood-stained hand so that it could be referred to when over the occasion demanded.

That same night word came to police headquarters that the body of a well-dressed man had been discovered at a spot where the North London railway passes Victoria park. The man was unconscious but still alive. He was taken to a nearby hospital, and that medical man could do nothing to restore him to consciousness, but in vain. He died within 24 hours without saying a word. It was evident from the start that he had been murdered. Unfortunately, his head and face had been beaten so cruelly that he was unrecognizable. Just at a time when the solution of his identity seemed furthest away, the hospital authorities found a card in his vest pocket. It read "Thomas Briggs, Roberts & Co., London."

An officer was at once dispatched to the office of Briggs & Co., in Lombard street. The head of the firm said that Mr. Briggs was their chief clerk, and one of their most valued employees, and that they were at a total loss to account for his unexpected absence from his post. He had been with their banking house for nearly half a century, and during all of that time had professedly reported for work on the clock was striking nine. He failed to do this the morning, and they had assumed that he was ill. It was then that "he" was discovered, stating that he had not returned to his home in Hackney the night before. A hurried investigation proved that Mr. Briggs left his home on the usual road on the previous day, he carried a gold-headed cane, and wore gold-framed eye-glasses, and had in his possession a gold watch and chain. After closing his business at the office, he had dinner in the afternoon, and dined with his married daughter at Peckham. He returned to the city at

time to take the regular train at Fenchurch street for his home at Hackney. That was the last time he was ever seen alive.

It did not take many hours to prove that the unfeeling clerk of Roberts & Company and the unknown individual whose body had been found near Victoria park were one and the same person, and that the old gentleman had been brutally murdered for his money. The evidence was the gold watch and chain, both missing. The blood-soaked cushions, the general disorder of the railway carriage, and the imprint of the bloody hand on the door of the vehicle proved that a terrible struggle had taken place before the foul deed was accomplished. It must have been done very quickly, because the distance from Fenchurch street, whence the train started, and Hackney was only a matter of three miles. In fact, the old man had probably been killed immediately after the train left the station, for the body had been thrown into the bushes of Victoria park, and the murderer had evidently jumped from the train before it reached Hackney station.

But the days went by and there was no result. The newspapers were filled with the details of the crime and there was great public indignation. The old citizens of the metropolis wrote scathing letters to the London Times, in which they implied that already the British Empire was in a position to go on a ravaging journey in the heart of the British Empire without incurring the risk of being murdered. The police shamed under this criticism, but still they did not appear to make any progress. Col. Fraser sat in his office day by day and tried to solve the problem. He finally resolved that it would be necessary to trace the dead man's last chain that had been stolen from Mr. Briggs before it would be possible to find out who the man had engaged and the services. He was a pawnshop or around the metropolis was visited but none of them possessed any jewelry that corresponded to that which had been stolen from the bank clerk in the railway carriage.

Col. Fraser was not satisfied with these reports, and determined to personally prosecute his inquiries and researched in another direction. He selected the jeweler of London and as a consequence he was soon engaged in the locality known as Cheapside.

To his delight he came upon a significant clue within 24 hours. Mr. Graves, a jeweler in Cheapside, possessed a gold chain which was identical with the one that had been stolen from Mr. Briggs. The jeweler said that he had accepted the chain in exchange for another one which he had given to a foreign looking person who had called at his establishment. He added to the importance of this discovery, it was learned that the exchange of the jewelry had been made on the following of the murder of Thomas Briggs.

The news of this first link in the chain of evidence was widely published in the London newspapers. On the day following, while Col. Fraser was seated at his desk in the police headquarters, the door opened and a short, slight, red-faced man, wearing a blue cap with brass buttons, entered. He started in an awkward manner.

"Is this Col. Fraser?" he asked. "It is," was the terse response.

"And may I see the chief of police?"

"That's what I am called," said the indigent response.

"Well, my name's Bobbi Smith."

"Glad to see you, Mr. Smith."

"I'm a cabin boy," responded the colonel with a smile.

"I understand you're investigating the murder of Mr. Briggs."

"At this Col. Fraser was again asked to furnish the man's name.

"Yes, I am. Can you furnish me with any information on the subject?"

"I don't know," was the response.

"But I have a little box here that may interest you."

Whereupon he handed Col. Fraser a jewelery little card boy bearing the name of Mr. Graves and the jeweler. The officer looked it over and said,

"Where did you get this?"



"It belongs to my little girl," was

"Where did she get it?"

"It was given to her by a man who lodged with me—his name is Franz Muller. He left very suddenly after the papers had become full of the Mystery of the Railway Carriage."

This was news with a vengeance, and the cabman was taken in hand and subjected to a rigorous cross-examination.

He told all about his German lodger and said among other things that the man had left his second-story bedroom where he had lodged. The police immediately secured the photograph and Col. Fraser hastened to Cheapside and presented it to Graves, who recognized him at once and shouted "There he is!"

"Did you ever see that man?" he inquired.

"I did," was the reply. "He is the man who came here and exchanged the chain in the day after Mr. Briggs was murdered."

Col. Fraser referred to the cabman's home and held another long interview with the red-faced person who had so providentially furnished him with a clue.

The cabby proved to be a veritable mine of information. He testified, among other things, that he had purchased the hat which was found in the railway carriage, when so at the request of Muller, his German boarder.

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Through the American judicial system of the day, the American authorities were speedily prepared and the German man was sent back to England in the custody of his four captors, arriving in his home in the Whitechapel district. This was carefully guarded, and Col. Fraser having supplied himself with a warrant, went there one morning to arrest the suspect. Two men were stationed in front of the door, and Col. Fraser, himself, went up the rear to make the arrest. He happened to be burst upon, and found himself in the room with the two men. The room was dark, and he was blindfolded and bound.

Col. Fraser realized the importance of prompt and speedy action and he at once formulated plans by which two of the foremost detectives in the metropolis were detailed to go to America to arrest Mr. Franz Muller.

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LAME BACK PRESCRIPTION

The increased use of "Toria" for lame back and rheumatism is causing considerable discussion among the medical fraternity. It is an almost infallible cure when mixed with certain other ingredients and taken properly. The following formula is effective: "To one-half pint of good whiskey add one ounce of Toria Compound and one ounce Syrup Sarsaparilla Compound. Take in tablespoonful doses with each meal and before bed time."

Toria compound is a product of the laboratories of the Globe Pharmaceutical Co., Chicago, but it as well as the other ingredients can be had from any good druggist.

"CALLING" THE PITCHER.



The captain—See here, you've given seventeen men bases on balls! This here's a ball game, not no six-day walkin' match!

HANDS RAW AND SCALY.

Itched and Burned Terribly—Could Not Move Thumbs Without Flesh Cracking—Sleep Impossible.

Cuticura Soon Cures His Eczema.

"An itching humor covered both my hands and got up over my wrists and over up to the elbows. The itching and burning were terrible. My hands got really red when I scratched the surface and it caused with blisters and then got raw. The sores got so bad that I could not move my thumbs without deep cracks appearing. I went to my doctor, but his medicine could only stop the itching. At night I suffered so fearfully that I could not sleep. I could not bear to touch my hands with water. This went on for three months and it was fairly worn out. I used Cuticura. It cured me and is a tonic. I am now well. Walter H. Col. 15 Somerset St., Boston, Mass., Eng. & Chem. Corp., So. Proprietary.

Hen Lays Eggs on Table.

A resident of the village of Houghton Eng. has a hen which always lays her eggs either on the kitchen table or on the top of the piano. It is in one of the boxes in the house. When the house is let out and the tenant wants to lay an egg it goes backwards and forwards until the door is opened.

What It Was.

She was carrying a Chinese umbrella when her hen laid an egg. It was discovered among other things an insect was clinging to the umbrella, a small chop-suey and the appetizing raw meat, she turned her attention to what seemed a dish of pancakes. Puzzled over the combination of ham, onion and other ingredients, she suddenly exclaimed to her companion: "Why there's an egg in this!"

"Sure, it's the omelet," he replied.

Thankful He Isn't Rich.

Gen. Adam Cracker is enjoying the humor of the following paragraph: "I am thankful I am not a millionaire. I do not however, claim any special credit. It seems to run in the family. I have traced the history of the Cracker family back to the jumping place and find that there is a wealthy one in the whole bunch, and the records show that there has never been a duke or count who tried to break in."—Atlanta Constitution.

The Unexpected.

The husband and wife pass through the life of the husband man. In view of certain contingent circumstances," he said, "I'm inclined to treat you with leniency."

A veiled woman who was sitting at a little distance suddenly burst into tears.

"Are you the prisoner's wife?" his humor inspired.

The woman could only nod.

"I think that in view of all these circumstances, the Judge released."

The veiled woman suddenly gasped.

"I ain't half enough judge, it ain't half enough," she wildly shrieked.

THEN AND NOW.

Complete Recovery from Coffeeitis.

"About nine years ago my daughter, from coffee drinking, was on the verge of nervous prostration," writes a Lantisville, Ind. woman. "She was confined for the winter to a bed.

"When she attempted a trip down town she was often brought home in a chair and would be prostrated for days afterwards."

"On the advice of her physician she gave up coffee and tea, drank Postum, and ate Grape-Nuts for breakfast."

"She liked Postum from the very beginning and we soon saw improvement. To-day she is in perfect health, the mother of five children, all of whom are well."

"She has recovered, is a member of three charity organizations and a club, holding an off-^{ice} in each. We give Postum and O's on O's the credit for her recovery."

"There's a Reason."

"Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read, 'The Road to Wellville,' in pgs.

"I am open to receive letters. A few names and some give me some. They are genuine, true and full of human interest."

Highest Altitude in Europe.

Madrid has the highest altitude of any city in Europe.

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