

TRUE DETECTIVE STORIES

THE TAN YARD CASE

BY RICHARD LINTHICUM

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"**JACK**" SHEA, who first gained wide publicity as a detective in the Haymarket anarchist case, later as chief of the Chicago Detective Bureau, and later still as Inspector of Police of the West Division, embracing one-half the area of Chicago, had two set theories concerning criminals and their detection. One was that professional criminals had little or no real intelligence, and this theory he also applied to non-professionals who committed atrocious crimes, regardless of their motives. His second theory was that a detective who had a "sixth sense"—which he defined as common sense—and would make proper use of his other five would rarely fail to solve the most complex case.

Whatever may have been the opinion of his co-workers with respect to those theories, they were unanimous in saying that Shea's individual success

Further examination showed that the back of the skull had been crushed by some heavy, flat object without leaving a mark in the form of a cut or abrasion.

Of a certainty the man might have cut his throat, but of equal certainty he could not have crushed the back of his skull.

Now that it was certain a murder had been committed, of what avail was the discovery when there seemed no possibility of identifying the victim?

The discovery, however, had aroused the detective instinct with which Shea was so liberally credited. From his point of view he had not made the best use of his senses—certainly he had been delinquent at first in the sight sense and the sense of touch, or he would have looked at the back of the man's head when he originally examined the body, and would have felt of it.

With all of his senses, including the sixth, alert and

search they found the tannery where the man had been employed, and where both the foreman and the cashier identified the victim by the photograph and later identified the body at the Morgue.

From them it was learned that the man was a Swede; that he, in company with a fellow countryman, had been discharged at the last pay day, had drawn their pay at the same time and had left together. The companion of the man who was murdered bore a bad reputation at the tan yard for drinking, gambling and quarrelling. The detectives obtained from the foreman such description of the second man as he was able to give, for he laughingly admitted that "all Swedes looked pretty much alike to him," and the description, in fact, would have answered very well for some hundreds of the many thousands of Scandinavians in the Middle West and Northwest.

Starting with the case of a man who would have been buried as an "unknown suicide" except for their visit to the Morgue, they had discovered a murder, had identified the victim and had gotten a clew to the probable murderer. Nothing remained but to find the murdered man's tan yard companion to conclude the case, for Shea reasoned that the second Swede, as he may be called, was the murderer—first, because he was the kind of man who would commit murder, and, second, because of a tip the cashier had given him that the murdered man was saving and penurious and probably had much more money on his person than the wages he drew at the last pay day.

Difficult of Detection.

The detection of the murderer, however, was seemingly a more difficult task than any they had performed so far in the case. They had his name, to be sure, but Shea declared that that class of workman, or, rather, that kind of a man, usually changed his name every time he changed his job. The description of the supposed murderer so accurately fitted the typical Swedish laborer that they might arrest any number of innocent Yon Yonsons and Ole Olesons on suspicion, while the real culprit was making his escape.

Besides, how would they prove that he had killed his companion unless they could force a confession? But that was a matter upon which they were willing to take a chance, for Shea was a master of the third degree and had the blame, at least, for having instituted that method of police inquisition in Chicago. He often declared to the writer, however, that he never used physical violence to extort a confession, but simply wore the prisoner down physically and mentally by continuously playing him with questions and citing hypothetical incidents.

The first moves, of course, for the apprehension of the tan yard murderer were the usual police steps to guard against his leaving the city, if he had not already left, and to send a description to the police of other cities and towns.

Then Shea made one of those moves that helped him to gain the title of a "born detective." Early the following morning he and Kipley left Chicago on a north bound Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul train and got off at a little station about twenty-five miles north of the city.

"Are you game to walk the track back to town with me?" Shea asked of Kipley.

"None game than Kipley," and together they set out. On the way Shea unfolded his reasoning on the case.

"The chances are, Joe," he said, "that the Swede we are after first spent his own money drinking and gambling and then killed his companion to get the latter's money, which probably was a much larger sum than the other fellow had. Now, I reason that he won't leave Chicago or try to leave until he's 'broke' or nearly so. He won't go by train, because he



"YOU'LL HAVE TO GO BACK TO CHICAGO WITH US."

won't have money enough to pay his fare, and probably wouldn't spend money for railroad fare if he had it.

"When he leaves Chicago he will probably strike for the Northwest—Wisconsin, and then Minnesota—because there's plenty of work up there among his own class of people. The chances are that he will walk the track, because, not knowing the country, he will in that way be sure not to get lost. Now he's got his choice of two tracks—the Chicago and Northwestern and this one. On the Northwestern there are a number of good sized towns near Chicago, and on the St. Paul road only a few small ones. Naturally he will take this route, because it is the most out of the way.

"Now, assuming that he committed this murder four or five days ago, I reason that he has spent the most of his money and is about due to make a break for some of the Wisconsin tanneries or Minnesota lumber camps. We have got the Northwestern road pretty well protected, and if you and I will patrol this part of the St. Paul road for a day or two we've got a chance to get him."

It all sounded very reasonable to Kipley, besides which he had unlimited confidence in Shea's detective skill. The man's natural inclinations would certainly lead him to the Northwest, and the very name St. Paul, by which the railroad they were on is commonly known, would suggest itself as the natural route, even if he did not reason it was the safest.

The day was warm and the two detectives, with their coats on their arms, trudged along Chicagoward. When the heat became oppressive they turned off the track to the friendly shade of a big tree, lighted their pipes and, reclining on their elbows, discussed the various features of the case they were working on.

About a half hour passed when Shea suddenly

arose, knocked the ashes from his pipe, picked up his coat and said, "Come on, Joe."

"What's your hurry?" inquired Kipley, who was lying flat on his back gazing up at the protecting foliage.

"There comes our man!" exclaimed Shea.

Surprised as Kipley was, he did not "leap to his feet instantly," like the detectives of fiction. He knew the man must be in sight and that any sudden movement might alarm him and give them the additional work of chasing him in the hot sun.

He arose slowly, stretched himself and looked down the track toward Chicago.

A big, burly individual was trudging heavily up the tracks toward them. He carried a stout stick over his shoulder, with a bundle on the end of it.

"He answers the description as far as size is concerned," said Kipley; "he's almost as big as you are, Jack."

When the two detectives started toward the track the burly pedestrian stopped and looked about as if undecided whether to turn back or turn off to the wagon road, which ran near by. Then he started forward again in a lumbering, clumsy gait.

"That's our man sure, Joe," said Shea. "Did you notice him balk when he saw us?"

Kipley nodded affirmatively. "Look out for that stick he's carrying, John."

Cleverly Captured.

As the three drew nearer together the man switched the bundle from the end of the stick to his left hand and carried the short, stout club in his right.

The detectives made no movement to excite suspicion. They walked along chatting and apparently paying no attention to the oncoming individual, although they were "sizing him up" with the description that had been furnished them and observing that he answered it in every particular. When they had approached each other within a few feet the solitary individual started to turn out and allow the two detectives to pass him. Shea, however, confronted him and asked him whence he had come.

He shook his head, trying to convey the impression that he did not understand English. Shea pointed toward the city.

"Chicago?" he queried.

The man nodded affirmatively and said, "Shacaw-go."

"Well, you'll have to go back to Chicago with us," declared Shea.

The man raised his stick to strike, just as Shea had expected him to do. Therefore the detective seized his wrist and by a jiu jitsu movement of his own, backed by the strength of a giant, brought a cry of pain from the prisoner as the club fell from his hand.

They returned to Chicago with their man on the next local train, where Shea put him through the third degree and obtained a confession. As additional evidence a number of articles were found upon him which were identified by the foreman and cashier at the tan yard as having belonged to the murdered man. If this were not a true story it should properly end here with the prisoner's conviction and punishment.

The truth is that he was never punished for this crime. He had friends among his countrymen who raised money and employed a skilful criminal lawyer to defend him. He repudiated his confession, declaring that it was forced from him by threats of bodily harm. He accounted for his possession of the articles belonging to the murdered man by asserting that his friend had given them to him. As the evidence was wholly circumstantial, aside from the confession, and as the press had created a popular prejudice against the so-called "third degree," a jury found him "Not guilty."

Shortly thereafter the man returned to Sweden, where he was arrested for a crime committed prior to going to America. He was convicted and sentenced to a term in prison.

Before his death he confessed to the tan yard murder. According to the confession he struck his victim in the back of the head with a large flat stone, then cut his throat and, holding him in an upright position, shoved him into the lake. The money he obtained he had spent in drink and at the gambling table.

The confession further stated that at the time of his arrest he was on his way to a lumber camp in Minnesota. In fact, the confession bore out in every important particular the reasoning of the detective. Furthermore, the man's lack of intelligence in concealing the crime and in the manner of his attempted escape, together with the use of the detective made of his six senses, are corroborative in a great degree of Detective Shea's set theories concerning criminals and detectives.



CASHIER AND FOREMAN IDENTIFY THE VICTIM.

was due to the fact that he was a born policeman; that is to say, that he had a natural inclination for police work and an instinct, or intuition, which enabled him to grasp the significance of every fact in a case and to make accurate deductions that quickly led to the detection of the particular criminal.

The "tan yard case," as Shea entitled it when telling the story to the writer, is an illustration in greater part of his theories.

Shea was then a quick witted, husky young Irishman, country born and bred, who won such favor with the Chief of Police for catching criminals while serving as a patrolman in uniform that he was promoted to "plain clothes." His "partner"—for detectives usually travel in pairs outside of fiction—was "Joe" Kipley, who afterward became Superintendent of Police.

One day the two detectives were summoned to the Morgue to see if they could identify a body in a baffling case of suicide. The victim was a common laborer. The body had been found in the shallow water of a little lake in the extreme southwest part of the city, lying face downward, with a horrid gash in the throat. The knife with which the deed had been committed was lying on the bank. The man after gashing his throat evidently had dropped the knife where he stood, then staggered forward into the shallow water and fallen face foremost, determined, if the self-assault failed, to put an end to himself by drowning.

There were no marks on the body other than this wound in the throat. There were no evidences of a struggle either on the banks of the lake or in the appearance or arrangement of the man's clothing. There were numerous footprints of various sizes in the vicinity, but these were accounted for by the fact that the place was much frequented by men and boys who lived on the outskirts of that part of the city.

Two "Star" Detectives.

It was so obviously a "case of suicide" that there was no suspicion otherwise, not even by the two "star" detectives from Headquarters. Obviously, too, the body would go to Potter's field as an "unknown." There was not an article nor scrap of paper found on the body to aid in identification. In the absence of any suspicion of violence it was assumed that the victim, humiliated, perhaps, by the thought of self-murder, had taken every possible precaution against the discovery of his identity.

The afternoon papers that circulated among the working classes published a description of the "suicide," with a portrait, but either the man had no relatives or friends or they had failed to recognize him in the "counterfeit presentment," and small wonder, as the portrait was in the style of freehand drawing that embellished newspapers before the day of the half-tone.

The examination made by the detectives revealed no clew to the dead man's identity. They were leaving the slab room when Shea turned for a last look at the cadaver and noticed that the head was reclining to one side, exposing the ghastly wound in the most hideous way. He returned to place the head in position to close the wound, and in doing so put one hand to the back of the skull. He paused in the act of putting the head in line with the body and called to Kipley:

"Joe, come here."

"What's the matter?" asked Kipley, coming forward.

"This is no suicide," declared Shea. "This man has been murdered. The back of his skull has been beaten in; feel here," indicating that Kipley should examine the place where Shea had first taken hold of the head to lift it in position.

stimulated, he began a new examination, which revealed nothing until he came to examine the man's shoes. He noted that the soles were of a peculiar reddish brown or a brownish red. Further examination convinced him that the color was not produced from a clayey soil, as he first thought; it was more like a stain. He bent down his face to the discolored soles and made use of his sense of smell. After one long inhalation he straightened up and remarked to Kipley:—"Tan bark." Then he took out his pocket knife and began to scrape the soles. The depth to which the stain penetrated convinced him that the man had been regularly employed in a tan yard, and was not merely a passer back and forth.

With a photograph of the victim, Shea and Kipley set out to visit the numerous tanneries. After a long

The LATEST in POPULAR SCIENCE

Moving Pictures by Daylight

STEREOPTICON pictures either fixed or moving for use in ordinary daylight or in a brightly lighted room are now made in France. The trick is simple and consists merely of some device to keep the light from shining directly on the screen on which the picture is thrown. In the Cinema Palace, Paris, this is effected by arranging heavy curtains around the screen at proper positions and distances. The lantern for projection is at the opposite end of the hall, as is now usual. In another device the pictures are thrown on a sheet of ground glass forming one end of a large black box, whose opposite end is open to view. In this case the lantern is not in the same room with the spectators, and the picture resembles that seen on looking at the ground glass of an ordinary photographic camera. As the screen in both these cases is sheltered from the diffused light of the theatre or hall, it is not necessary to extinguish or lower the lamps, although, of course, these should not be brilliant enough to dazzle the eyes. In describing these "full daylight" devices it has been wrongly stated by some writers that they depend on special brilliancy in the lantern or on some arrangement of reflectors. This is incorrect. The only things necessary are to keep the light away from the screen and out of the spectators' eyes.

Gas at High Pressure

THE distribution of illuminating gas under high pressure is becoming increasingly popular with the companies. Much smaller pipes may be used with this system and the region served from a single central station may be very much larger. The advantages, in fact, are similar to those gained on an electric transmission line by using high voltage. One trouble with high voltage, or electric pressure, is the increased tendency to leakage, but in the case of high pressure gas this, according to those who are familiar with it, is an advantage rather than a drawback.

When leaks occur in an ordinary low pressure system it is extremely difficult to locate them. The escaping gas is lost in the crevices of the surrounding earth or accumulates in excavations or cellars, where its presence is often revealed by an explosion. When test papers are used they may give indications of leakage along a line 150 feet in extent without showing any exact point, or the paper may give its reaction at a considerable distance from the real leak.

Again, the accumulated gas in the soil may act on the paper long after the leak through which it made its way has been mended. On the contrary, with high pressure leaks reveal themselves at once and there is never any trouble in finding exactly where they are. One trouble about high pressure is that it liquefies some of the components of the gas, including a few that add to its light giving power. High pressure gas may thus lose as much as five candle power to the cubic foot. On the other hand, some of the liquefied constituents are impurities whose absence improves the gas, such as the sulphur compounds and naphthalene. On the whole the advantage seems to lie with a moderately high pressure.

Transparent Metals

METALS are usually regarded as opaque, but they become translucent when hammered out into very thin sheets. An English physicist, who has been studying this property, finds that although thin gold leaf is usually green by transmitted light, the green light becomes white when the film is heated on glass. Microscopic examination shows that the gold has formed into opaque, detached spots, leaving clear spaces, through which the light passes. Silver leaf also becomes transparent when heated. Copper leaf, when heated more and more, becomes successively emerald green, light olive, dark olive and dark port wine color. These latter results are apparently due to the formation of films of oxide, since to produce them the metals must be heated in an atmosphere containing oxygen. Aluminum and "Dutch metal" do not become transparent when heated. By the electric theory of light, according to which conductors must be opaque and insulators transparent, the metals should not transmit light, and it is notable that they do not except in very thin films which have a high electric resistance.

Curious Property of Printer's Ink

THAT printer's ink gives off an emanation that passes through opaque bodies and affects a photographic plate has been discovered by a German investigator. Photographic roll film is sometimes thus affected, through its celluloid cover, by the printed characters on the paper in which it is wrapped. The emanation is found to proceed from the oil in the ink during the drying process. It is not precisely the same as the emanation from radium and other radio-active substances, for, unlike them, it changes gum arabic into a granular, insoluble substance. It was this effect produced on the gum

of envelope flaps by the printed characters on the envelopes that first attracted the investigator's attention. The emanations are reflected by metal mirrors in the same way as light, and they oxidize metal surfaces against which they strike. The exposure necessary to effect a sensitive plate is eight to ten days.

Champion Moisture Indicator

THE most sensitive moisture detector, or hygroscope, ever invented has been devised by a Frenchman, M. Pionchon, who has based it upon the ability of a clean glass surface to attract and condense moisture from the air. Such a surface is moistened exactly in proportion to the moisture in the surrounding atmosphere. The surface used by the inventor is the cut end of a glass tube which has been silvered inside and out. Wires are connected with the inner and outer metallic coatings of the tube and form part of a circuit including a battery of one hundred volts and a galvanometer to measure the current. As the glass end of the tube forms part of this circuit no current flows when the end is quite dry, but the galvanometer is deflected more and more as moisture is deposited on the end. This apparatus is so sensitive that the mere approach of a moist body affects it. The presence of a human hand half an inch distant is shown at once. If the hand grasps a paper tube the amount of moisture evaporated from the paper by the heat of the body affects the instrument.

Getting Rid of Steamship Ashes

THE newest liners now dispose of their ashes by forcing them through the bottom of the hull by means of compressed air. The old method of hoisting them up and dumping them overboard was disagreeable to the passengers, and an attempted improvement by which they were mixed with water and pumped overboard was equally so when the wind was in the wrong quarter. In the new "expeller" a hopper receives the ashes and clinkers and delivers them into a crusher, which breaks up the large pieces. Below this is a drum revolving in a watertight casing and open as it turns first to the crusher chamber and then to the discharge pipe below. In order to counteract the upward pressure of the water compressed air at about seventy pounds to the square inch is delivered to the interior of the ash filled drum just before its opening comes opposite that in the discharge pipe. Thus the ashes are expelled with such force that they are swept clear of the bottom of the vessel. This expeller will get rid of the ash and clinkers from forty-eight furnaces under forced draught, amounting to eight or ten tons an hour.