

JAMES PRATER FOULLY MURDERED. His Skull Is Crushed and Throat Horribly Gashed.

The Murderer Admits His Guilt to the Officers—A Razor and a Hatchet Were Employed in the Bloody Tragedy—May Be Crazy.

The most horrid murder which has yet occurred to stain the record of the Yukon Territory was committed some time between eight and nine o'clock Wednesday morning.

The victim was James P. Prater, for several weeks past a compositor in the Nugget office, and previously a well known newspaper man of Juneau, Alaska.

Prater had been occupying a cabin adjacent to the trail leading to the ferry, and about half way between the auxiliary A. C. warehouses and the top of the bluff back of Dawson. With him were Arthur Goddard, a Seattle boy who came in with him, and Albert Anderson.

Prater worked at his case in the Nugget office until about nine o'clock last night—at which hour the paper was put to press—and then left in the company of another compositor. He spent the next two hours and a half with a dozen or so friends engaged in athletic sports close to the office, then visited several pleasure resorts about town.

At about half-past one o'clock in the morning—according to the best obtainable information—he started for his cabin on the hillside, and nothing more was known of him until the news of his horrid murder was conveyed to the police at about half-past eleven.

DISCOVERY OF THE MURDER.

As near as can be found out at this hour, Anderson got up and left the cabin ahead of Prater and Goddard, and went down town. George Hill, a friend of the three named, had occasion later to go to the cabin at about 10:30 o'clock and upon entering he was accosted by Goddard, who said: "Jimmy's throat is cut; I want you to take care of the case."

Hill stayed only long enough to convince himself that the man spoke the truth, then hurried down town; he met Anderson on the street, and hastily informed him that "Prater has been murdered." The two, without parley, hastened to return to the cabin and then went to the barracks and told their terrible story.

Captain Harper at once prepared to go to the scene, and upon arriving there found Corporal Wilson of the town station in charge.

Prater lay in his bunk at the south end of the cabin, curled up and unconscious, he was still breathing, but a horrid, gaping wound appeared on the left side of the neck and investigation disclosed another terrible wound on the left side of the head, where the skull was fractured as if from a heavy blow. He was alive and struggling for breath, but oblivious to all that was passing about him.

As Captain Harper entered, Goddard was observed standing with his two hands upon a table. His attitude and expression constituted an open confession of guilt, and one of the officers was moved to ask, "Why did you do it?"

Without any show of emotion, and with his hands still holding his weight from the table, Goddard replied, "I don't know."

COVERED HIS TRACKS.

While Goddard was kept under surveillance of one of the police, Captain Harper had the bleeding man removed to a place in the middle of the floor, where he was examined by Dr. Thompson of the police force. He was still alive, but his life blood was swiftly flowing away, and as the physician knelt by his side a feeble gasp and a quickly appearing pallor indicated that all was over. Ten minutes after their arrival James Prater was dead.

CORNERING THE MURDERER.

Attention was then centered upon Goddard, and Captain Harper, taking him off his guard, abruptly inquired, "What did you strike him on the head with?"

"A hatchet," Goddard answered mechanically. The captain swept the room with a glance, and seeing no hatchet there, went outside. There his search was quickly rewarded, for lying against the corner of an adjacent cabin was a large, sharp bladed hatchet; it showed evidence of having been recently washed, but specks of tell-tale blood still showed on the rust at the back of the head, where it had escaped the notice of the murderer. It was also evident that he had put the hatchet in the place where it was found with the purpose of having it dried by the sun.

THE CONFESSION COMPLETE.

In the meanwhile Corporal Wilson was searching the cabin for the weapon that had inflicted the wound on the neck. It was not the hatchet, for the flesh was cleanly cut and the head half severed from the trunk. In a few minutes his search was rewarded by the discovery, in one corner of the cabin, of a razor, which the officer put in his pocket.

Captain Harper then took the matter in hand again. "Where is the razor you put in your pocket with?" he demanded of Goddard.

Goddard, without any hesitation, walked over to the corner where the razor had been, and evidenced a sense of surprise when it did not appear in the spot where he had placed it. Then Corporal Wilson stepped forward, pulling the razor from his pocket at the same time.

"Is this it?" he asked, as he held it out. "Yes," replied Goddard, "that is the one." "Why did you do it?" next asked the captain. "I was his partner and he was a traitor to me," was the response.

THE MURDERER IN JAIL.

Captain Harper then had Goddard taken to the barracks and locked up in a cell, where he was

visited, a few minutes later, by a representative of the NUGGET.

Goddard was in a fever of excitement and evidently realized to the fullest extent the enormity of his awful crime. He would not, however, be induced to talk, other than to say that he was a partner of Prater whom he had met at Juneau.

HE MAY BE CRAZY.

Goddard is a young man of about twenty-one years, and came into the Klondike with Prater and Hill last spring. He was practically without means at the time, and Prater constituted himself his guardian. He was evidently well bred and possessed a high degree of morality. Last fall he was sent to Gold Run to represent a claim by Prater. It is said, in extenuation of his act of this morning, that he is insane, due to a gunshot wound received in the head before coming here.

James Prater, the murdered man, was a native of England, and was thirty-two years of age. He went to New York while a boy, and later removed to Alaska, where he followed the printing business until he came into the Klondike. His best work was done at Juneau, where he was foreman for a long time of the *Juneau Searchlight*. In disposition he was quiet and amiable, and generous to a fault. He leaves a father and sister at Seattle.

The Funeral.

The body, which lies at the undertaking establishment of Jenkins & Barker, is now under the care of the printing fraternity of the city, who, through a committee, have made arrangements for the funeral and secured funds therefor. It has been arranged that the burial will take place from the undertaker's this (Saturday) afternoon at one o'clock. Bishop Bumpas conducting the service from the Church of England rite at the grave.

The pall-bearers will be taken from the ranks of the printers. Prof. Fred Green, on behalf of the musicians, kindly offered to furnish a band for the occasion, but the tender was declined owing to the extremely sad features of the case. All friends of the deceased are invited to attend the obsequies.

The Stampeder's Return.

Say, partners, you ask of the Klondike fields, As the goal indicating your hopes, But I'll tell you how the thing succeeds, Before you're caught on the ropes.

I floated along on the river's tide, And I staid in the city of gold, But my grub was wet and mouldy too, While my clothes were growing old.

The fellows in luck had recorded claims, On the creeks that yielded the dust, I had to rustle to drive my stakes, Before I totally bust.

I saw the men on a wild stampede, And a skirt sometimes in the crowd, I took my pack and ran'd in the push, As fast as my strength allow'd.

I harry'd six time for ninety above, And I staid a son of-a-gun, But never a speck of gold was pan'd, By the time my grub was done.

I reciev'd a tip, so I chas'd again, And I circled over the hills, I travell'd by day and night the same, As I hit the clip that kills.

I reach'd the discovery, weary and sore, And I staid in the second below, But that was simply a fake stampede, With scarce a color to show.

I took the scent of another stampede, With my toes beginning to peel, But I only struck an old house, With grub two dollars a meal.

And I tore around till the winter came, Yet I never work'd in the lead, The pay was stak'd by the others first, And I could only stampe.

I chased around from Dominion creek, To the Sulphur, Quartz and Carlyle; I monkey'd around the Coffee, too, Kentucky and Sixty Mile.

When I struck the pay a conflict arose, Or the claim was swip'd by the ring, The fever appear'd and bettry too, I couldn't accomplish a thing.

I recover'd with hardly a bean in sight, And the winter days were forlorn, The only work was chopping for board, I wish'd I'd never been born.

I had work'd a season to gain the mines, I'd paid my blood as the price, And then I had, for a winter job, The coming out on the ice.

For I had to leave by the winter route, To prevent my starving to death, And so I started with a loaded sled, As the frosts congeal'd my breath.

I was caught by storms, and I freezing reach'd The established posts of the route, And that was the worst of all stampedes, I mind myself coming out.

For I threw aside my sled and my robes, In the desperate struggle that came, I tumbled into the Thirty-Mile, And my feet are frozen and lame.

And now, while I limp with half of my toes, And appear the picture of need, I swear I've had enough and to spare, Of the Klondike's mad stampede.

—ASA THURSTON HEDDEN.

A Correction.

DAWSON, Y. T., May 31, 1899.

ED. NUGGET:—In speaking of the Forty-Mile excursion in your last issue you mention the firm of Cooper & O'Brien as having chartered the steamer Tyrrell. We wish to inform you that this is a mistake, as the whole management of the excursion trip was under the direction of the officers of the British American Corporation, who are owners of the steamer Tyrrell. Trusting this will rectify a wrong impression, we remain, very truly yours, COOPER & O'BRIEN.

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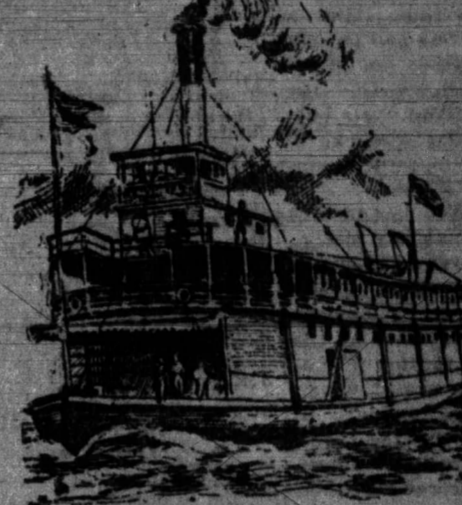
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