

possession, the Chief pondered thoughtfully over it. Then he sent directions for two of his detectives to be sent to him. They were his counselors and most trusted aids in all important and difficult cases, and the trio had built up a brilliant record for efficiency when they worked together in previous years.

Two men answered the Chief's summons a moment later—in nothing alike save a certain indication in the features of each of the possession of rare characteristics of courage and shrewdness. Both were already famous as detectives, having laid the foundation of a reputation which in after years became national, and invested each with the highest official authority possible in the municipal detective service.

The larger of the two, stalwart, powerful, and straight as an arrow, was a monument of perfect physical development. His name, John Shea, had been a terror to evil-doers since he first entered the police force, while his sagacity in tracing down a criminal was only equaled by his pertinacity, once engaged in a case involving endurance or hardship.

His companion, Joseph Kipley, was of lower build, his set head and broad, square shoulders giving him an aspect almost leonine. His eye was never still, and one quick flash seemed to take in every detail of vision presented.

As a keen, strategic worker this talented officer had no equal on the force. He was noted for deft handling of criminals under suspicion and arrest, and, less demonstrative than his confrere, was far more persuasive and magnetic where long, exhaustive "pumping" of a malefactor was required.

Together they were the strongest "team" of detectives Chicago ever knew, and a glance would have told the most casual observer that they were men whom no obstacles could daunt in the pursuit of a criminal, no adverse circumstances prevent their steady march to official usefulness and promotion.

From the reports on his desk and his own theories regarding the case, the Chief related the circumstances of the artesian well murder in a few graphic words.

"The case is a mysterious and difficult one," he said, but we must find a starting point and work rapidly. I detail you for the scene of the murder, Kipley. Make a search for weapons, and question the people in the vicinity. Shea and myself will visit the morgue, and he will rejoin you later."

The experienced Kipley needed no detailed instructions as to his duty, and left the room at once.

"Our first task should be to learn who the murdered man was," suggested Shea.

"Exactly," replied the Chief. "That once ascertained, we may trace him, learn who he was, his circumstances and his associates. The knowledge will be pretty certain to place us on the trail of his assassin. Come, we will go to the morgue at once. What is your theory of the case?"

"That it is a murder for gain or revenge, and that an acquaintance, possibly a warm friend, murdered the victim."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because this man was decoyed to the place he was murdered. No one knows him in the vicinity, and it is a secluded spot a stranger would seek to avoid. Some friend lured him to the place under pretense of a swim or a wash, say last evening. He was no professional thief, for he used a razor to kill him—a weapon no regular criminal employs. He even took away his clothes, so that they might not serve as a clue to his identity."

The two officers surveyed the body of the victim of the night's tragedy silently when they reached the morgue. For over half an hour they examined it closely. As they drew away from the slab their eyes met intelligently.

Intuitively each discerned that the other had made an important discovery.

"You have discovered something?" inquired the Chief.

"Yes. That man's throat was cut after he was dead," replied Shea.

The Chief started.

"Why do you start at that?"

"Because back of his ear the skull is crushed in. A rock or a cudgel robbed him of life, and his throat was cut to mutilate him or to distract suspicion to a plausible theory of suicide."

"The mystery deepens," remarked the Chief. "I also have made an important discovery."

"In what way?"

"I have learned the man's business."

Shea looked curious.

"Did you notice his feet?" inquired the Chief.

"Not particularly."

"They are stained a dark brown. Whenever this man worked, and that, too, recently, he was engaged in a task where some strong tanning solution was in use. We have done all we can do here. I shall give orders to have him photographed, and the body preserved in ice for possible identification."

"Shall I rejoin Kipley?"

"Yes, and report your success to-night." Shea found his industrious partner hard