

Board of Works
May 95

BRANTON IS A MYSTERY.

WAS HE A DESERTER AND WAS HE MARRIED?

An Accepted Lover of the Daughter of the Man Who Murdered Him—The Letter from Springhill to "My Darling Husband"—What He Told Himself.

When the fates ordained that the little village of Fairville should be visited by its first murder they prepared no ordinary crime. When the world began their decree went forth and from then on events shaped themselves to the great end. Things small in themselves but momentous in their effects came to pass and all leading up to their culmination in the sudden projection of a soul on its way to the eternal.

The murderer was brought into the world, his victim was born, the murderous axe was fashioned. Upon the chessboard of the earth the murderer and the murdered are moved about, not of their own will but of another's. From opposite corners of the earth they start out on the road that every man treads, the road that ends he knows not where. With eyes happily blind to the future they go on, ever converging toward one another and to the weapon that is to kill. One may be laboring on a farm in New Brunswick, the other may be deep down in the coal mines of Pennsylvania, one may be hewing timber in the heart of the woods, the other may be wearing the Queen's uniform in her service; no matter where they are, they must meet at last and the murderous deed must be done.

And then to think that if the stern shapers of our ends could have been foiled in one little particular it might never have happened. If only such a letter could never have been written, if only such advice had been followed, the thing that has wrecked so many lives might never have happened. But it could never be. Some innocent man made the axe that dealt the blow of death, and that blow was never to be turned aside. No use to lament over "what might have been." It could never be.

Guilford Crawford slew Henry Branton and he could not do otherwise. He slew him though he was his guest, though he was his son's bedfellow, though he was his daughter's accepted lover. He killed him under the most horrible circumstances. On Sunday night they went to bed to sleep and in the morning Branton awoke to die. Before it was light Crawford got out of bed, lit a light and made a fire in the stove. Then in cold blood, without the heat of passion to condone his action, he procured an axe, and as his victim lay in bed beside his own son he struck the fatal blow. With frightful force the heavy steel descended and the back of the axe crushed the cheek of the man and inflicted great cuts about his eye.

The deed was unusual in its atrocity, and the mystery that attaches to it assisted to draw out the sympathy and interest of people. There are twin mysteries that are solved only by laying bare the hearts of murderer and murdered. What condition of mind led the former to commit his crime and what is the identity of the man whom he killed?

From the flotsam and jetsam of common talk much information is gathered that has not already been published for the readers of the press. And first and foremost the people of Fairville have almost without exception made an answer to the first question. They say that Crawford was sane when he did his foul deed. They believe that he was shamming when he acted strangely before others. He had had it in mind all along to kill Branton and had several times threatened to do so. At the time of the murder he acted just the same, says foreman Cameron of Mooney's brickyard, as he had always acted during the few months he was employed with him wheeling clay. He had always seemed queer and acted rather soft. Though he was a big stalwart fellow he was a poor workman and not at all brainy. His fellow workmen used to jibe at him a little and he took it all in good part and seemed incapable of hurting even a worm. Yet though he seemed to have this characteristic he did not show it in his looks. With his big, gaunt form, his bowed back, his preoccupied air and a peculiar way of looking at people through the corners of his eyes he did not present a prepossessing appearance and looked rather fierce.

At his original home at the Millstream in Kings County, the report concerning him is about the same. He was thought rather soft and he never rose beyond the station of an ordinary laborer. Men did not associate with him much, and when they did it was to make a butt of him, to make fun of his peculiar drawl and his strange actions.

Whether he is insane or not is for a jury of his peers to decide. There is not yet sufficient knowledge of him on this point. One thing is, however, sure, and that is that he was jealous of his wife and Branton. Whether he was sanely or insanely jealous is the all important question of the crime. The people of Fairville believe him sane and they feel strongly in the mat-

ter. Officer Hennessy and others have stated that had Crawford remained in the Fairville lock-up all Monday he would have been taken out and hung.

Then comes the next question and that has to do with the identity of young Branton. Crawford's career is told in brief. Born forty-five years ago on the Mill-stream he lived all his life in this province and raised a family of a son and two daughters.

To Branton a mystery attaches and rumors of a deserted wife in Springhill, N. S., give color to his story. But there is one fixed fact, that in his short twenty-three years of life he wandered much in various countries and was always roving.

He first popped up in Fairville last summer with clothes filled with the dust of the Springhill coal mines where he had been mining. He found a boarding place with a lady and went to work in Mooney's brick-yard. But he stayed only three weeks and from there proceeded to Maine.

But his spirit of roving drew him still further along and he brought up in the Pennsylvania coal mines when he worked all winter. This spring he went out on strike and wrote to Fairville to see if he could come back to the brick-yard. He was offered employment and he came here from a Maine town where he had gone after leaving the mines.

While here he captivated all by his quiet manners and pleasant ways. No one believed "Jack" capable of anything wrong, and his open countenance and well cut features prepossessed all in his favor. He was good looking in face and slight and active in build and he had the appearance of being above the average working man.

The mystery of his past is only cleared to some extent by what he has said on various occasions. He was a Yorkshireman and was born at Kirkham, between York and Scarborough. Early in life his father and mother died and he and his brother were cast upon the world. Since then he has wandered much and he lost trace of his brother and did not know where he was.

Last summer while he was at Fairville he received a letter from Springhill mines, N.S. After he left Fairville a letter addressed to J.H. Branton was delivered at the house where he had been boarding. The lady of the house did not know that she would ever see him again, so she opened the letter. It was written from Springhill and signed "Your Darling Wife" and addressed "My Darling Husband." It contained nothing of importance and became lost or destroyed. When he returned this summer though he boarded at the same place no mention was made of the letter, for the lady thought it would do no good and she trusted that it was all right any way, especially as he spoke once or twice of going up to Springhill.

There are suspicions and rumors that his name was not Branton and that he was a deserter from the British army at Halifax. Robt. Crilley, a fellow workman in Mooney's brick-yard and a chum of his, says that Branton once confessed to him that he was a deserter. In regard to this little can be said as yet. He received letters every week while he was here and they are now in his trunk. They have been examined cursorily but they tell nothing. They are from New York and Pennsylvania where he has been and are signed "John," "Chum," etc. Some are from John Junker, with whom he stopped while in Pennsylvania, and they seem to be all from people whom he has met in his travels. "They do not unveil his past.

Preserving the Records.

The New Brunswick Historical Society seems to have taken a wise step in beginning to print its collections of papers on the early settlement of this province. The first number, a pamphlet of 152 pages, has recently been issued, and in addition to considerable information in regard to the society and its objects, contains a paper by Jones Howe on the King's New Brunswick Regiment, and by James Hannay on the settlement of Maudersville. While both are historically valuable, the former is of the greater general interest and while written in an attractive style shows a careful regard for detail in regard to important events and the actors in them. The publication is on sale at the bookstores, and should it meet with the encouragement it merits will doubtless be followed by others at an early day. The membership of the society is far from as large as it should be, when one considers all the advantages to be had at the cost of a merely nominal annual fee.

Was One of Three.

It is understood that three names were under consideration for the appointment of a successor to Bishop Sillitoe, of the Diocese of New Westminster, British Columbia, who died a few months ago. One of these names was said to be that of Rev. J. M. Davenport, of the Mission church of this city, who is now in England. Whether any formal proposition has been made to that clergyman, or whether he would have entertained one if made, does not appear to be known here. The matter was settled this week by the appointment of another man.

ORANGEMEN WILL FIGHT

BOUND TO HAVE A CANDIDATE IN ST. JOHN

Either on the Conservative or Liberal Side or as an Independent—What One of Their Leaders Says—Possible Candidates for Political Honors.

The signs of an election are many and varied. Politicians are on the alert and both liberals and conservatives are speculating as to who will carry the party standard. The complexion of the campaign will be changed somewhat since there will be only two candidates instead of three. Whether this will make matters easier or harder for the wire pullers is to be seen. Whether it will be a harder job to narrow down the political aspirants to two or whether they will thank fortune that they have to seek a man less to sacrifice are questions that only the future can answer. Then, too, there is the monetary question. Can two men be elected with less money than three? Will the expenses incident to an election be decreased because there are not so many candidates?

All these things must occur to the average voter. But the uppermost thought is, who will be selected to bear the standards of defeat or victory. On the conservative side there are three men who are now M. P.'s and they must surely have some claims. There is no doubt that the strongest of these is Mr. Hazen. He is a young man and despite the fact that he appears to be very closely connected with the "ring" that runs the conservative party in this city and county, he will very likely be accepted by the opponents of the charmed circle.

But a colleague is not found so easily. It is quite generally understood that if Mr. S. McLeod had the right kind of a judgeship that he would retire and give the party his blessing. Mr. Chesley is in a similar position and looks with longing eyes upon several good positions that might be his if vacancies were created and supernumeration funds brought into action. But Mr. Chesley will be a fighter if he is not recognized and it is said he makes the bold assertion that if the conservatives don't choose him he can secure a nomination from the other side. But PROGRESS doubts that Mr. Chesley ever made such an assertion. He has plenty of common sense and does not imagine for an instant that the liberals will be made cats paws of a second time in his interest.

A possible candidate is Mayor Robertson. Apart from the duties of his office and his business which keep him on the move constantly now there is nothing to prevent him from making a good fight. His civic record has been a good one so far and he is a more popular man and better known today than ever. But Mr. Robertson may think he has enough to look after. His predecessor, Mr. T. W. Peters, also a conservative, and one of those hinted at in connection with the nomination, cannot say as much. He has the time to give the canvas and there is not much doubt but that he would like to try his strength in the dominion field. If he had not run the last mayors election he would not run the last mayors election and he would not run the last mayors election.

Another peddler of organs, pianos and sewing machines—or it might have been the same one—went to a house on Princess street, and when a lady opened the door planted his foot against it to keep it open. "He was," said the lady, "positively insulting," but she speedily relieved herself of his presence by calling upon an imaginary man, whom she found quite as useful in this case as "the late Mrs. Null" found her imaginary spouse.

One lady who lives on Germain street, was even more lively. A peddler called upon her, and was extremely free and easy with his low tongue. She promptly screamed a man's name. That this agent was the same one that called at the house on Princess street seems probable, as it was after the one called at the Princess street house, and the calling of the man's name did not scare him. The man did, though, and he came down upon that peddler even as the Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold, and the blackguard was hustled down the steps of the house, and given a parting kick.

Whether these peddlers—there have certainly been several peddlers around—or rather if this one peddler, as it may be only one that is such a thorough coward, is really a piano-agent, or simply has no other trade than that of blackguard—is a question. It would certainly not seem that his system of selling goods was a business-like one. A strange thing about the visit of this tramp were the tramps is that the three ladies do not seem to be any more discerning in regard to the dress of the stranger than most men are as to female attire. Each says, though, that the man she saw had a bad face. But this any one who never saw this prince of blackguards are able to tell, when his actions and conversation are reported.

"Will they all be conservative? That is hard to say. I will however say this that Orangemen generally seem more in touch with the conservative party than with the liberals. But if the conservative party will not listen to us, our candidate will be either on the liberal ticket or else run as an independent. We do not pro-

pose in the future when we have a request to make to seek the high and mighty smoking their cigars in the Union club. The man we elect must represent us. The methods of the Boyne have gone and we will fight by the ballot."

There was no uncertain sound about what this orangeman had to say. His official position stamped his remarks with authority and from further inquiry PROGRESS learned that this is the outline of the Orange policy. Judge Skinner is said not to be unwilling to run. Mr. Pugsley would not object to fighting in Kings County while rather than see the order represented Mr. A. J. Armstrong would resign his office and fight it out. Then on the liberal side Mr. H. A. McKeown hopes for the Orange nomination and with that in his hand he can virtually compel the liberal party to make him carry the standard of the party. Who his colleague will be is a question. Not Mr. Weldon, because the feeling is general that law is his forte not politics. Mr. Ellis is unconcerned and would not feel at all badly if the nomination was not extended to him. Another name has been mentioned—that of D. McLellan, whose strength in this county is probably not equalled by that of any man on either side of politics. But Mr. McLellan has a good job and may feel so comfortable in it that he would smile at the idea of stepping down and out for the uncertainty of a dominion election contest.

A MISERABLE BLACKGUARD

Who Poses as a Piano Agent and Seares Ladies.

A number of piano and organ fiends, who may have licenses, but who are of the class that usually have not, have been in the city during the last two weeks. They are exceedingly talkative, and exceedingly rude. One of these knocked at the door of a residence last week, and after asking the lady of the house, who came to the door, if she was that lady, engaged her in a conversation which was not at all pleasing to her, but which she was afraid to attempt to put a stop to.

"Don't you want a piano?" he asked.
"No."
"Nor an organ?"
"No."
"Well, now, that's strange—that's very strange. I thought that a lady like you would want either a piano or an organ. Why, I hear you play very well—very well indeed," which was perfectly true, and the lady wondered how he found it out.
"Don't you want a sewing machine?"
"No."
"Well, now, that certainly is strange—" but he did not tell her that she sewed well. All women do.

"Well, now, the head manager of our house is coming down here in a few weeks. He's a great man for the ladies—a great man. You'll take one then, won't you?" This was too much for the lady. She slammed the door in his face, which she ought to have done long before, and would have done had she not been afraid to.

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A Love and Detective Story.

The Daily Record announces a new story "The Lone Inn" by Fergus Hume, to begin this Saturday night and continue every night until completed. This is a detective and love story never published in serial or book form and will be worth reading.

FOUGHT WHILE HE DIED.

A SCENE AT THE DEATH BED OF MURDERED BRANTON.

Officer Hennessy and Dr. Gray Meet, Dispute Over Former Differences and Fighting Language and Blows are the Result—What the End May Be.

An episode of the Fairville murder that has rendered the recollection of the affair more unpleasant than it otherwise would have been, was either not related at all in the daily papers or else was referred to only cursorily.

While the murdered man was dying in the house, two prominent citizens of Fairville were engaged in a fight at the door and almost within range of the vision of poor Branton.

It was certainly a strange time to engage in petty squabbles and to make a commotion. There must have been great provocation to induce men to forget what was due to the dying and to act as they did.

The men who were thus disputing were Dr. James H. Gray and Officer Hennessy, both Fairville men. Dr. Gray has been practising medicine in Fairville some half dozen years and previous to that he had practised in St. John, so that he is well known about the city. Officer Hennessy is also a well known figure about St. John. He is chief of police and also of the police force of Fairville and has held the position for several years.

The incident of Monday was only the culmination of ill feeling between the two men that has been accumulating some time. It only required time for their pent up feelings to boil over into heated action. The time did come and then they forgot their circumstances and started in to have it out.

Each man had a grievance against the other. Officer Hennessy's was that the physician had not professionally treated a member of his family with satisfaction to himself. Dr. Gray's was that officer Hennessy had tried to injure his professional reputation and that he had not notified him of inquests, thereby depriving him of chances for fees.

The physician was called to the Crawford house Monday morning to young Branton. Officer Hennessy was around while he was looking after his patient and he got the idea that the doctor had not done as much as he should for the man.

When Dr. Gray was leaving the house he was met at the door by Officer Hennessy, who asked him if he was going to leave the man in that state. He heaped up the agony by offering the doctor five dollars to finish his work. The physician, jealous of his profession, did not like to hear these remarks and so he bristled up and observed sternly to his interrogator that he did not want to be dictated to. He further declared that Hennessy had done all he could in the last year or two to hurt his practice. This the officer denied flatly.

The discussion went on and at last Dr. Gray called Hennessy a "liar." This was too much for the defender of the peace. He straightened up and drew back his strong right arm to defend his honor. All this was occurring in front of the house and there two or three around. As the officer struck at the doctor Daniel Noonan sprang between the two. He warded off the blow and it just grazed the doctor's cheek and knocked off the hat of a woman who was standing near. The blow was a powerful one and had it brought up there would have been some excitement. As it was both parties had cooled down and the trouble ended for the time.

But the doctor started out immediately after his enemy's scalp. That very day he sought Councillor Cutherwood and at the county council the next afternoon the councillor read a communication from Dr. Gray. It was addressed to that body and it contained a complaint against Officer Hennessy of assault. The council appointed a special committee to investigate the matter and they will report at the next meeting of the council in January. What Dr. Gray desires is to see some one else occupy the position in place of Officer Hennessy. That gentleman is appointed by the county council and it was therefore before them that he laid his complaint.

MR. HORNEMAN'S CONTEST.

He Wants to Be a Member of the Halifax U. E. Company.

HALIFAX, October 4.—The torchlight parade of the firemen last week went a considerable distance to reassure some people who have been talking about a paid fire department for Halifax that, after all, perhaps there is no great need for a change just now. The men of the volunteer system made a splendid showing with their \$40,000 worth of apparatus. While the procession was being marshalled an alarm of fire came in and without confusion the men and apparatus for the proper division at once responded. There was an indication of a little hitch in the smoothness of the affair, but the trouble turned out to exist mainly in the mind of the chairman of the board of firemen. That gentleman, it is said, took it into his head that there ought to be a kick on the

point of the U. P. C. and others because the Captain of the U. E. C. had a seat beside the grand marshal at the head of the procession instead of the U. E. C. itself. What little kick there was the chairman magnified, but the gale blew over, Captain Murphy sat beside the grand marshal, and there was not an outward jar of any kind.

The pro-paid department people in the U. E. C., city council and elsewhere, naturally make all they can of this or other such incidents, to further their designs upon the volunteer system. They are anxious to destroy the N. E. C. this year if it can be accomplished, and they will leave nothing undone to secure their success.

There is a decided ripple on the surface of U. E. C. matters in another direction, which possibly means that the days of the volunteer system are numbered. F. J. Horneman applied for membership in the volunteer fire department. He was elected by a narrow majority in No 3 S. F. E. division, but when the election came up for confirmation in the union engine company as a whole, Mr. Horneman was rejected by a vote of 70 to 10. One reason assigned for this action was that Horneman was disliked on account of a practical joke he played on Fireman Berrigan at the general's fire some years ago. But the great grievance the fireman had against Mr. Horneman was that about five years ago he accused a member of the Union Engine company of stealing cigars at a Barrington street fire. The man died a few days later. This insult was never forgiven. Recently when Mr. Horneman asked for membership the firemen promptly and effectively revenged themselves by refusing to associate with him in the U. E. C. Horneman is a hard fighter, and he appealed to the city council to exercise its power, which had never been exercised in that way before, and force the U. E. C. to accept him whether they wanted him or not.

At the city council meeting on Tuesday night the aldermen voted, 9 to 6, ordering the U. E. C. to recognize Horneman as a member. That was a big triumph for Horneman and incidentally for the enemies of the volunteer fire system. The U. E. C. will not accept Mr. Horneman, there is no doubt of that. They would shut their doors in his face, Captain Murphy says, even if he came up escorted by the city clerk, mayor and all the aldermen. The moment he does get in, if such a thing were possible, that moment the U. E. C. will go out and such an exit is just what the advocates of the paid department want. It may be taken for granted, then, that the door will be kept shut in Mr. Horneman's face for a long time yet. The U. E. C. will not resign to please their enemies. It is to be war to the knife with them. The U. E. C. officers say the council will find passing a resolution making a man a member, and actually getting him into the ranks of the company to be entirely different matters. It does seem as if the Union Engine company were being gradually driven to the wall. One reason for this is the spirit of factionism in the company, and the chief motive with the council is political feeling and the hopes of political gain, combined with the personal rancor of some of the aldermen against the leading spirits of the U. E. C. It certainly looks, after Tuesday night's meeting of the city council, as if the days of the volunteer firemen in Halifax were about numbered. But officers and men now will die game.

It is said that this blackballing of Mr. Horneman is the only instance of the kind in the U. E. C. which has been finally adhered to. Ald. O'Donnell once applied, but his effort to secure admission never got beyond the initial stages of the division; his application did not get as far as the company. Three men, Messrs. Gibbons, Laidlaw and Byers, were blackballed, but on satisfactory apologies and explanations having been made they were subsequently admitted.

A Successful Luncheon.
The luncheon given by the board of trade to its visitors and friends was a happy idea and the pleasant hours spent over the spread excellently prepared by Caterer Lang were enjoyed by all present. There was plenty of freedom in the speechmaking and many sound and sensible ideas advanced, the chief of which was a maritime board of trade project. President Troop of the Halifax board of trade got a great reception and made just such a speech as one would expect from a shrewd and successful merchant.

Brought from a Funeral.
Even at funerals the humor of some men crop out. Thus it was when at a recent ceremony of this grave nature Mr. W. W. Turnbull met Mr. C. W. Weldon. The deceased was an old friend of both and Mr. Turnbull remarked in a meditative way that none of them know when the end would come for any of them, or what would cause it. "Yes," replied the Q. C., "but we all know what will be the death of you." "What?" asked Mr. Turnbull, with sudden interest. "Taxes," was the laconic answer.