

# A TRANSALANTIC CHASE WITHOUT THE WIRELESS OR CABLE

THE spectacular transatlantic chase of Dr. Crippen, accused of the murder of his wife in London, made by Inspector Dew of Scotland Yard, which resulted in his capture on Sunday last—a chase of many days with the fugitive unknown, the pursuer unrelentless, and the world looking on, recalls another very similar pursuit across the Atlantic's wide expanse made by Inspector Tanner of the same force in the early sixties, and his apprehension of Francis Müller, before landing in New York, who was suspected of having killed Thomas Briggs in a first-class compartment of a train on the North London Railway.

This crime startled two continents and held the people's interest at fever heat for many weeks, quite as the Crippen case has done both in this country and abroad. In the Müller case it was the nemesis of steam—its supremacy over the sail that was the murderer's undoing, while in the matter of Crippen wireless telegraphy acted as the goddess of vengeance, but the pursuit and capture in 1864—for that period—was just as exciting as the one that ended a week ago.

Late in the evening of July 9, 1864, a passenger entered one of the first-class compartments of a train pulling in at Hackney station, not far from London, but its condition caused him to make a quick retreat; for the interior showed plainly that a deadly struggle had taken place there and some sort of a crime had very evidently been committed. The place was literally besmeared with blood.

It was only a few hours afterward, however, that the body of a man, terribly beaten and cut, and later identified as Thomas Briggs, 60 years old, chief clerk in the banking house of Roberts, Curtiss & Co. in Lombard Street, London, was found lying near the tracks of Wick

station, not many miles away. He died in a few hours without giving a statement or description of the murderer.

For days the police were nonplused. To work on so slender a clue as a hat, that was found not to belong to Mr. Briggs, and to succeed in locating its owner in the hundreds of thousands of London's population, seemed almost an impossibility. But they kept at it just as they did in the Crippen case.

The first information that pointed directly to any one individual as a suspect was furnished by the little daughter of a cab driver who lived at Bow,

Behind him, in his room, the youngster found a small cardboard box, such as jewelers use, and upon showing it to her father he remembered reading that the name on the box—that of a jeweler named Death—it was, indeed, more than significant, as the box was the first real clue—was the tradesman who had received in exchange a chain identified as belonging to the murdered man. Subsequently Mr. Death identified a picture of Müller, which he had given to the cab driver's daughter, as the man who had exchanged the chain for another.

The cabman then recalled, too, that Müller had in his possession a fine gold watch, but was very reticent as to how he came to have it. Finally he ceased to wear it, and accounted for this by saying that it had been taken from him in a brawl, yet he refused to advertise for it or to even try to locate the parties whom he said he suspected of stealing it.

Then followed the argus-eyed efforts of the British police and Scotland Yard to locate the German, and by their persistence, even in the face of great difficulties, it was learned that a man answering his description had taken passage some days previous on a sailing vessel named

the Victoria, bound for New York. Already he had many days' start, but it was figured that the passage of the sailing craft would occupy about nineteen days before it reached American waters, and there was just a chance of getting him before he landed in America.

The matter was placed in the hands of Inspector Tanner, who, after obtaining a warrant for Müller's arrest, sought for some means to beat the fugitive in his race across the Atlantic. There were no five-day steamers in those days.

The Government was appealed to, and Sir George Grey offered every facility, and with the result that within a few hours after it was known that Müller had probably sailed, Inspector Tanner, Sergt. Clarke, Mr. Death, and the cabman were on an Admiralty steamer hot on the trail of the alleged murderer, who, they had every reason to believe, was on the Victoria bound for New York.

It was figured that the Admiralty steamer would arrive in New York some few days before the Victoria—as a matter of fact, the steamer did cast anchor on Aug. 5, but at that time there had as yet been no word as to the whereabouts of the sailing ship. Upon arrival, Inspector Tanner communicated with the British Consul and Chief Kennedy of the New York Police Department and steps were taken at once to insure prompt notice of the arrival of the Victoria.

For this purpose the Sandy Hook Telegraph Company was instructed to immediately forward any information of the incoming vessel to Police Headquarters and to the Quarantine Station, where Inspector Tanner and his party were waiting. The Secretary of the pilot officers also communicated with the various pilots telling them to keep a sharp lookout for the Victoria and at the same time a re-

ward of \$25 was offered to the first pilot who boarded that vessel.

A few days passed and the Victoria entered the lower bay. The picture is much the same as the arrival of Crippen at Father Point.

After boarding the sailing vessel and their mission made known Capt. Champion, as a ruse, ordered all the passengers forward on deck for examination by the health officer. Inspector Tanner was the health officer in this case. Müller was among them, and was quickly recognized by Mr. Death and the cabman. He was seized immediately.

"What is it?" he cried, and when told he was wanted for the murder of Thomas Briggs, turned ghastly pale.

"I did not do it," he shouted. "I can prove that I was not there at all!"

The murderer was turned over to the United States authorities, extradition arranged for, and Inspector Tanner and his prisoner left for home on the Etna, the officer with probably the same amount of satisfaction as that with which Inspector Dew returns with Crippen and his girl companion. The party reached London Sept. 17. Müller was very quiet during the trip—said little or nothing other than to protest his innocence.

It took but a few days to convict Müller, who still persisted that he was not guilty, and he was sentenced to death on Oct. 31. During the trial he conducted himself with considerable dignity. The proof against him was wholly circumstantial, and the result of this was that in Germany the feeling against the British Government ran high, for Müller's fellow-countrymen believed him innocent, and his simplicity, apparent gentleness, and the truthfulness of his statements of innocence appealed to many even in London. When a verdict was found against him

and sentence passed he arose and quietly said:

"I am at all events satisfied with the sentence which you have passed. I know very well it is that which the law of this country prescribes. What I have to say is that I have not been convicted on a true statement of facts, but on a false statement."

After this many more people were inclined to think him guiltless. The time came for his execution. The date was Nov. 1, 1864.

The condemned, marvelously calm, walked briskly to the scaffold, and as he sat on a stool awaiting the adjustment of the rope that was to swing him into eternity he repeated in German the words the minister uttered, "Christ, the saint of God, have mercy upon me."

Dr. Cappell, the attending physician, said to him: "In a few minutes, Müller, you will stand before God. I ask you again, and for the last time, are you innocent or guilty?"

"I am innocent," Müller replied.

Then Dr. Cappell repeated it after him in the form of a question—"You are innocent?" and to which he responded, "God Almighty knows what I have done."

"Does God know that you have done this particular deed?" queried the physician. And then, after weeks of endeavor to have him make a confession to a crime which the authorities were morally certain he committed, Müller came out with the truth and said: "Ich habe es gethan," meaning "I have done it."

The physician and minister muttered "Thank God!" and the execution proceeded, the trap was sprung quickly, and Müller paid the penalty of his crime, the details of which, the reason for it, and all that will never be known.