

MURDER AT ADDIEWELL

Horrible murder

For some time back we had had to relate unpleasant incidents in the unruly life led by some of the inhabitants of this place, and now it would appear that these irregularities have culminated in a horrible murder, committed last Saturday night.

Armed with sharp-edged pieces of shale

We understand that it is no uncommon thing for workmen to spend Saturday afternoons in drinking together, and then issue forth, ready for any brawl, and dangerously forward, when any disturbance does take place, to arm themselves with ugly pieces of the sharp-edged shale which is scattered plentifully about the village. On a recent occasion several men, under the excitement referred to, are alleged to have amused themselves by throwing bricks and shale at random into a crowd that had chanced to gather; in another case, four or five weeks ago, a workman was seriously assaulted; and of similar character would seem to have been the circumstances which led to the murder of Saturday night.

A tendency to excess in liquor

James Pattison, the person killed, has, according to the statements of those intimate with him, been resident in the village for eleven years. Prior to his settling in this quarter, he had, it is stated, occupied a respectable position in Glasgow, where he carried on the business of a druggist. On removing to Addiewell, he obtained employment at the chemical works as a labourer in the gas refining department, and in this position, he has since continued. Before he had resided long in the village, he apparently became a favourite with many of his neighbours. He was most inoffensive and obliging and, it may be truly said of him, that so far as any of his acquaintance ever knew, he had not a single enemy. He passed his time here apparently contented with his altered position, always cheerful, and always ready to help a neighbour, so far as experience allowed him. He was a member of the Addiewell Botanic Club; and last summer devoted all his spare time to the study of botany. So agreeable a person did he prove to be that in the lodging he occupied, as an unmarried man in the 'row' known as Graham Street, the people speak regretfully of the nine pleasant years he spent under their roof, and say that only once twice in that period did he give way to a tendency to excess in liquor, which had previously proved detrimental to his worldly interest.

Explaining the 'hard bits' of books

Latterly indeed, he appears to have lived with exemplary regularity; but though earning only 19s a week, he enjoyed comparative comfort, and never made any endeavour to regain his lost position. Content to go quietly about the neighbourhood, giving anyone such help as he was often asked for – prescribing simple remedies for a child in one house, explaining the 'hard bits of books' in another, translating, it is said, in one case, some Latin phrase which completely puzzled a divinity student:- he never indicated that he hoped for anything better, but replied to any suggestions as to the desirability of exertion with the remark that he was too old to begin life a second time, and showed an active interest only in furthering work connected with the Free Church. Of the local congregation he had for some time been a prominent member, and in its service he may be said to have spent the last hours of his life.

Three hours of singing and music

On Saturday he passed the afternoon in his usual regular way, taking no drink, and at an early hour in the evening he started on a round of calls for the purpose of collecting the monthly subscriptions due to the Sustentation Fund. This business he finished shortly after eight o'clock, after which he repaired to a house in Campbell Street to visit an intimate acquaintance, where he

spent nearly three hours, occupying the time in singing and music, of which he was extremely fond. At eleven o'clock he left his friend's cottage perfectly sober, but here all certainty regarding his movements ends.

Asked for a drink of water

Whether or not he had been led by the pleasantness of the night to stroll a short distance along the road, or whether he had spent the time with some other friend, is not yet known; all that has been ascertained – and even about this there is an apparent want of reliability – is that about midnight, while passing up Campbell Street, he stopped at the door next the house where he had passed the evening and asked for a drink of water from a woman with whom he is said to have been pretty well acquainted. Within a short time after this occurrence - if such a thing really happened – a man named Kitchen, who lives in the middle of the street in question, on going to his door to 'have a look at the night' before retiring to bed, had his attention attracted by the sight of a couple of men behaving in what seemed rather an odd way at the north end of the row - the opposite end to that at which the houses previously alluded to are situated.

Saturated with blood

At first Kitchen thought the men were throwing stones at the door of a house occupied by his daughter, as he heard the sound as if of a blow falling upon some hard substance; but almost immediately afterward, he noticed that the men were struggling, and that the struggle was brought to a close by one of them being thrown to the ground. No sooner was the tussle over, than the supposed assailant made off with all possible speed; and, induced by circumstance to satisfy himself as to the real nature of the occurrence, Kitchen cautiously made his way to the spot where the fallen man was lying, still a little suspicious, it would seem, as to the whole affair, and taking care to guard against being himself led into any trap. On getting to the end of the street, however, he discovered that the man lay quite unconscious, in the gutter, with his face to the ground, his head and clothes being saturated with blood, of which a pool had already gathered.

Running back to his cottage, with his own hands being smeared with blood, Kitchen called his son; and with the assistance thus gained, he lifted the unfortunate sufferer from the ground, and placing him in a reclining posture against the wall of the house, left him in charge of his son while he himself carried the alarm to the local policeman, whose house was not far off.

A lifeless body

In the interval that elapsed before the arrival of this officer, the wounded man remained almost motionless, never giving any indication of consciousness except once, when he feebly raised his hand towards his head. When examined by the light of the policeman's lamp, the face was seen to be that of Pattison; and accordingly the unfortunate man was removed to his lodgings in Graham Street, into which, however, only a lifeless body was carried.

'Let me in, Mary, let me in'

While this was being done, the quiet of Graham Street was, it is alleged, disturbed, in the hearing of at least one woman, by repeated knocks at a certain door, accompanied by cries of, 'Let me in, Mary, let me in.' Any clue that this circumstance might have afforded was not, however, followed up, and the night passed without any apprehension being made. With as little delay as possible, medical advice was procured from West Calder – too late, of course, to be of any avail, while the neighbouring police stations were also communicated with.

The fatal wound

On an examination of Pattison's body, it was found that his face was a good deal bruised about the right eye – the effect, it is thought, of a blow; while the fatal wound was discovered to

be an ugly gash immediately above the right ear, evidently inflicted with a sharp piece of shale picked up close to the body, in a tell-tale, bloody state. In the course of Sunday afternoon, Mr Stewart, Procurator-Fiscal for the county of Edinburgh, visited the village, in company with Dr. Littlejohn, and a post-mortem examination of the body was made, disclosing, we believe the fact that death has been brought about as stated.

Some wild feeling of jealousy

Previous to this, the police, following up certain suspicions, had apprehended a man named, as we believe, Hugh O'Neil, on a charge of being concerned in the murder. O'Neil, it is stated, was, like Pattison, employed at the chemical works but, though they had thus some knowledge of one another, the men, so far as can be gathered, have had no quarrel. In the close of the evening they had, it is asserted, been seen speaking to one another, but no high words or any indications of misunderstanding were then noticed. At the same time, it should be mentioned that the woman in Campbell Street, from whom the deceased is said to have got a drink of water, is alleged to have been on intimate terms with O'Neil. It is farther asserted that the latter was seen in the neighbourhood of the house in question shortly before twelve o'clock, and in these circumstances it has been suggested that some wild feeling of jealousy might have led to the fatal affair.

The deceased, it may be added, is supposed to have been about thirty-six years of age. Whether he has any relations resident in Glasgow is not known, the only persons whom he was in the habit of speaking about as friends being the Rev. Dr Bonar and Dr. McEwan, both resident in the west.

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