

A CENTENNIAL MYSTERY.

TRACING A MURDER OF EXHIBITION TIMES

—A TRAGEDY AT THE GRANGERS' ENCAMPMENT—PROBABLE CAUSE FOR THE BURNING OF THE HOTEL—THE MANGLED REMAINS OF A MAN FOUND.

From Our Own Correspondent.

PHILADELPHIA, Sunday, March 4, 1877.

A curious and, as yet, impenetrable mystery, involving the death of some unknown man, is engaging the attention of the residents in the western section of the city, and more especially those in the vicinity of the Centennial Grounds. The remains of a stranger, much decomposed, being, doubtless, all that is left of some Centennial visitor, have been found in a ravine near the ruins of the burned Grangers' Encampment at Elm Station, on the Pennsylvania Railroad, just over the Philadelphia County line. On Feb. 21 three small boys from the city were walking along the railroad, about 100 feet from the pile of ruins, when they observed the foot of a man sticking up through some weeds, and debris. The boys examined it and found the dead body of a man. Instead of making their discovery public, they kept the secret to themselves, and returned to the city. The next day, after having confided it to some young companions, they proceeded to the spot where the body lay. They then gave the alarm, and some of the neighbors came to the spot and dug the remains up. Coroner Pearce, of Ardmore, commenced an examination into the affair, and after a few days' search obtained such information as to lead to the belief that the man had been cruelly murdered at the Grangers' Hotel, and that the murderers had taken the body out of the building and buried it beneath the pile of rubbish where it was found. There seems no doubt whatever, from the further revelations, that the dead man was the victim of some scoundrels about the hotel. It was testified to at the inquest by some of the employes of the hotel, that about the 8th of November last, when there were at least 1,000 persons in the building, a room in corridor D had been found one morning in a terribly disordered condition, that the sheets on the bed were covered with blood, and that large pools were on the floor in the corridor. This information was kept quiet at the time, and the articles of bed-clothing were carried away, and cannot now be found. When the remains were found, the trunk of the body was detached from the head, the latter being blackened and terribly mutilated. There were marks on the skull, as if wounds had been inflicted with the sharp edge and also the pole of a hatchet. No other marks of violence were apparent. From the mangled condition of the head, it was evident that the blows inflicted were sufficient to cause death. The object of the murderers no doubt was robbery, and it is believed they attacked this unfortunate man in his room at the hotel, for the purpose of robbing him, and that he, offering resistance, was chopped to death. To get rid of the body and hide their bloody work was their next move, so it is thought the remains were taken out by the window, carried back of the hotel to the ravine, covered with rubbish, and there left to nature to carry on the remainder of the work of hiding the terrible crime. A few days after the hotel closed it was destroyed by fire, without doubt being the work of an incendiary, and the traces of the murder, which were so essential to establish the identity of the missing man, were thus obliterated. There were a number of people of bad reputation residing in the neighborhood of the hotel, and there are rumors that one night a guest from the hotel was badly beaten by a woman named Fury at a saloon kept by her. It is also reported that when the hotel building was destroyed she said, "I have had my revenge on the Grangers now," and that she had threatened different persons at various times with violence.

The deeper the matter is probed the greater the mystery becomes. About the time of the closing of the Centennial there were advertisements in the papers here of numbers of missing men, and the mystery attending their disappearance was as great as that of the celebrated East and North Rivers suicides or murders. Of course it cannot be told whether all of them have been returned to their friends by this time, but it is certain that some have not, and that this is one. The remains have the appearance of being those of a German, of about 25 or 30 years of age; weight about 140 pounds, five feet seven inches in height, light complexion, light hair, mustache and chin whiskers, excellent teeth; had on two shirts, outside shirt of muslin, with finely embroidered bosom; undershirt of linen, with old English letter H worked with red cotton on the skirt.

The stud-holes of the shirt appear torn, as if thieves in their eagerness to seize the studs had torn them out. The very indistinct marks "V. S." also appear on the clothing. The remains have been buried, and Coroner Pearce, at Ardmore, Montgomery County, is endeavoring to unravel this Centennial mystery.

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A MURDERER WANTED IN PENNSYLVANIA

Special Dispatch to the New-York Times.

PHILADELPHIA, June 30.—District Attorney Gotwalis, of Montgomery County, and Detective Hart, of Norristown, Penn., are in Albany, N. Y., to-day, for the purpose of having Henry Wahlen, now confined in the Kings County Penitentiary, pardoned, so that he may be removed to Montgomery and there answer the charge of murdering Max Hoehne at Elm Station, near this city, during the Carnival last year. It is not known what success they had.

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ARREST OF A MURDERER.

PHILADELPHIA, Penn., Aug. 22.—Adolph Strefolchy, a Russian, who was arrested in this city on Friday, is an accomplice of Whalen in the murder of Max Hoehne, at Elm Station. The prisoner made a full confession to Detective Abrams, by whom he was arrested. At No. 531 North Front-street, where he lodged, a coat, vest, razor-strop, and two handkerchiefs which belonged to the murdered man were found, and the pair of trousers worn by the prisoner also belonged to Hoehne. A pawn ticket found in his pocket called for the hammer with which Hoehne was knocked on the head.

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THE CENTENNIAL MURDER.

PERSONATING THE VICTIM.

SAD FATE OF A YOUNG GERMAN—BAD COMPANY AND VAGABONDAGE AT LAST—MURDERED BY HIS COMPANIONS, AND MONEY OBTAINED FROM HIS FATHER BY PERSONATING HIM—THE TRIAL OF THE ALLEGED MURDERER TO BEGIN TO-DAY.

Special Dispatch to the New-York Times.

NORRISTOWN, Penn., Sept. 9.—One of the most celebrated murder trials which has taken place in the country for a long time will commence here to-morrow, when Heinrich Wahlen, a German, will be arraigned, charged with the murder of Max Hoehne, another German, on or about the 17th of October last, at Elm Station, on the Pennsylvania Railroad, within a stone's throw of the celebrated Granger Encampment of the Centennial. This is familiarly known as the Centennial murder, and was the only case of great mystery in which life was lost during the progress of the great Exhibition. Although the crime was committed in October, it was not discovered until the following February, when a couple of boys from Philadelphia were walking on the railroad track, and discovered a man's hand sticking up through a pile of rubbish. They examined the heap and found the dead body of a man, but became so frightened that they hurried to the city, and did not reveal what they saw for three or four days afterward. The body proved to be that of Max Hoehne, a son of a restaurant-keeper in Berlin, Germany, who had come here to seek his fortune, fallen into bad company, and was murdered, as was afterward ascertained, by Wahlen, so that the latter could personate the dead man and send letters home to the father, and thus obtain money. It was through these letters that the alleged murderer was found. According to the tale of one Adolf Strepoleky, who was an accomplice in the crime, Hoehne, Wahlen, and himself were wandering around the country, and, of course, drifted from New-York to Philadelphia, where the Exhibition was in progress. On the night of the 17th of October they sat down in a gulch in the rear of the Grangers' Encampment, not having any other place to spend the night. Hoehne fell asleep, and, it is said, was struck on the head and killed by Wahlen.

His two companions then divested him of part of his clothing, buried the body in a heap of rubbish, covered it with leaves, and left the place. Strepoleky's share of the spoils was a pair of pantaloons, which he had on when arrested. Wahlen then went to New-York, where he remained for some time, getting a trunk of Hoehne's out of pawn, appropriating the clothing of his victim and the effects of the box. Then he wrote a pitiful letter to Hoehne's father for money, and soon a draft came. As a natural consequence he overdid the thing, and sent too many letters, which aroused the suspicions of the parents of the dead man, who sent word to the German Consul at Philadelphia to look after their son. In the meantime a paragraph from the Philadelphia *German Democrat*, giving an account of the murder and a description of the dead man, was copied into a Berlin paper, and the father of Hoehne saw it. The horrible truth flashed across his mind that his son was dead and some impostor was personating him. He immediately forwarded all the desired information to America, and Wahlen was found in the Kings County Penitentiary, committed under the name of Max Hoehne, charged with burglary in Williamsburg, serving out a sentence of six months. When confronted by the detectives, he had the effrontery to insist that he was Max Hoehne, but afterward admitted that he was Wahlen, alias Keller, Gov. Robinson, of New-York, pardoned him, and on the 2d of August the murderer arrived at the Norristown Jail, where he has been confined since, and the great mystery of the Centennial year promises soon to be cleared up.

Wahlen is an adventurer, and a dangerous man. He is polished in manners, very intelligent and ready-witted, as is shown by his scheme to personate Hoehne, and it is said that he actually believes he will be able to clear himself of this foul charge, and show that Strepoleky committed the murder. Since his imprisonment here his health has apparently failed, although he keeps up good spirits. A few weeks ago it was thought that he intended to pursue a systematic plan of starving himself, he refusing all food for six days, and taking only a bowl of tea morning and night. Under this method he reduced himself in flesh and obtained admission to the prison hospital. He denies that he tried to starve, and says that he was sick. While in prison his conduct has been excellent, never having given any trouble until Thursday last, when he was taken before the Grand Jury. Then he refused to walk to the Court-house as fast as was desired, saying that he was sick and intended to take his own time. At that time T. Warren O'Neil, his counsel, made application to have the panel of jurors quashed, and presented most remarkable reasons. The causes assigned were that the Jury Commissioner, named Hart, who had charge of the drawing of the juries, both Grand and Petit, had been appointed a special detective to aid in working up the case, and that \$1,400 reward had been offered for the arrest and conviction of the murderer. Hart did a good portion of the work, in connection with Detective Abrams, and will come in for a share of the blood-money. Therefore the counsel for the prisoner, knowing that Hart was interested pecuniarily in securing the conviction of the man, objected. Judge Ross decided that there had been no fraud, and allowed a true bill to be found. Had the panel of jurors been quashed, the result would have entailed an expense of \$90,000 upon the county, and no jury trials could have taken place for six months, thus blocking the business of the courts. If Wahlen is found guilty the case will be carried to the Supreme Court on a writ of error, which, under the peculiar law of this Commonwealth, will lie over for a year, and then will come the numerous appeals to the Board of Pardons, another seemingly useless body, instead of allowing the Governor to exercise his discretion in the matter. The detectives are grasping for a reward of \$1,400, and as there are several parties concerned in the capture of the prisoner, there is likely to be a fight over it. One of the principal reasons for pushing the case so hard and soon is to allow of the distribution of this reward.

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A MURDERER'S SUICIDE.

THE MURDER NEAR THE CENTENNIAL GROUNDS
AT PHILADELPHIA—STRANGE SUICIDE OF
THE CONVICTED MURDERER—STORY OF
THE CRIME.

Special Dispatch to the New-York Times.

NORRISTOWN, Penn., Feb. 23.—Heinrich Wahlen, under sentence of death for the murder of Max Hugo Hoehne, at Elm Station, near the Centennial Grounds, in October, 1876, committed suicide in the jail at this place this evening. His self-murder was of the most brutal character, and closely resembled the method it is alleged he employed to deprive Hoehne of his life. The prison authorities, apprehending that Wahlen would kill himself, placed a watchman over him at night, leaving him unguarded during the day, save the same attention given to other prisoners. He seemed cheerful all day, and about 5 o'clock received his supper. He took this through the cell door, and no further attention was given him at the time. At 6:15 o'clock the night watchman went to Wahlen's cell and found the door securely locked from the inside. It was pried open, and Wahlen was found suspended by the neck and dead. He had taken the clothes from his bed, tied one end to the iron grating in the window, and the other end about his neck, and hanged himself. To add to his horrible self-murder, the man had torn off the top of the heater and battered in his head with the piece of iron. His skull was fractured and the brains were oozing out. The heater top was found on the floor covered with blood and hair, and the chair had been kicked over.

The man was cut down, and life was found to be extinct, though it was evident the man had been dead but a short time. Wahlen left three statements concerning the crime with which he was charged, in English, in German, and in French. In the English statement he strongly protested his innocence, and called on God to curse those who had anything to do with his prosecution and conviction. He also left another statement, or rather a letter to his counsel, Q. Warren O'Neill, which was private in its character.

Heinrich Wahlen, the convicted murderer of Max Hoehne, became acquainted with his victim at the Jewish restaurant in the Centennial grounds in the latter part of the Summer of 1876. Hoehne had had some difficulty with his father in Berlin, and came to this country with a good wardrobe and some money. When the money ran out he engaged as a waiter in a restaurant, but the wages were not sufficient to allow him to live as he liked, and he was in the habit of writing home from whence he obtained remittances. Wahlen knew this, and in conjunction with a man named Strobolsky enticed Hoehne to the Granger's Hotel, at Elm station, three miles from the Centennial grounds. After staying there a day or two, the three went out into the woods, where Hoehne was murdered with a hammer. Wahlen's accomplice on the trial acknowledged this much. The murder was not discovered until in February, 1877, and then the body was so decomposed that it was almost unrecognizable. There was a shirt on it, however, marked with an "H," and this finally led to the identification of the murdered man. Wahlen then went to New-York, carrying with him Hoehne's trunk, in which was some jewelry in addition to the clothing. He pawned both, and after running out of money, attempted to commit a burglary in Williamsburg, and was arrested and sent to Brooklyn Jail under the name of Max Hoehne. While there he wrote letters to Hoehne's father, imitating the son's handwriting, asking for money. The father became suspicious, and Dr. Morwitz, of the *German Democrat* here, was written by the father, who also sent to Brooklyn, and the bogus son and the murderer was discovered. He was brought to Norristown, and tried and convicted Sept. 25, 1877. He applied for a new trial, but it was refused, and he was then sentenced to be hanged. The case was appealed to the Supreme Court, which is the next mode of procedure here, where it lays for a year, unless taken up sooner. A short time ago the case was called up, and the decision of the Judges reserved in the matter. Strobolsky, the accomplice in the murder, is at present confined in the jail here.

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