

MURDER AT GLENELG

A Police Constable Shot

Revenge the Motive

The Assailant at Large

An illustration of the truism that a policeman carries his life in his hands was afforded at Glenelg on Sunday morning, when a crime was committed which will not soon be forgotten. A constable stationed at the seaside town was murdered in the open street by a fisherman whom he had arrested for drunkenness ten hours previously. From the remarks of the fisherman prior to the murder there can be no doubt that the motive of the crime was revenge; the murderer evidently laboring under the delusion that the constable had shown spite in effecting his arrest. Although there were many people in the vicinity when the fisherman fired at the policeman, they appear to have given their attention entirely to rendering what assistance was possible to the victim, and the perpetrator of the tragedy succeeded in effecting his escape. Although a vigorous search has been made no clue to his whereabouts has been obtained, but the police are confident that his capture will be effected shortly.

The affair took place about five minutes past midnight. The victim was Constable Ring, and the perpetrator Joseph Coleman, usually known as "Joe" Coleman, the master of the fishing cutter Janet. The crime was of the most coldblooded and vindictive character. Coleman had been arrested by the police officer in the afternoon for drunkenness, and had been lodged in the cell at the station. Finding that his captive had become sober, at about half-past 8 in the evening Constable Ring obtained the services of Mr. W. Hicks, a local justice of the peace, and a magistrates' court was held. This was arranged by Constable Ring so as to get the case settled and give Coleman an opportunity of going out in his boat as usual on

opportunity of going out in his boat as usual on Sunday morning. As the result Coleman was fined 5/. On leaving the station he said he "would get a skinful," and departed breathing threats of vengeance against the officer who arrested him. He crossed Moseley-square, where he obtained a nobbler of whisky. Thence he proceeded to his home, off Reid-street, near Miller's Corner, in the 11 o'clock train, by which Constable Ring, according to his custom, also travelled. The constable remained at the corner to see the last two trains arrive from Adelaide. Coleman went home and procured an old single-barrelled muzzle-loading gun, which he charged. He told his wife that she would shortly be a widow, as he intended shooting himself. She endeavored to take the weapon from him, and in the struggle managed to secure the ramrod. Coleman then left his home, and evidently being aware that it was Constable Ring's practice to remain at Miller's Corner for the arrival of the last train from Adelaide, he went thither for the purpose of meeting him.

After Constable Ring arrived at Miller's Corner, he walked up and down and conversed with several citizens. He spoke to Mr. J. Stanyer, and said—"When Coleman was released he went off swearing, and said 'Life is not worth living after being put in gaol.'" This was about six minutes past 12. As the last train was approaching along the street on the way to the sheds, Coleman stepped on to the road, and Constable Ring warned him lest he should be run over. Coleman appears to have resented the remark, and drawing his gun emptied the full charge into the policeman's breast. Ring reeled and fell, dying instantly. From a statement made by Mrs. Hunt, who witnessed the tragedy, it is evident that Coleman left the scene by way of Partridge-street as soon as the shot was fired, and he must have turned down High-street to get to the Pier Hotel, at the time that Constable Fitzgerald was notifying the Adelaide station of the murder. Immediately the shot was fired, several persons in the vicinity rushed to the scene. Among them was Mr. W. Fisk, who was standing by the body when Constable Fitzgerald arrived and took charge of it. Mr. J. Liddle's vehicle was then requisitioned, and the owner and Messrs. W. Fisk, J. Stanyer, and Foreman Cleveland placed the body in it for conveyance to the morgue. In the meantime Constable Fitzgerald had proceeded down the Jetty-road in search of the murderer, and at the Pier Hotel made use of the telephone. Whilst he was doing so, Coleman knocked at the door three times and endeavored to gain admission, which was denied him by the landlord (Mr. A. E. Hastwell). He was

admission, which was denied him by the landlord (Mr. A. E. Hastwell). He was carrying the gun at the time, and evidently contemplated an attack upon Constable Fitzgerald, the other local constable. The murderer was then seen to pace up and down on the verandah of the hotel in full view of the police-station, where a number of persons had gathered full of concern over the crime. One of them, Mr. J. Ross, unaware as to the identity of the murderer, walked over to Coleman, who levelled the gun at him, and said, "Is that you, Fitz?" Ross said, "No, I'm Jack Ross; don't you know me?" and Coleman replied, "Shake hands; I'm in trouble." The twain then crossed the square, and Coleman sat down on a seat in the Glenelg railway-station. After that he was seen on the jetty, but as soon as he was "wanted" he was nowhere to be found.

The Scene of the Crime.

The spot where the murder took place was on Jetty-road, immediately in front of Mr. E. Thompson's Terminus Hotel, and close to the intersection of Partridge-street and Rudolph-terrace. This was about 400 yards distant from Coleman's home, a two-roomed cottage off Reid-street. Between the rails and the hotel a pool of blood denoted the spot upon which the murdered man was standing when the fatal shot was fired. It may be mentioned that on Sunday afternoon a dog was run over by the 4 o'clock train from Adelaide almost at the same spot, and had to be shot by the police.

What Eye-witnesses Saw.

Mr. Charles Ranford, who had been conversing with Coleman five minutes before the tragedy, when interviewed by a representative of "The Advertiser," said:—"In company with James McCaffrey, I was talking to Coleman about midnight. He did not appear to be drunk, but had a gun trailing behind him, like a walking-stick. I said to him, 'What are you doing with that gun, Joe?' He answered, 'Looking for that — Ring. He shot me in this afternoon. Revenge is sweet. I intend to shoot him and myself afterwards. Life is nothing to me?' I thought at the time that it was nothing but an empty threat, but nevertheless tried to persuade him to part with the gun. Soon afterwards Constable Ring came up and said, 'You had better go home, Joe,' and went towards him, with the object of wresting the gun from him. In an endeavor to distract his attention he said, 'Look out for the train, Joe.' Coleman hacked two or three steps, raised his gun to his hip and then fired. The shot took instant effect, and the constable exclaimed, 'Oh!' and put his hands to his abdomen. With McCaffrey I then hastened down to the police-station, but as the constable was not there I informed the Glenelg stationmaster of the crime."

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THE GLENELG STATIONMASTER OF THE CRIME.

(Continued on page 4.)

Mr. McCaffrey, when seen subsequently, corroborated the statement made by Mr. Ranford.

Detective Fraser's Statement.

Detective Fraser on Sunday afternoon made the following statement concerning the crime:—"At about 2.45 on Saturday afternoon a man known as Joe Coleman, who had been drinking and was quarrelsome, was locked up by Constable Ring on a charge of drunkenness. He was detained in custody on that charge until about 9 p.m. He was then practically sober, and as he was anxious to get away with his cutter Janet on a fishing cruise early on Sunday morning he was brought before a magistrate, fined 5/, and given his freedom. Afterwards he seems to have knocked about Glenelg and imbibed more liquor. He also expressed his determination to revenge himself on the police for having locked him up. Before he met Ring at Miller's Corner Coleman was seen walking along the street with a gun in his possession. Before Ring appeared on the scene two men, Charles H. Ranford, of Rose-street, and J. McCaffrey, spoke to Coleman at Miller's Corner, and he said he was waiting for Ring so as to get his revenge. They advised him to go home, and it was while they were still speaking to him that Constable Ring came on the scene. Ring said, 'Hallo, Joe, what have you got there?' Some further conversation took place, and just as the last train from Adelaide to Glenelg was returning along the street from the terminus to the sheds, Coleman stepped back on to the roadway. Ring went on the roadway too, and said to Coleman, 'Look out; look out for the train,' and just then Coleman quickly raised his gun and fired at the policeman from a distance of only three or four yards. The constable threw up his two hands and staggered. The two men who watched the occurrence ran down the side streets towards the police-station to give the information. Other people soon assembled, and Dr. O'Leary was sent for. He came within a few minutes, and found Ring lying quite dead on the roadway near a pool of blood. He ordered the removal of the body to the morgue. After the shooting Coleman appears to have walked along the road to the Pier Hotel, where he was refused admittance, and he was spoken to by several others. He was still carrying the gun, and on several occasions enquired for Fitz (meaning Constable Fitzgerald). However, he failed to find Fitzgerald, and he was last seen leaving the jetty a little after a quarter-past 12. Since then, though search has been made, Coleman has not been found. Before leaving his home, at about 11.45 on Saturday

ing his home, at about 11.45 on Saturday night, after loading his gun in the dining-room, he spoke to his wife, and informed her it was his last good-bye, and that she would soon be a widow. Coleman was then under the influence of liquor, and as he had made similar threats on previous occasions his wife did not take much notice of the remarks."

Another Account.

Mr. W. Fisk, assistant chemist, who was in the vicinity of Miller's Corner at the time of the tragedy, heard the fatal shot fired. He immediately hastened to the scene. Mr. Fisk said—"When I arrived on the scene Constable Ring was standing upright near the railway-line, and was bleeding from the mouth. Then with a spasmodic contraction of the muscles of his arms he fell over on his back lifeless."

Stopping the Train.

Mrs. M. A. Hunt, a resident of Jetty-road, had been visiting her daughter, who lives in Rose-street, and accompanied by her son-in-law was passing the Terminus Hotel, when she heard a short fired. "When I heard the report," said Mrs. Hunt, "I saw two figures outlined in the darkness, and thought some trick was being played. I saw the figure of a man pass around Miller's Corner into Partridge-street, but had no suspicion that a murder had occurred. I heard no voices. I walked on a few steps and then saw Constable Ring fall heavily. Thinking his body was on the line I stood up in front of the approaching train from Glenelg and waved some sewing which I was carrying. The train stopped, and as other helpers had arrived I went on my way."

At the Pier Hotel.

Coleman, as stated above, endeavored to gain admission to the Pier Hotel. Mr. A. E. Hastwell, the proprietor of the hotel, stated:—"Some time after midnight, at about 12.20 I think, Coleman knocked at the door of the hotel. Constable Fitzgerald came in about that time to ring up the head office in connection with the murder, and immediately I had let him in and locked the door, a second knock came. I asked who was there, and in a voice which I did not know the person said—"It's all right. I have missed my last train." I opened the door, and as I saw it was Coleman, a local resident, I refused him admission. He asked for a whisky. In the light of subsequent events it appears as though he saw Constable Fitzgerald come into the hotel, and was after him. Neither Fitzgerald nor I knew at the time that Coleman was suspected of the deed up the street. After he had locked the door a second knock came, and on going to the door I saw it was Coleman again. I refused to let him in, and told him that someone had shot Constable Ring. At this he made no comment, but simply said—"I want a whisky," which I refused him. Some few minutes later

but simply said—"I want a whisky," which I refused him. Some few minutes later Coleman knocked for the third time, and when I opened the door he made a determined effort to get in, and put his foot inside, but I got him out and told him that if he came again I would have him arrested, as a constable was inside. He did not appear to be drunk, and was carrying what appeared to be a walking-stick. I could not see well because it was dark. When I let the policeman out of the door I offered to go over to the police-station if I could be of any assistance. Fitzgerald accepted my offer, and as we were crossing the road Coleman ran towards us, and thinking he wanted to get in the hotel I ran back, locked the door, and got out by the verandah. After I learned at the police-station that Coleman was suspected I assisted in a search for him, but could find no trace of him."

Spreading the News.

The first information of the affair was telephoned to the city watchhouse at 12.30 on Sunday morning, and Inspector Burchell at once sent word to the police at Goodwood. Detective Fraser was informed, and he and Constables Molloy and Hipwell rode down to Glenelg on bicycles. Meanwhile Trooper Matthews, of Brighton, had been informed, and he happened to be first on the scene. A little later a vehicle from the police barracks arrived with Detective Morter and Constables Parkins and Loughlin. Detective Mattin and Sub-Inspector Priest travelled to Glenelg by the first train from the city, and were subsequently joined by the Commissioner (Colonel Madley) and Inspector Burchell.

Searching for the Fugitive.

From the Glenelg station it appears that Coleman went up the jetty. Dr. O'Leary, as soon as he found that Constable Ring had been murdered, borrowed a revolver and went in search of the assassin. He walked up the jetty, which was practically deserted, accompanied by another man, and meeting a fisherman said, "Have you seen Coleman?" The man replied, "I saw him up at the end of the jetty." When the doctor arrived at the end of the jetty he saw a man, who, in answer to enquiries, said, "He has just gone down the jetty, and you must have passed him." From that time no trace of the murderer has been found. Many rumors, however, are in circulation. Early in the morning it was stated that he had been arrested at Brighton, and later in the day at Morphett Vale, but neither statement had any foundation. There is a possibility that Coleman may have stowed away on one of the fishing cutters, the Arrow, Beatrice, or Stella, which sailed from the jetty shortly after daylight.

As soon as the police arrived on the scene Coleman's house was searched, and the premises were watched for the night. The jetty was thoroughly examined, and

The jetty was thoroughly examined, and at daylight the Janet and other boats at the anchorage were carefully inspected. Additional police assistance was obtained, and the district all around was scoured from morning till night without success, the sandhills being carefully watched by the patrolling constables. It was thought that the fugitive might have sought temporary shelter in the "bluebushes," which comprise much of the vegetation to be found on the sandhills between Brighton and Henley Beach, so that the police had a lengthy task. Great indignation was felt throughout the district at the crime. The deceased constable was highly esteemed, and the residents gave every assistance to the police in their efforts to capture the murderer. It was surmised by some that subsequent to the deed, Coleman might have drowned himself. The constables peered into the water near the jetty, and at one time some color was lent to this view by the discovery of a man's shirt from the water. This was taken to Mrs. Coleman, but she could not say that it belonged to her husband. So far no grappling operations have been carried on.

Coleman is armed. In his flight he took with him the muzzle-loading rifle, also a quantity of powder and shot and percussion caps. He is without a ramrod, but he can easily supply this deficiency with a piece of fencing-wire. In his desperate

straits he may have recourse to bloodshed to avoid arrest. The fact, however, that he is armed with an old-fashioned weapon, and cannot re-load speedily, renders him less dangerous than he would be otherwise.

A Description.

James Albert Coleman is 55 years of age, and of a "nuggety" build. He is described as follows:—5 ft. 5 in. or 5 ft. 6 in. high, stout, of strong build, but not corpulent, with iron-grey hair, a grey scrubby moustache, and a few days' growth of beard. He has a hard weather-beaten face, deeply lined, the bottom jaw protruding, and a rather large mouth. He was dressed in dark-grey patched trousers, vest of rough woolly material, light fawn-colored coat, and a dark cap with a glazed peak, a dark handkerchief round his neck, a blue-grey woollen shirt, and blucher boots.

Coleman and His Wife.

Coleman has lived with his wife for some years in a neatly-kept two-roomed stone and brick cottage, reached by a narrow lane running off Reid-street, which is about 400 yards from the scene of the tragedy. He is a native of Deal, in Kent, England, where he was married before coming to Australia about 32 years ago. He has no children, and so far as can be ascertained no relations, either in Australia or in England. Mrs. Coleman's only relative in Aus-

land. Mrs. Coleman's only relative in Australia was a brother, and he was killed about two years ago in an underground mining accident at Broken Hill. She, however, has a brother and sister living in her native county of Kent. Mrs. Coleman left her residence on Sunday morning at 9 o'clock after the premises had been placed under police surveillance, and had not returned late in the afternoon. Coleman has followed the occupation of a fisherman during his lengthy residence at Glenelg. He is said to be a capable seaman, and to be well known there and on Kangaroo Island and all along the coastline. He was in partnership in the fishing industry which was conducted in the cutter Janet, the largest boat of her type in the Bay on Sunday. The Janet once belonged to the late Sir W. J. T. Clarke, of Melbourne, and it was that gentleman who was believed to have named it after his wife, Janet Lady Clarke.

The Murdered Policeman.

The unfortunate victim, Albert Edward Ring, had been stationed in charge of the Glenelg police-station for about 18 months. He was a fine officer, standing about 6 ft. 1 in. high, and had a stately appearance. He was highly esteemed, and commanded the greatest respect from his superior officers in the force. He was courteous, and at the same time a zealous officer whom the force could ill-afford to lose. Much regret was expressed at Glenelg and elsewhere at his tragic and untimely death. He was 38 years of age, and before he joined the police force, nearly ten years ago, he was connected with pastoral and other pursuits, and was for some time engaged on the Barrier at the mines. It was on August 1, 1898, that he joined the service, and soon afterwards he was stationed at St. Peters and Marryatville. He returned to the Adelaide station on September 8, 1902, and was transferred to Glenelg on November 1, 1906. At the time of his appointment there, a question was raised as to his right to the post of officer in charge, but the authorities had acted within their rights, and justly appreciated his merit. He carried out his duties satisfactorily, and showed that he was worthy of the confidence reposed in him. He was a married man, and left a widow and one child.

The Inquest.

The City Coroner (Dr. W. Ramsay Smith) was notified of the tragedy, and he will hold an inquest this afternoon. An autopsy was performed on Sunday afternoon by Dr. O'Leary. Colonel Madley has decided that the remains of Constable Ring shall be accorded a funeral with full military honors. The cortege will leave Glenelg at 1.45 p.m. to-morrow for the Payneham Cemetery, and will be met at West-terrace by the Police Band and members of the police force at 3 o'clock. A procession will then be formed to East-ter-

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race, where tramcars will be provided for
the mourners.