

SHERLOCK HOLMES WOULD BE BAFFLED BY THIS MYSTERY

A London Actor Is Found Murdered in a Battersea Garden, the Stage Setting Is Unusual, and Three Persons See the Murderer, Yet He Escapes and Scotland Yard Is Mystified.



Arthur James, a salesman. He added that the running man, whose face he did not see, was dressed like a clerk, rather stoutly built, and about 25 or 26 years of age. Inquiries at the actor's address, 14 Great Percy Street, and among his friends showed him to have been professionally respected, of regular habits, and of kindly, even generous, disposition. In short, not a man who would incite personal animosity.

On the morning of the 17th both Miss Earle and young Anderson were released from custody, as nothing had been revealed, even remotely, to connect them with the crime.

At the close of the week, the inquiry was adjourned until the forenoon of Saturday, Sept. 17, even the fringe of the veil which at present screens both the motive and the identity of the perpetrator of the crime had not been lifted. Evidence was, however, presented tending to show that a struggle had taken place before the fatal shot was fired. The footprints of the murderer on the soft soil were also discovered and measured. No. 9 boots were fitted into them. Young Anderson wore 7½. The toes of his boots were pointed; those of the murderer's were not. An interesting witness was William Gordon Anderson, 16 years old, the sec-

ond son of the deceased. He said that he had private business. I don't know what time he got back, but I saw him next morning, and he said something about missing the tram."

A tram ticket was here produced which the deceased had used on the Thursday. It was a workman's ticket for the Battersea district. The coroner said that it looked as if the deceased had come back by a workmen's car early on Thursday morning.

In further evidence witness said he had no reason to think that his father was on bad terms with anybody. The foreman of the jury:

"Have you any idea why your brother went frequently to see Miss Earle?"

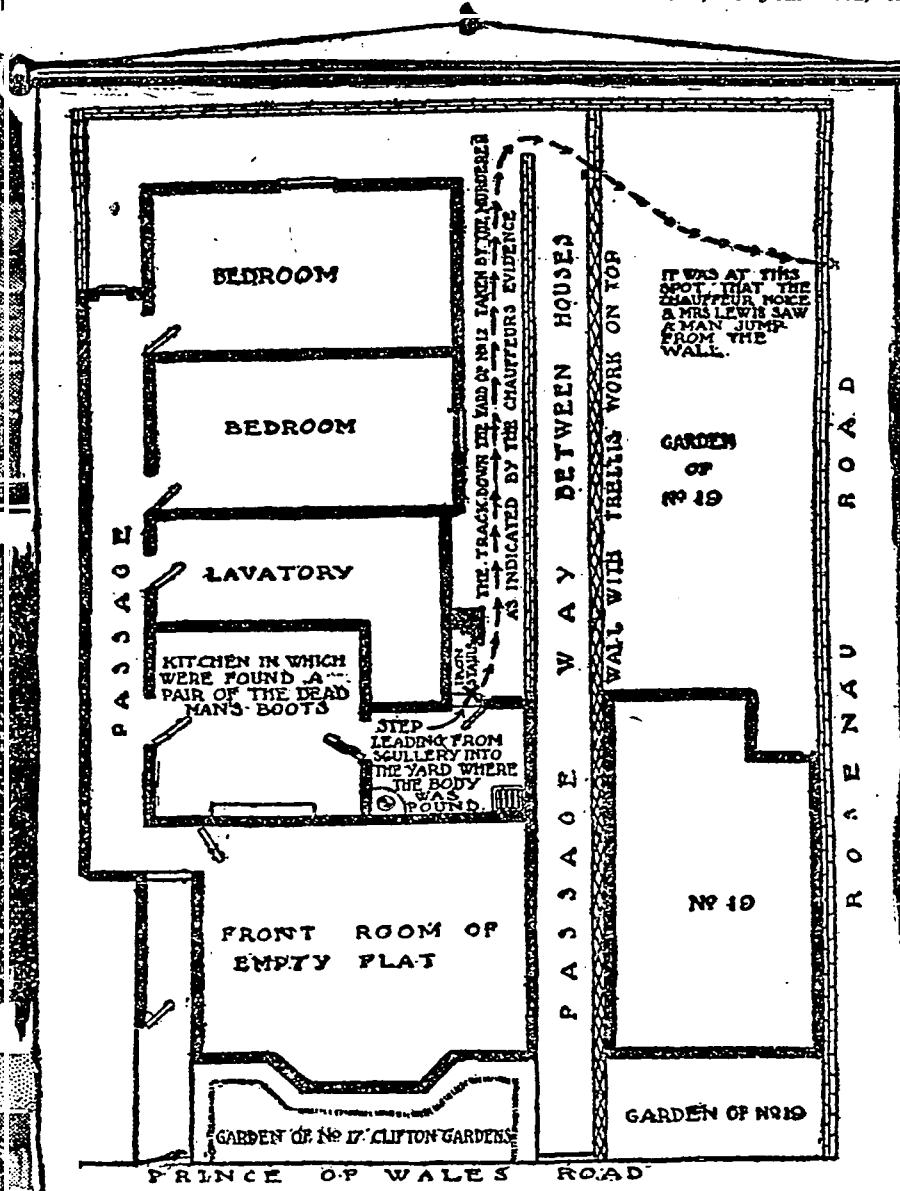
"No, except that he was on very good terms with her."

Coroner—Did you tell your father that your brother was going to see Miss Earle on that Saturday?

however, the woman of the house made the following statement:

"We have known Anderson and the members of his family for quite a number of years. We all respected him highly. He was one of the finest men you could meet, and in particular we all admired him for the interest and affection which he bestowed upon his children. Both the sons received a good education at a college in the Northwest of London, and of his two daughters one was educated at a convent, while the other remained at home with her aunts. You could scarcely imagine a family on more friendly terms with one another than they were."

"The meeting which took place at my house on the evening of the 14th was arranged in the last resort by telephone. It was simply an informal visit. My brother, with his younger son, called about a quarter to eight, and the day



Assistant Commissioner MacNaghton Giving Instructions to Scotland Yard Detective Mitchell.

The son burst into a fit of crying and covered his face with his hands and said: "Good God! It is my father!"

He was right. The injured man, who was at that very moment breathing his last, was Thomas Weldon Anderson, an actor, professionally known as Atherstone. Later the son identified him at the mortuary.

An investigation was at once made on the scene of the murder. It revealed nothing, however, but a pair of boots belonging to the actor. These were found on the mantelpiece of the front room of the empty flat. Dr. Kempster, after the death of the elder Anderson, at 10:20, returned to the house in Prince of Wales Road. He found a tweed cloth cap, later identified as belonging to the murdered man. He noticed a bullet mark on the door of the scullery and saw that the glass of the panel had been splintered by another. The first mark was made by the bullet that had passed through Anderson's head. Its direction showed that the assailant had been standing close to the door in the garden.

The physician then went upstairs. There he found Miss Earle being interrogated by Inspector Badcock of Scotland Yard. The woman was pale and trembling in every limb, while beads of perspiration stood out on her forehead. She had already been told that the murdered man was the father of her guest. She talked freely about the deceased, whom she had known intimately, as well as his two sons, for several years. Later on the physician and Inspector took her to the police station, where she made this statement:

"I am a teacher at the Academy of Dramatic Arts, Gower Street, and occupy 5B Flat, Clifton Gardens, 17 Prince of Wales Road, Battersea. I have lived there and at the flat beneath about eight years. Thomas Weldon Anderson, lying dead, was an actor, whose stage name was Weldon Atherstone. He is married, and lived at 14 Great Percy Street, King's Cross, in lodgings, having separated from his wife since before I knew him. He has four children."

"I first met Thomas Weldon Anderson when on a theatrical tour with him upward of eight years ago, and have since been on intimate relations with him."

"About 8:30 or 8:45 to-night his son, Thomas Frederick, called upon me by appointment made on a post card, asking if he might call. I had known him from a boy, and he had always visited me. I replied that he might call, and he did so. On his arrival at about 8:30 we were talking in the front sitting room until about 9 o'clock."

"Then I showed him some decorations I had carried out in my bedroom, and then we went to take supper in the kitchen. While doing so we heard two shots in quick succession, and going into the scullery adjoining I opened the door leading on to the back stairs, and on looking up saw a man scramble over the wall dividing our back yard from the adjoining one to the right of us. I wanted to go down to see what the matter was, but Mr. Anderson would not let me."

"We returned our meal, thinking some one might have fired to scare a thief. A few minutes later a knock came at the door and I admitted Sergt. Buckley. "I last saw Thomas Weldon Anderson when he called with his son, Thomas Frederick. They stayed to tea, and through the evening, and we were happy together. The time before that when I saw Thomas Weldon Anderson was eight weeks ago."

"He had called before I came home, and I believe was let through by one of the other flat's occupants. He seemed sulky, and at breakfast next morning we quarreled. He struck me and I called for help. I went into the parlor, and when I returned he was gone."

"He had said, 'It is all over,' meaning our friendship, but as he had been frequently jealous because I had made pupils, I gave them up a year ago, and had got used to his jealousy. After the



Detective Mitchell Talking to Women Detectives of Scotland Yard.

quarrel he called in my absence and left a letter, with a note asking me to forward his letters to his address."

"As he had written this it made me think he might not come again; but my home was always open to him, and he knew it. I know of no one who has any feeling against him, and I was more like a mother to his boys, the eldest of whom I have taken great interest in and instructed."

At the station house both Novee and Mrs. Lewis confronted young Anderson. They emphatically declared that he was not the man whom they had seen climb over the wall. This man was described as 5 feet 6 inches in height, wearing a dark jacket suit and a bowler hat. Another witness was found who identified this description as of a man he had seen at 9:40, running along Rosenau Road and down Petworth Street. This witness was

On the foregoing facts Scotland Yard has based the following hypothesis: That Anderson went to the Battersea garden in the evening of July 16, anticipating an attack upon himself or his son or Miss Earle. In order better to observe the intruder he concealed himself in the empty flat and changed his boots for slippers to make less noise. That from the scullery door of the empty flat he saw the intruder enter the yard and immediately confronted him. Before he had time to make use of the loaded cable in his pocket he was shot down.

The only objection—a serious one—to this hypothesis is that it reveals no motive either on the part of Anderson or the intruder.

In the week following the murder an inquest was begun by Dr. John Troutbeck, Coroner for the Battersea district. Many witnesses were examined, but when,

Diagram of the Battersea Mystery.

ond son of the deceased. He said that his father had no particular residence, as he was an actor traveling the country. When in London he stayed at different places, sometimes at Miss Earle's and sometimes at 14 Great Percy Street. During his holidays he had stayed with his father at the latter place. He had seen Miss Earle only once in several years. He was asked if he knew of any reason why he should not call on Miss Earle. He replied:

"No, except that I did not think about calling."

The Coroner quoted Miss Earle's testimony to the effect that she was "more of a mother to the boys." Was that the witness's recollection of her position? To which young Anderson replied:

"Yes, I believe so; she took a great interest in us."

In further evidence the witness said: "I last saw my father at 12:30 o'clock on the afternoon of Saturday at 14 Great Percy Street. I was going to meet a friend by appointment at 1:30 o'clock. I could not say what my father was going to do, as he did not tell me. I recognize the slippers produced. I saw them once on July 2 at Great Percy Street. I never saw the piece of cable before his death. The first I heard of my father's death was from the police. I did not see my brother, Thomas Frederick, until later. His age is 21. I last saw him before that on Thursday evening at a house in Finsbury Park. He was a greater friend of Miss Earle than I was. He told me he had made an appointment with her for Saturday. He did not speak of any arrangement between my father and Miss Earle."

"Did your brother give any reason for not recognizing your father after death?"

"He told me at the police station there was a blood mark on the upper lip, and that he was the last person in the world he expected to see there."

"Has your father ever worn a disguise?"

"Not in the street."

"What had you noticed about your father's manner?"

"He had been rather troubled about his business for the last week or two. Autumn was getting near, and he had not fixed up any engagement. He was a man of sober habits. He never had a revolver that I know of. He stayed out



"No; my brother told me in the presence of my father."

"Have you told the authorities where that conversation took place?"

"No."

At the request of the Coroner the witness wrote on a slip of paper the address to which he was referring.

Coroner—Was your father at that house in Finsbury Park?

"Yes."

"Where you say you last saw your brother?"

"Yes."

After the Coroner's Court had adjourned till Sept. 17, a Scotland Yard detective interviewed the members of the household designated in the Finsbury Park address written down by the younger Anderson. Neither the name nor the address of the persons has been revealed, according to the report of the Inspector.

boy came along a little later. We had a chat and some supper, and I think we spent some little time in the garden."

"I saw nothing in the least unusual in Mr. Anderson's manner that night. There was no sign whatever of any trouble hanging over him—none of the moodiness of brooding jealousy or vengeance. He was just his own affable self. It was altogether a happy gathering."

"I think the allusion to the elder son's contemplated call upon Miss Earle arose in this way. I suggested that they should call upon us again on the Saturday. In order that we might have a group photograph taken in our garden. Then it was that the elder son mentioned that he was sorry he could not come as he had arranged to pay a visit to Miss Earle. And that is the whole story."

That is the whole story—no identified murderer, no motive, nothing but conjectures. Scotland Yard is still at sea.