

THE SOUTHEND MURDER.

REMARKABLE EVIDENCE.

"LLOYD'S" REPORTER ON THE SPOT.

"It is a beautiful spot where the tragedy took place," says our reporter who went down to Rochford. It was the dead woman's favourite walk. "The Wilderness," so called, is studded with elm, chestnut, and other trees, now decked in the most splendid foliage. Only a few minutes before the woman met her death she had just passed the east end of old Rochford church. It was the one she regularly attended, and is a fine old fabric, dedicated to St. Andrew, and dates from the reign of Henry VII. A few yards to the west end of the church stands Rochford hall, a place of great historical interest. Here, to visitors, is shown the room in which Anne Boleyn is said to have been born, and the rooms in which she was afterwards kept captive. The deceased was a constant visitor to the hall, for her companion in girlhood, and for many years her most intimate and dearest friend, Mrs. Sach, is now the wife of the farm bailiff and the caretaker of the hall. Only 200 yards from the church, and 300 yards from the hall, is the shallow running river which divides the Wilderness meadow from the rising ground on the other side of the rivulet called "The Chase." On the east, on higher ground, runs the railway from Rochford to Southend; and the whole scene of the murder is in full view of the station.

Mrs. Sach wept bitterly when a reporter called upon her, as she related the consternation that was caused on the farm when the murder was first discovered; and when the farm labourers

is my brother. My name is Hazell, too. You see you don't know who you are talking to." The reporter, however, knew him right enough all the time, but he got the two together and heard their version of the matter. It was in substance a repetition of the evidence at the inquest.

The deceased was buried on Thursday, and general surprise was expressed that, as she was a Churchwoman, the Congregational minister, the Rev. C. B. Herbert, should conduct the ceremony, the deceased being buried in Rochford churchyard, about 250 yards from the scene of the tragedy. The service was very short, but the officiating minister alluded in feeling terms to her tragic end in a special prayer. The boy, the deceased's son, was present.

A KNIFE FOUND.

On Thursday a fire-engine was brought from Southend, and the water of the little river pumped out to see if a knife could be found in its bed. Gangs of men in water-tight boots and leggings assisted. Quantities of turf were torn up to form dams. When the river got dry a careful search began. Many fine large eels were found and carried away, but no knife. Then large ponds adjacent, about 10ft. deep, were emptied, and other gangs shovelled the mud into buckets and scattered it on the turf. Many more eels were caught, but still no knife. The news spread to Southend, and thousands of visitors arrived to view the scene. It had reached the ears of the police in a roundabout way that the culvert near the railway bridge, not far from the spot, were searched, the police would find what they wanted. This was done, with the result that a knife was found. The knife was a not very sharp "boy's clasp knife" and was somewhat rusty. There were no blood

because I did not want him to go home and frighten his mother."

Mrs. Wakeling said: It is all perfectly true just as he told me. He came home quite frightened. The first words he said to me were, "Mother, don't you go into the Wilderness; or else you will be murdered." I said, "Why?" He said, "Because there is a woman murdered there." I said, "Hold your noise, and don't talk about such things. It is only some drunken woman, I suppose, that you have seen." He said, "No it isn't; I saw a man trying to cut a woman's head off." I then said to him, "Where?" He said, "By the stepping-stones in the water where we lift the perambulator over." Then I began to think that perhaps he really had seen something, and I asked him what he really had seen. Then he told me what he has told you—that he had seen a man with a big knife trying to cut a woman's head off. I then asked him what he did with the knife, and he said he took it with him when he ran away; and ran out at the "Cockney gate"—that is the name of the white gate, and it is called that because most of the Londoners stop there. We had a fearful night with him, for he was so terribly frightened and troubled. About half-past 11 that night he got up and walked down the stairs in his sleep, and came down here. We got hold of him quietly, and then he woke in a great fright. He has been suffering from the shock ever since, and we have been doing all we can to try and get him to forget it. He himself does not like talking about it.

HAZELL BEFORE THE MAGISTRATES.

Alfred Hazell, 16, groom, was charged on Wednesday, before the county magistrates at Rochford, with the murder of Emma Hunt, dressmaker, aged 38, on the 20th ult.

Mr. T. Lamb, of Southend, prosecuted for the Treasury; and Mr. J. E. Searle was for the prisoner.

Mr. Lamb said he was instructed by the Solicitor to the Treasury to prosecute the prisoner on the charge of the murder of Mrs. Emma Hunt on the afternoon of Saturday, May 20. The act took place certainly between half-past four and five o'clock, and probably he should be able to fix the time more nearly even. The evidence which he would have to submit was entirely circumstantial. No one would be called who actually saw the prisoner commit the act, and no one would be called who saw the woman come by her death. He should call witnesses who saw her die, but no one saw the act committed. Under those circumstances it would be the duty of the prosecution to lay before the Bench such facts as would leave no other presumption than that the murder was committed by the prisoner. The deceased woman lived in North-street, and about three in the afternoon of the day named she left her house and went for a walk, and there would be witnesses who would trace her until she was found dying. She went on that afternoon twice to the place where she was afterwards found, and a woman who knew her saw her as she was travelling on the railway walking towards the spot where the murder was committed. With regard to the prisoner, not only by his own admissions, but also by the statement of witnesses, it would be proved that he was near the spot at the time the murder was committed. The first person who knew of the murder was the prisoner himself, and he was the man who gave information to several persons. The injuries from which the murdered woman died were committed, he should prove, in the time immediately preceding the moment when the prisoner was seen running from the brook, and at the stepping-stones with the alarm of the murder. There were only two theories with regard to the death. Either it was a case of sui-

the Essex Independent, in which you say that "you believe in publicity, and that in a mysterious case like this you believe that it is the bounden duty of everyone to give all the assistance possible." Did you tell their correspondent that?—No; I never saw him at all (laughter).

Did you say it to anybody?—Yes; I said it to a reporter of Lloyd's News-paper, from which it may have been copied into the paper you have.

Did you tell all these other things in this long statement to the reporter of Lloyd's News-paper?—Yes; I did.

Are they true?—I will not undertake to say that the statement is exactly word for word as I spoke it; but I say that it is really strictly true in substance and in fact, exactly as I told him.

You say here according to this statement which you made to the reporter that "precisely 20 minutes to four you saw Alfred Hazell going along the east end of the churchyard wall." Did you know Alfred Hazell?—Yes, by first having him in the Sunday-school as a boy; and afterwards in my Bible-class.

By Mr. Lamb: Had you known Hazel long?—About three years; he was in the Sunday school, and in my Bible class.

Mr. Searle: He would have sworn it was me if I had had a light coat on.

The chairman of the Bench said that was a most improper observation to make, and he should expect him to withdraw it, and apologise.

Mr. Searle said he readily complied with the chairman's request.

William Hagger, a boy, said on Saturday, May 20, he was cutting nettles with a hook, and another boy was with him; this was in the Church Mead. The prisoner came along and cut a few, and then went again into the Wilderness. After that, witness went up to the hall to get paid. That was about a quarter to five.

George Benson, labourer, a one-legged man and the keeper of the town pump, said he knew Mrs. Hunt well. He last saw her alive in Rochford, at the Almshouses, near the bottom of Church-street, on May 20. That was between 20 minutes and half-past four. A quarter of an hour or 20 minutes later he saw the prisoner running from the direction of the railway-station.

Miss E. M. A. Bishop stated that she left home on the afternoon of May 20 at 4.25 p.m. in order to put some flowers upon her mother's grave. Ten minutes after reaching the churchyard she heard screaming from the direction of the stepping-stones. She looked up, and saw a man running; but she could not tell who it was. As he ran towards witness he cried out, "Help! help! there's been a woman murdered in the Wilderness, and I pulled her out of the water." She ran towards the churchyard wall, and on the man coming up she saw it was the prisoner. Rowe, the sexton, came out of the vestry, and the prisoner was then standing in the churchyard. She heard no noise before the prisoner called out.

The further hearing was then adjourned until Saturday.

DOMESTIC TRAGEDY.

On Tuesday afternoon at Walsall, Mrs. Alice Hyslop, wife of the third master of the Tantarra-street board school, committed suicide by drinking carbolic acid, after taking the life of her infant child, aged six months, by the same means. She had previously tried in vain to induce her daughter Ethel, aged seven years, to drink some of the acid.

A POLICEMAN FOUND SHOT.

Police-constable Whitelaw, of the North Shields police force, was proceeding on his rounds on the ropery banks on Saturday morning, when he found another constable, named George Ferguson, lying on the ground, unconscious, and with a terrible wound in his neck. The injury is supposed to have been caused by a shot from a revolver. The doctors speak hopefully of his ultimate recovery. The police authorities have up to the present failed to find a clue to the perpetrators.

STABBING OF LADIES AT BIRMINGHAM.

Some excitement has lately been occasioned among suburban residents in Birmingham by the dangerous vagaries of a stranger, supposed to be a madman, who makes a point of stopping ladies without escort and stabbing them in the breast or side with a stout bodkin or a lady's hat pin. Several of these stabbing cases are reported from various parts of the town, and ladies have sustained painful injuries. In one case the weapon broke short off, or the wound might have been fatal. In another case the bodkin, which had been newly sharpened, was left sticking in the victim's side. The mysterious assailant has been repeatedly pursued, but without success. From the similarity of his methods to those of a man who was arrested and imprisoned at Northampton a few years ago for wantonly stabbing women in the streets with a shoemaker's awl, it is conjectured that the man at Birmingham is the same individual.

The Birmingham police believe they have secured in the person of a man named Henry Cook the perpetrator of the outrages. Cook is 25 years of age, and is a button-maker. He was arrested on Sunday at his father's house in a working-class part of Birmingham, and is at present confined in the lunatic asylum, having been certified as insane immediately after his arrest. A number of young ladies have complained to the police of being seriously stabbed with large darning needles, the weapons being left in the wound by the perpetrator, who managed in each case to escape. A workman identified a portion of a pin produced as one he had helped Cook to sharpen.

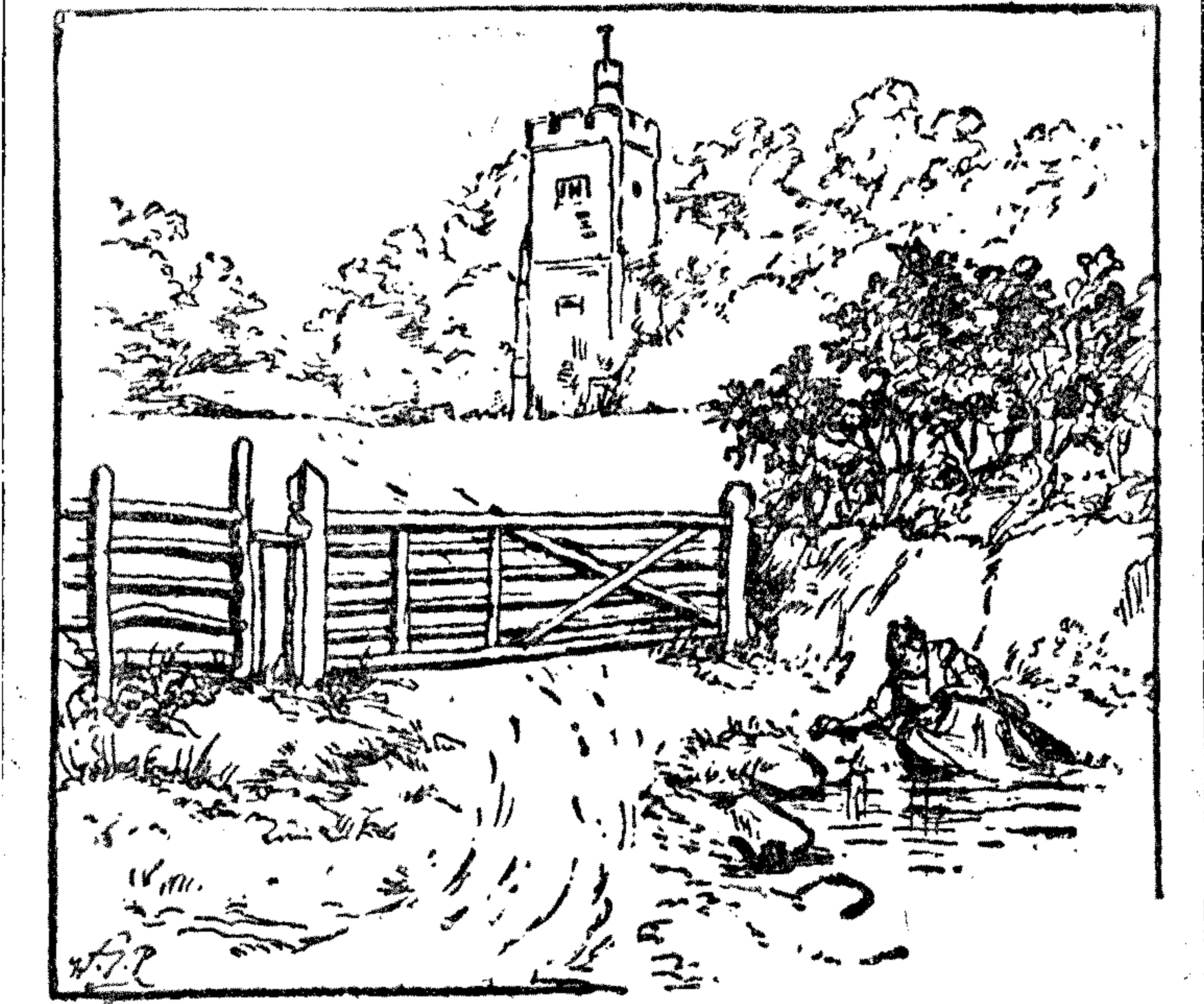
THREE MEN SUFFOCATED.

A fire broke out on Saturday morning in the workings of No. 2 pit, Orbeiston colliery, Bellshill (Lanarkshire), belonging to Messrs. Addie. Three men, named Peter McAllister, John Killop, and Wm. Maddison, while assisting in extinguishing the fire, were overcome by afterdamp and suffocated. By noon the fire was practically mastered.

A BOOKING CLERK'S DOWNFALL.

Jas. Mead, 39, a clerk, of Rendlesham-road, Clapton, was charged, at Clerkenwell police-court, on Wednesday, with stealing from the booking-office at Maiden-lane railway station, 13l. 15s., the money of the Great Northern Railway company.—The prisoner pleaded "Guilty."—On the 21st April Mead was handed a bag containing 23l. with which he was to pay the weekly salaries of those engaged at the station. The prisoner paid four of the company's employes, and afterwards absconded with the remainder of the money. On Tuesday evening he was arrested at Stoke Newington, by Detective-serjeant Cox, Y division.—In reply to the charge, Mead said, "It's all through the drink."—The prisoner had been in the company's employment for 20 years, and hitherto had borne an excellent character.—The company's solicitor said his clients did not wish to unduly press the charge, and Mr. Horace Smith bound Mead over to come up for judgment if called upon.

RAILWAY ACCIDENT.—An accident occurred at Darlington station on Saturday night through an excursion train for Hartlepool running into the end of an ordinary train for Middlesbrough. Six people remained in Darlington at hotels and elsewhere, suffering from scalp wounds and shock.



SCENE OF THE CRIME—WITH THE WOMAN IN THE WATER.

came running into the large kitchen and told her that they thought that the lady that was murdered was Mrs. Hunt, who was in the habit of coming there. She gave a history of Mrs. Hunt's life, who, she said, had been a widow three years, but who was a most hard-working dressmaker, greatly respected and supported with work by many of the ladies in the parish. When she saw her only a few days before she was in good spirits.

The Rev. A. W. Hadley, the curate of Rochford church, said to a reporter—"I believe in publicity, and in a mysterious case like this I believe it is the bounden duty of every person to give all the assistance possible; and therefore I shall be happy to give you all the information I can. I will begin by telling you that I have just been reading very carefully the report of the inquest, and particularly the statement of Alfred Hazell. He told the jury that when the 3.30 up train passed he was over on the other side of the railway—that is some distance away—and that he was coming from that direction when he discovered the deceased woman. If I were called as a witness I should be able to swear positively that I saw him going quite in the opposite direction to that in which he says he was coming. When the 3.30 up train passed my house here, opposite the railway station, I was indoors. In a few minutes I left to go into the vestry of the church, and precisely at 20 minutes to four I saw Alfred Hazell going just before me along the east end of the churchyard wall. He was then by the shed in the churchyard, and he was then going towards the brook, and in a totally opposite direction to that he alleges. When I saw him he was dressed in his best clothes; and when I saw that I said to myself at the time, 'Well, Alfred Hazell, you ought to be at work instead of walking about doing nothing like this.' As regards the poor woman, she was highly respectable and industrious, and I do not believe that she ever contemplated suicide. She was not in embarrassed circumstances, for as a dressmaker she generally had plenty of work. She was a regular attendant at our church, and if ever she was a little slack, which was seldom, she would always tell me; and I had only to speak to one or two benevolent ladies and they always gave her dresses to make. Her great aim seemed to be to try to keep up a good home for her boy, and do something for him. Knowing her circumstances so well, I can give you an ex-

marks on it, but it is possible, if improbable, that the fatal wounds were inflicted with it. Constable Deeks was the finder.

LETTERS BY THE DECEASED.

At the residence of the deceased the following letters, in her writing, were found:—"My dear Walter,—If you don't come to see me I know I shall be ill, seeing you have brought back the love that will never die until I rest. I feel I would go through anything for you. I hope you will not disappoint Mrs. Sach. She is looking every Sunday for your coming. I trust, dear, that I shall meet you; would come by train 11.0. Fondest love. From your ever affectionate sister, E. HUNT. I cannot live without seeing you."

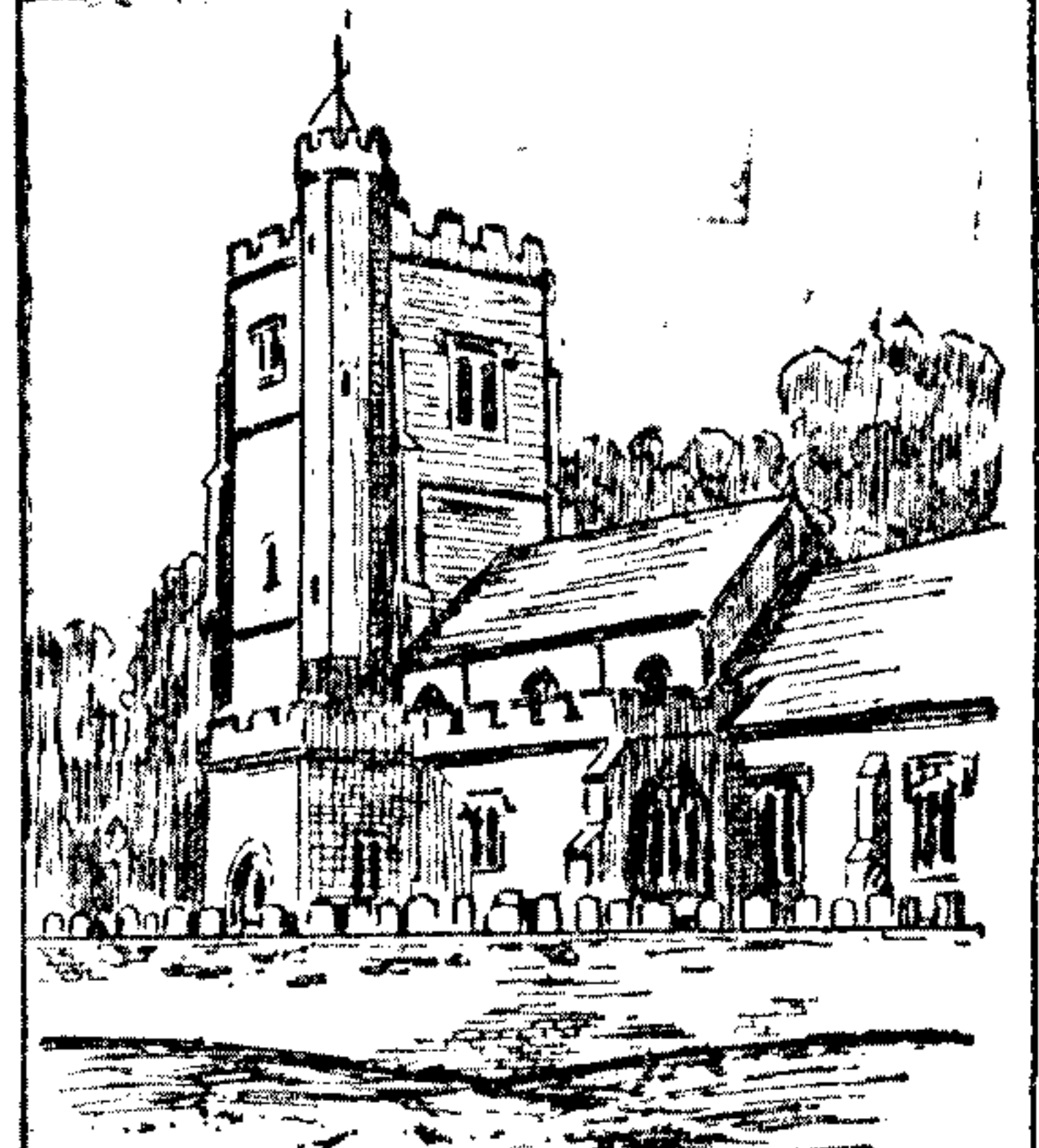
The next epistle was as follows:—"Rochford, May 9. Dear Walter,—I heard you didn't want the flower I particularly took to Southend for you. I am sorry I went, as I am painfully conscious of the coldness towards me without a true reason.—Affectionate sister, E. HUNT."

The "WALKER" referred to is a brother-in-law of the deceased.

It has been elicited that, in addition to the clean cut, or cuts, which almost severed the head from the body, the cartilage of the larynx was broken, and this points to additional violence, and supports the theory of murder.

A LITTLE BOY'S STORY.

On Friday night our special representative called at the house of Frederick Wakeling, a signalman at the Rochford railway station, in consequence of a rumour that his little boy was in the Wilderness fields about the time of the tragedy. The little boy was in a large garden, and on being called came and said his name was Alfred Wakeling. In reply to a question as to where he was the previous Saturday afternoon he said he was in the fields. Asked whether he saw anybody there, he said, "Yes, a man and a woman." The reporter then knocked at the door and obtained Mrs. Wakeling's (his mother) permission to question the child, who she said would be six years old in June. The little fellow, who seemed very intelligent, then said, "I was going along the hedges, looking for birds' nests. Then I saw a man and a woman standing by the hedge near the gate by the water, where the stepping-stones are. I thought they were looking for birds' nests too. I saw the man throw the woman down on the grass. She got up again and began to scream. The man



ROCHFORD CHURCH.

side or murder. That it was not a case of suicide the doctor's evidence would, he believed, conclusively prove; and he thought no other conclusion could be arrived at but that a murder was committed, and by no other person but the prisoner. When first discovered the woman was sitting on the bank of the brook, with her legs in the water. There was a pool of blood near in the bank, and her umbrella was found at the gate leading to the brook, with the handle broken. Then her hat was discovered in the water, together with some false hair, and these were up steam. The theory of suicide was altogether untenable. Not only was it disproved by the things found about the spot, but also by the character of the wounds inflicted.

Sarah Chapman stated that she was a widow, and lived at The Potash, near the White Horse beerhouse. She had a view from her window in North-street, and she knew Mrs. Emma Hunt. They both attended the same chapel. On May 20 she saw Mrs. Hunt pass her house at three or a quarter-past. She was going from her own house in the direction of the fields leading to the National schools.

Henry Arnold, an engineer out of work, stated that on May 20 he was walking in the Wilderness, near the brook, about a quarter-past three in the afternoon. He saw the deceased coming towards him from the brook; she walked towards the footpath to cross the field.

Miss Mary P. Froom, a Board School mistress, went by train to Southend on the afternoon of May 20, by the 17 minutes past three train, which started soon after half-past three. She noticed the deceased walking on the footpath from the Wilderness across the railway line.

The Rev. A. W. Hadley, curate of Rochford church, stated that on the day in question he saw the prisoner walking before him along the east end of the churchyard wall; this was precisely 20 minutes to four, and he fixed the time by an up-train which passed. The prisoner was going by the stable which is in the south-east corner of the churchyard, and in the direction of the stepping-stones. He did not see the prisoner any more that afternoon.

By Mr. Searle: The prisoner was 44 yards distant when witness saw him. He recognised him from his general appearance, his walk, and his clothes. He was prepared a hundred thousand times to swear it was the prisoner he saw.

By Mr. Searle: He looked at his watch because he had an engagement that afternoon; it was for lawn tennis. Did you mention that incident to a newspaper correspondent?—I can't say that I did. But you seem to have been making a statement to a newspaper reporter. Why did you not tell him that?—Because I did not think it necessary. Well, there is a long statement here in



ROCHFORD HALL.

planation of the letter to her boy you ask about, in which she says that when he comes home he will find a suit of black; which, in the suicide theory, has been construed into having provided him with the necessary mourning. The real explanation of that is just the very reverse. He is an apprentice at the Bon Marche, Southend, and his employers expect and call upon their apprentices to be well dressed—respectably in dark clothes. The mother was anxious to get them, and ordered them in April. He chose the cloth himself, and when they were sent home she wrote and told him they had come."

On his travels our reporter met Hazell's brother. When accosted he was a little reserved at first, but eventually warmed, and took the reporter all round the town, and pointed out all the houses of the people interested in the matter. Passing the corner of a street near where Hazell's father and mother live, he said, "You see that young fellow standing there in light trousers and dark coat, there? That is the young fellow that they suspect." "Is it really?" asked the reporter. "Do you know him sufficiently to go and talk to him?" "Yes," he replied; "I know him, for, to tell you the real truth, as you don't know me, he

had a large knife in his hand, and the woman struck at him with her umbrella. She hit him with the handle, and it broke. When I first saw them the gate was shut, but he dragged her near the water. He then got behind her and held her. Next I saw him trying to cut her head off with the knife. She was standing up. He pushed her into the water, and she fell on her face. After that I saw him run away towards the church and Rochford hall. I did not see her with any basket. She was wearing a black shawl, and the man was wearing a light jacket and light trousers. My father came up soon after, and told me to go into the signal-box."

Mr. Wakeling, the father, then said:—"When I heard that a woman had been found in the brook with her throat cut I ran down the bank and got to the scene as soon as I could. The woman had been raised up and was sitting against the bank with her feet in the water. Her eyes were turning from one side to another, and she looked pitiful, with blood streaming from her. I was startled to see my boy standing opposite to her, staring at her as though he was fixed to the spot. He seemed perfectly shocked and frightened, and I then told him to go to my signal-box and wait there for me,