

VACHER'S MANIA TO SLAY. EXTRAORDINARY CAREER OF THE FRENCH MURDERER.

Twenty-Three Assassinations Already Brought Home to Him - His Record Without a Parallel in the Annals of Crime - Danger to Society in Allowing Such Monsters to Run at Large.

There is nothing in modern history with which to compare the sanguinary career of the French slaughterer.

Vacher. The Jack the Ripper murders in London ten years ago are completely eclipsed by it, and the revelation is still incomplete. Twenty-three assassinations have already been brought home to this bloodthirsty wretch, and scarcely a day passes that another is not added to the list. It is doubtful if the murderer himself knows the number of his victims. He nonchalantly tells the story of some fresh tragedy to the examining Magistrate from time to time as the details recur to his diseased mind.

Investigation in each case so far has produced full corroboration of the murderer's narrative. These cases include several crimes not heretofore discovered, but the victim's body has in each instance been found where indicated - in a disused well or lonely thicket.

BRUTALLY SEVERE

to the recruits under him. A young man, a member of a renowned French family, tells how Vacher once abused him so savagely while drilling him that he lost his temper and sprang at the young martinet. Luckily for the soldier his companions seized him before he had succeeded in striking his tormentor, otherwise court-martial and sentence to death for assaulting an officer might have been his fate under the stern laws of military discipline in France.

But there was no suspicion or ground for suspicion of Vacher's sanity at that time. Just after completing his service, Vacher was ill in hospital for several weeks. During his confinement, he attempted to blow out his brains with a revolver, and he still carries the bullet somewhere inside his skull. The shot produced recurrent fits of insanity of so violent a character that he was confined for some time at the lunatic asylum at Dole.

Dr. Gilbert, the well-known expert in mental diseases says that the physicians at the asylum released Vacher, although they knew he was not fit to be at large, because they were afraid of an outcry in the press against the arbitrary confinement of a citizen under the pretext that he was insane.

A CLEAN-LOOKING SHIRT

which Vacher coveted. Sometimes, he admits, he killed because he needed money and food.

The murderer was always remarkably clever in shifting suspicion from himself. Two years ago he killed a shepherd boy on a country road a few miles from Lyons. He hacked the body almost into pieces, and then strolled on. Within a few minutes the mutilated corpse was discovered and there was immediate search for the murderer in all directions.

Occasionally by some lucky chance a victim escaped him. A boy of 13 named Rodier was herding cows near Clermont Ferrand one day in October, a year ago, when he saw an ugly-looking, grinning fellow approach. He was a tramp, poorly dressed, and carried a big bag on his back and a heavy stick in his hand. The boy was frightened by the tramp's appearance, and as the stranger came near, young Rod-

ier, under pretence of minding his cows, ran away. The stranger, Vacher, followed.

"It's bitter cold," he said when he came near. "Why don't you light a fire? If you want matches, I can give you some."

"I want none," said the boy, "and don't be coming after me, but keep on the path."

But Vacher came on, and the boy kept moving off until he got to the brow of the hill, where a man and a woman were digging. When the tramp saw them,

HE STOPPED SHORT. They eyed him also, and thought there was something wrong about him. The man was so sure Vacher meant mischief that he took up a pitchfork to be ready for the worst. The tramp said:

"This is a horrid country. The people are worse than dogs. I have been fasting for two days and nobody has offered me a crust. He had, not twenty minutes before, murdered Rosine, the 14-year-old sister of young Rodier, but her body was not found until a week later.

At another time three or four women in turn escaped him. A Mme. Marchand has identified Vacher as a man who attacked her on the road near Lyons at Easter, 1895. She was returning from market, where she had sold some oranges, and a man came behind her and seized her by the throat. She struggled violently, managed to scratch her assailant's face and succeeded in finally screaming. Several persons heard her, but before they reached her her assailant fled.

Other women were attacked in the same way that afternoon, but were able to escape in a similar manner.

Vacher's most prominent victim was the Marquis de Villeplaine, who was killed while walking in his park in southwestern France, not far from the Spanish frontier. The murderer crept up behind him felled him by a blow on the head with a heavy stick and then cut his throat. The murderer carried off his victim's coat and a portfolio, containing some banknotes. Vacher went to Spain soon after this murder.

One of his more recent crimes, which might never have been known but for the murderer's boastful volunteered description of it, was the killing of a boy of 16 named Bully near Lyons in June last. The boy was

A NOTORIOUS POACHER and chicken stealer, so that his disappearance was made little account of. Vacher told the magistrate that he met Bully on the high road and despatched him in an unoccupied house where they went to pass the night. He spent some hours in cutting the body to pieces, and finally threw it into a well on the premises. Parts of the remains have now been recovered by following Vacher's directions.

This extraordinary criminal is sane enough under ordinary observation and therein, of course, lies the danger to society from creatures with such propensities. The most disgusting feature of the whole frightful record is the fact that a criminal, sane or insane, should be able to go about for three years in a civilized, well-populated country, taking life at will and in an almost wholesale way, and yet be comparatively free from the agents of the law.

PRE-HISTORIC IRISH CANOE.

A Boat Thousands of Years Old, Perhaps Discovered in a Bog.

A curious discovery has been made in the townland of Kilbrenan, in the parish of Moviddy, near the road leading from Brandon to Cookstown. A farmer was reclaiming some bog land, and in sinking a drain came upon what appeared to be the trunk of an oak tree 2 feet beneath the surface. On further examination he found that it was an ancient Irish canoe. It is composed of bog oak and was made from the section of the trunk of a huge oak tree, hollowed out at the center; it is of one piece, no nails having been used in the construction. The length is about 15 feet 10 inches, the breadth is 2 feet 8 inches, while the depth is about 1 foot 3 inches, and the sides are about 1 1/2 inches thick. It would accommodate three or four persons, and was probably used for fishing. Externally it is of a dark-brown color, but underneath the surface it is quite black, and the wood is extremely hard. There are two curious grooves about 6 inches in diameter at both the bow and the stern, extending from the gunwales to the keel, but it is not easy to surmise what purpose they served.

Canoes of this kind have been discovered in other parts of Ireland, and it is not known to what period of history they belong, but there are many indications that this boat had lain in its late position for some thousands of years. At present there is no lake in the vicinity, and the place on which it was found is on a slope of a hill; but it is probable that there was once a lake a mile and a half in circumference, as the land close by forms a kind of basin with an amphitheater of hills, and at one end there is a narrow gorge which may have served to drain the lake. Within 3 yards of the place where the canoe was found is one of those circular mounds of stones and cinders, about 12 yards in diameter, which are found in Ireland, and of which there are three or four in the locality. What these mounds were used for is not known, but it is supposed that they were either connected with dwelling houses or else were used for sacrificial purposes. It is probable, however, that the canoe and the mound belonged to the same age and people.

Every soldier in the French army who can play upon a musical instrument will hereafter be supplied with one at the expense of the State, provided it is not a harp or a piano.

ABOUT THE FIRST UMBRELLA.

Almost 150 Years Ago Jonas Hanway Carried One in London.

The umbrella is a comparatively modern feature of European civilization.

In 1750 Jonas Hanway, a Quaker, first went through the streets of London carrying an umbrella. Three years from now, in 1900, it will be met to celebrate the sesquicentennial of this most useful implement.

As this is an age of celebration, it is not likely that so good an opportunity will be missed. Already in London they are discussing the proper manner of doing homage to the umbrella.

Mr. Hanway was a man of strong character, but it required all his courage to brave the London crowd, with his strange rain shield. The inhabitants of that great metropolis received him with jeers and even more substantial marks of disapproval. But he was imperturbable, and in consequence of his example the umbrella came very rapidly into general use.

Hanway had travelled much in the East, and there he had noted the great benefits derived by the natives from the umbrella, both as a protection against

THE SUN AND RAIN.

The East, with its infinitely older civilization, has been familiar with this, as with many other useful articles, at a time when Europe was sunk in the wildest savagery.

Umbrellas were known to the Egyptians and were certainly used by the ancient Hindoos. The umbrella is mentioned in a poem of Sakuntala, written in the sixth century, and it figures in various bas-reliefs among the Nineveh sculptures discovered by Sir Henry Layard. The Chinese "Book of the Rites of Tcheou," printed about the year 300, contains a description of a veritable gamp. And it is on record that when the son of the Emperor of China was captured in the second Tartar invasion he was made to carry the umbrella of the Tartar chief when he went out hunting.

The parasol was invariably carried by the high-bred dames in ancient Greece, and a white parapline was borne by the priestesses of the goddess Athene in the annual Scirophoria. The fashion migrated also to Rome, where the umbraculum carried by the women and even by some of the men, was

MADE OF LEATHER,

and could be opened and shut. This fact is mentioned by Martial, Juvenal and Ovid; while the latter also speaks of "a golden umbrella which warded off the keen sun."

In Siam the umbrella has always been regarded as a mark of distinction, and M. de Loubere, in his work on that country, tells us how the use of the umbrella was only granted to certain of the King's subjects. The King was invariably protected in his progresses by an umbrella appearing as three separate protections against



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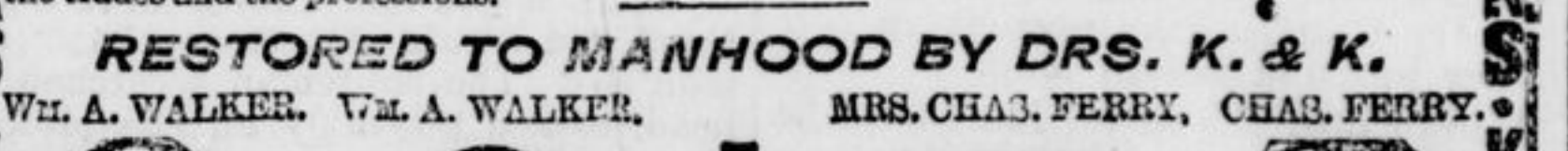
the weather had been mounted on one stick, one over the other. Tavernier speaks in his "Voyage to the East," of the throne of the Great Mogul being supported on either side by an umbrella. The princes of the Mahratta provinces in India bore the title of Chatrapati, lord of the umbrella; while in Ava, to this present day the title of the ruler is "King of the White Elephant and Lord of the Twenty-Four Umbrellas."

SINFUL HABITS IN YOUTH

LATER EXCESSES IN MANHOOD MAKE NERVOUS, DISEASED MEN

THE RESULT of ignorance and folly in youth, overexertion of mind and body, induced by lust and exposure to constantly winking the lives and future happiness of thousands of promising young men. Some fade and wither at an early age, and the blossom of manhood, while others are forced to drag out a weary, fruitless and unprofitable existence. Others resort to matrimony but find no solace or comfort there. The victims are found in all stations of life—the farm, the office, the workshop, the pulpit, the trades and the professions.

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