

A Dark and Bloody Deed Brought to Light.

Curious Combination of Murder, Robbery, and Forgery.

From the Chicago Tribune.

Readers of the *Tribune* will remember that on Tuesday, January 2, there was published an account of the finding of the body of an unknown man in the basin on the Jake front. The man had evidently been foully dealt with, though no testimony could be adduced to show who was the guilty person. On January 4th there appeared an account of the result of the Coroner's investigations and the verdict of the jury. This was to the effect that the deceased had come to his death by drowning, and that the person, or persons who threw him into the water could not be found. At this time it was supposed that the dead man, whose name was ascertained to be M. W. Gumbleton, was an Englishman: and although some letters and freight receipts were found on his body, no clue could be gathered from them as to the previous history of this man. On the 5th of January Detective Dixon took the case in hand, and proceeded in the attempt to unravel the thread presented by the letters found on the dead man. The shipping receipts found on the body showed that Gumbleton had received two boxes over the Union Line from Baltimore, and had shipped two boxes—presumably the same—to Manhattan, Kansas, over the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad. There was also found a letter from Blake Bros. & Co., No. 52 Wall street, New York, directed to Gumbleton in Baltimore, referring to a sum of money, and advising the recipient to leave the money in their hand until he had settled himself in the West, whither he seemed to have formed the intention of going. Detective Dixon ascertained that a man calling himself Gumbleton had been rooming at No. 112 Dearbon street, Room 28; but that he had departed on the 20th of December, just two weeks before. So far the matter was plain, and no appreciable progress had been made. But, in his inquiries as to the appearance and habits of Gumbleton, Dixon found a strange state of things existing. The Gumbleton taken from the basin dead, was a dark man, medium size, with a little black beard, black hair, with a tendency to baldness, apparently about 45 years of age, and from all evidences an Irishman or Englishman. On the other hand, the lodgers with Gumbleton, as well as other people with whom he came in contact, all represented him as a very light complexioned young man, quite tall, having no beard, very light hair, about 21 years of age, and a German. This latter fact was apparent from the very broken manner in which he used the language, and from his own representations. Further investigation proved that Gumbleton arrived in this city on November 16th 1870, in company with one Alfred Ziegenmeyer, whose description obtained afterward, tallied with that of the younger German. It then came out that Gumbleton had been almost constantly in company with Ziegenmeyer during the time they were in the city: that is, from the 16th to the 19th of November. On the latter date, the two proceeded to the Central depot together to ship two boxes, which were afterwards proved to have contained clothing, to Manhattan, Kansas. That this shipment is made is shown by the receipt found on the body of Gumbleton. This was the last ever seen of the latter alive. As to the manner of his death, and the means employed by his murderer to compass his purpose, there may be an indefinite number of conjectures made, and perhaps every reader of this is as well able to form a theory of himself as is the writer to form one of him. It will be remembered that there was a piece of rope found bound or tied around the head and face of the deceased man and partially over his mouth. Taking this element into consideration, it may reasonably be thought probable that Gumbleton and Ziegenmeyer took a walk toward the lake after the business of shipping of the goods had been finished. The time was about 5 in the

afternoon, and at that hour in a November day the night had nearly come on. It is probable that the younger and more crafty one of the couple had no difficulty in gagging or binding the older man, and in throwing him into the lake. There may have been a struggle, though the body showed no marks of violence; but, however it may have been accomplished, there need be no doubt that, when Ziegenmeyer went back to his lodgings that night, he felt that he had freed himself from one enmity which prevented him from obtaining the money which he knew his victim to be possessed of. Knowing intimately the habits and customs of Gumbleton, Ziegenmeyer was perfectly aware that the former had left, on deposit in Chicago, some \$300 which he had brought from Baltimore, and which together with the \$2650 found on his body, was the only money he had in the West. This \$300 was deposited on November 16th, the day of the arrival of the two. On the 20th of November, the day after the supposed murder, Ziegenmeyer presented himself at the National Bank of Commerce, No. 107 Dearbon street, and represented that Gumbleton, who was his partner in business, had left on the previous day for New York, but that he had authorized him (Ziegenmeyer) to draw the money and use it in their partnership matters.— At the same time he presented the certificate of deposit which he had taken from the body of Gumbleton. The bank, of course, refused to pay the money, and informed Ziegenmeyer that he would have to have the endorsement of Gumbleton before he could draw the money. He acquiesced in the decision of the bank and went away, saying that he would send the certificate to New York and have it indorsed by Gumbleton. He could calculate that it would take about three days for a letter to reach New York, supposing he had one to send, and so he forged Gumbleton's name, with the name of "New York, Nov. 23," just three days after the first presentation. Giving time for another three days to elapse after the pretended signature had affixed, he presented himself again at the same bank on the 26th of November, and drew the money on the certificate and forged signature of Gumbleton. One of the most curious aspects of this strange affair is that Ziegenmeyer had been known by his own name during the time that he and Gumbleton had been rooming together at No. 112 Dearbon street; that he went out as Ziegenmeyer on the afternoon of the 19th of November at about 5 o'clock; that he came back on the same night as Gumbleton; and, finally, that on the following day, the 20th, he was Gumbleton at his lodgings and Ziegenmeyer at the bank. Shortly after he had successfully obtained the money, he set himself to work to get back from Kansas the two boxes of clothing which had been shipped on the 19th, the day of the murder. To accomplish this he went to Alderman Powell, the freight agent of Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Road, at the Eighteenth street depot; and, representing himself as Gumbleton, desired that the boxes be telegraphed for. This was done, and the car in which they were known to be was found to be at Quincy. In response to a telegram dictated by the supposed Gumbleton, the boxes were returned on November 20, and, when received here, were receipted for and taken in charge by Ziegenmeyer who forged the name of Gumbleton to the receipt.— They were by him taken to a store on Fifth avenue and sold for what they would bring. Having thus easily settled up the Western accounts of his predecessor in the Gumbleton business, Ziegenmeyer next set his wits at work to get possession of the money which Gumbleton had deposited in New York, and for which he had the letter of credit in Gumbleton's name. His first proceeding was to forge a letter to Blake Bros. & Co., on whom the letter of credit was drawn.— He had, no doubt, been in constant practice on Gumbleton's writing from the 19th of November to the 1st of December, and that he had attained considerable proficiency is shown by the fact that he was able to write a letter so nearly an imitation of the dead man's that it was received and answered as genuine by a banking firm which had plenty of

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genuine letters of the same man, and that, too, in a matter involving some \$8,000. The following is the forged letter to Blake Bros. & Co:

CHICAGO, DEC. 1, 1870.

Messrs. Blake Bros. & Co., New York:

DEAR SIR—Enclosed I hand over to you your letter of credit, which will show to you to what extent I have drawn on Messrs. McKinnon & Co. As I am upon the point of entering into business here, you will oblige me by closing up my account, and sending me a draft, over the whole of my credit, on a Chicago house as soon as possible.

Hoping to find soon an opportunity to renew business with your honorable house I am yours.
M. WM. GEUMBLETON.

Please direct your letters to No. 112 Dearborn street, Room 38.

The New York Bunkers evidently felt no question as to the letter over Gumbleton's signature. They probably received the letter on the 3d or 4th of December, and, as soon as their business would allow, they made the desired statement of Gumbleton's account and transmitted to him (as they supposed) in Chicago. Below is their letter, which is dated only three days after the receipt of Ziegenmeyer's:

NEW YORK, Dec. 7, 1870.

M. Win. Gumbleton Esq. No. 112 Dearborn street, Room No. 38, Chicagoxx

DEAR SIR.— We have yours of the 1st, and now enclose a statement of your account with us, showing a balance due you of seven thousand nine hundred and eighty-one and fifty one hundredths dollars, (\$7,981 50 100), currency, for which amount we now enclose our check No. 4976 to your order on the Fourth National Bank, New York City, which we understand, will readily pass at par in Chicago.

We would have sent you a draft on some Chicago Bank, but were unable to obtain one. Very truly, &c.,

BLAKE BROS. & CO.

On having received the draft, Ziegenmeyer had gone far toward getting the money; but still he was not in the possession of it. There remained the obstacle that he was not known at all, even as Ziegenmeyer, and that the draft was drawn to Gumbleton. To get the money from any bank on such a draft would require that he be known, or vouched for by some responsible person. He adopted his plan with great sagacity, and relied on the cupidity of man to give him the necessary endorsement. He first visited the real estate office of Rose & Cooley No. 11 South Canal street, and there represented himself as Gumbleton, a man of means, and very desirous of buying a farm. Rose & Cooley, very obligingly introduced Mr. Gumbleton to a friend of theirs, Mr. D. W. Mills, who has an office with them, and who had a farm for sale. Mr. Mills had no difficulty in arranging matters with the Gumbleton.— The farm was agreeable, and all promised well for a

goodly profit for Mr. Mills in a bargain which a wealthy but half-educated German was one of the parties. The only trouble was that Mr. Gumbleton had not great amount of ready money. He had, to be sure, a draft on New York for a sum large enough to cover the price of the farm; but he had unfortunately, no means of getting it cashed. In this juncture, Mr. D. W. Mill offered his services to help his friend Gumbleton, and went with him to Ira Holmes, Cashier of the Manufacturers' National Bank. He introduced Mr. Gumbleton to Mr. Holms, and testified that he was the real Gumbleton to whom the draft was drawn and no other. Furthermore, he vouched for Gumbleton's financial standing and offered to sign the draft with him. How far the profits on the prospective sale of the farm went to convince Mr. Mills that he could conscientiously vouch for the identity of this Gumbleton, whom he had known for nearly a week, it is, perhaps, not best to inquire. Doubtless Mr. Mills considered his part in the transactions 'as mere business formality;' but it will be curious to see if the heirs of Gumbleton, should any appear, will regard Mr. Mills' endorsement in the same light. Not quite satisfied with the affair, Mr. Holmes prudently wrote to his New York correspondent to see Blake Brothers & Co., and ascertained if the draft was all right. They returned answer that the matter was regular, and advised the payment of the draft, meaning of course its payment to Gumbleton. Acting on this advice the Manufacturers' Bank received the draft on the forged signature of Gumbleton and the genuine one of D.W. Mills. They did not pay the draft to Ziegenmeyer, but gave him a certificate of deposit for the amount of money named in it. He let the money lay in the bank just long enough to get rid of his tool, D.W. Mills and then went back and drew it all out. On the 21st day of December at a little before 5, Ziegenmeyer took Express No. 108 and with his aid conveyed his trunk and other baggage to the Central depot; and from that hour until yesterday no news were ever received of him. It was learned that he paid on some extra baggage as far as Kalamazoo, and that he there had paid again on the same baggage, but no certain trace was then known of him. Thus it will be seen that he got away in time. He left this city just two weeks before the body of his victim was found; but he stayed here long enough.— He administered on the estate of Gumbleton in a speedy and thorough manner, and having obtained all there was to obtain, he left presumably satisfied with the result of his plan.

After Detective Dixon had ascertained all the facts detailed above, he became convinced that any further efforts in this city would be useless. He had ably and skillfully worked out every detail that had been a part of the record of the criminal in this city. He then determined to visit Baltimore and perhaps, New York, to trace out what might be found in either of those or other Eastern cities in relation to the murdered man or the criminal. It was mentioned before that Coroner Stephens addressed a telegram to Blake Bros. & Co., as soon as he learned that the dead man had had business relations with that firm. To his message the Coroner received a reply which induced him to visit Baltimore.

On January 11th Detective Dixon started for Baltimore, and on reaching there made his way to McKinnon & Co.'s bank where he learned some facts connected with the history of Gumbleton which will be better seen if placed in order than if mentioned as he found them: M.W. Gumbleton was an Irishman by birth, very well connected in Dublin, Ireland, and of a highly respectable family. He was not specially talented, and very much inclined to be dissolute in his habits; but withal, very careful of his money. He came to this country about April 28, 1870, and made his way immediately to Baltimore. He had with him a letter of credit on a Liverpool, Eng. House, for £1,600, which he sold to the New York firm above mentioned immediately upon his

arrival. The price of gold being at that time 109, he realized from his letter the sum of \$8768.10 which he left in New York with an arrangement by which he could draw as he wished through Messrs. McKinnon & Co., of Baltimore. He had also a letter from D. O'Callahan, an attorney, of No. 1 Capel street, Dublin. Gumbleton stayed in Baltimore steadily, and commenced attending a telegraph school there. At this school, on the 4th of May, he met the man Alfred Ziegenmeyer, and formed a friendship with him immediately.

Ziegenmeyer was found to have been a native of Braunschweig (probably Brunswick), Germany. He shipped at Bremen on the ship Florella, Captain Peabody, and made two trips in her. This was three years ago. He left the Florella in New York as soon as the war in Germany was announced, and immediately shipped on board the Cuba. In her he made one or two trips to Key West, and, after a difficulty with the mate, left her and went to work learning telegraphing in the same school in Baltimore in which Gumbleton was occupied. Just before the departure of Gumbleton west, Ziegenmeyer had made arrangements with a house in Baltimore to stop with them a long time; but, on learning of Gumbleton's proposed departure, he made his arrangements as suddenly as possible and came with him. The fact that he long entertained the idea of getting possession of Gumbleton's money is shown by some of his actions in Baltimore. On several occasions he tried to get the latter to go out hunting with him, and even went so far as to borrow a gun for the use of the two. These facts were remarked as singular at the time, but other occurrences have since made plain what must have been Ziegenmeyer's intentions. It would be superfluous to mention the number of places in Baltimore that the detectives visited in search of information of Ziegenmeyer; but it is enough to say that they found, at last, one Frank Howard, keeper of a sailor's boarding house, who remembered the German. Through him they found a man who had sailed with him and who knew him and his parents. He remembered that Ziegenmeyer had sent home some money through the German banking house of Schumacher & Co. From this house the officer learned that on the 15th of November, 1869, he had sent to his father \$150. Impressed with the idea that the fugitive had probably gone home with his booty, Dixon went to Washington and obtained there the name of the American Consul nearest the residence of Ziegenmeyer's family. This was Consul R. M. Hapson, at Bremen, and to him, on the 26th of January, Dixon transmitted a full description of the whole crime, with all the particulars as far as then ascertained. With this he enclosed a picture which had been taken of Ziegenmeyer in Baltimore. The Consul immediately replied he would use his utmost efforts to detect the criminal, and there the matter rested until yesterday, when the following cable telegram from Hanson showed that he was in earnest in saying that he would do his best:

	BREMEN, March 19.
Ziegenmeyer	is arrested. Procure the proper
requisition from Washington, and send an officer. Answer.	HANSON.

To this Superintendent Kennedy replied last night that he would send an officer as soon as possible, but that Ziegenmeyer must be held at all hazards.— The fact that the United States has an extradition treaty with Germany will render easy the task of getting back the criminal. It is probably that an officer will start for Bremen in a few days, and that the fugitive will be in Chicago before many months.

The working up of this case shows that for ability as a detective, Mr. Dixon has few, if any equals. He was detailed to take charge of the case the day subsequent to the finding of the body,

and was one of the few who believed that the deceased had been murdered, the statement of the breaksman who first saw the remains that he placed the rope over the mouth of Mr. Gumbleton to prevent the corpse from floating away, having induced nearly every one to regard the case as one of accidental drowning. Dixon with the assistance of his partner, Sam Ellis, an excellent officer—obtained the information above mentioned that enabled him to trace the murderer. He suddenly departed for Baltimore one afternoon, and not until now was his mission to that city made known. He called upon deputy Marshal Fry, of Baltimore, who accompanied him to all of the out of the way places in the city in search of the sailor who, as Dixon had learned from Howard, knew the history of the assassin. Almost every sailor's boarding house in Baltimore was visited before this man was found; but he imparted the facts about Schumacher & Co., which fully compensated for the time spent in hunting him.

One fact deserves mentioned, and that is, that not a cent as a reward was offered for the apprehension of the murderer of Gumbleton, either in city or country. The appropriation for contingent expenses is so meager that officers cannot leave the city in search of criminals without footing their own bills. It was so in this case. Every dollar Dixon expended on his journeying came out of his own pocket, Superintendent Kennedy having guaranteed that the money should be refunded, if possible. Where it is to come from no one knows. If ever any one deserved a reward, and a liberal one it is Joseph Dixon. The Council and the Board of Supervisors should give the matter consideration at their next meeting; and if they do not vote him a large reward, they should, at least, pay his expenses. There can be no better time to agitate to some effect the subject of a contingent fund for detective service than the present. The eminent services of Chicago detectives, even when working where they have to charge the expense account to themselves, should spur up the proper authorities to vote a sufficient sum for expenses at least. Such a fund, if wisely expended, would be vastly productive of good results, and there can be no better time to begin than now.

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