

THE HOUNDSDITCH SENSATION.

"PETER THE PAINTER'S" DIS- APPEARANCE.

IMPORTANT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

TWO RUSSIANS ARRESTED.

CABLE TO SCOTLAND YARD.

If the officers of the Criminal Investigation Department succeed in substantiating certain information which has been receiving their keenest attention for some days past Western Australia will come in for some notoriety in connection with the Houndsditch murders, as it did some years ago over the arrest at Southern Cross of the wife-murderer Frederick Bailey Deeming, who was executed in Melbourne.

On Saturday two Russian immigrants were arrested in the Kellerberrin district and brought to the Perth Police Station on a charge of conspiracy. The accused gave their names as August Maren, a Russian student, 25 years of age, and Fred. Johnson, a tailor's presser, 27 years of age. The indictment sets out that on or about April 20 last they conspired together and did falsely swear in the Kellerberrin Police Court that a Russian named Ernest Dreger went to Kellerberrin for the especial purpose of receiving a gun. Dreger was charged at the time with having stolen the gun, and he was convicted and sentenced to three months' imprisonment.

After having served his term of imprisonment Dreger it is understood made certain statements, in which he alleged that one of the men, who, notwithstanding the silence of the police, is believed to be Maren, was identical with the notorious "Peter the Painter," who was concerned in the Houndsditch affray in London on December 17 last and for whose arrest the Imperial Government has offered a reward of £500. Dreger's statements were communicated to the Criminal Investigation Department about two weeks ago, and since then secret inquiries have been in progress. Last week, as a result of information gathered by officers of the department, Inspector Connell, through the Commissioner of Police (Captain Hare), cabled to Scotland Yard giving the whole of the particulars of the investigations, together with the fact that there was a striking resemblance between the suspect and the police description

that there was a striking resemblance between the suspect and the police description of "Peter the Painter" which had been circulated. A reply was received requesting that all written statements, together with all the evidence that could be gathered, should be forwarded as early as possible, to enable the fullest inquiries to be made at home.

The description of "Peter the Painter" published in the English papers was as follows:—"Peter, known as Peter the Painter, formerly of 59 Grove-street, aged 28 or 30 years; height, 5ft. 9in. or 5ft. 10in.; hair and medium moustache, black; clear skin, eyes dark, medium build, reserved manner believed to be a Russian."

Despite the great degree of reticence which, as usual, is being displayed by the Criminal Investigation Department, it is known that the utmost importance is attached to the evidence that has already been gathered, and which is to a certain extent confirmed by the likeness of the suspected man to the published description of "Peter the Painter." For upwards of a week Detective-Sergeant Mann has devoted all his time to the investigations, but it was not until after a reply had been received to the cable to Scotland Yard that officers were sent to the Kellerberrin district to arrest the two men. On Thursday night Detective Fraser and Plain-clothes Constable Ebbeson left the city for Kellerberrin, and they were followed by Sergeant Mann, who has charge of the inquiries. Early on Saturday Johnson was arrested on a farm 15 miles from Doodlakine, and Maren was taken into custody on a farm 40 miles from Merredin. Maren, who speaks only a little English, is described as a man of evident culture, while Johnson, whose knowledge of English, is still more limited, apparently belongs more to the working class.

The accused will appear before the City Court this morning, when a remand will be applied for.

DETAILS OF THE AFFRAY.

A GRAPHIC ACCOUNT.

The following particulars of the Houndsditch shooting affray are taken from "Lloyd's Weekly" of December 18:—

Not since the Tottenham tragedy of 1909, when several policemen were killed and injured in a dramatic chase after a couple of desperate alien criminals who had attempted in broad daylight to steal a bag of money from a messenger, has London been startled as it was on Saturday by the news of an armed conflict between criminals and police—perpetrated in this instance in the heart of the city of London, and causing the deaths of three policemen. Two others were seriously injured. The gallant officers were the victims of a desperate gang foiled in their endeavours to sack a Houndsditch jeweller's shop.

About three weeks ago a couple giving the names of Mr. and Mrs. Levi moved into 11 Exchange Buildings, while a man giving the name of Garstein took over No. 9 as for warehouse purposes. These two houses are exactly at the rear of 118a Houndsditch, occupied by Mr. H. S. Harris, a jeweller, and are only separated from it by a narrow passage and high wall.

In Mr. Harris's safe was jewellery worth between £20,000 and £30,000, and this was the objective of the new tenants of 9 and 11

between £20,000 and £30,000, and this was the objective of the new tenants of 9 and 11 Exchange Buildings, who had conceived the desperate plan of boring their way through the wall into Mr. Harris's premises.

Neighbours of the new occupants of No. 11 noticed that there was little furniture taken in, and that Mr. and Mrs. Levi had several male visitors. They themselves were very seldom seen, and the green shutters of the house were seldom taken down.

After a few days mysterious noises began to be heard and these got so pronounced as to be a nuisance to the neighbours, who, however, beyond grumbling among themselves, appear to have taken no action.

But Mr. Isenstein, Mr. Harris's neighbour, thought the noises were more than mere sounds of men at their ordinary work, and he quietly informed the police that there was something suspicious going on at 9 and 11 Exchange Buildings.

This was about 10 o'clock on Friday night. A constable was sent to make an inspection, and in company with Mr. Isenstein, examined the rear of his shop as well as a dairy carried on by two sisters next door, with no result. The noise in the meantime had ceased. The theory is suggested that in carrying out their plot the perpetrators had carefully organised a watch, and consequently they were informed both of the arrival and the departure of the constable.

The police, however, determined to increase their vigilance. About a quarter-past eleven Sergeants Tucker, Bentley, and Bryant, with Constables Woodhams, Martin, and Choat—the officer on the beat—visited Exchange Buildings. They made at once for No. 11.

Sergeant Bentley knocked. A woman answered, and some short conversation took place. Sergeant Bentley said, "Let us in; we believe there are burglars about." Receiving a reply in some foreign tongue, he called out, "Fetch somebody who can speak English," and inserted his foot in the slightly-opened door.

At that instant, and without the slightest warning, there was a brilliant flash, followed by a loud report. It seemed to come from the direction of the window, about a foot to the right of the sergeant, and the gallant officer staggered back with a bullet through the right side of his neck. Before he could get clear another flash and report followed, and he received a second bullet a few inches to the left of the first one, and fell over on his back, with his head in the gutter.

What then happened took place all in about sixty seconds. The door was flung wide open, and out dashed three men and a woman, the men—and it is said the woman also—carrying revolvers. These they fired point blank at every police officer who approached them.

Sergeant Bryant was the next to be shot down, a bullet skimming across his chest and embedding itself in his arm. Constable Woodhams was the next to fall, shot through the left thigh, high up, the bone being badly splintered. Sergeant Tucker, racing to the help of his comrades, was stopped with a bullet through the heart, and staggering a few paces towards Cutler-street, fell to the ground dead.

Constable Choat collapsed on the roadway writhing in agony, from no fewer than eight bullet wounds.

At this moment a dramatic incident hap-

pened. While one member of the gang was shooting at Constable Choat, the others were making their escape at the end of the cul-de-sac into Cutler-street. One dashed past the two contestants, with the extraordinary coincidence that he got within the line of fire of his companion's revolver, and received in his back one of the bullets that had already passed through poor Constable Choat's body. So near was he to the murdered policeman that the bullet had

sufficient force left to pass upwards, penetrate the lung, and enter his breast just under his first left rib.

As the man was falling he was seized by Constable Choat's murderer by one arm. A third member of the gang grasped the other arm, and, with the woman following, they all dashed away, and in a moment had disappeared in the network of narrow streets and alleys with which the neighbourhood is honeycombed.

On the arrival of the heads of the city police from Old Jewry a hurried telephonic despatch was sent to all the city police stations calling out the reserves and every available officer that could be spared. As they arrived they were promptly posted so as to form a complete cordon round the area of the tragedy. First, attention was given to the fallen officers. Sergeant Tucker was dead, but all were taken to hospital, where it was soon seen that Sergeant Bentley and Constable Choat were mortally wounded. They died next day.

Meanwhile, under the direction of Superintendents Ottaway Nicholls, and Stark, and Chief Inspector Hayes, a complete search of Exchange Buildings and the adjoining warehouses and the new buildings in the course of construction in Cutler-street was made, and many proofs of the daring scheme of burglary were found.

On Saturday afternoon came a sensational sequel to the shooting. From an unknown source there came to Leman-street Police Station, Whitechapel, the following message—"Man wounded in city police fight is dying at No. 59 Grove-street, off the Commercial-road, E. Send at once if you wish to take him alive."

An hour after the arrival of the detectives the man, who was a Russian Pole about 28 years of age, died without recognising anyone round him.