

POLICEMAN'S SLAYER MAY BE STELZ'S ALSO.

Fritz Meyer's Hand, with the Top of a Finger Gone, Corresponds with the Bloody Print on the Door of Holy Trinity Church.

And the Crimes Are So Similar, Poor Box Robbery, the Motive and a Heavy Blow on the Victim's Head Following Detection, That the Police Are Confident They Have the Right Man.

FRED SMITH, a policeman—the man the little children loved, the arbiter of quarrels and the personal friend of nearly every dweller in the precinct—was murdered while in the discharge of his duty.

Only a few blocks away Fritz Meyer, his murderer, paces up and down his cell, looking in vain for the means of ending a life which the law claims for this crime, at least. The police think that in the person of Meyer they have also secured the murderer of Beltinger Steiz.

Meyer is a German, of medium height, forty years old and partially bald. He is a recognized criminal.

When Steiz was murdered, in the Church of the Holy Trinity, at Williamsburg, on August 30, those who sought for clues of his murderer found upon the door post the print, in blood, of a man's hand. A photograph was made of this print, which is now at Police Headquarters.

Meyer's left hand, complete in every particular but one. The top joint of the forefinger is missing.

When Meyer was arrested the police noticed that he held his left hand strangely. He was ready enough to use his right in gesticulating or in defending himself from the mob which tried to lynch him, but the left hand he kept concealed. When the police, noticing this, obliged him by force to show his hand, they found that the top joint of the forefinger had been chopped square off.

Hand and Print Correspond.
A print of that left hand corresponds closely with the photograph the police have of the print on the door post of Trinity Church.

The police say there is no practical doubt of Meyer's identity with the murderer of Beltinger Steiz. The conception and object of the crime in each case appears to have been the same—the looting of the poor box.

found upon Meyer. The revolver has a rubber handle, and the police believe that it is the weapon which was used upon Steiz. The microscope will disclose traces of blood in the interest of the weapon's handle. The pistol butt will be submitted to an examination by experts.

Beltinger Steiz breathed out his life in the shadow of the sculptured wings of angels. Policeman Fred Smith, too, died in a room which was connected with the church. Five hundred children were in the class room—the girls below, the boys on the two upper floors—when a small fire broke out. The girls on the lower floor rushed for the entrance and became jammed, just as the rooms above gave up their quota of frightened children. Policeman Smith was among those called to rescue the children. Among the fifteen dead little ones he carried from that fatal class room was his own little daughter Jessie.

Meyer Was at the Service.
Yesterday's investigation brought to light many new facts in connection with the robbery which cost Policeman Smith his life. The Church of the Redeemer, usually known as the Church of the Holy Redeemer, is on the north side of Third street, between avenues A and B. The church runs back half the depth of the block. On the left, and facing Fourth street, are the church schools with a little to the right on the same street is a convent. The church occupies the entire property, and there is communication between all the departments. The main entrance to the church is on the Third street side. Just to the right of the main entrance a door opens into the rectory. In front of the door, and fourteen feet from it, is the poor box.

During the week the October devotion of the Rosary have been celebrated daily at the Church of the Holy Redeemer. Tuesday evening Fritz Meyer entered the church, apparently as a worshiper. In reality as a thief. He went into the gallery and there waited for his opportunity to hide. When it came, he lay down under a bench and was not noticed when the attendant closed the church at night.

Meyer's admitted intention was to rob the poor box, but there were some things he did not know when he made his plans. He had evidently looked the place over with sufficient thoroughness to know all the means of entrance and exit. He had noticed that when the iron door which shuts off the church from the parsonage was closed the poor box and the other depositories for alms in the church were apparently unprotected. What he did not know was that a complete system of burglar alarms connected all the alms boxes with electric bells in the parsonage.

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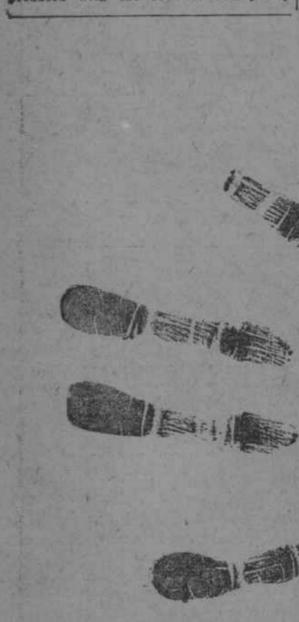
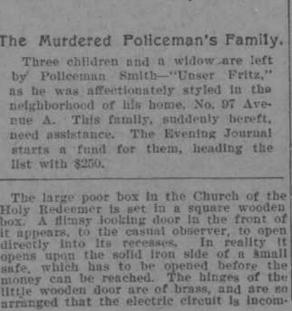
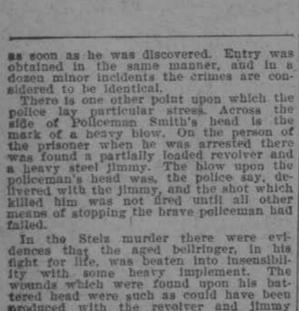


photo as long as the door remains shut. The second it is opened, however, the circuit is closed and the alarm bell rings.

He Aroused the Priests.
It was the ringing of this alarm bell at 12:15 a. m. yesterday that aroused Father William Engelhardt, his superior, and the priest told him to take the police whistle, which is kept for emergencies, and blow it to summon help.

It is probable that Meyer, working on the poor box, heard the ringing of the alarm bell and the sound of the police whistle. At any rate, when Father Engelhardt and William, accompanied by Policeman Smith and Conkling, entered the church, there was nothing to be seen but the shattered casing of the poor box. Policeman Conkling remained on guard at the door to catch any one who might try to escape that way, while Officer Smith and the two priests began to search the building. Gradually their quest brought them to the high altar, to the left of which a small door leads by a passage to the class rooms of the school house. Policeman Smith reached it first, asked where it led, and, being informed, passed through, closely followed by the priests.

Hardly had he passed out of sight when there was the sound of a struggle, and then the report of a pistol. In another second another shot was fired.

At the sound of the shot Policeman Conkling, on guard at the great door, charged up the aisle to the aid of his brother officer. He was too late. Half way up the church he heard the crash of broken glass and a cry from one of the priests. A gas jet was burning dimly in the hall as he tore around to the class room in which Smith had disappeared. At first he could see nothing, but then, at the far end of the room, he detected a man half in and half out of the broken window of the door leading to Fourth street. Unable to see clearly, Conkling thought Policeman Smith was the man climbing through the door and that he was following the burglar to the street. He called to him, and receiving no response ran up. As he reached the door he saw the man leap from the little platform outside the broken door over the high iron fence to the sidewalk.

Surrounded by Police.
Then, for the first time, Conkling says, he recognized that the escaping man was the burglar and not his fellow officer. He plunged through the broken door after him. As he, in his turn, vaulted over the fence, his night stick struck the pavement a resounding blow.

It gave the signal for help, and Policeman Ryan, at the corner, answered it. Seeing the running man, he gave three raps, and in a few seconds every policeman in the precinct was closing down upon the scene of the murder. Before he could run more than half a block Meyer, the murderer, was caught by Charles Leitch, of 233 East Fourth street.

In the meantime the priests had lighted the gas in the class room and had found Policeman Fred Smith gasping his last across one of the school benches. Through the windows came the shouts of the mob, which was doing its best to take the murderer from the policemen and lynch him. The smoke of the revolver shots hung in the air. The crowd of the policeman was scattered upon the floor. Down upon his knees in the midst of the confusion Father Engelhardt knelt by the side of the dying man, praying that his life might be prolonged until Father William might return with the holy elements. The priest raised the dying man's head into a more comfortable position and administered to him the sacrament of extreme unction. As the last prayer was uttered, Policeman Fred Smith, his duty done, breathed his last.

It was five minutes before the police, struggling to keep their prisoner from harm, knew that their comrade was dead, or even wounded. Then the news spread through the crowd. "Schmitt is dead; Schmitt is dead." It spread through the crowd. Everybody knew "Schmitt" as his friends called him, and for the next ten minutes fifteen policemen had the fight of their lives to save the cowering Meyer from being lynched by the maddened mob.

"I Had to Kill Him."
They got him to the station at last, in rags, blood-soaked and terrorized. He hid his left hand as they thrust him forward to confront Captain Herlihy. The boys of

prisoner. "I don't believe you've got the nerve to kill yourself, anyhow. But you'll never get the chance in this station." They talked with the prisoner more than an hour, and at the close of the examination Detective Harrington said: "Our witness was unable to identify the prisoner. The man who had been lurking about the Church of the Holy Trinity. That, however, is not strange, as the man might easily change his dress and appearance. I think it is exceedingly likely that the police have in custody the murderer of Beltinger Steiz, and that a closer investigation into this man's antecedents will prove it."

"I do not want to say positively that Meyer is the man who murdered Steiz," said Captain McCusky, "because, if it should subsequently be proved that he is not the man, it might prevent us making a case against the real culprit. At the same time I will say that the print of the prisoner's hand closely corresponds with that of the man who murdered Steiz. In my opinion—though I do not make this statement as a positive certainty—we have both the man who murdered Policeman Smith and the man who killed Beltinger Steiz."

The man has been in trouble many times before. He has told us that he has not been in Brooklyn for four years. We have proved that to be untrue. The Brooklyn officials who were over here say Meyer has been through their hands and they have a record of his previous address. We hope to be able to trace him from there. If we should be so fortunate as to discover his last abiding place, I trust to be able to announce the finding of evidence positively connecting him with the murder of the bellringer."

Curious Crowd Gathers.
All yesterday Third and Fourth streets, in the neighborhood of the Church of the Holy Redeemer, were filled with excited crowds discussing the murder. Every copy of the evening papers which appeared on the street was eagerly bought up by those who had known the participants in the tragedy. Store keepers purchased extra copies of the Evening Journal, and, cutting out the account of the murder, pasted it up in their windows, so that those who did not possess the penny necessary to buy a paper might be able to read the news.

Crowds gathered on the sidewalks both before the main entrance of the church, through which the rifled poor box could be seen, and also on the Fourth street side, where a new sheet of glass, replacing the broken pane, divided the honors with the iron grating which the burglar bent in his effort to escape. So large did the crowd become that the Redeemerist Fathers were obliged to send a messenger to the East Fifth street station to ask that policemen be sent to preserve order. They said that a horde of children and adult lovers of the morbid had invaded the church and were interfering with the services in their endeavors to see the place where the policeman was killed.



Evening Journal Starts a Fund for the Widow and Children of the Brave Policeman Who Was a Martyr to His Duty.

Smith, Looking Forward to Promotion and More Pay, Saved Nothing, Generously Helping the Needy, and His Family Are Left Destitute.

the murder had preceded him. "What did you tell that policeman for?" demanded Herlihy, who is a personal friend of Smith. "I had to," answered the prisoner, sullenly. "He stopped me and I didn't want to get arrested."

"How did you get into the church?" "I went in by the door," answered the prisoner, and admitted later that he had hidden in the gallery until he had decided the place was deserted.

"Were you trying to rob the poor box?" "Yes," answered the prisoner. "I was hard up and needed money."

"I'll never go to the chair," he added a moment later. "Should I suppose you think I will. I'll kill myself to-night."

"Not if I can prevent it," commented Captain Herlihy grimly, as he detailed two policemen for special duty in watching the

Fund for the family of the murdered policeman, Fred Smith:
The Evening Journal, \$250

In a long line, extending from the sidewalk to the third floor of the tenement at No. 97 Avenue A, men, women and children waited last night to take a last look at the features, impassive in death, of "Unser Fritz," the big policeman who had been their friend and neighbor. Mothers carried the little ones to the coffin and allowed tears from baby eyes to fall on the glass. It was the tribute of a section of the East Side to one who was their hero, the tribute of strength and weakness to bravery and kindness of heart.

A man beloved by children is a man with a heart. The undertaker tried early in the day to bar the swarms of children in the hallway, come to take a last look at the face of their friend, such weeping and screaming and protestation was never heard on the East Side under similar circumstances. The children in the hallway were shut out, but they were not to be kept from the face of "Unser Fritz," and the mothers and fathers of the children before the coffin of the brave policeman. The undertaker relented; boys and girls and toddlers climbed the steps for hours, went over the coffin of their friend, caressed his helmet and his cap, lying on top of the coffin and went away sobbing.

It is a little home, this, where the body of the dead policeman lies. It is a four small rooms. Up the stairs leading to it one walks on linoleum worn through with the tread of feet, and the stairs are dark.

At every landing there is a lamp with a colored shade, but on the landing where the home of Fritz is the colored shade has been taken off. A line of gas pipes in the bare, clean hall glows with white. Through the house lingers an odor of flowers—an odor of roses and geraniums and carnations.

Humble Home, but Neat.
In the little front room the coffin is placed, close to the windows. All the mirrors and all the pictures are covered, save the picture of the dead policeman. It, draped in black, stands on a table, and is draped, apparently, by hands understanding more of the cares of housework than of the drapery of a funeral home. Under the picture is a tub, arranged to catch the drippings from the ice surrounding the body. Many candles burn on a convenient table.

Off the parlor, in a clean, white bed, tossing and moaning, is the widow. Bravely she stood up under her affliction until yesterday evening. Inarticulate murmuring phrases of endurance, she threw herself on the cushion and kind neighbors carried her away. It will be many a day before the widow rises from her bed—many a day before she is the merry little woman she was when she saw her husband start out on his beat Tuesday evening.

Down the stairs of this tenement, from the room in which the body of Fred Smith lies, have been carried six little ones—flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone—little ones whose presence brightened his home for a few days—it went now to the sorrowing wife—and then went away. And of these little ones there was one, Mary, the sweet child of the family, the little one in whom the mother, with a mother's partiality, took the most pride, and in whom the father placed the hope of the future. Sadly enough—and remarkably enough—this little Mary lost her tender life, violently, in the same building where the body of Fritz Meyer put an end to the life of her father.

Fred Smith and his wife married early in life. In two months they were to have celebrated their silver wedding, and he was but forty-five when he died; his widow is thirty-eight. Their first child was a sweet little girl—and they called her Mary. Fred Smith was not a Catholic when he married. But his wife is a Catholic, and Fred, gladly carried their first child to the Church of the Redeemer and gladly turned her over to the arms of the good father, on the pleasant Sunday to be baptised. He had been appointed to the police force but a short time before, and he was proud of his new uniform—almost—as he was of his wife and baby.

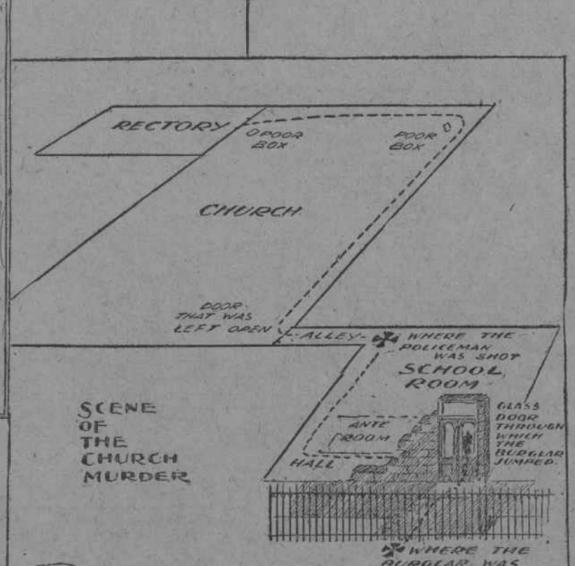
Six Given and Taken Away.
Time rolled on and little Mary reached the age of fourteen. She was a pupil in the school connected with the Church of the Holy Redeemer, and her desk was in a room fronting on Fourth street. One morning she slipped away to school, leaving behind the echo of joyous laughter. That day a fire started in the basement of the school. There was a panic among the children, and the school was abandoned. Fred Smith helped other policemen carry out from the wrecked building, the bruised and mangled body of his little girl. Five other little ones he yielded to the Angel of Death, but he never complained. He was always the jolly "Unser Fritz," and to compensate for those he lost he gained the friendship and love of the children of others. For years he walked but two beats—one on the Bowers, from Houston to Fifth street, the other on Avenue A, from Houston street to Seventh street. On the Bowers he made friends of men and made friends of men, women and children. About the neighborhood he was known as a man who helped little ones and was a friend to all, and when he appeared, but two weeks ago, with his third service stripe on the arm of his blouse, he was greeted with cheers and cries of joy. He was getting to be quite a fixture about Avenue A.

It was not only his uniform kindness and gentleness that commended him to his neighbors and the children. They told stories of how the jolly, likable policeman had arrested men who had drawn revolvers to repel him. They told a story, which is a piece of East Side history, about how he entered about a saloon to arrest a man and quell an impending riot and was thrown out by force of numbers to the sidewalk. They told how he got up with a broken shoulder, went back into the hall, fought his way through and arrested the man he went after and one other.

A free-and-easy disposition had this policeman. His salary was first at the disposition of his family—then at the disposition of his friends. No poor man ever approached him and was sent away empty-handed. No friend in distress had to ask help twice of Fred Smith. He bought tickets for balls and gave his children money for the church to which he did not belong. His family wanted for nothing while he lived. Often his wife, a thrifty soul, scolded him because he was laying nothing away for a rainy day. He laughed at her.

Castles in Spain.
"Never you mind," this big, strong man would tell her. "Some of these days they'll make me a sergeant, and some of these days they'll make me a captain. We'll have plenty of money then, but we'll never move away from Avenue A. Maybe I'll be chief some day. Who knows?"

To-day's Great Overcoat Sale.
At King's, the well-known clothing store, one day sale for the benefit of poor people. Five hundred good heavy winter overcoats, blue and black, well made all sizes, at \$3.00 each, such overcoats are worth \$10.00 on any man's money. To-day only \$3.00 at King's, the great clothing store, Broadway and Park place, our only New York store.



Scene of the Latest of Greater New York's Church Murders.

Meyer's Left Hand Compared With the Imprint of the Left Hand of the Williamsburg Church Murderer.

Is the murderer of Policeman Smith in the Church of the Holy Redeemer, Tuesday morning, and the murderer of Assistant Sexton Steiz, in a Williamsburg church last August, one and the same man? George Steiz, assistant sexton of Holy Trinity Church, Williamsburg, was murdered in the church on the evening of Sunday, August 29. He was choked and beaten to death by a man, or men, who had entered the sanctuary to rob the poor boxes. An imprint of a murderer's hand was found on a belfry step. It shows that the end of the index finger of the hand—the left hand—is missing. The left hand of Fritz Meyer, the burglar who killed Policeman Smith in the Church of the Holy Redeemer, this city, Tuesday night, has a similar mutilation.