

CRIME IN FACTORY FOULEST HE EVER KNEW, SAYS BURNS

Thinks Killing Was Product of a Mind Steeped in Crime — He Is Confident of Success.

LETTER FROM BECKER TO THE CONSTITUTION

Former Master Mechanic Throws New Light on the Death Notes Found in the Factory Basement.

"The slayer of Mary Phagan was a criminal of the worst type. I have never come in contact with a tragedy so foul."

This assertion was made by Detective William J. Burns Thursday afternoon to a reporter for The Constitution, who talked with him in the office of Attorney Leonard J. Haas, to which the noted sleuth had repaired for a brief respite from his vigorous activities during the forenoon.

"Furthermore, I see my way perfectly clear to point my finger at the guilty man. It is a simple matter. My investigation has been an easy one, and is growing easier as it progresses. It has merely meant the following of the trend of the criminal mind. This process, to a man of my long experience with criminals, is no difficult matter.

"Throughout this murder there can plainly be seen the thread of the criminal's mental process. It is certainly a simple thing to detect. Simple, I mean, in a sane and normal investigation after the hysterics that always follow such a crime have died away."

Letter From Becker.

A letter from Henry F. Becker, of Irvington, N. J., the pencil factory employee whose name is said by Frank's defense to be written on one of the murder notes found by Mary Phagan's body, has been received by The Constitution. It throws new light on the death note phase of the mystery.

It is as follows:

"Editor Constitution: Just a few lines in reference to Leo Frank's case. I would like to make a few remarks in his behalf. Having been employed as master mechanic with the National Pencil company, where I came in contact with Mr. Frank more than any one else of the employees, I will state I always found him upright and honest, and, in regard to female help, it was nothing but business with him.

"There has been a booklet sent me from Atlanta, with a photograph of the notes found by the girl's body. As near as I can see, one of these notes bears my signature. Before I left the employ of the pencil factory I sent the bulk of old order books to the basement to be burned, as I did not keep them for reference to myself, and with the photographs I note the date 190—. As the negro claims that the notes were written in Mr. Frank's office, it could not be possible, as Mr. Frank's order blanks were dated 191—. I am not connected with Mr. Frank in any way or form, but I would like to see that justice is done by giving him another trial so his innocence may be proved. Sincerely yours,

(Signed) HENRY F. BECKER,

"41 Maple Avenue, Irvington, N. J."

Work of Crime-Saturated Mind.

"An analytical probe of this murder," Burns told the reporter, "will unquestionably reveal the criminal state of mind that impelled it. In all its various phases, the stamp of a crime-saturated mentality is indelibly shown. Fewer cases upon which I have worked manifested more obviously the criminal turn of mind of the perpetrator."

Burns discussed this feature of his investigation at length, but would go no further into detail. He stated that he had met no obstacles in the course of his investigation, and that, thus far, he had met the fullest co-operation with everyone whom he sought for aid.

"And I can say this much," he de-

clared. "I am perfectly satisfied with results. I am utterly confident of success, and there is positively no doubt in my mind that I will soon be able to point conclusively at the slayer of Mary Phagan."

Thinks Dorsey Was Misled.

He was asked by the reporter when

he intended conferring with Solicitor General Hugh M. Dorsey and with the detectives at police headquarters. It was in his answer to this question that the detective made the interesting assertion that Dorsey had likely been misled in Frank's prosecution.

"But it was by private detectives," Burns declared. "The average private detective is one of the most diabolical evils with which we have to contend. If we take it for granted that Dorsey was misled in the Frank case, I firmly believe he is the kind of man who will set about at once to rectify the wrong he has done."

"Dorsey was not prejudiced. Although I do not know him, I understand him to be an entirely different type of man. He believed that what action he took was right, and that it was founded on justifiable basis. He might have been zealous—let that be granted—but our country would be in a bad fix if we did not have public prosecutors who took up their duty with zeal and spirit.

"If Leo Frank is guilty of the murder of Mary Phagan, he should hang. Whoever is guilty should hang. I feel that way, and Dorsey felt that way. Dorsey believed he was guilty. Dorsey was furnished with substance that tended conclusively to show that Frank was guilty. Dorsey didn't collect that substance. It was collected by others and put in his hands."

Convincing Results.

"For this reason: I will have results that will convince them all. I am thoroughly satisfied of that. Even at this early day, I am prepared to do no little amount of convincing. And, when I am near the finishing point, I will turn my data over to the solicitor general and he may act as he sees fit upon it."

In keeping with Burns' theory that a criminal mind had produced the murder of Mary Phagan, the reporter put this question:

"Could a man of high intellectual capacity and culture be capable of the crime?"

The detective smiled non-committally, answering readily:

"That I would prefer not to say."

"Then, do you think that the murder was committed through savage instinct and nature?"

"Neither would I answer that at present."

Burns would not say one way or the

other whether or not he had formed any opinion or theory of the crime, or whether he had set suspicion upon any particular suspect.

"Even if I had formed an opinion or theory," he said, "it would not be proper for me to discuss it at this time."

He was unable to give any definite idea of the length of his investigation. It may last for many days further, he stated, and may not be necessarily so long.

Dorsey's Attitude.

The attitude of Solicitor Dorsey toward the Burns investigation still remains a mystery. He will have nothing whatever to say for publication. He was asked the question point-blank:

"Will you co-operate with Burns?"

"I don't care to talk of the subject," was his answer.

Then this was put to him:

"Or will you refuse him co-operation?"

"I won't say one way or the other." Burns stated to the reporter that his probe was mutual, clean and candid. He had nothing to conceal, he stated, and every fragment of his findings will eventually be made public. He is not "framing up," he declared, neither is he representing any individual.

"I am merely solving the mystery," he said, "and making pleasing progress in my work."

Night Trip to Factory.

Detective Burns, accompanied by Leonard Haas and others associated with Frank's defense, again went over the scene of the crime last night in the National Pencil factory building on Forsyth street. The doors were locked upon their entrance, and none others were admitted.

It is said, although not verified, that the noted sleuth went over the state's theory of the tragedy upon the second floor, seeking to establish certain possibilities of Jim Conley's narration. They spent anywhere from two to three hours upon the second floor, the first floor and in the basement where the body was discovered.

Immediately after he had returned to the Georgian Terrace from the pencil factory building, Burns was communicated with by a reporter for The Constitution. He would not discuss the trip to the building, saying that he had gone there merely to follow up certain developments in his investigation. He would not say whether or not he had made examinations at the scene upon the theory of the prosecution.

Whether or not new clues had prompted the journey to the factory building, Burns would not say. It is believed, however, that he has revealed new threads of the crime which required a second examination of the pencil plant premises. This is the second time Burns has gone over the scene of the murder.

His trip to the plant building last night lasted from 7:30 o'clock until some time after 10, after which he went to his apartments in the Georgian Terrace. He expects, he stated to the reporter, to make other visits to the factory.

Debate by Law Students.

After a hotly contested debate on the question of whether or not Leo M. Frank should have a new trial, the junior class of the Atlanta Law school decided Thursday that he should not.

For nearly an hour, arguments, charges and counter-charges were made by the embryo lawyers. The debate was entirely impromptu, being arranged without preparation, when it was found that the class instructor in "Agency Law" was unavoidably absent Thursday afternoon. The debate was proposed and agreed upon, the subject being "Resolved, That Leo Frank should have a new trial."

Hewitt W. Chambers, a graduate of the Boys' High school, who is now connected with the municipal court while studying law, was leader of the winning side. He made a forceful address in favor of upholding the courts and not attempting to overturn the verdict of the trial jury and the supreme court. His principal argument was that the questions now being raised by the adherents of the convicted man, and being agitated throughout the country, were argued to the supreme court of Georgia and turned down by that austere body as insufficient to warrant a

new trial. He also argued vigorously against trials in the press.

Robert M. Strickland, former president of the class, who is connected with the S. M. Inman company, led the affirmative side, making a strong argument in favor of giving Frank another trial, based mainly on the plea that public sentiment was so strong against Frank that the jury was bound to have been influenced. He was supported in his argument by Raymond C. Holton. The other speaker on the negative side, who supported Mr. Chambers was E. W. Smith.

The debate was presided over by J. Walter LeCrew, president of the class. At the close of the addresses and rebuttals the question was voted on by the entire junior class, according to the prearranged plan, who decided that under the arguments presented the negative had won.