

THE ASHTOWN 'OUTRAGE'

OLICE OFFICER'S SENSATIONAL REPORT

About the middle of August we were informed by cable that a bomb had been exploded at Lord Ashtown's shooting lodge at Glenaheiry, Waterford, where the owner had arrived the previous day. The following embellishments were also added to the cabled item for the edification of colonial readers, although there is not a word about a 'ladder' and 'sacks saturated with paraffin,' etc., in the police report of the explosion:—'Sacks saturated in paraffin were hurled after the explosion into the drawing room. A ladder, which was too short to reach Lord Ashtown's window, was found below in a shattered condition.' Since then a good deal of attention has been given to the matter both in Parliament and in the public Press. The Irish Parliamentary Party have repeatedly asked for a searching inquiry into the mysterious circumstances surrounding the 'outrage,' but, for some unaccountable reason, the Government have declined to accede to their request. Lord Ashtown made a claim, and has been granted compensation for malicious injury to property. At the inquiry into the claim for compensation Captain Lloyd, a Government expert on explosives, said he considered the window and shutters were open when the bomb exploded. Our Home exchanges by the last mail publish the following sensational report on the alleged outrage by District Inspector Preston:—

'Cappoquin, September 11, 1907.

'About 1.35 a.m. on August 14 last a bomb was exploded at Lord Ashtown's shooting lodge at Glenaheiry, doing considerable damage. Sergeant Patrick Rielly visited the scene within an hour of the occurrence, and his report regarding what he found has already been furnished:—

'At the time of the outrage I was on duty in County Antrim, and, though I was wired to return at once by the Inspector-General, I did not arrive on the scene until August 17. In the interim Mr Jennings, C.I., Mr Rogers, C.I., and Mr Tweedy, D.I., had visited the scene. In accordance with my instructions I took and am still in entire charge of the case. When I arrived at Glenaheiry Lodge I caused everything to be replaced exactly as found by the police who were early on the scene; though, indeed, with the exception of those articles which it was necessary to take possession of, the whole place appeared undisturbed. I was informed by the local police that the explosion had been caused by a metal bomb, and I was shown by them a number of pieces of metal, which I examined. I found that these pieces of metal formed portions of what had been an oval pot, measuring 16 x 12 x 10 inches. It appeared to have had a metal lid, in which five circular holes had been bored, as if to admit the fuse. All the pieces were marked with exploded powder, and there were powder marks on the ceiling of the drawing room and on the woodwork of portions of the unmovable structure of the window facing the door. Amongst the debris was found an iron band, about 1½ in wide and ½ in thick, and recently worked. This appeared to have been passed under the pot, and up both the sides rather more than flush with the lid. The ends of this band were threaded to receive nuts, but the upper portions of the threads had been blown off. A flat metal plate, about 1½ in wide, was also found. It was slightly bent, and had four holes bored in it, as if intended to fit on the threaded three-sided band. Two nuts, with the missing portions of the threads attached, were also found. It was apparent that the lid of the pot had been secured in position by these articles.

'I observed that the lower half of the window at which the explosion occurred was open almost to its full extent. I was informed, when I inquired, that it was found in that position after the explosion, and it was stated that it had been blown into such position.

A Searching Inquiry

led me to form the conclusions that (1) the bomb had been placed on the outside window sill of that window of the drawing room which faces the door, and that at the time of the explosion (2) this window was wide open; (3) the shutters were open and unbarred, and (4) the drawing room door was wide open. I was given to understand that on the night of the explosion the house was occupied by Lord Ashtown, James Graham (gamekeeper), Mrs Graham, her two young children, and Alice Cudd (Mrs Graham's sister). I questioned Graham on August 17, and subsequently on the 19th and 21st, with reference to the closing of the doors and windows on the night of

August 13. He stated that while Lord Ashtown was at dinner, between 8 p.m. and 8.30 p.m., he went into the drawing room and shut all the windows, and shut and barred all the shutters. Alice Cudd stated on the 17th, and again on August 19, that on the night of the explosion, after Lord Ashtown had gone to bed, about 9.30, she went into the drawing room and put out the lights. She was certain the shutters were then shut, and that she shut the door when she came out.

'I reported these matters to the Inspector-General, and I asked that an expert in explosives from the Home Office should be sent. On August 21 Captain Lloyd, from the Home Office, visited the scene, and

He Corroborated the Conclusions

to which I had come. Sergeant Read, R.I.C., photographer, took photographs of the window on the same date.

'The pot used had peculiar "lugs" or "ears" for hanging it upon the "hangers" over the fire. One portion of the pot had one of those "lugs" attached intact. This portion was shown on August 28 to Mrs Lizzie Williamson, widow of the former gamekeeper, and who had resided at Glenaheiry Lodge for many years up to about twelve months ago. She stated that when she left Glenaheiry there was a similar pot, with similar "lugs," lying in the pump house there, in which pot whitewash used to be kept. On receipt of this statement I caused a number of portions of the bomb to be analysed, with the result that traces of lime were found on both sides of the portions submitted to the analyst. No such pot can be found about Glenaheiry now.

'Near the scene of the explosion were found what appeared to have once formed the handle of a "hand" barrow and two small loops of cord. By these loops it would have been possible to sling the pot upon the pole. On August 19 I saw Edward Allen, foreman carpenter at Lord Ashtown's sawmills at Ballymacarbery. He stated he made a hand barrow for Lord Ashtown about four years ago, and that he last saw that barrow in the summer of 1906. Since the explosion he says he has

Searched for the Barrow,

because James Ormond told him it was 'missing,' and he could not find it. He called at the barracks to see the handle found by the police, and he said it was like the handle he made, as it was made out of larch paling. The police had been unable to trace this barrow. Graham told me that on the night of August 15 he locked up in separate houses his own dogs and the strange dogs which Lord Ashtown had brought with him. He gave as his reason that he did not want his dogs to be fighting with the strange dogs. I asked him what was the necessity of locking up both lots of dogs. He replied that he did not know, but that he had locked them up the previous night also. A few small particles of blasting powder were discovered in one of the sacks found at the scene of the explosion. Graham stated to me that when he came downstairs after the explosion he found all doors and windows intact except for the damage done by the explosion. I carefully examined the house for signs of a forcible entry having been effected, and found no trace.'

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