

# JEANNE WEBER,

## Like a Terrible Monster of the Mediaeval Legends.

# WHOSE TOUCH SLAYS.

### Every Child Now Arrested for a Sixth Death. The Case Recalls the Most Fantastic Legends of Ogresses, Who Dwell in Caves in the Woods and Feasted on the Blood of Children.

The case of "The Ogress of Montmartre" is again causing the deepest emotion and rage among the population of Paris.

The ogress whose actual name is Jeanne Weber, is held responsible by the inhabitants of Montmartre and of Paris generally for causing the death of at least five children, and yet there is no reasonable explanation how she killed any of them.

One child after another, who came in contact with the ogress of Montmartre died suddenly and mysteriously, as if some invisible force had stopped its life. There was never any sign of violence on the body and the doctors called in were unable to state the cause of death with any certainty. All that was known positively was that Madame Jeanne Weber had touched them upon the breast.

The case recalls the most fantastic mediaeval legends of ogresses, who dwell in caves in the woods and feasted on the blood of children, and of the historical Marshal de Retz, of the fifteenth century who destroyed hundreds of children in order to minister to a perverted appetite for blood.

The parents of the dead children are convinced that Jeanne Weber took their lives and the common people have become so impressed with the idea, that the woman would be in danger of lynching if she were not safely lodged in jail. On the other hand, all the judges, doctors and educated men, who have investigated the cases, are satisfied there was no legal evidence against her.

Mme. Weber is a heavily built stolid looking woman, who excites repulsion in all who come in contact with her on account of her sickly smile, her long yellow teeth and her sallow complexion. She expresses an overwhelming fondness for all children and loves to fondle them. While she does so, she gurgles with delight and utters loud expressions of endearment.

The first child whose death is attributed to Mme. Weber was Cecile Pereyborme, a girl of three years, who was the child of neighbors of the ogress, living in the quarter of Montmartre. Mme. Weber lived at that time at No. 53 Rue des Trois Freres, Montmartre, and the Pereybormes lived at No. 57 in the same street. She offered to come in and take care of the child whenever Mme. Pereyborme wished to go anywhere, and the busy mother was glad to accept the offer.

"I am happy to spend all day playing with the dear little thing," said Mme. Weber. "I love her so." The girl was frightened when the ogress first smiled at her, but the woman quickly became the child's perfectly healthy playmate. After a few days the mother went away on a long shopping errand, leaving her daughter in the care of Madame Weber. When she returned the child was lying motionless on her back, while the ogress was pressing her hand on her chest.

"What are you doing?" cried the mother. "I was feeling her heart to see if it was still beating," said Madame Weber. "I am afraid she is very ill."

The terrified mother ran to her child and found that she was dead. The doctor who was called could not decide positively what was the cause of death. The little girl had been perfectly healthy up to the time the mother left her. Her face wore an expression as if she had died in great agony or terror.

This case did not attract grave suspicion to Madame Weber, but a year later three children whom she had been fondling died mysteriously within two months and one one narrowly escaped. Then the outcry began and the ogress was arrested.

She passed four months in prison while the authorities were gathering evidence concerning the strange fatalities. Then her case was sent to the Court of Assizes. The first judge, President Favre, to whom the case was referred, was so impressed with the evidence that he believed her to be guilty. He was overruled, however, by the other judges, and the case was referred to the Court of Cassation.

She first child to perish among this new batch of victims was her nephew, Maurice Weber, aged three, the child of her husband's oldest brother. Mme. Weber always wished to take care of the child, and it was said that on the day of his death she persuaded the mother to go away on a long visit to the country. The child was found dead from no known disease. His face bore the same marks of agony as in the previous case, and a neighbor declared that she had seen Mme. Weber press her hand over his heart.

The little girl's own mother died in the same sudden and mysterious manner. She had five children and this was the last of them. Her enemies do not hesitate to say that she made away with them by her diabolical methods.

After this Marcel Weber, another child of the brother-in-law previously mentioned, was attacked by a mysterious sickness when in the arms of Mme. Weber, but the mother returned at the critical moment and remembering what had happened to her other child, snatched this one away from her sister-in-law.

"The boy looked as if he were half dead," said the mother, "but he revived as soon as I took him in my arms."

The next victim was Alice Weber, aged three, the child of another brother of her husband. This was one of the most peculiar cases of all, and largely helped to ensure the release of Madame Weber. The little girl had been strong and healthy nearly all her life, but just before her death she had an attack of gastroenteritis. She recovered from

this completely, and on the morning of her death she was playing on the street in a very lively manner.

She partook of a very hearty lunch, consisting of soupe aux legumes, pork chops, salad, wine and coffee.

In the afternoon she was taken suddenly ill. Her mother wished to give her ipecac, the drug which the doctor had recommended in such emergencies and asked Madame Weber if she would go to the drugist, but she insisted that the mother should go out while she stayed and looked after the child.

The mother was absent about 10 minutes, and when she returned she found her daughter dying in great agony, with the ogress bending over her.

Then a terrible scene occurred. The mother, recalling all the other deaths of her children, accused Madame Weber of being a murderer. The latter replied that it was a wicked, cruel lie, and she loved the children better than their own mothers and that they died because their parents did not take proper care of them. Meanwhile Alice Weber was dying in great pain and in two hours passed away.

That night Madame Weber was arrested. The body of Alice Weber was retained by the public authorities and the bodies of the three other dead children were exhumed. Nothing was found on any of them to show how they had met death. An examination of Alice Weber's body indicated that she had recovered from her gastro-enteritis, but still she was liable to an attack of acute indigestion. The police and prosecuting officers searched for every scrap of evidence that would make a case against the ogress, because they wanted to satisfy the public clamor, but they accomplished little in their four months of work.

There were plenty of witnesses convinced that she had murdered the children and anxious to testify against her. The belief that she was really an ogress who spent her life destroying children had spread through Montmartre and caused immense popular excitement.

The fact that Madame Weber was frequently seen placing her hand upon the breast of the dead children was mentioned by several witnesses. One of them declared that "She pinched the heart" (pincit le coeur) of the children to kill them, and his belief gained general credence among the neighbors, although the act is apparently an impossible one.

Another witness declared that she had seen Madame Weber leaning over Maurice Weber's face, as if she were sucking his breath. This seemed a more feasible act than that of pinching the heart, but in every case a doctor had examined the dead child and found no indication of death by suffocation.

At the trial Drs. Brouardel and Thoinot, two of the most eminent physicians in France, who appeared on behalf of the state, declared that there was not a shadow of medical evidence against Madame Weber.

Dr. Bernard spent several hours explaining that the death of a little child frequently due to some slight cause, and that it was not necessary to look for a grave disease, such as was to be expected in the case of an adult. He suggested that the deaths were due to the habits of life prevailing among these families. He dwelt strongly upon the meal of vegetable soup, pork chops, salad, coffee, wine, etc., as responsible for the loss of little Alice Weber.

The public prosecutor, M. Seligmann, declared that there was no case against Madame Weber. Counsel for the defense made a very brief address, in which he spoke of the accusation as ridiculous, and the jury returned a verdict of "Not guilty" in three minutes.

This verdict was greeted with bitter disapproval among the people in court and outside and there were loud cries of:

"A bas l'ogresse!" The woman needed the protection of the police when she went away from the court. She was forced to leave Montmartre and went to another quarter of Paris, concealing her address as well as possible from her former neighbors.

Now, after an interval of two years, Mme. Jeanne Weber has been arrested on suspicion of causing the death of a neighbor's child, who perished exactly the same manner as all the other children. The last victim is little Alphonse Poirier, living at 14 rue des Boulets, in the quarter of Charonne. It does not seem credible that six occurrences of this character, with Mme. Weber taking the same part in all of them, are all accidental and disconnected? This is not in accord with the calculus of probabilities as Poe would have expressed it.

The people are more than ever convinced that Mme. Weber is a dreadful ogress, and the scientific men are being converted to the same belief. It is pointed out that there is a hideous form of mental perversion, in which a person takes delight in watching the dying agonies of children, and that several cases of this character have occurred in recent and in earlier times.

What's The Use. The adult masculine of the Dunkard religious sect is having a hard time fighting against neckties. The average Dunkard thinks the necktie, particularly if it is brightly colored, is the invention and most deadly weapon of the devil, who puts vanity into our hearts and thus leads us to destruction, but what we would like to know is why the Dunkard, who invariably wears whiskers to the waist, does not wear neckties. He can't wear 'em.

Beginning of the Shave. In the time of Alexander the Great it was found that when troops came in conflict the beard offered a good handhold for the enemy. Alexander, who was a wise old geezer, readily saw that if his own soldiers were given a shave and a haircut they would have immense advantage over the unbarbered enemy. The whole army was made to shave and cut their hair, and then Alexander's soldiers licked everything in sight, and sighed for more worlds to conquer.

Hobo Lake of Asia. The oddest Lake in the world is the wandering Lake Nor of Asia. Floating islands are common enough, but there is only one tramp lake. Each summer the high waters of the Tarim river, entering the lake from the west, bring to it great quantities of silt, which drives the lake water, toward the southeast. In a few months the lake is hundreds of miles from the starting point, leaving the former bed dry and dusty.

# MAN IS KNOWN.

## Who Left Coffin in Front of Rev. E. M. Lightfoot's Door.

# Threats Against Orangeburg Minister Had Some Developments. Man Seen Around the House.

The Orangeburg correspondent of the Columbia State says Monday June 10, was the day on which some violence was to have been done to Rev. E. M. Lightfoot of Orangeburg, according to the threat incorporated in a note placarded on a coffin left on Mr. Lightfoot's door by some cowardly person or persons in the dead of the night. That day has passed and Mr. Lightfoot is yet unharmed.

But another has suffered from the devilry aimed at the minister, and his wife, who is very much broken in health, has had to leave Orangeburg for a visit to Summerville in order to get away from the excitement surrounding the incident which caused such a sensation in the State. Mr. Lightfoot himself expresses no concern, for he appreciates the fact that the coward who under cover of darkness thus attempted to frighten him from his field of labor and his post of duty will not meet him face to face.

It was one night early in May that the coffin was left on the porch of Mr. Lightfoot's home in the business part of the city of Orangeburg. One of the policemen on duty at that time stated that he saw a bright mulatto negro driving a gray mule about 1 o'clock in the morning and that there was something in the wagon covered with old corn sacks. He made no further inspection. The owner of the mule has been located and the name of the negro is known. These things have been learned within the last week.

WRITER OF NOTE. For some time it has been known who wrote the note. It was written on the back of a printed notice sent out by Walker, Evans & Cogswell company, it has been learned to whom the Charleston stationers sent those notices. There were but a few in Orangeburg, and by elimination it was easy to learn whence the piece of paper was secured on which the notice was written. Furthermore, the handwriting was made up of an indelible pencil, and the characters are marked characteristically in the chirography which make it a very easy matter to trace the writing to an individual in Orangeburg. Furthermore, there is some proof of malice, and the same party under suspicion is known to have had ill feeling toward Mr. Lightfoot. Circumstantial evidence against a certain party is strong, and it is entirely probable that somebody will serve a long term in the penitentiary when the investigations are over. A short time ago it was reported that a certain party in Orangeburg had confessed the whole matter. Mr. Lightfoot denies this. He states that the man in question came to his study one night and said that he was under suspicion. Mr. Lightfoot added that the man was indeed under suspicion, for he had been under the influence of liquor at the time that the outrage was perpetrated and that the suspected party had failed to use an official position which he occupies to ferret out the mystery.

When Mr. Lightfoot charged him with these things the party under suspicion proved an alibi, but also proved that Mr. Lightfoot's suspicions as to the animus behind the whole thing are in the main correct. The handwriting of the note in the coffin has been identified at first sight by half a dozen men who have had business dealings with the man under suspicion, and no one of those who identified the writing knew at the time that any one else had done so.

It appears to be a clean cut case against this man. The animus is known. It came from Mr. Lightfoot's fearless denunciation of certain civic wrongs and slack-twistedness. The writing is known to be that of the party said to have been aggrieved by the action of Mr. Lightfoot in certain matters, and the same party is known to have communicated by phone on the night of the outrage with the owner of the mule which pulled the wagon in which the coffin was carried to the house of Mr. Lightfoot. The circumstantial evidence is strong.

Last Sunday was the eve of the day set for violence to be done Mr. Lightfoot according to the threats made by those who put the coffin on his porch. The man under suspicion was observed to be bestirring himself in a peculiar manner on that day.

That night by some freak of chance the lights on Mr. Lightfoot's street were not burning, although they are said to have been burning brightly in other parts of the city. Mr. Lightfoot observed a man sneaking behind a tree in the neighborhood. He and his wife were sitting on the porch at the time. Mr. Lightfoot went to the door and saw the man, but the man made off, and Mr. Lightfoot returned to his house to get a shotgun. As he was leaving the house in pursuit of the man who was acting so queerly, Mayor Doyle phoned him that on account of the excitement he had detailed a detective to guard the house, and the man whom Mr. Lightfoot had seen was the detective.

Mr. Lightfoot is one of the most highly respected ministers in the State. He is chaplain of the Second regiment of infantry and is well beloved. If the parties who threatened his life thought to frighten him, they are mistaken. He expects to remain in Orangeburg. The town has been set on fire by the outrage and the parties who are responsible will yet suffer the penalty of the law, no matter what their social standing, as nine-tenths of the people of the city are willing to resent it by force.

Rev. W. G. Neville, D. D., president for the past two years of the Presbyterian college at Clinton, died on Saturday after a very short illness of heart failure. Dr. Neville was born at Wallhalla July 2, 1855; graduated at Adger college and at the Columbia theological seminary. He married Miss Virginia Aiken, a sister of Congressman Aiken. She and eight children survive him.

THE Columbia Record is resigned. It says Columbia cannot win the pennant this year, but the home team can be made to play games that are worth going to see.

# ATTENTION LANDOWNERS.

## Every One Should Read the Circular Printed Below.

# In Which Steve John and Steve Mikell are Reunited.

Father After Greek Bride Who Sold Her "For Keep" for \$1,250 Daughter Will Remain With Groom.

A party of a dozen or more jabbering Greeks wearing boots of gorgeous tops and adorned with much glittering jewelry, blew into police headquarters at Columbia, S. C., excitedly gesticulating and dancing about in fear of some impending danger, the nature of which Chief Daly finally discovered through repeated showers of punctuation marks, to be that the father of a bride in the "Gypsy" came near the city was about to arrive here from Norfolk and take her away.

The father of the groom, whose lucid Hungarian bride of a few months, was threatened with kidnapping by her father, has the martial carriage and grace of an Arab as he strode into police headquarters, every muscle in his seven feet of height evidencing his splendid physique acquired in camp life, his swarthy complexion blending with his strong cigar. He wore a picturesque silk vest, the buttons of which were gold watch and chain would have furnished \$2 excellent "stage property" for a count of Monte Cristo show.

This was Steve John, and he exhibited papers to the police which seem to indicate and his party to protection, and which incidentally revealed some curious customs which are allowed to prevail even in this country among people of his nationality. "Steve Mikell, the fadder of my son Theodore's bride, is coming on next train to run away with his daughter Louva, my son's wife. But we've been too smart for him. We got papers from Boston showing his consent to marriage. I gif him Twelve hundred and feifty dollar for her, and he has sign contract with me to pay me back twenty-five hunder dollar if he take her back. He can't trade her off any more under American law."

And the tall man pulled out the documents, which conclusively confirmed his story. There was a contract signed by both fathers—Steve Mikell and Steve John—giving their consent to the marriage, "in consideration of the sum of \$1,250, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged," the said Steve Mikell agreeing if he ever did anything to separate the two that he would pay Steve John \$2,500. The paper binds him specifically not to run away with or in any manner induce her to leave young Theodore John. The paper is signed by both Steves, duly witnessed and bears the signature of the Boston lawyer drawing it up.

Steve John also exhibited the marriage license and register's certification that both parents consented to the marriage. Another treasure which Steve John showed of his inside pocket, and which he still more jealously guarded against going out of his possession, was a newspaper clipping from a Boston paper giving a picture of the bride who was married to his son last fall, and which sets forth how she was adorned with \$5,000 worth of jewels.

"Steve Mikell, he tink he made lots of mon out of my Louva," said Theodore the groom, "by sell from one to odder, get lots mon from each, but we bind him on Contrack mon. He sell no mor."

"How many times has he sold her like this?" asked the desk man, his eyes glistening with interest. "Four time already."

"No, no, no," said Steve John, rising and glowering down on his son in indignation, "only two time."

At which the privates in the room joined the desk man in a hearty laugh. "Oh, but he no do it no more; we bind him in a contract," came the reassurance from the groom.

"Will you be satisfied to let her go back to her father if he pays the \$2,500?" wickedly asked the newspaper man for the purpose of provoking another explosion in the hope that something else interesting and novel would be blown out of the curious soul of the groom.

"Oh, yes, we get plenty of mon." At which there was more laughter among the privates, the chief joining in with his favorite little snorts, which bubble up from his Irish blood in spite of his well trained official dignity.

The party said Steve Mikell was coming with a large party of followers and that there would likely be a bloody conflict unless the police interfered, which the police agreed to do.

Bryan and the Veterans. The Hon. William Jennings Bryan was at Richmond last week when the monument to President Davis was unveiled. His course on that occasion will win him more friends in the South than he ever had before. There were thousands of Confederate veterans there, but there was to be no politics in the gathering of the men who wore the gray and their descendants, therefore Mr. Bryan refused to be lionized. We agree with the Florence Times in his retiring before the acclaim of the populace, he won more friends than he would have made by the best speech he could have given them. Bryan has shown himself to be what is always admired in the south, especially, a man of delicacy of feeling and sentiment.

JAPAN seems to be determined to pick a row with the United States. The United States will not be in a hurry to go to war, but when she gets fighting mad Japan will be lucky if the end of it does not witness her relegation to a fourth or fifth rate power. We have the money and the men, and what ships we lack we can soon build.

THE Columbia Record says "While Latimer is touring Europe at Uncle Sam's expense, some men who would like to succeed him in the senate are probably minutely examining his political fences, figuring on how strong they are." The man who beats Latimer will be the next Senator.

An exposition visitor was fined \$30 for kissing a Norfolk girl. Visitors should be careful not to mistake natives for exhibits or make exhibitions of themselves.

# A PECULIAR STORY

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# SUICIDE GERM.

## Several Cities Said to be Infected With It.

# FIFTY ONE SUICIDES

### In the Little Town of Huntington West Virginia, Whose People Declare That They Cannot Successfully Struggle Against the Dreadful Infection, and Kill Themselves.

Huntington, W. Va., is a place which appears to be hopelessly infested with the dreadful suicide germ, just as other localities are so thoroughly saturated with tuberculosis germs that even the healthiest persons are likely to be attacked. Persons have declared that they felt the suicide sense upon them and were unable to struggle against it.

Huntington is a modern town named after the late C. P. Huntington and was incorporated in 1871. It is a busy, financial prosperous place, but some deadly influence has fallen upon the minds and hearts of its inhabitants, causing them to take their lives with such frequency that Huntington has come to be known throughout the State as "the Suicide City."

The suicide habit has prevailed and increased since the city's birth, but this year it has grown to a terrifying climax. Fifty-one suicides have occurred during the present year in this city of less than 30,000 people. A large proportion of the suicides took the form of carbolic acid. The only suicide to recommend this poison is that it is easy to obtain, but as there are several comparatively painless forms of death available to everybody, it seems as if the intending suicide preferred to suffer in dying.

Many persons whose fantastic methods of suicide, William Barnes, a wealthy merchant, with calm deliberation placed the sharp point of a pair of scissors directly over his heart and with a four-pound iron weight drove them through that vital organ.

John Hagerman dashed himself to death from a five-story building because an engagement to call on his sweetheart had been postponed by her for twenty-four hours.

William Calkins almost severed his head from his body with a razor because of some trifling financial loss. The suicide of a colored woman because her lover, a chef in one of the hotels, weighed something like 400 pounds and had failed to wear a dress suit on a certain occasion, makes even death grotesque.

One of the saddest and strangest cases in the list was that of William Weber, a wealthy contractor, who built the United States Government Building at Huntington. Mr. Weber and his wife made their home in Huntington while the building was in process of erection. About the time it was nearly completed Mrs. Weber, a delicate, refined and pretty woman and a favorite in society was heard to declare that the suicide mania was upon her. Shortly after she went to visit friends in Texas, and the next day after her arrival there committed suicide by drowning herself in the Neches River. Husband in Huntington upon hearing of her death, killed himself.

Among the latest instances was that of beautiful Dora Spears and her stalwart lover, Samuel Montrose Rittenhour. The youth had gone to a neighboring city on a brief business trip and through some inadvertence failed one day to write to his sweetheart. When he returned two days later it was to look upon her body, destroyed by her own hand, and waiting him a note read "If for one day your love has failed, life's bright light has perished, and so good night, sweetheart." The lover only waited till she was buried and then died at the grave by taking carbolic acid.

Lizzie Vance, a girl in her teens, apparently without cause of trouble, drank carbolic acid. She died.

William Adkins, a youth, scolded by his parents for not attending school, shot himself dead.

Julia Ward, married two months, believed her husband unfaithful and took carbolic acid. She died.

Rena Clark, twenty without any known cause, ended her life by taking an overdose of morphine.

Lila Jordan, seventeen, had a quarrel with her sweetheart. She drank carbolic acid and died.

Bessie Bonnett, a beautiful girl of eighteen years, the only support of her aged mother, became weary over the cares of life and committed suicide by drinking carbolic acid in a dry goods store, in which she was employed as a clerk.

Tilly Williams, a pretty girl, still in her teens, told her mother that life held no charms for her and, going upstairs, was found an hour later a corpse.

Margaret Chadwick was another young girl who drank carbolic acid and died.

Mary Swanson worried because of the sudden departure of her sweetheart for another city, slash ed her throat with a razor and killed herself. She was eighteen years of age.

# DEATH PLUNGE

## Balloon Struck by Lightning While High in the Air.

# FELL TO THE EARTH

### From a Distance of Thirteen Hundred Feet.—It Occurred at the Festival of the Italian Constitution at Rome, and 100,000 People Gazed in Horror as the Basket Fell to the Ground.

While King Emmanuel, Queen Helena and 100,000 spectators looked on in horror, an Italian military balloon, manned by Capt. Olivelli, was struck by a lightning bolt during the festival of the Italian constitution at Rome, early last week, and the collapsing basket, carrying with it its load of human freight, plunged to the parade ground, almost at the feet of the royal pair, mortally wounding the occupant, and causing the big celebration to come to a sudden close. What was promised to be one of the most glorious spectacles attempted in connection with this popular festival, was thus halted, King Emmanuel issuing the decree himself.

The accident happened about noon. The royal couple had spent the morning reviewing the troops of armaments of the garrison of Rome, numbering 25,000 men, inaugurating the international rifle match, which takes place every five years, and were engaged in reviewing a parade by cyclists when the accident happened. The sky was the color of dull lead, threatening a severe tempest over the shooting ground. In the air, at the height of 1,300 feet, was a balloon of the military engineer corps, manned by Olivelli, a well known and highly esteemed captain of engineers. Unexpectedly a bolt of lightning darted from the clouds and struck the balloon, setting fire to it. A cry at once arose from the crowd on the shooting ground, which numbered fully 100,000 persons. The gazing spectators saw the silk bag burn, and the framework and the basket fall toward the earth with a whirling motion until it struck the ground. The volunteer cyclists ran in all haste to the spot and found Olivelli unconscious, with his legs entangled in the ropes of the basket. A physician, who ran to the spot, examined the unconscious man and said that his spinal column had been broken.

King Victor Emmanuel and Queen Helena witnessed the accident, and the king, thinking because of the automobile in which the dying man was placed and taken to the hospital. The king followed him in another automobile and went to the bedside of Olivelli, who had regained consciousness, and the fast-sinking man recognized his savior. The king spoke to him affectionately. The two hours after the accident, Olivelli died and the king immediately announced that he would attend no more of the exercises of the day. The festival was at once suspended and the funeral of the grandola was postponed.

Olivelli's sister witnessed the accident, but she fainted before the basket struck the ground. The sister later attempted to see her brother, but this was prevented because of the automobile in which the dying man was placed and taken to the hospital. The king followed him in another automobile and went to the bedside of Olivelli, who had regained consciousness, and the fast-sinking man recognized his savior. The king spoke to him affectionately. The two hours after the accident, Olivelli died and the king immediately announced that he would attend no more of the exercises of the day. The festival was at once suspended and the funeral of the grandola was postponed.

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