

Mother of Girl Poison Victim in Vigil at Bedside

Woman Waits Moment of Lucidity to Learn Story of Alleged Sleeping Car Attack.

By SONIA LEE. International News Service Staff. INDIANAPOLIS, Ind., April 8.—Mathilda Jane Oberholtzer today sits by the side of her daughter, Madge, who 23 days ago took bit of mercury at Hammond, Ind., following an alleged attack by D. C. Stephenson, former Ku Klux Klan leader, and a power in this state, and seeks to penetrate the bulwark of the girl's unconsciousness with crooning words of love and prayer and pity. The girl lies in a corner room on the second floor of their home in a state neighborhood immersed in a coma which has extended into 11 days, calling for her mother, sobbing, whimpering.

Physicians have said there is no hope. She might live two weeks, she may die at any moment, depending on the rapidity with which her kidney tissues are deteriorating, due to the action of the poison.

Dying Statement Remains. But the stoop-shouldered woman in the lavender crepe frock, covered by the apron of checkered gingham, supports the frail fingers and strengthens her tottering knees. Perhaps the girl may never, ever for a moment, regain lucidity. There will be then only her dying statement, made in an affidavit form before Dr. Charles Moore, and two attorneys, Asa Smith and Judge Charles E. Cox, to which Stephenson.

But these are matters of legal import only and to the mother watching are mere drops in a deluge. She sits with a quietness of infinite weariness as she tells of her beloved—as she wonders and fails to understand.

"It was on a Sunday," she begins to the plaintive wail of her Madge in pain, "and I wanted to go to church. Madge took me over and brought me back and then she said that she and Emma Moore, a friend, wanted to go for a drive in the afternoon. Some time later a call came for her. The man on the wire said he was Stephenson's secretary. He called again and left a number. Not five minutes elapsed before the phone rang again and I inquired if it was the same person calling. I received an indistinct reply, but the number was left again for Madge. She came in after a couple of minutes and I told her of the messages. She waited a bit and then called. By that time I had gone to bed, and she came to my door and told me that there was a party at Stephenson's and she was going over.

Hears Man's Voice. "Steve can't come for me," she told me, "but he's sending someone after me. I heard a man's voice at the door when she went down. I looked out of the window and saw a broad-shouldered man escorting her down the walk. They crossed the street, and I went back to bed and to sleep.

Madge had said that she would be back soon. I hadn't heard her come in, and when I awoke at half past two I went to bed again to see if she was asleep, as in my habit, and was disturbed when I saw the bed unmade.

"At 6 o'clock, when she was still missing, I went down to the phone and called Asa Smith, a young attorney, and a close friend of the family. He told me not to worry—that Madge was probably staying with some friends. I gave him the phone numbers of several of her acquaintances, and then began my waiting.

Father Not Told. "My husband had been ill. I did not dare tell him of our daughter's strange absence. She had never remained away without letting me know. I couldn't understand, and my heart was so heavy—as if I knew something terrible had happened.

"A little after nine a wire came from Hammond. It read: 'Driving through to Chicago. Be home on night train. Madge.'

"I called Mr. Smith and Miss Moore. We met the night train. Madge did not come. I couldn't tell him father.

About 11—on Monday night, it was—more than 24 hours after my girl had gone—I went to Stephenson's home and hammered on the door and called and shook the knob. It seemed as if no one would answer and I leaned up against the pillar and thought I was going to die.

"Then a man came and I asked him if there had been a party at the house the night before, and he said he hadn't known there was. I asked him if he had seen Madge. He denied that he had, but stated that he thought he had heard Mr. Stephenson's voice in the hallway that morning.

"Asa, who had driven down the street a bit, and waited for me, told me later that a large car just then drove into the drive, and stopped. But all we knew was that a man suddenly appeared at our side and wanted to know what we were after.

"We asked him about Madge and Stephenson, and I threatened to put the federal authorities on the trail of my daughter if she didn't return soon.

"The man, Madge, told me later that his name was Shorty, mumbled something about finding Steve and we went away. Again to wait.

"While I was at the Western Union office to get a copy of the telegram I received the morning before, my daughter was brought home. A strange man had carried her up stairs, mumbled something about an accident at Muncie, and hurried away.

"And this is the story she told in the intervals when poison eating into her has let her rest."

"The woman listens closely with finger upon lip for the indistinct moaning. It rises into a crescendo of agony.

"Mother, mother dearie," the girl cries.

"My daughter told me," she begins again, "before she became unconscious 11 days ago, that just as soon as she got to Stephenson's she knew she was trapped. She said that she had something to drink, and then—I'm not quite clear here—but they were going to take her to Chicago. She thought they were driving through, and she pleaded to go home for a hat as an excuse. But they took her right along. When they got to town, they bundled her into a compartment and Shorty took the car, presumably to drive through.

Displays Bruises. "See," the woman pulls back the girl's nightgown, displays the three bruises. "She was a mass of black and blue spots when she was first brought back," she says.

"When they got to Hammond they went to a hotel. There were two rooms, and Shorty met them with the car later on. There was more drinking, she told me. Stephenson stood over while she wrote out the telegram I received, and it was then sent to the telegraph office by messenger. One of the men gave her some money to buy a hat and she went out and bought the poison and she took it when she came back to the hotel.

Road Graveling Begun. Harvard, April 8.—Graveling work on nearby highways has already begun in this territory.

They laughed at her when she said that she had taken poison. They tried to make her say that she hadn't. But then she got sick and she went to the telephone to call me, but she was so weak she couldn't stand up.

"If she had only let me know. Nothing would have stood in my way, and she would have received medical attention immediately. She has so little chance now—except after the blood Marshall, her brother, has given her. I wanted to offer mine, but his was better.

"When she became sick they started her back. She begged them to leave her by the side of the road so that some one would pick her up and take her to a doctor. She was burning up. But they promised to stop at the next town—and the next, and the next. But they never stopped, and she was losing so much blood and suffering tortures. Some one suggested that the best way out was for Stephenson to marry her. But she refused.

"My girl was in that car when I was at Stephenson's door looking for her. She couldn't cry out. She begged them to take her home. She couldn't move, she was so weak. And there she lay, helpless, and I was only such a little way from her.

Taken to Garage. "From now on, as I understand it, she remembers but little. She said that she was taken to the garage, to the service quarters. She may have been unconscious—she may have slept. But the next thing she knows she was being carried upstairs and put to bed—in her own room."

She holds her child's hands in both her own. The girl murmurs through straight rows of white teeth. She draws back her slightly pink lips. "Mother, mother dearie, mother dearie," becomes blurred in the rapidity of repetition. She calls for Marshall and then her mother again. Her heavy lids flutter and tears squeeze out. Her curved black brows draw straight, as she seems to remember with dulling monotony some experience.

"She had told me that she had met him at the governor's ball," the mother recollects. "She had gone with another young man, but she danced with Stephenson. Another time she went to a party at his house with a friend of his, a senator from Evansville. I didn't know she was seeing him. I don't know how frequently she saw him, if at all."

had seen Thunderer drumming on a rock or on the ground. You see, it always is easier to guess than to take the trouble to seek the facts, and

Thunderer was drumming and watched.

So Peter stole a bit nearer to where Thunderer was drumming and watched. He saw Thunderer lift his wings above his head and bring

them down. He lifted them hard and brought them down hard, and Peter heard the first boom of the long roll. It began slowly and then went faster and faster. By now those wings were moving so fast that all Peter could see of them was a blur. Then they stopped, and of course the drumming stopped, too. But Peter was satisfied. He knew now how that drumming was done. He knew now what Thunderer beat with his wings. At least he thought he knew. So he was satisfied. It didn't occur to him to even try to make sure that he knew. He was guessing, and nothing more.

"He beats his own sides with his wings, and that is the way he makes that noise," thought Peter. "His own sides are his drum. I wonder that I didn't think of that before."

Of course he doesn't have to be on a hollow tree. Of course he can drum anywhere he happens to be. He has his drum with him all the time. Well, I'm glad I found out about it all by myself. I'll go hunt up Cousin Jumper and tell him that I know now how Thunderer the Grouse drums and what his drum really is."

So off started Peter to look for his cousin, Jumper the Hare. And as he hopped along, hipperly-hipperly, through the Green Forest he heard behind him the drumming which sounded like distant thunder, and chuckled as he thought how smart he had been to find out all about it and how it was done. It didn't once pop into his funny little head that after all he was still guessing and that he might be mistaken. As a

matter of fact he was. He was quite as mistaken as when he had been so sure that Thunderer made all that noise by beating a hollow log with his stout wings.

Put Peter was sure—oh, absolutely sure—that this time he was right, and he hurried, for he was most anxious to find his cousin, Jumper the Hare, and tell him how much he knew. You see, Peter, like many other people, couldn't be comfortable until he had told what he knew.

The next story: "The Upsetting of Peter." (Copyright 1925).

Ord to Hold May Festival. Ord, April 8.—This city is planning a festival to be held on May day under the direction of Prof. J. J. Geeks.

Burgess Bedtime Stories

By THORNTON W. BURGESS. When you find a person guessing, his ignorance is revealing. —Old Mother Nature.

Peter Makes Another Wrong Guess. To guess is about as useless a thing as any one can do. Yet most folks do a great deal of guessing. If they do not know a thing they guess. Peter Rabbit had guessed that the log on which Thunderer the Grouse drummed was hollow. He had never taken the trouble to find out until Jumper the Hare had led him over there and told him to look. He had guessed that Thunderer always used a log for his drumming until now he



So Peter stole a bit nearer to where Thunderer was drumming and watched.

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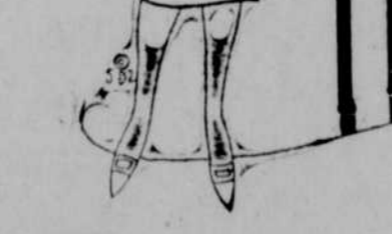
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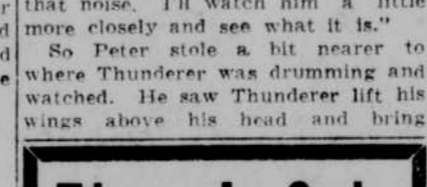
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