

# The Centre Democrat.

Population, Over 3400.

BELLEFONTE, PA., THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1902.

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## WHAT WITCH KING IS LIKE

Testimony in a West Virginia Murder Case.

### BELIEF IN WITCHCRAFT.

An Old Woman was Killed Because She was Suspected of Being a Witch—Tell of Midnight Trips Forced to Take With her.

(One-half the world knows little how the other half lives, is an old saying, and applies to our own country. Stories of West Virginia mountaineers, depicting the life of a people who are a century behind the times, crude, ignorant and superstitious, are not new to most of our readers. The mountain fastness of that section recently has been entered owing to the wealth of fine timber and rich coal deposits. Quite a number of Centre county lumber men are operating in West Virginia all of whom relate the same story of the native population. The following article was sent us from Shelton, W. Va., by W. D. Walker, formerly of Yarnell, this county, who is near Clay, and vouches for the accuracy of the same.)

Salem itself in the old days held no firmer creed of witchcraft than obtains to-day in the mountain districts of this State. At times whole valleys are witch ridden and the scattered inhabitants cower in their huts after dark praying against the visitation of the evil women.

Clay county, thirty miles up Elk River from here, and one of the poorest and most ignorant counties in all the mountain regions, is sorely beset by the supernatural. It has long been a favorite resort for the powers of darkness, and there now lies in the Clay court house jail one Old Man Cottrell, in whose pending trial for murder witchcraft will play a curious and important part.

Old Man Cottrell—he probably has, or had at some time, a given name, but nobody regards it—is the head of a clan of Cottrells, Lyonses and McCombers who live up Big Otter Creek, several miles back from Elk. Sand-diggers there are mostly by trade, if collecting herbs and grubbing for roots may be called a trade.

In the winter they live as they can, miserably enough. A little hunting, a little charity, perhaps an occasional odd job, keeps them alive through the cold months.

Generation after generation they have intermarried until the type has become incapable of mental or moral effort. They make no effort to improve their circumstances; reading and writing are lost arts to them.

When a schoolhouse was put up on the property of Squire Boggs, a mile up the creek from them, they declined to take any interest in the opportunity. In time the school passed out of existence, dying of inanition, and the building was empty. About a year ago there came to Squire Boggs, who is one of the few intelligent and well-to-do men of that locality, a seventy-year-old woman with her eighteen-year-old granddaughter. They had come from back in the country somewhere and they had no home.

They asked permission to occupy the deserted schoolhouse, and this was readily granted. Although the old woman was rather feeble she contrived to break ground for a little garden in which she grew corn and tobacco and a few other necessities for home use.

The Squire helped her through the winter and she announced her intention of staying as long as he would let her. Known at first as "the old woman at Boggs'" she soon got the name of Mother Boggs.

In the spring the rumor began to spread that Mother Boggs was a witch. It was said that some kin of the Cottrells had sent the message from over in Roane county that she had been run out of there for the practice of witchcraft.

Her appearance and manners bore out the accusation, for she was very bent, very wrinkled, very sharp of feature and very silent—four standard characteristics of a witch.

All the Cottrell-Lyons-Macomber clan began to make their enmity felt. By day they flouted the old woman as they passed and saw her at work.

By night they shunned the locality of the old schoolhouse. Some threats were made but Squire Boggs soon let it be known that he would not have any persecution of the harmless pair of women.

So they were left very much to themselves, except that it was said that one of the Cottrell boys was sometimes seen talking to the granddaughter. Every untoward circumstance in the neighborhood, however, was laid to the ill-will of Mother Boggs.

One night there came visitors to the schoolhouse. One of them drew aside the blanket that served as cover to the front window. The other fired a rifle. A dozen leaden slugs went into the old woman's body and she died without a word, in the arms of her granddaughter. It happened that Deputy United States

Marshal Dan Cunningham, who is probably the best detective in West Virginia, was in the locality at the time, and he was sent for. The nature of the slugs told him that they had been fired from a rifle specially bored out for that purpose.

He made inquiries and found that Old Man Cottrell had borrowed such a rifle a few days before from a neighbor. The old man and the nephew, who had been paying attention to Mother Boggs's granddaughter, were arrested and taken to Clay court house, where they had a preliminary hearing before Squire Shannon.

Both prisoners stoutly denied knowing anything about the old woman's death, and both as stoutly averred that she was a witch. It was the examination of Old Man Cottrell that brought forth the most interesting testimony as to witchcraft.

The court room was filled with the members of the clan, who had left their rifles and shotguns outside under guard of two of their number—by request.

The Court—You say that you had no part in the killing of this old woman?

The witness—I wa'n't nowhere about when it was done.

The Court—You knew her well?

The witness—I knowed her as well as I wanted to. She wa'n't no company to me.

A voice—She were a witch, she were, Right pert job somebody done, a-shootin' of her.

The witness—Anybody knows she were a witch.

The Court—How do you know she was a witch?

The witness—Lordy! Didn't she do witchery on me?

The Court—What witchery?

The witness—She ridden me many a night.

The nephew—An' me the same way.

A niece of Old Man Cottrell's—So as their hands was full of briars an' brambles when they come back.

The witness, holding up his hands which were seamed with old scratches—There's the witch marks, squire.

The Court—Give me an instance of how she rode you.

The witness—The night the thundercloud broke an' the high water come down Big Otter she were out a-ridin'.

A voice—That were a witch night! I heard her a-goin' screechin' past.

The witness—She come a-callin' for me an' for the boy. It were a ha's night an' she wanted a team. I expect she were in a hurry.

The Court—And you went?

The witness, in a great surprise—She called me, I tol' you, Squire. She called me with a witch-call.

The nephew—No matter how hard you try to hol' yourself you got to go to a witch-call.

The Court—Then you got up out of bed and went out into the night?

The witness, after a pause for consideration—No; it ain't just that way. You don't go. You just lies abed shiverin' an' sweatin' an' asleep all the time. It wa'n't exactly me that went that night or any other night. It war my seconds, another of me. So I flew out through the window. That boy there, Linn, he was standin' shiverin' outside, all hitched up with a rope of poison oak.

The nephew—The streaks of it is on my neck yet.

The witness—She hitched me to him an' we went up in the air right to the moon. When we went too slow a buzz of snake doctors [dragonflies] stung us up.

A voice—Them wa'n't no real snake-doctors. Them was witch-flies. Snake-doctors that's real don't fly nights.

The witness—Whatever they was they stung right hard. She drove us to Blue Knob an' hitched us to a pawpaw bush an' left us there.

A man in the audience—I'm from Blue Knob. I heard her that night screechin' like a big owl between the thunder claps. I knowed it were a witch, but I thought it were the witch from over Strange Creek, the one that strangled Neel Russell's litter of pigs.

The witness—That were her you heard screechin'. She always screeches when she's witch-ridin'.

The Court—What did she go to Blue Knob for?

The witness—Maybe for a ride, just. Maybe to meet some other witch. Then I expect she did a little poverin' [piferin] thereabouts—eggs an' milk, or maybe a strip of meat.

The Court—What happened next?

The witness—We was left there fast to the pawpaw bush, moanin' an' cryin' with the wind an' rain an' cold, an' not knowin' what minute the lightnin' would hit us.

A woman's voice—You can't get stricken by lightnin' when you're bein' witch-ridden. Lightnin' don't hit witch horses.

The witness—We was hitched an' she was away. It might have stricken us.

The Court—Well, what next?

A woman's voice—I wouldn't tell any thing about it. It's mighty openerten

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## FIRES OVER THE COUNTY

Several Costly Conflagrations the Past Week.

### VALUABLE PROPERTY LOST

Bathurst's Store at Unionville—Peculiar Fire at Phillipsburg—Two Large Barns Burned With all Their Contents.

The valuable barn belonging to Michael Williams was destroyed by fire. On Saturday evening at 5:30 Mrs. Williams' son Clemson returned from Phillipsburg with a load of coal. After putting his team up in the stable he went to the house for supper and then he lighted the lantern and went to the barn and finding no hay down went to the haymow and proceeded to throw down hay. The burner of the lantern was a poor one. It is not known whether the current of air caused by throwing the hay passed the lantern or the poor burner caused the lantern to explode. It burst and fell to the barn floor. Clem quickly tried to smother the fire but was unable to do so, and narrowly escaped being burned. In the meantime he called for help, his father and Henry Lowry were close at hand but seeing it was impossible to save it with so much hay in, took the stock from the stables and one set of harness. A crowd quickly gathered but were unable to save either the barn or wagon shed.

About 100 bushels of grain were burned, several tons of hay, corn fodder, straw, two chests of tools valued at \$300, two sets of harness, quite a lot of valuable lumber, about 40 bu. potatoes, and many other things. There was a small insurance on the building but not enough to cover the loss.

The beautiful country home of William T. Senser, a short distance west of Phillipsburg, was totally destroyed by fire on Saturday evening, together with all the contents. The fire was unquestionably the work of an incendiary. Mr. and Mrs. Senser left the house to come to town. About 8:30 John Shimmel, a neighbor, discovered the house to be in a perfect sheet of flames. He started on a run, giving the alarm as he passed along, and finding that the building was too far gone to save even anything in the house, he went to the barn to turn out the horses and cows. Just as he came near the barn he was shot at by some one three different times, fortunately none of the balls took effect. Other neighbors were soon on the ground, and the big barn was saved which was full of hay, straw and grain of various kinds. The loss will aggregate something over \$3,000, with only an insurance of \$1,000. In the loss were a good many valuable articles that can never be replaced, together with all of Mr. Senser's coal books and accounts.

Tuesday morning the large barn located on the Cooper farm in the Glades, near Rock Springs and owned by David Miller burned to the ground. All this year's crop, a new binder, new harness, a horse and a pig were burned. The origin of the fire is unknown. The loss is placed at \$1,500, with \$1200 insurance in the Patron's Insurance Co.

On Tuesday night about 11 o'clock the store room of E. J. Bathurst & Co., at Unionville, was burned to the ground with all its contents. It was only by the most heroic efforts of the bucket brigade that the residence of Wm. Peters was saved. The post office and other buildings near had to be closely watched. Origin of fire is unknown. The store was managed by Joseph Barton.

For full account of fires at Unionville and Hannah, see correspondence.

Cuts Out Small Offices.

One of the unexpected results of the extension of the rural free delivery service is the discontinuance of postoffices in the smaller rural communities. As a result of the extension of the service last year, 1906 postoffices were discontinued, effecting a saving in the salaries of postmasters aggregating \$116,807.

Rabbits May be Sold.

The open season for rabbits began on November 1, and continues until December 15. Secretary Kalbfus, of the game commission, in a recent interview, stated that rabbits could be bought and sold, likewise squirrels; as neither are included in the list of game that cannot be sold or offered for sale.

Advertised Warning Insufficient.

Judge Bregy, of Philadelphia, has declared that the advertised warnings of husbands not to give credit to their wives do not absolve them from their obligations to pay debts contracted by their better halves.

## THE HUNTERS.

Engineer Wm. H. Housel, of Monument, shot a deer while the train was running at a high rate of speed.

A man from Pittsburg was shot in the arm in Mifflin county by one of his own party just as a deer was coming along, realizing that it was a rare opportunity he raised his gun with his wounded arm and shot the deer.

Thus far 35 deer have been shot and killed in what is commonly called the 'Scotac region and the season is but half over. Fifteen bear have been killed or trapped this fall. In the Seven mountain district about 20 deer have been killed and taking the rest of the country of Centre county, there must have been almost 45 deer killed thus far.

Daniel Gorman, Toner Wolfe and G. M. Raup, of Lamar, have returned from Big Run where they were hunting a week. They brought with them two deer and a number of pheasants.

G. M. Walk, of Hannah, has shot his third bear this season. The last animal to fall before his aim was a cub.

Rev. J. E. B. Rice and Sam'l Bennett hunted on the Bald Eagle ridge in the neighborhood of Port Matilda on Friday. Two wild turkeys and a lot of rabbits and squirrels belonged to their credit at the end of the day's hunt.

Saturday a big five-pronged buck fell a prey to Charles Hess' well aimed rifle ball out in the forest east of Obmeis' clearing in Sugar valley. For years many hunters eagerly sought for this deer's magnificent antlers.

Robert Wolf and party, who have been in the Big Run hunting grounds the past week, returned home to Mill Hall with two deer.

The Lingie brothers of Eagleville killed one deer. The Dorman party of Hubersburg shot 2 Wm. B. Strunk and Mr. Strawhecker, who are with the W. I. Harter party at the "Soldier's Home," each shot a deer. Chas. Heinkle and party at the head of the North fork of 'Scotac creek have killed 2 deer.

Never before was the woods so full of deer hunters as this season. The reports indicate that the number of deer killed this season will surpass that of any one season since the act of the Legislature was passed prohibiting the pursuit of deer with dogs.

An Old Hunter.

George Knarr, of Troutville, Clearfield county, who lacks but a few weeks of being 80 years old, is still an active nimrod. He went to Clearfield county with the pioneer generation, when every man was a hunter. Every fall he has devoted some time to his favorite recreation, the chase, until now so fond of it, advancing years fail to keep him from it. He has not missed his annual hunt for big game for a period of 65 years. He accompanies a party to the mountains each fall in the deer season and spends a portion of the season at the hunting camp and enters upon the hunt with as much enthusiasm as any other member of the party, and usually with as good results. He is yet physically able to stand a day's hunt well and has lost none of his reliance upon his trusty rifle.

Fatal Shooting Accident.

Ray Young aged 14 years was accidentally and fatally shot at Quaker bridge on the West Branch railroad a day or two ago. The father of the boy was in a buggy and the young man threw his double-barreled breech loading shotgun in the back part of the vehicle. The stock hit the seat and both barrels, which were pointing full at the young man, were discharged. His liver was shot away and a great hole was torn in his right side. He died about five hours later and was conscious up to the time of his death.

Died Suddenly in a Hunter's Camp.

Al Herr, of Beech Creek, Monday, took a load of provisions to a hunters camp, at a place called "Oak Flat," about fifteen miles distant. Shortly after his arrival, about 5 o'clock, he became sick with a heart affection and died about 7 o'clock. He was about 35 years old and was unmarried. He was a son of John Herr, of Beech Creek. The body was brought to Hayes Run station and from that place was brought on the train to Beech Creek.—L. H. Democrat.

From Burnside to Cherry Tree.

Grading has begun on an extension of the New York Central railroad to Cherry Tree. The road will follow the west branch of the Susquehanna river and will connect with the Pennsylvania railroad. The contract calls for the completion of the line by June, 1903.

Rather a Heavy Salmon, This.

Howard Schnure, of Selingsgrove, caught a salmon that measured 28½ inches and weighed eight pounds. This is said to be the largest salmon ever caught in the stream at that place.

## PENN'A R.R. IMPROVEMENTS

Important Plans for Enlarging their Facilities.

### NEW LINES WILL BE BUILT

Between Pittsburg and Philadelphia so that Increased Traffic can be Handled—\$3,000,000 to be Expended for this Purpose.

The Pennsylvania Railroad, in order to relieve congestion on the main line between Philadelphia and Pittsburg, will build a low grade freight line from the Susquehanna river to the Delaware.

The line will cost about \$3,000,000, will include a new bridge across the Susquehanna and will be completed within two years. This announcement made in the Philadelphia Ledger, is confirmed by high officials at Broad Street Station.

The new road is part of an extensive plan which the company will soon announce for shortening its line from Pittsburg to Philadelphia, and which includes the building of cut-offs between Harrisburg and Pittsburg that will greatly lessen the time between those cities.

The freight congestion at Pittsburg, which has existed for more than a year, and has caused much anxiety to Pennsylvania officials, can never be relieved, so railroad men say, unless the main line affords more track room for handling the trains which go into and out of Pittsburg. The trouble is not confined to Pittsburg, according to Pennsylvania officials. More tracks are needed on every mile of line between Philadelphia and Pittsburg, and so long as present prosperity continues, congestion at Pittsburg will not be greatly relieved, in the opinion of railroad men, until the main line is kept just as clear as Pittsburg yards.

For this reason President Cassatt has determined to build small lines to take freight traffic from the main line, one of which is the new road from Susquehanna to the Delaware. Marysville, in Perry county, at the western end of the new \$2,000,000 stone bridge across the Susquehanna, which the Pennsylvania lately completed, is the point where the Pennsylvania and Northern Central roads meet, and here the Pennsylvania's new freight line will begin. Just east of Downingtown, at Glen Loch, connection will be made with the Trenton Cut-Off, and this will give a low grade freight line from the eastern side of the Susquehanna to the Delaware.

The Pennsylvania is now boring a new tunnel through the Alleghenies at Galitzin to Hollidaysburg. This will be completed by Dec. 31, 1902, and will avoid the long haul through Altoona and around the Horse Shoe Curve. The company has already in operation a cut-off between Hollidaysburg, Blair county, and Petersburg, Huntingdon county, which does away with the long haul through Tyrone. This was opened less than a year ago. It is said that there is in contemplation the building of a new short line between Petersburg and Marysville, through Huntingdon, Mifflin and Juniata counties. Should this be done, the Pennsylvania would have a practically new freight line from the Alleghenies to the Delaware.

YOUNG MAN SHOT.

Wednesday afternoon a fatal hunting accident occurred near State College, resulting in the death of John Kline, of that place. Yesterday afternoon Dr. John Robinson, Elliot Sowers and John Kline, three young men of State College borough, were hunting rabbits. The accident happened in Thompson's corn field near Penna Furnace.

It seems that young Sowers was walking along close to John Kline and was carrying his shot gun, cocked, under his arm with the muzzle pointing towards Kline who was but a few steps from him. In some manner Sowers' gun was accidentally discharged, the contents of the load, a charge of fine shot, striking Kline in the right side above the hip. The young man exclaimed "I'm shot!" and sank unconscious to the ground. The result was fatal, death was instantaneous. Dr. Robinson was a short distance away, but his assistance was of no avail as the wound was of such a nature as to destroy internal organs.

The young man was about 18 years of age, and a son of Geo. H. Kline, a steam fitter, at the College.

Collection Agency at Work.

The West Virginia Collection agency, which has been stirring up trouble for employes of the Pennsylvania Railroad company in various places, has struck Williamsport, and as a result about 15 employes of the Pennsy in that city are asked to settle claims against them which local merchants have transferred to the collection agency.

Mail Carriers Appointed.

Postmaster Bolger, of Phillipsburg, received word from the First Assistant Postmaster General, Monday, notifying him that the following persons were appointed letter carriers for Phillipsburg under the free delivery system to be inaugurated there on December 1st, viz: Charles T. Waring, of North Ninth street; J. H. Harpster, Allport, and Geo. A. Wilson, of Tyrone. The latter was a carrier in Tyrone for three years. There were 23 applicants, only 8 of whom passed the required examination.

It is doubtful if even the political powers could form a Hot Air Trust.

## FACT, FUN AND FANCY.

Bright Sparkling Paragraphs—Selected and Original.

A fellow doesn't have to be taut to get tight.

Some people do all their fighting over a telephone.

When a pen goes wrong you can't make it write.

Even the religious girl may be a sort of church belle.

In sowing a crop of wild oats there is generally a lot of rye.

The thought of what might have been keeps some people cheerful.

You can't tie up a bundle of music with your vocal chords.

A man doesn't amount to much unless he can prove it.

The successful borrower is often able to live on Easy street.

Where a crank is concerned, one good turn-down deserves another.

There are men who could loose their reputations and not miss them.

Money burns a hole in a man's pocket and in a woman's stocking.

The man with a million dollars can afford to scorn common sense.

The chronic kicker will kick because he hasn't anything to kick about.

Charity with some people consists of placing other under obligations to them.

The woman who wears a décollete gown evidently has no fear of the back-biter.

Two heads are not better than one when it comes to being the head of the house.

We are told the noblest work of God is man, but it's difficult to make some married women believe it.

A New Jersey police justice recently fined a young man \$10 for kissing his sweetheart in a public park, and a similar fine was directed from the young lady. Jersey justice is peculiar.

A man in Michigan by the name of Moon got married, and that was a change of the moon. In due time his wife presented him with a new daughter and that was a new moon. Then he went to town and got drunk for joy and that was a full moon. When he started for home he had only 25 cents in his pocket and that was the last quarter. His mother-in-law met him at the door with a rolling pin and then there was a total eclipse, and he saw stars.

Bill Arp has a homely way of saying things, but he usually manages to express a good deal of truth. Here is one of his latest: "Once I was young, but now I am old, and I never have seen a girl who went back on her mother, who ever came to be worth a one-eyed button to her husband. Is it the law of God. It is not exactly in the bible, but it is written large and lawful on the lives of many misfit homes. If one of you chaps ever run across a girl with her face full of roses, who says to you when you come to the door: "I cannot go for thirty minutes, for the dishes are not washed," you want to wait for that girl. Sit right down on the door-step and wait for her, because some other fellow will come along and carry her off, and then you will lose an angel. Wait for her and stick to her like a burr to a male's tail."

Scored the Slouch.

Dr. Horace F. Livingood in an address before the Berks county teachers institute scored the teachers of that county for their slouchy appearance in the school room. Dr. Livingood said: "I am in favor of discharging the school teacher who is neglectful of his personal appearance during professional hours. Some teachers look as though they had not taken a bath for a week. Some affect paper collars that are much the worse for wear. Others cling to linen that frequent trips to the washtub have carried past the point of respectability."

A resolution was adopted urging the Assemblymen of the district to enact a law requiring a standard of qualification for school directors and recommending that teachers be employed upon merit only, "without reference to political sectarian or other consideration."

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