

STORY THAT IS STRANGE AND SAD

Experience of a Young Girl
Whose Actions Puzzle the
Police Officials

FOUND OVER IN CAMDEN

Her First Statement That She
Was Abducted and Poisoned
Admitted to Be False

An 18-year-old girl, with a wonderful faculty for inventing weird tales of abduction by black-bearded men, kept the police of Philadelphia and Camden guessing for nearly the whole day yesterday.

The girl's name is Virginia May Weller. In addition to being young she is pretty and attractive. Her home is with her foster-parents, who are also named Weller, at 356 North Forty-fifth street. Sunday afternoon Miss Weller left the house to go to Sunday school at the Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church, on North Forty-first street. Mrs. Robert Weller, her foster-mother, and the latter's sister had started for the same place a few



MISS VIRGINIA WELLER

THE DISCOVERY OF MISS WELLER

minutes before. This was about 2 o'clock. Miss Weller did not get to the Sunday school. Neither did she return home. In fact, the next her parents saw of her she was lying on a cot in the Cooper Hospital, Camden. That was about 6 o'clock yesterday morning. Between 10 and 11 o'clock the night before the girl had been discovered in a semi-unconscious condition on the steps in front of the residence of William Johnson, 350 North Eighth street, Camden. It was Mr. Johnson who found her there. Induced by the unusual warmth of the night to go to his front door for a breath of fresh air, his eyes rested upon the prostrate form. To notify the police authorities and summon an ambulance was the work of but a few minutes. A little later the hospital physicians were at work in an endeavor to restore Miss Weller to consciousness.

A STRANGE NOTE.

When the girl had partially revived an attempt was made to learn her identity. To all the questions put to her, however, she replied in an unintelligible manner. Some unlooked-for and decidedly sensational information was gleaned though, from a note that was found pinned to the waist of her stylishly made dress. The note read as follows:

"Ha! ha! my beautiful Hyacinth, I have at last been avenged. You no more will cast your eyes in disgust at me and turn your head in scorn. You, who were so loving, kind, and forgiving, are far too good to live, and at last I have put an end to your miserable life. On the 11th of December I ruined her fair name and character which she thought so much of. She still would have a child if she had lived. Take her to the almshouse, for she has no father nor mother, but I hardly think she will recover."

After working perhaps an hour the physicians succeeded in getting the girl in a condition to give her name and address. Then Lieutenant Pettit, of the Camden police, hurriedly notified the authorities here. A telephone message was sent to the Thirty-ninth and Lancaster avenue Police Stations and an officer was dispatched from there to the home of the Wellers.

Mr. and Mrs. Weller reached Cooper Hospital at 6 o'clock yesterday morning. To them Miss Weller said that instead of going to Sunday school, as she at first intended when she left the house Sunday afternoon, she had gone to pay a visit to a daughter of Police Sergeant Gibson, of the Twenty-first District, who lives at 1302 South Fiftieth street. After spending several hours there she started for home, walking down Woodland avenue.

GIRL'S OWN STORY.

"At Fortieth street and Woodland avenue," she said, "I was suddenly seized by two men and thrown into a carriage. One of the men forced something out of a small bottle down my throat, and after that I knew nothing until I awoke here in the hospital."

This was all the girl's parents or the police could get her to say about her abduction. She was also unable to give any further description of the men she said seized her, other than that they both had black beards. Lieutenant Pettit came over to Philadelphia later in the day and held a consultation with Superintendent Linden and Captain of Detectives Miller. As a result Detectives Geyer and Hamm were detailed on the case. Several hours of hard work on their part, however, failed to bring forth any traces of the black-whiskered abductors. And for a very good reason. There weren't any to bring forth; nor had there been any.

This Miss Weller admitted late yesterday afternoon to the Philadelphia detec-

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STRANGE STORY

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tives. Captain Miller last night gave out the following statement:

"The case of Miss Virginia Weller, who disappeared from her home last Sunday afternoon, is a sad one. Miss Weller acknowledges that the story of her being kidnapped is untrue, and in addition she admits having herself written the note found pinned to her clothing."

The girl's foster parents had not heard of this admission when a reporter for The Inquirer saw them last evening. They were deeply puzzled over their daughter's experience. Both Mr. and Mrs. Weller had seen the note when they were at the hospital. When asked by the reporter if the handwriting was anything like Miss Weller's they declared that it was not, and that it was impossible for her to have written the note.

HER HABITS GOOD.

Miss Weller, they said, had lived with them for nearly fifteen years, or ever since the death of her parents in Burlington, N. J. She had always been of a retiring disposition and had never received any but the slightest attentions from young men. They also declared that she had never been away from home late at night with the exception of a period of two weeks during the last Christmas holidays, when she was a clerk in a store. It was there that she formed the acquaintance of Sergeant Gibson's daughter.

It was said last night that the girl had invented the poison part of her story, as she had the abduction part. Her unconsciousness when found, being the result of exhaustion. In her later admissions to the detectives Miss Weller declared that she walked a part of the way to Camden and finished the trip to the ferry in a trolley car. After getting over to the New Jersey side it is probable that she wandered around in an aimless way until she sank on the doorstep of the Johnson home.

While calling at the house of Sergeant Gibson Sunday afternoon Miss Weller made a number of inquiries concerning Camden of the Sergeant's daughter. The latter, never having visited that city with the exception of once, and then for a few hours only, could tell her but little.

"What do you want to know for?" she asked Miss Weller.

"Oh, nothing in particular," was the evasive answer, "I just thought you knew all about the place."

The girl's object in going to Camden is a mystery, unless she had some secret trouble she imagined she could hide from her foster-parents only by flight. This the latter think improbable, however, as Miss Weller's manner during the past two or three weeks was a more than ordinarily cheerful one.

"Why," said Mrs. Weller last night, "When we left home Sunday afternoon she was singing as happy-like as I ever saw her."

Special Policeman Harbridge, of the Lancaster Avenue Station, stated last evening that the girl on a previous occasion took a dose of laudanum and was treated at the Presbyterian Hospital. Both the specials of the Sixteenth-district were busy all day on the case, and expect to make a statement to Captain Miller to-day.