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MEADOW BROOK TRAGEDY.

Mrs Dutcher and 11 Year-Old Son Found Murdered by a Midnight Assassin
 (Condensed from the Times)

Scarcely has the death of pretty Annie Kempton, the victim of the sensational Bear River, N. S., tragedy, been avenged and the excitement attending the expiation of the crime begun to subside, than the people of Moncton have enacted at their very door, a triple crime of murder, robbery and arson, that will go down on the criminal record of this province as one of the foulest of the foul. The first report of a fatality at Meadow Brook reached Moncton about ten o'clock Friday morning, but it was then generally supposed that an accidental fire had occurred and that one or two persons had been cremated. This was the worst that could be believed, until people, who had passed through Meadow Brook on the morning train on their way to town, began to circulate the suspicion of foul play. The public, however, were quickly assured of one fact. The Dutcher house at Meadow Brook had been totally destroyed by fire during the night and Mrs. Dutcher and her youngest son had been cremated in it. A Times reporter made his way to the scene of the tragedy and found the community in a wild state of excitement. The Dutcher home was levelled to the ground while all that was mortal of its three occupants of the night previous, lay in a dying condition in a neighboring house.

By the time the heat from the fire had become sufficiently abated to permit of the men gathering up the remains of the dead, there was very little left by which what was a few hours before a human being, could be told from the ashes and debris of the consumed building. All that could be discovered of the mother was a portion of the trunk of the body about two feet in length. Many of the more timid among the spectators stood aghast with horror as this was fished from the burning coals and carried to the barn on the premises. The head and limbs of the woman were completely consumed save very small portions of charred bones, which were placed in a small basket containing the portion of a skull and a few bone ashes, all that remained of the little son who shared his mother's sad fate.

The story of the tragedy which ushered unwarned two souls into the presence of their Maker is easily told in so far as those on the spot first appear to be cognizant of the facts. The fire was first discovered in the Dutcher house about midnight by Mrs. James Green, a sister-in-law of the dead woman, who lives about one hundred and twenty-five yards distant. Mrs. Green, according to her own story, did not sleep well during the first part of the night but was kept awake by the continual barking of her dog. She also says she was somewhat frightened, and detecting fierce barking on the part of her dog about midnight, she arose, pulled aside her window blind and peered out into the darkness. Her room faced the Dutcher residence, and the first thing to catch her eye was a light in Mrs. Dutcher's bedroom. She thought nothing of that at first, but in gazing steadily at the window she was quick to discern that the light grew brighter. This struck her as peculiar and gradually the truth dawned upon her that the Dutcher house was on fire. She at once raised the cry of fire, arousing her three children, who were all the persons in the house beside herself, and made her way out to the road as quickly as possible. She continued to shout fire and run down the road. On reaching Hugh Green's place, about 100 yards distant, she met Mr. Green in the road, coming from his house in his shirt sleeves and bare-headed. He cried "For God's sake, get an axe." This Mrs. Green says she did, returning to her house for it. After returning with the axe she continued down the road to arouse the neighbors while Hugh Green broke in the door.

Mr. Hugh Green, who is a brother of the dead woman, says he was first aroused by Mrs. Jas. Green, who lives a short distance up the road. He hastily put on

Children Cry for Pitcher's Castoria.

some clothing and ran out. On gaining his sister's house, he ran through the kitchen and upstairs. At the stairway he was met with a volume of smoke, but saw no fire until he reached the bedroom supposed to be occupied by all three occupants of the house. Mr. Green says he was attracted by the little girl, who was calling "Mamma, Mamma." On reaching the bedroom he encountered a heavy body of fire and smoke. He groped his way and aided by the child's cries managed to find her and carry her out. His hair and eyebrows were singed by fire, and when he started to return upstairs after carrying little Maggie out, his daughters, he said, held him back. The fire was all confined to the bedroom when he went upstairs. He was unable to tell whether there was anybody else in the same bed with the girl or not, although he supposes they were all three together. On reaching open air with Maggie it was found that she had received a fearful blow on the side of her head and that blood was flowing freely from a wound in her ear. She was unconscious and was carried to her uncle's house.

As the building gradually crumbled away an awful sight was presented to the few neighbors and relatives gathered. The bodies of the murdered mother and son, fell with a sickening thud into the furnace of flames in the cellar and were slowly cremated in full view of those standing helplessly about.

That the shocking affair was the work of an assassin is proved beyond doubt. All the circumstances surrounding the case, to say nothing of the foul blow dealt the little girl rescued in time to thwart the villain's hellish scheme, go to show that there was a deep laid plot on the part of the perpetrator of the deed to effectively cover up his tracks. Dr. Gaudet, who was called to attend the child, pronounced the skull crushed and the victim unlikely to live. The blow was dealt on the left side of the head, just above the ear, with some dull instrument. The lower portion of the child's left ear was split as if cut with a knife. As the doctor dressed the wound the little one in agony said, "Oh, don't kill me any more." The injuries together with a badly burned arm and shoulder, are causing the little thing intense suffering.

The motive of the crime is generally conceded to have been robbery, as the impression was abroad that Mrs. Dutcher had more or less money in the house. The statement of Mrs. Jane Green, who was probably on more intimate terms with the dead woman, than any of the other neighbors, is valuable on this question. Mrs. Green is confident that Mrs. Dutcher kept in the vicinity of \$300 or \$400 in the house. She saw Mrs. Dutcher have \$300 about a year ago, and about a month ago, she saw one of the Dutcher boys give his mother \$100 to lay away. Mrs. Dutcher never banked her money, being afraid that these institutions might become insolvent some day. She therefore kept her money in an old trunk in her room. In a satchel found in a bureau drawer saved from the burning building, the sum of \$30.25 was found.

The "Dutcher House," so-called, has been for years quite noted in the neighborhood. It had the reputation, whether justly or unjustly, of being known as "a Road House," where liquor also was sold. Some years ago, it will be remembered, a case was heard in the police court here, brought by Mrs. Dutcher against two boys for complicity in the alleged stealing of a watch when calling at her house. Since then Mrs. Dutcher has frequently figured in Scott act violation cases, and on one occasion she served forty-five days in jail for Scott act violation.

From all the information available so far the case seems to be shrouded in mystery. That robbery was first attempted, then murder and lastly arson to cover up the crime seems to be undisputed. According to all reports strangers have been scarce around those parts for some time, but a man well known in that section is said to have been lurking around the place Thursday morning, in which case he should be asked to give an account of himself. However, any suspicions so far are mere conjectures. But in the case referred to, Mrs. Dutcher no later than the day before the day of her death, told Mrs. Green she was afraid of this man. She recited the case of a few nights previous in which he had practically forced his way into the house. He got a drink and a cigar from her and departed. A couple of gentlemen driving to Moncton yesterday observed a man on the main road about four or five miles from Meadow Brook, and as soon as the stranger saw the team he darted into the woods and was lost sight of.

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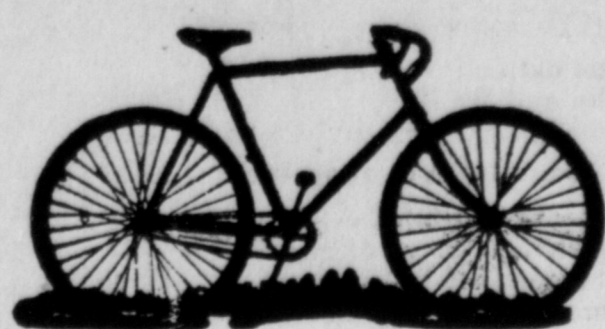
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