



[1925, vendredi 17 juillet]

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Up noon — pick up files — read Cambridge history — SH ret. with dinner  
— write letters — out on errands — retire.

*Levé à midi. Rangé mes papiers. Lu l'histoire de Cambridge.  
Sonia revient avec de quoi dîner. Écrit des lettres. Sorti pour des  
courses. Couché.*

Ou bien, en version lettre à Lillian : « Le lendemain — vendredi 17 — je me suis levé à midi, j'ai repris et trié mes dossiers, jeté des tas de documents inutiles, puis j'ai commencé à lire ce numéro de la *Tribune de Cambridge* édité pour leur anniversaire, c'est A.E.P.G qui me l'a envoyé. L'histoire de Cambridge par le révérend Sam Eliot est superbe et devrait être réédité sous forme de brochure. S.H. est revenue ensuite avec le dîner, puis j'ai écrit encore un peu, quelques courses et couché enfin. » À l'assaut des vieux papiers, donc : « *bushels of crudless documents* » dont le langage dans les lettres n'a rien à voir avec celui de ses fictions. C'est le *Cambridge Tribune* qui a réalisé un numéro spécial pour son anniversaire, réédité en volume.

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*New York Times*, 17 juillet 1925. Mme Ellen Peck, 95 ans, longtemps nommée « la reine des femmes de confiance », et dont le casier judiciaire remonte à 1885, considérée à l'époque de l'inspecteur Byrnes comme étant l'escroc la plus dangereuse d'Amérique, é été accueillie hier à l'hôpital public de Nyack (New York), dans un état grave. Même si aux jours glorieux de son activité criminelle elle vivait toujours dans les meilleurs hôtels, et a vécu plus tard dans une prétentieuse villa de Sparkhill (New York), elle n'a plus apparemment ni revenus ni amis. L'inspecteur Byrnes avait estimé autrefois que ses opérations frauduleuses l'avaient mis à la tête d'un million de dollars. On la connaissait à l'époque sous le nom de « la femme en noir » parce qu'elle était toujours habillée de dette couleur et s'efforçait de ressembler à une petite veuve. Elle était une criminelle de la plus haute classe, choisissant pour victimes des hommes de moyens et d'influence. Elle a ainsi été accusée d'avoir dépouillé Jay Gould, mais n'a jamais pu être accusée faite de preuve. Elle se disait apparentée à S.F.B Morse, l'inventeur du télégraphe, et disait que sa grand-mère était une soeur de Noah Webster. Mme Peck, aussi connue en tant qu'Eliza E Knight, s'est signalée la première fois à l'attention du public en 1878, s'étant enfuie de chez B.T. Babbitt, millionnaire fabricant de savon, en emportant 19 000 dollars. Elle fut inculpée mais pas condamnée, et lors des années suivantes elle a souvent prétendu que les charges requises à son encontre s'établissaient sur la publicité autour de ces précédentes affaires. Elle a eu sept enfants, dont trois encore vivant. Plusieurs fois condamnée et emprisonnée pour vente de terrains ne lui appartenant pas, elle avait été libérée de la prison d'Auburn en 1912, et vivait depuis

## AGED CROOK 'QUEEN' ILL AND DESTITUTE

Mrs. Ellen Peck, 95, Said to Have Made a Million by Fraud in a Ward at Nyack.

KNOWN AS 'SWEET OLD LADY'

Has Been Living in a Modest Flat in Sparkill—Once the Most Feared Swindler.

Mrs. Ellen Peck, 95 years old, long known as "the queen of confidence women," whose criminal record dates back to 1888, and who was considered in the days of Inspector Byrnes to be the most dangerous woman swindler in America, was discovered yesterday in the public ward of Nyack (N. Y.) Hospital in a serious condition following an operation. Although in the days of her criminal activities she lived always in the pretentious cottage in Sparkill, N. Y., she is now apparently without funds or friends. Inspector Byrnes once estimated her swindling operations had netted her at least \$1,000,000. At that time she was known also as "the woman in black" because her gowns were always of that color, and she dressed and looked the part of a demure little old lady.

She was a criminal of the higher class, selecting for her victims men of means and influence. She was once accused of swindling Jay Gould, but was never indicted for that alleged offense because of lack of evidence. She claims to be related to S. F. B. Morse, inventor of the telegraph, and says her great-grandmother was a sister of Noah Webster.

Accused of a \$100,000 Swindle.

Mrs. Peck, known also as Eliza R. Knight, first attracted public attention in 1878 when she was charged with having fleeced B. T. Habbitt, millionaire soap manufacturer, out of \$10,000. She was indicted but not convicted, and in later years frequently said the publicity attendant upon that charge had been responsible for her convictions in other cases. She said also that series of articles she wrote about herself for a newspaper had done much to make her the name of one of her sons who was in the Government service in Chicago. She had seven children, three of whom live.

At Police Headquarters here her record showed that she was convicted on Oct. 6, 1907, of grand larceny and was sentenced to four and a half years in the penitentiary. That record shows also that she had been convicted previously. The complainant against her in the 1903 case was Emily F. Hissell of 213 East Fourteenth Street.

On June 1, 1905, she was convicted of grand larceny in Chicago, sentenced to one year and fined \$1,000. The complainant, the Congress Hall Company, said she had given worthless railroad stock for a board bill at the Auditorium Hotel.

On Sept. 10, 1907, she was arrested here on a charge of grand larceny in connection with the sale of a worthless land deed. She fled and so was not convicted on that charge until Feb. 15, 1909. She was sentenced to serve five years in Auburn Prison. The complaint in that case was Christopher Gini of 31 East Twentieth Street.

On Nov. 27, 1908, Mrs. Peck was again arrested for the sale of a worthless land deed to Paul H. Schubert of 1 West Thirty-fifth Street. She was convicted on Feb. 23, 1909, and sentenced to Auburn Prison for ten days. She was pardoned by Governor Dix in 1912.

Lived in Elaborate Cottage.

Mrs. Peck then went to Sparkill and took up her residence in a very elaborate cottage, where she was joined by her husband Richard V. Peck, who is still a Sparkill resident. He refused last night to make any comment on his wife's illness or to discuss her in any way. Mrs. Peck, although able to talk, also refused to say anything about herself.

In June, 1914, Mrs. Peck was accused of swindling a Central American out of \$1,000. She was not prosecuted.

After she had lived for some time in the Sparkill cottage Mrs. Peck became known as "the sweet little old woman." Her face and manner of dress always bore this out. In the last year her former Sparkill friends have had sight of her. It was learned yesterday that, with her husband, she has been occupying an unpretentious apartment in the business district of Sparkill.

There she still retains a mahogany table which figured in the Habbitt case. It was said Mr. Habbitt threw down a number of \$1,000 bills and she never saw them again. On this table today is an old Bible that belonged to Mrs. Peck and, to the Morse family and which contains their family records.

lors à Parkhill dans une très belle maison. Son mari, Richard W Peck, qui vit toujours à Sparkhill, a refusé hier de faire quelque déclaration que ce soit au sujet de son épouse. Après quelques années à Sparkhill, on appelait Mme Peck : « cette chère vieille dame ». Son visage et ses manières de s'habiller ont effacé ce souvenir-là. On a appris hier qu'avec son mari, depuis un an, elle occupait une chambre dans une maison des zones industrielles de Parkhill.

## SWIMMING MADMAN TRAPPED IN A SEWER

Dives Off Boat in East River, Twice Beats Off Captors in Pursuing Craft.

CHASE LASTS FOR 3 HOURS

Police Defy Perils of Sewer Gas to Get Prisoner, Who Is Tied and Dragged Out.

David Greenwood, a lunatic who was being transferred from Bellevue Hospital to the State Hospital for the Insane at Wards Island, leaped from the hospital ship Wanderer in the East River shortly after noon yesterday. Swimming with almost superhuman strength, he beat off repeated attempts to seize him. Three hours later he was trapped in a sewer under Twenty-sixth Street near Madison Avenue and caught.

A score of policemen and firemen, who took part in the chase, told of the madman's amazing strength and daring. Twice he was captured and pulled aboard a rowboat in the East River; twice he wriggled loose. For over an hour he eluded his pursuers in a dark, narrow sewer under Twenty-sixth Street. Even when he was finally cornered he fought like a wild beast. At last he was tied, dragged back through the sewer to Third Avenue and taken to Bellevue.

Hundreds of persons crowded the pier at the foot of East Twenty-sixth Street to see the struggle in the river. Others lined the street curbs when it became known that the madman was running through the sewer. Police reserves held back the crowds and guarded every manhole on Twenty-sixth Street, from the river to Madison Avenue, in case the fugitive should emerge from one.

Greenwood was one of twenty-five insane patients who were being transferred to Ward's Island on the Wanderer, a Department of Public Welfare boat. He is 27 years old. He was a painter, and lived at 37 West 148th Street. He was brought to Bellevue on July 1. In a coma. His case was diagnosed as sleeping sickness. The patients were in charge of William Macnamara, a transportation agent of the Department of Public Welfare.

Greenwood, although small, is strong and wiry, and hospital authorities had warned them on the boat to watch him. Still the insane man was too quick for those guarding him. Late a flash he dived through an open window into the water and started to swim toward the middle of the river. A call was sent in hurriedly for the marine police, but an error in transmission first brought the fireboat New Yorker to the scene, under command of Lieutenant Thomas H. Malin.

Chase Him in a Rowboat.

Lieutenant Malin quickly launched a rowboat and headed for the bobbing form on the water. With him were Fireman James Monahan, Fireman Adolf Voehringer and Sergeant William Randolph, in command of the police boat Gypper, which had also landed at the dock.

## GIRL FAILS TO SWIM ENGLISH CHANNEL

Miss Lillian Harrison of Argentina Becomes Chilled Five Miles From Goal.

SETS RECORD FOR WOMEN

She Is in the Water 8 Hours and 57 Minutes—Plans to Try Again in August.

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PARIS, July 14.—Miss Lillian Harrison, attempting to swim across the Channel, fainted at 1:30 o'clock this afternoon after swimming nine hours, and, after rescue, was brought back to the French coast.

Tonight her father said she would try again next month.

BOULOGNE, France, July 14 (AP).—The cold water of the English Channel proved too much for Miss Lillian Harrison, the young Argentine swimmer, who started from Cape Gris-Nez early this morning to swim to the English coast, and after 8 hours 57 minutes, when within five miles of Dover, she had to be taken from the water. She was brought back to Boulogne on the tug "Albatros," accompanied by her father.

It was at 1:30 o'clock this afternoon, while receiving food, that the swimmer stiffened from the cold, the temperature of the water being 50 degrees Fahrenheit, and only the quickness with which the man who was feeding her caught hold of her jersey saved her from sinking like a stone.

After a brief rest Miss Harrison declared she felt none the worse for her experience, and made known her determination to try again in August, because she feels she "must be the first woman to swim the Channel."

Although Miss Harrison is credited with having swum a greater distance in the Channel than any other woman swimmer, it was with a heavy heart, but not discouragement, that she returned to Boulogne aboard her tug Albatros.

Accompanied by her trainer, T. W. Burgess, she started from Gris-Nez Beach at 4:35 o'clock this morning. She appeared to be in perfect condition, her classic, graceful stroke remained regular, twenty-five to the minute. Throughout the swim her smile never left her, and she kept up a lively exchange of small talk with Henry, the noted Egyptian swimmer, and Joe Costa, who were in charge of the plan.

After a cup of orange juice and coffee. Two swimmers accompanied her for some time. Her father and mother, on board the Albatros, never took their eyes from the water, and called encouragement to her, to which she replied cheerfully.

When the tug returned to Boulogne, Miss Harrison rested for a brief period, after which she returned to Gris-Nez, where she expects to keep up her training "in order to save revenge and defeat the channel in August."

Miss Harrison made two previous attempts to swim the Channel, both last year.