

A remarkable "child woman"

N. M. H. Turner

HERE is another item from an early edition of *Scientific American*, the issue for May 22, 1886, page 321:

"The recent death of Miss Caroline Terboss has attracted renewed interest in her remarkable case. She was a member of an otherwise normally developed family, and up to her twelfth year she was apparently like other girls. But at that age she suddenly stopped growing, and though she lived to the advanced age of seventy-seven, development, once interrupted, was never resumed. At the time of her death, she was in form, stature, and organization a child. For many years she was a familiar figure on Fifth Avenue in the neighbourhood of the reservoir. Her age was a mystery, for her hair remained unchanged in colour, and her face, though noticeably mature for so young a figure, was but slightly wrinkled. Beyond an extreme sensitiveness of the skin, she enjoyed apparently good health until within a short time of her death. Her height is given at but four feet and four inches. She is stated to have been remarkably quick intellectually. As no physician had been in attendance within twenty-four hours of death, it was necessary to summon the coroner. The autopsy revealed the perfectly formed body of an apparent girl of eleven. Beyond certain organic peculiarities, the anatomy was normal. The spine was straight, and there was no outward deformity. No examination was made of the brain.

"The case attracts much interest among physicians, because, though similar instances have been recorded, they are very rare, and never has the subject lived to so advanced an age. Death has usually occurred before twenty-one. Twenty-five years of age is believed to have been the extreme limit."

The case of Caroline Terboss may or may not be relevant to the study of flying saucers, although who can say what is relevant? In view of the fact that there are many legends of people who were abducted by the "little people" or "fairy folk", and on their return were found to have aged but little or not at all, this story becomes more interesting. Notice that she suddenly "stopped growing" and for the remaining 66 years of her life her body remained in a state of what could be called "living suspended animation". Notice also that she was stated to have been "remarkably quick intellectually" (showing that her brain had not deteriorated) and that when she died her body was found to have "certain organic peculiarities."

Flying Saucer Review has, in recent years, carried an increasing number of reports of people who have had seemingly miraculous returns to perfect health after many years of illness or disability. These "cures" have often involved flying saucers, curious lights, operators or a combination of all three. They show that some entities, at least, have the knowledge necessary for the repair of the human organism. From here it is quite logical to assume that they would also have the "know-how" to keep a body in a state of "living suspended animation". This is not important; the problem is *why*.

There is nothing in the report to suggest that Miss Terboss went through anything unusual at the age of eleven; however, there are sufficient points of interest to make this story worthy of further investigation. Since Jacques Vallée is taking an interest in stories of people who don't age, I am glad to be able to bring this one to his attention. I would like to make further inquiries into this case myself, but my own research and a university course make this impossible.

Grand Rapids Spherical UFO

by Jerome S. Gardeski

ON Saturday, September 10, 1970, two Kent County Sheriff's Reserve Officers were patrolling in the southern outskirts of Grand Rapids, Michigan. That evening the sky was slightly overcast, with no stars visible, although moon glow could be recognised high in the sky to the east.

At 10.20 p.m., Officer Michael Kooistra noticed a large, spherical object, yellowish in colour, progressing at very slow speed on a course heading N.N.E. from S.S.W. Sergeant John Hawley spotted the object almost immediately and both men had time to eliminate the possibility that the object was a conventional aircraft, particularly as they both have considerable experience in this field.

Kooistra estimated the size of the object when first noticed as approximating that of a pencil eraser held at arm's length. He judged it to be about five miles distant. Hawley felt that it must have been about 50ft. in diameter and only about one mile away. Both men agreed that it was quite close to the ground, at an altitude of about 1,000ft.

The men's curiosity was heightened when the object stopped and began to spout bursts of sparks and flaming material which they felt would strike the ground and give rise to reports from the inhabitants of that area. This display of pyrotechnics issued from an indeterminate area at the bottom of the object without any change being

observed in its shape or colour; it lasted for some 10 to 15 seconds. The object then vanished instantly, without appearing to move from the spot. The total time elapse during this sighting was two to three minutes.

Each officer was interviewed without the other's knowledge and their reports showed a marked degree of corroboration. These men could be considered as high-calibre witnesses, and neither of them had any special interest in UFOs, apart from "what was published in the papers."

There was no publicity, and no report of this sighting, or of the shower of sparks, filed with any other authority.