

KILLED FRIEND'S WIFE AND SLEW HIMSELF

Double Crime of Henry Towns- end Edson, Ex-Mayor's Son.

His Victim Was Mrs. Fannie Pullen—
Murderer Said to Have Been Also
an Embezzler of Church Funds
—Statements of Witnesses.

Henry Townsend Edson, son of ex-Mayor Franklin Edson, shot and killed Mrs. Fannie Pullen yesterday morning in his apartment at 292 West Ninety-second Street, and then killed himself with the two bullets that remained in his 32-calibre pistol after he had fired three times at his victim.

The murder and suicide were preceded by a half-incoherent demand that Mrs. Pullen run away from the city with him. This demand was heard and the tragedy was witnessed by Mrs. Margarita Diehl Edson, the man's wife, and by Dr. David Orr Edson, his brother. Just as the shots were fired the brother and wife were in the act of leaving the room, disgusted at the language of the murderer, whose request was indignantly refused by Mrs. Pullen a moment before the report of the revolver resounded through the apartment house. Dr. Edson and the murderer's wife, who were already outside the door, turned their heads in bare time to see Edson and Mrs. Pullen fall dead to the floor.

Mrs. Pullen was the wife of John Pullen, chief clerk in the Auditor's office of the New York Central Railroad's Passenger Department, at the Grand Central Station, and the mother of two children, a boy aged fifteen and a daughter one year younger. She was the closest personal friend of her murderer's wife, and the two families had been on intimate terms for eleven years. She met her death after having come to the Edson flat for the purpose of aiding in adjusting the troubles that had overtaken her friends.

"BLACK SHEEP" FROM YOUTH.

Henry Townsend Edson, who was admitted by his brothers to have been a "black sheep" from his youth, was considered far from well balanced mentally. According to his oldest brother, Dr. Cyrus Edson, ex-President of the Board of Health, he would have been examined for his sanity within a few days at the request of his family. His final act of desperation followed a varied career of failures and of bad habits. He had been living at the expense of his relatives, with occasional aid from his wife's mother, Mrs. Margarita Diehl, whose check for \$50, payable to Mrs. Edson, was found lying on the apartment floor after the tragedy yesterday.

As a climax to his recklessness and misfortune in the affairs of Henry Townsend Edson, there came to light a few weeks ago the fact that he had been stealing money from St. Michael's Protestant Episcopal Church, of which the Rev. Dr. John P. Peters is the rector. The church is at Ninety-ninth Street and Amsterdam Avenue. Edson was employed by the institution as a financial clerk. He secured the position on the recommendation of John Pullen, husband of the woman he killed.

Dr. Peters said yesterday that the amount of the stealings, which Edson confessed recently both to the Pullens and to his wife, had not been determined exactly; but expert accountants were at work to fix the losses. The man also confessed to having stolen money from other sources, mentioning to his wife the Corn Exchange Bank as one institution he had swindled. According to a statement made by Mr. Pullen a few hours after the crime was committed the former clerk was both a defaulter and a forger. The details of the transactions that led to this characterization, said Mr. Pullen, would come to light shortly. The speculations, Dr. Peters explained, had been preceded by unfortunate operations in Wall Street, and the man's originally weakened mental state had been accentuated by these latest calamities to his finances.

While the fatal crime of Edson was bringing to light the family's past griefs and was perplexing the Coroners' office so much that Coroner Jackson decided to hold an inquest next week, the aged father of the murderer was lying ill in his home at 35 West Seventy-first Street. Every care was taken that he should not hear of the tragedy. Drs. Cyrus and David Edson, who were in the house all the afternoon, and even Mrs. Henry Townsend Edson, prostrated though she was by her harrowing experience, feigned unconcern when in his presence. The two sons said that their father, who reached his seventy-first birthday last April, had just recovered from a severe attack of rheumatism and heart disease, and his advanced age rendered his condition too precarious for him to hear the sad news. The ex-Mayor has been a leading produce merchant of this city for nearly half a century. His term in the City Hall was in 1883 and 1884.

It was after Coroner Jackson had examined the scene of the crime and examined many papers found in the apartment and on the body of the dead man that he said late in the afternoon:

"The accounts of the affair are so contradictory, and the events that led up to it so overshadowed in mystery, that I have decided to have an inquest on Monday or Tuesday. The principal witnesses will be Dr. David Orr Edson, Mrs. Henry Townsend Edson, and the Rev. Dr. Peters."

Out of the different accounts mentioned by the Coroner, despite a variance as to details, a few facts could be elicited. Henry Edson and his wife agreed to separate. They were in the apartment for the purpose of disposing of their furniture, and they had met there at his request, after he had been away in parts unknown for more than a week. Mrs. Pullen had come at the request of Mrs. Edson, and Dr. David Edson had arrived in response to a telegram sent early in the morning by Mrs. Edson. Besides the four already named, the only person in the apartment at the time was a furniture mover, Thomas Woods, who had been called from a storage warehouse to pack up the belongings of the family.

According to Capt. Nally of the West One Hundredth Street Police Station, where Woods was detained until he gave his story of the morning's happenings, the party of four—Dr. David Edson, Henry Townsend Edson, Mrs. Edson and Mrs. Pullen—were in the dining room of the apartment at 8:40 o'clock. Woods, who had been ordered by Mrs. Edson to pack up some books in a room adjoining the dining room, said:

"The dining room is at the rear of the eight-room flat. While I was packing the books I heard loud talking, as if the four were quarreling. Suddenly the door opened quickly. Dr. Edson and the two women came out. As they walked through the private hall toward the outside door of the apartment, Mrs. Pullen cried to me:

"There's a man after me. Don't let him come out."

"They went out of the flat. I followed. When I got outside I took hold of the door and held it, so as to keep the other Mr. Edson in, as I was told to do. I held the knob and I felt him pulling at it on the inside. Finally he gave it up and went back somewhere inside. Then I just stayed there."

"In twenty minutes Dr. Edson and the two women returned. They went inside, and I did, too. Mrs. Edson again told me to pack the books in one of the front rooms. Once more they went to the dining room; and they had not been there a minute before Mrs. Edson came out and asked me if I had a writing pen. I said I had none, but she found one somewhere, and I saw her take it in. In another minute, after some wild talking, I heard Mr. Edson cry: 'You've got to go away with me.' Then the door opened. Dr. Edson and Mrs. Henry Edson came out, and as they did Mr. Edson shot the other woman and himself. I can't remember exactly how it was. All I know is that I ran out then with Dr. Edson and Mrs. Henry Edson, and when we left the other two were lying dead on the floor."

It was a minute or two after this, while the neighbors along Ninety-second Street were running to their windows to discover the cause of the shots, that Dr. David Edson ran up to Patrolman Payne, who stood at the Amsterdam Avenue crossing of Ninety-second Street.

"Come with me," shouted the doctor.

"There's murder over here."

The officer went to the apartment and then sent a hurry call to the J. Hood Wright Memorial Hospital. Dr. Fahnestock came in an ambulance and pronounced the

man and woman dead, saying they must have died instantaneously. Capt. Nally and Detective Maloney were summoned at once, and the latter was ordered to stand guard over the apartment until the arrival of the Coroner, but in the meanwhile Capt. Nally sent to the station the property found in the clothing of Mr. Edson and Mrs. Pullen.

In Edson's pockets were found five loose pistol cartridges, \$116 in United States greenbacks, \$9 in Canadian bills, \$1 in silver, four keys, a gold watch, and several letters. The only thing found in Mrs. Pullen's clothing was a handsome Swiss watch.

One of the four keys in the man's possession had engraved on it the name of the Hotel Minot, One Hundred and Twenty-sixth Street and Eighth Avenue. The room number was 58. The police, after learning that Mr. Edson left home more than a week ago, subsequent to his confession about the church money, went to the hotel to get further information. They learned there that Mr. Edson had been in the habit of visiting the place at intervals for more than a year. He always had come alone, and had registered as "H. Allen." The clerks said they knew him as Mr. Allen. He was accustomed to write many letters in the hotel, and often it happened that his visits were many weeks apart. He had talked little to the employees, and they never knew his name was Edson until yesterday.

On Tuesday night he came in and told the clerk that he expected his wife from the country, adding that he wanted a nice suite of rooms. No. 58, composed of a parlor and bedroom, suited him, and he took the key. This was about 6 o'clock. After writing some letters he left the hotel. At 8 o'clock he returned and went to his room. That was the last the clerk saw of him, and the supposition of the police is that he slipped out early yesterday morning to keep his engagement with his wife and brother and Mrs. Pullen at the Ninety-second Street apartment.

SAY HE WAS INSANE.

Dr. David Orr Edson, when seen later in the day at his home, showed the effects of the nervous strain he had experienced. He said:

"My brother Henry, who was thirty-nine years old, had been a source of sorrow and tribulation to us for years. We knew there was something wrong with him, but we had concluded at various times that he was not sufficiently deranged to place him in custody. He failed at everything he tried. The failures were so numerous that I need not recount them. I don't know how long he had been clerk in the church. His wife, finding her life unbearable, had agreed to separate from him. He had been acting strangely for a long time. I was called to the apartment by Mrs. Edson this morning and when I reached there Henry was walking up and down like an insane man."

"I'm going away," he was saying. 'I'm going somewhere, I don't know where.'"

"Finally he turned wildly toward Mrs. Pullen and cried: 'And I want you to go with me.' Then I said to him: 'I'm tired of this sort of thing, and I am going away from here.'"

Dr. Edson said that he suited his actions to his words and started out of the door. Mrs. Edson followed him. Both of them were disgusted and shocked. Presumably, Mrs. Pullen was about to follow also. She had objected indignantly when Henry talked about wanting her to go with him. As he went out the doctor glanced at her and saw Henry point toward her, but suspected no attempt on her life. Just as his back was turned, continued the doctor, the shots rang out behind him. He started to run back, but the deed was done too quickly, and before he recovered himself the bodies of his brother and Mrs. Pullen lay on the floor. Then he ran out for the policeman.

According to the doctor, his younger brother exhibited vicious tendencies from his boyhood. His bad habits grew until the family gave up hope for him. He had never made his own living for any length of time, and the family had been forced to come to his rescue on many occasions.

"The best friends Henry and his wife had," added the doctor, "were the Pullens. I know them well myself and respect them greatly. Mrs. Pullen was called into the apartment by Mrs. Edson because it was thought she might act as a friend in helping to smooth over the family difficulties. Before she married Mr. Pullen she was Miss Fannie Wetherbee Shirk, daughter of the late Rear Admiral Shirk of the United States Navy. She was thirty-three years old."

Dr. Edson said that his dead brother left only one child, a boy aged fifteen, named Franklin, for his grandfather. It was said last night that the boy was up at Larchmont with his uncle, Dr. Cyrus Edson, and was left there when the latter returned to the city after hearing of the shooting.

Dr. Cyrus Edson was seen after his return at the home of his father and brother, 38 West Seventy-first. He said Dr. David was so nervous over the affair that it was impossible to learn all the details of the tragedy from him, and he (Dr. Cyrus) was not at all certain what had taken place previous to the shooting. He added:

"A long time ago my brother Henry failed for an amount in Rochester, and involved me and my father. As a result there was a coolness between us. I saw him only about once in every six months. He had no connection with me except a little medical practice. He had been acting queerly for the last few days. His wife says he had acted violently toward her, and several neighbors have complained. He was altogether irrational. His wife was greatly alarmed."

"I understand after the others left the room he called Mrs. Pullen back. Had any other persons remained with him in that room this morning he would have shot them also, undoubtedly, because he was attacked with homicidal mania."

"Mrs. Pullen was in every way a lovely and estimable woman, respected and admired by all who knew her. The worst has happened. My brother has killed her, and certain suggestions which have been made are the most dreadful features of the whole affair."

Dr. Cyrus Edson said he understood from Dr. David Edson that Henry had called for pen, ink, and paper and had signed over the furniture to his wife, as he was going away. Dr. Edson said that he and his brother David had conferred over their brother's condition Tuesday night, intending to call in an alienist to look after his case. They had about determined to have his mental condition tested under some ruse, and except for the tragedy this morning Dr. Edson said, his brother undoubtedly would have been taken to a sanitarium for treatment.

The Rev. Dr. John P. Peters, who was called to the apartment immediately after the police arrived, was seen after Dr. David Edson and Mrs. Henry Edson had gone down to the doctor's home. Dr. Peters said he had employed Henry Edson as clerk for the church four years ago upon the recommendation of Mr. Pullen, who admitted at the time that he knew nothing of his protégé's ability, but whose testimonial was supplemented by other good references.

"In his capacity as clerk," continued Dr. Peters, "he received rents for the church. I found him personally a very lovable character, and I never suspected anything was wrong. He appeared to be devoted to his wife and family. It was last Friday that he confessed to his wife that he was involved with the church's finances and with other persons. He mentioned the Corn Exchange Bank. I have learned that he speculated in Wall Street recently with disastrous results. He seems to have acted like a lunatic."

"On Friday, the same day he confessed, he left home. His wife went over to Mrs. Pullen's house, at 673 West End Avenue, just around the corner toward Ninety-third Street, and has been staying there until today. Mrs. Pullen was her best friend. After discussing the matter together, they decided it was best for Mrs. Edson to put her furniture in storage. Several times Mrs. Edson heard from her husband by telephone. She urged that he ought to return and own up to his defalcations, but he did not seem willing to take her advice."

Dr. Peters said he had been consulted by the Pullens and Mrs. Edson concerning their troubles, and the last time he saw them was at Mrs. Pullen's home on Saturday night. In regard to the circumstances of the shooting, Dr. Peters said he was sure Edson was speaking to his wife when he cried: "And I want you to go away with me." Such a remark to Mrs. Edson, said the clergyman, would have been in accord with what Edson had said to his wife in a recent letter. He had written to her that he wished she would go somewhere with him and start life anew. Dr. Peters advanced the theory that there must be some mistake in the accounts of the affair.

"I believe that Mrs. Pullen was shot while rushing between the husband and wife to prevent the latter from being killed," he added. "It was perfectly natural that Mrs. Pullen should have taken a great interest in the family troubles of her best friends, said Dr. Peters, but there was no reason to believe she was the one Edson intended to kill, or that she was acting in any way other than that of a true friend of Mrs. Edson's."

Mr. Pullen, who was summoned to the scene by a telephone message from his fifteen-year-old son, Trafton, arrived at the apartment soon after 10 o'clock. He was prostrated and wept like a child at the sight of his wife's body, and when he came out of the house he said he could not talk about it yet awhile, but would make a statement later. In the afternoon he said:

CONFLICTING STATEMENTS.

"This whole thing is too horrible to talk about. It is wholly unthought of, and I can't realize that it is the truth. This man and I and our wives were old friends."

"He was the clerk of St. Michael's Church, and it became known three or four days ago that he was a defaulter and a

forger. His speculations were in connection with the church fund, but I do not know the amount, and it would not be fair to make any guess."

"I am a Vestryman, and an unfortunate feature of the affair is that I put him in as clerk. He had charge of the rent, the church funds, and the church cemetery fund. He was one of the most plausible men I ever met, and as events have shown he was very cunning. He was always anxious to accommodate everybody, and was particularly courteous to old persons, especially old women, and was always anxious to do them any service. I thought he was all right, and never made any inquiry into his character, but I have learned since the irregularities in his accounts were discovered that he was thoroughly bad."

"After the discovery of the defalcation by W. R. Peters, brother of the Pastor and Treasurer of the church, a meeting of the Vestrymen was called to decide on what action be taken. Edson disappeared, and I thought he had left the city. He telephoned from some place to me two days ago, when I told him I wanted to have nothing to say to him and did not wish to see him again, as I was disgusted at his conduct."

"When the defalcation became known Mrs. Edson came to our house to stay with us. She and my wife were very warm friends. This morning she had an appointment to meet Dr. Edson, her brother-in-law, at her husband's apartment to arrange about the packing up of the furniture and other household articles, to turn them over to the church to reimburse it in part for what her husband had taken. I kissed my wife good-bye before we left the house and walked around with her and Mrs. Edson to the door of the apartment in which he lived. There I shook hands with my wife and she asked me when I would be home, and I said at the usual time. I know just what happened after that. I know only from what has been told me. I don't think they expected to find Edson in the house. He was there, however, and his brother, the doctor, was also present. They had been urging him to go with them to Dr. Peters and throw himself on his mercy. This he refused to do, finally exclaiming: 'I'll end it all by shooting my wife and myself.' Then he jumped to his feet and drew a revolver from his pocket."

"Mrs. Pullen and Mrs. Edson were sitting with their arms around each other and crying. He fired at his wife and hit my wife; then he shot himself. I do not know how many shots were fired, or where they took effect. Of course in an instant everything was in confusion."

"The man must have become suddenly crazy when he realized his position, and shot my wife when he intended to kill his own wife. I have the utmost confidence that the truth will show that matters are as I have stated. Dr. Peters will bear me out."

Mr. Pullen's theory was not acquiesced in by Dr. O'Hanlon, Croner's physician, who arrived at the Edson apartment about 3 o'clock. He found Dr. Peters alone in the flat. After examining the bodies, Dr. O'Hanlon found that the woman had been shot on the side of the head, the bullet entering the base of the skull. The bullet, in its course, had cut off a portion of her ear. There were decided powder marks on her face, and when Dr. O'Hanlon was told of Mr. Pullen's statement he said:

"That must be a mistake. There could have been no error in this shooting. The pistol must have been pointed directly at this woman, and at no one else, as the marks of the powder on her face show that the pistol was held very near her. Edson intended to kill her. Of that I am sure."

Edson had evidently shot himself in the mouth, the bullet passing through to his brain. One bullet was evidently stopped by his teeth, as Dr. O'Hanlon, putting his hand in Edson's mouth, picked up a bullet which was lying in the mouth.

BEREAVED BOY WANTED REVENGE.

At the Pullen home, a handsome private house, the two children of Edson's victim were the first to hear of the news. The young boy, after he and his sister had sobbed as though their hearts would break, suddenly grasped a pistol and rushed out of the house. As he was entering the apartment house where the Edsons had lived he was met by the house's agent, Mr. Card, whom he informed that he had come to see if his mother's slayer was really dead.

"I'll kill him if he's not," said the boy, producing his weapon from an inside pocket.

He departed only after being assured that Edson was past all fear of vengeance. Mr. Card, when asked what he knew of the Edson family, said they had been in his apartment house for four years. Previously they had lived almost directly across the street, at No. 295. He had known that Mr. Edson was unlucky in Wall Street not long ago and had heard rumors of his bad habits. The Pullens and Edsons had been close friends, he knew, but he did not know of anything that should have caused the double crime. The apartment occupied by the Edsons was rented for \$100 a month and was elegantly furnished. A feature of the decorations was a handsome collection of old armor.

The investigation made in the dining room by the police indicated that the first shot fired by Edson had missed its aim and struck the mantel, while the second, after having passed through Mrs. Pullen's face, also struck the mantel. The other three were lodged in the bodies of the dead man and woman.

Besides the relatives already mentioned, another brother of Henry Townsend Edson is Franklin Edson, Jr., member of the Produce Exchange and of many clubs. The aged ex-Mayor, besides having been President of the same Exchange, has had extensive club connections and is still President of the Genesee Fruit Company and the Mutual Mercantile Agency.

MOVING CATHEDRAL COLUMNS.

Task of Conveying Giant Pillars to
Cathedral of St. John the
Divine Begun.

The long-delayed work of moving the first of the big columns for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine from the wharf at the foot of West One Hundred and Thirty-fifth Street to the cathedral site was begun last night by the Jones Brother Company, the contractors.

The hardest part of the task, according to the contractors, is to move the big columns over the soft ground along Railroad Avenue, where the tracks are laid, and east on One Hundred and Thirty-fourth Street to Twelfth Avenue.

At midnight last night the column had been moved as far south as One Hundred and Thirty-fourth Street, and the difficult task of turning the truck east on the cross street had been begun. The contractors hope to draw the column to Twelfth Avenue by 6 o'clock this morning.

TRIED ON WIG IN COURT.

It Didn't Fit, So Miss Huntington Will
Not Have to Pay Brenner's Claim.

Miss Agnes Huntington, the actress, who plays Kate in "Way Down East," has her home in Jersey City. She was sued in the First District Court there yesterday by Oscar F. Brenner of New York, who alleged that she owed him a balance of \$25 for a wig he had made for her and on which she had paid \$10 in advance. Miss Huntington's defense was that the wig did not fit her. She made a counter claim for the return of the \$10 she had paid.

Judge Lyons, who heard the case, directed Miss Huntington to put on the wig. The exhibit won the case for her, and the jury decided against Brenner, ordering at the same time that he should return the \$10 Miss Huntington had paid when she ordered the wig.

UNUSUAL BAGGAGE CONGESTION

Railroads and Express Companies Taxed
to Their Utmost by September Trade.

The amount of baggage handled during the last two days at the terminals of the various railroads converging at this city is said to exceed that of any other two days in several years. The great rush of people returning from their Summer outings always causes a congestion of transportation business during the first days of September, and each succeeding year sees this business increase.

The number of pieces of baggage, chiefly outgoing, handled at the Grand Central Station on Sept. 1 of this year, is said to have approximated 7,000. The number handled yesterday was not so great, but the baggagemen declare there was enough business to satisfy them. One train from the West brought more than 600 pieces of baggage—the limit of its capacity. A second section had to be made up at Syracuse to carry the surplusage of passengers and baggage.

The distribution of the baggage throughout the city, or its transference to other lines, has taxed the resources of the express companies. A loaded baggage wagon has been one of the commonest sights upon the street, while nearly every hansom cab has sported a steamer trunk.

Iron Workers' President Here.

President Frank Buchanan of the International Association of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers came to this city yesterday and will remain for several days.