

# DIED STRANGELY IN A BATH HOUSE.

Mary S. Duff and Ellett L. Titus, of Brooklyn, Who Were Betrothed, Found Dead Near Her Summer Home in Sea Cliff, L. I.

## HE HAD SHOT HIMSELF.

She, a Doctor Says, Died from Heart Disease Superinduced by Chloroform.

## PHIAL FOUND IN HIS POCKET.

Bodies Lay in a Six by Four Foot-Room on the Beach Below Her Father's Cottage.

## MISSING FOR 24 HOURS.

She Was a Wealthy Brooklyn Man's Daughter and He a Descendant of John Hopkins.

Ellett Livingstone Titus, a young broker, and Mary S. Duff, the daughter of a wealthy Brooklyn carriage manufacturer, after an absence of twenty-four hours from the summer home of her father in Sea Cliff, L. I., were found dead in a bath house on the beach.

He had been shot through the head. She, according to a physician who examined the bodies, died from heart disease, which the physician and her relatives say was superinduced by chloroform administered to her by Titus to cure a headache.

Then, it is thought, the man, realizing his position, shot himself. There was little evidence of rigor mortis, but a bottle of the anesthetic was found in the dead man's pocket.

They were to have been married in February, and when they went out for a walk on Tuesday evening both were in good spirits.

It was, so all their friends had to tell yesterday, a pleasant path that led Mary Duff and the man who was to have been her husband through a long engagement and up to the pleasant house party on Tuesday evening in her father's summer cottage, high above the waters of Hempstead Harbor.

He was not yet quite twenty-four, had fair business prospects and would inherit a fortune at the death of his mother. He was a hardy fellow, more than six feet tall, with a cheerful, happy disposition that made friends for him wherever he went. For two years he had been engaged to marry the wealthy manufacturer's daughter.

Titus had known the family for a long time, for when he came North from Titusville, Fla., seven years ago, he went to live with his aunt, Mrs. James D. Hodgkin, at No. 440 Clinton street. She has six sons. There was an undercurrent of feeling among them that young Titus might have made an alliance more pleasing to their mother. But their opposition to the engagement, which was announced more than two years ago, was never very determined.

HE WAS NOT INFLUENCED. Titus was employed by Ford & Walsh, brokers, in Wall street, this city. Early this spring Mr. Walsh, whose confidential clerk he had been, went to Europe, and since that time Titus had not been an employe of the firm, but had been doing a small brokerage business for himself, and spent much of his time in the firm's office as formerly.

If any one ever expressed objection to his approaching marriage to Miss Duff, Titus was not at all influenced by it. He was a man who had his own way and who was as proud of his family as of his opinion. His father, Colonel Henry T. Titus, founded Titusville, Fla., after the war, and his mother, who has lived there ever since, is a relative of John Hopkins, of university founding fame.

Peter Duff, the father of Titus' fiancée, is a wealthy carriage manufacturer in Brooklyn, and his town house is at No. 323 Clinton street, within two blocks of that of Mrs. Hodgkin, where Titus lived.

Titus was everybody's friend in Sea Cliff. He had been there and called with the Sea Cliff Yacht Club men when he was not escorting Miss Mary Duff along the picturesque walks that skirt Hempstead Harbor. He was deeply in love with her, spoke of her continually to his

day night, but the family had been preparing to leave the city for the summer. The next morning, he decided to remain over night and accompany her.

So when he had cleaned the fish she put on her hat and a fur tipnet and prepared to go out on the beach for a stroll with him. It was their custom to go from the cottage to the rear of the grounds, reach the road that runs along the bluff, descend to the beach by the steep steps that lead down the declivity just beside the sea cliff. The house and cottage along the board walk that skirts the water and come home through the village. Ordinarily they were gone less than an hour.

They left the cottage at a quarter to nine, and as they stepped from the piazza the other persons in the house saw that they turned toward the beach as usual, and toward the right call to her mother. "I'm going out to get a breath of fresh air. I'll be back in twenty minutes." That night was the brightest Sea Cliff had known in the village since the death of John Duff. The tree fringed cliff which gives the village its name was white in the moonlight. The harbor was shining silver. The figure of a man mist in the distance on the beach had long since been deserted. Sea Cliff goes to bed early.

FROM THE REAR OF MR. DUFF'S GROUNDS IT IS A FEW MINUTES' STROLL, GOING TO THE RIGHT, TO THE YACHT CLUB HOUSE. There a narrow flight of one hundred steps leads down to the water. Then to reach the family bathhouse, the pair had to turn to the left and walk back along the board walk to a point directly opposite the cottage they had left.

Miss Duff's twenty minutes became an hour, and two and three. Then the growing alarm of those she left in the cottage became fear that something serious had happened, and the girl's brother-in-law, E. P. Floyd-Jones, accompanied by her brother, John Duff, hurried down the cliff to investigate. They gave no general alarm at first.

The men went to the bath house, thinking the missing ones might have gone to row by moonlight and met with the accident. The boat was in its usual place. The bath house was locked.

They searched the shore and the cliff, but found nothing. The morning brought no news, and then, fearing foul play, in the absence of a more definite suspicion, Mr. Floyd-Jones consulted the village authorities, and an organized search was instituted by nearly fifty men.

The row of bath houses under the bluff is perhaps half a mile long. As a rule, only those used by private families are locked. These were searched early Wednesday morning, but without avail. Inquiry at the Brooklyn homes and among the friends of Titus and the missing girl had met with the report of John Duff on Wednesday Mr. Floyd-Jones had decided to publicly offer a reward of \$200 for information about either of the absent persons.

FOUND. The bills were ordered, but they were never printed. One of the parties which was still scouring the beach Wednesday evening decided to force the door of the family bath house. There was seemingly nowhere else to search, so

much ground had been covered already. In this party were Mr. Floyd-Jones, Charles Connors and Village Constables George Brenzel and James Tuttle.

The bathhouse, which is very small, rests upon timbers that hold it high enough to be safe from the tides. As it had not been used during the bathing season the approach was somewhat encumbered by planks, which had been piled on the little platform at the top of the steps leading up to the door. It was difficult access. The constables forced the front door and stood in a little corridor, from which four small dressing rooms open, each apartment being six feet by four. The doors of these were open. That of the third was closed. Connors, who had tried the door and found that it resisted, stood upon a small shelf in the second room, and holding his lantern above his head, looked into the third. His exclamation told the other men that their long search was ended.

Brenzel, from the corridor, placed his knee against the closed door and finally forced it with his shoulder. Miss Duff lay upon her side, with her feet toward the door. Her body was difficult at first to enter, for the door opened inward. Her position and the expression of her face indicated that she had died easily. It was said yesterday by a member of the Hodgkin family that when the constable first entered he found a towel or handkerchief over her face. This was subsequently denied.

There was a stain of blood upon her forehead, but that, it was afterward determined, came from the head of Titus. His feet were also toward the door, but he was in a corner of the room, with his arm against a low shelf, and his head bent far forward between his legs.

MIST HAD DIED INSTANTLY. Beside him was a revolver of thirty-eight calibre. One chamber was empty. The bullet had entered his right temple and passed outward at the left. Death had come to him instantly. His position indicated that he fired the shot while in a sitting posture, and then lurched forward.

The keys to the house and the inner rooms were found in the door on the inside or on the floor. Testimony on this point is contradictory. Among those who arrived at the bath house soon after the discovery of the bodies was William J. Burns, of Sea Cliff. He was the first to make more than a cursory examination of the bodies. It was his first impression, he said, that Titus must have entered Miss Duff to the place and then suddenly becoming a prey to homicidal and suicidal mania, which had been gradually developing, shot her and himself.

An examination of the bodies caused him to change his mind. To begin with, Miss Duff had not been shot, as was at first supposed, and a two ounce phial of chloroform was found in Titus' pocket. If it had been used it had been carefully resealed, for it was still more than half full. Coroner Duryea reached the bath house about one o'clock yesterday morning. He secured a jury, and when they had viewed the bodies stretchers were secured at the Sea Cliff Yacht Club house and the dead bodies were carried up to Mr. Duff's cottage.

DR. BURNS' CONCLUSIONS. Dr. Burns, when I saw him after the autopsy yesterday, said:—"Miss Duff was not shot. Her death was due to heart disease, aggravated, I believe, by the administering of chloroform. I am led to this conclusion by the condition of her heart, the fact that chloroform was found in the man's pocket, and that there was no rigor mortis, although she had doubtless been dead twenty-four hours when found." "I should not expect to have found evidences of chloroform so long after death. I found none in Titus' handkerchiefs or upon the towels I examined. I saw the bottle a few minutes after they were found. Miss Duff lay prone upon the floor. Her clothing was in no way disturbed, and there was no evidence of a struggle of any kind. I discovered nothing in my examination which throws any light upon the cause of the tragedy."

"Miss Duff had a very weak heart, and a few whiffs of chloroform would have caused death. Of course I cannot say whether it was inhaled from the bottle or from a saturated cloth. It would have evaporated from a cloth long before the bodies were discovered." "Miss Duff, I understand, was taken from school, some six years ago, because of her trouble. She was also subject to violent headaches, the pain starting at the base of the brain and gradually affecting her entire head. These were likely to come on at any time, and she attempted to secure relief by a slight inhalation of chloroform the experiment might have been fatal."

"Titus, too, was subject to headaches, and it was his habit to carry a small bottle of chloroform about in his pocket. Frequently he offered me the bottle, but I refused to use it. Only two nights ago he offered it to Miss Duff." LIFE VALUELESS WITHOUT HER. THE EXPLANATION OF the tragedy, offered by Dr. Burns, was duplicated by Mr. Floyd-Jones, who spoke for the Duff family. "I have just found out," he said, "that Mr. Titus a few days ago, told Mrs. Duff that chloroform was good for a headache, and she used it herself. Miss Duff was subject to headaches. No doubt he attempted to relieve her by using it, and he knew enough about it to know that he would not have valued life without her."

"You see Mr. Titus may have forgotten to lock the bath house after leaving his ornaments there in the afternoon, or he may have unlocked the house when they reached it in order to light a cigar. The fresh breeze on the beach would have blown out a match had he struck one outside. It may be, on the other hand, that Miss Duff became ill on the beach, and that he gave her the chloroform there and then carried her to the bath house."

"The revolver I know nothing about, but I have learned that he bought it recently to shoot with in a match he had arranged with a friend. They were to be married in February. He worshipped the very ground under her feet." There was no letter in explanation, and this,

together with the apparent cheerfulness of both persons when they left Mr. Duff's cottage, is regarded by their friends as strongly supporting the theory that Miss Duff's death was due to an accidental overdose of chloroform, and that Titus, frenzied then, shot himself.

Coroner Duryea will hold an inquest on Tuesday next.

WOUND FROM HIS MOTHER. By instructions which Mrs. Titus telegraphed from Florida when informed of her son's death his body will be interred in the Hodgskins lot in Greenwood. The time of the funeral has not yet been set. The body will be removed to Brooklyn to-day.

The funeral of Miss Duff will be held in St. Ann's Protestant Episcopal Church, Brooklyn, of which she was a member.

When I called at the house of Titus' aunt, Mrs. James D. Hodgkin, yesterday afternoon, she told me that she was absolutely at a loss to account for the action of her nephew. "He was of a bright, sunny, cheerful disposition, a hearty, healthy Southerner, and was reasonably prosperous in his business," she said.

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MARY S. DUFF.  
(From a photograph taken three days ago.)



BATH HOUSES WHERE THE BODIES WERE FOUND.

friends and talked much of his approaching marriage. She was the kind of woman described oftentimes as lovable. She was twenty-three, distinctively blond, with light brown hair, a round, girlish face and fine brown eyes. She was a vivacious girl at most times, but subject to occasional nervous headaches of great severity. These have a distinct bearing upon the tragedy, as it is understood by her relatives, and by Dr. Burns, who is responsible for the statement, that her death was due to a heart which a few whiffs of chloroform would have affected fatally.

TITUS RAN AN EXCELLENT FISHING. On Monday evening for a day's fishing. Miss Duff met him at the station, as was her custom, and carried him over to the cottage in the family carriage. Mr. Duff was in the city, but his wife was still in the cottage by the sea. With her were her daughter Mary, an elder daughter, and her husband, Mr. E. P. Floyd-Jones, and John Duff, her son.

Titus went bass fishing next day, as he had intended. He carried the keys to the bath house, where the cars were kept. He returned at half-past six in the evening in great spirits over his luck. He donned an apron after dinner and cleaned the fish himself. He had originally intended to return to Brooklyn on Tues-