

# ONE WOMAN'S DEATH.

The Cruelty of Fate That Pursued Poor Helen Parrott,  
Forewoman at A. D. Matthews & Co.'s Big Store.

She Was Good and Pure and the Little Cash Girls Idolized Her.

## I. THE UNMARKED GRAVE IN EVERGREENS CEMETERY.

There is a newly-made grave in Evergreens Cemetery, Brooklyn, which several people visited yesterday. It bears no name, no distinguishing mark of any kind, and few who pass it realize that it is the final resting place of one of the strangest, saddest life stories that has ever been written.

It is the grave of Helen Parrott, who committed suicide in the North River a few nights ago, and whose body was carried by the tide to the Twenty-third street dock, in this city, where it was found and taken to the Morgue.

There is much that is pathetic in the history of the lovely woman whose life ended under such tragic circumstances. Those who knew her and loved her, and they are many, refuse to believe that she committed suicide. They claim that it was absolutely inconsistent with the life she led, with the brave spirit she had and with the true Christianity she showed every day that she lived. To these people it is very clear that Helen Parrott's death was an accident—and perhaps they are right. No one saw the end, no one can say she ever contemplated it, and no one can tell of what happened from the time she left her bed in her delirium and wandered out of the house until she was taken from the river next morning.

AN ORPHAN GIRL'S LOT.  
Helen Parrott was born in Massachusetts

forty-eight years ago. She was an orphan from babyhood and never had a mother's care or love until she was adopted by Wm. Parrott and his wife, of Boston. For a few years the child knew what a home-life was—the only time she ever had an opportunity to learn. When she was about sixteen both of her adopted parents died, leaving her once more upon the world. The Parrotts had no other children and no near relatives. Their death left Helen dependent entirely upon herself.

She was too young to teach, so she secured a place in a large dry-goods store and began the drudgery of a clerk's life. Eventually she obtained a responsible position with the firm of Chandler & Co., where she worked for fifteen years.

Two years ago the firm retired from business and Miss Parrott looked about her for something else. Just at this time she received a letter from one of her few intimate friends, Mrs. Randall, of No. 329 State street, Brooklyn.

"You have had enough of Boston," urged this friend. "Come to Brooklyn for a few years at least. You can easily find a position and the change will do you good."

Miss Parrott took this advice and came to Brooklyn, where she entered the cloak department in the dry-goods store of A. D. Matthews & Co., 424 Fulton street. She showed great ability and soon became forewoman, a position she held at the time of her death. She had much of the New England reserve of manner, and, while every-

body liked and admired her, only three people in Brooklyn can say to-day that they stood to Helen Parrott as dear friends.

For a time she lived alone in a few furnished rooms of her own. But somewhat more than a year ago Mrs. Randall persuaded her to come and make a home with her. Miss Parrott did so and the two women found great comfort in each other's society.

THE BEGINNING OF A BAD ROMANCE.  
About this time Miss Parrott met Louis B. McCarthy, also a Bostonian, and a former employee of the Associated Press. They had much in common—birthplace, associations, acquaintances. Mr. McCarthy was a



SHE CAME DOWN THE STOOP IN HER NIGHT ROBES.

polished gentleman and a brilliant conversationalist. Miss Parrott was a fine musician. They spent most of their leisure time together, and finally became engaged. He was consumptive, although at that time neither of them realized it. But the disease made rapid strides, and very shortly after their engagement McCarthy's physician, Dr. Lincoln, of this city, notified him that he could not live a year in this climate.

The lovers talked it over and Mr. Mc-

Carthy announced his intention of waiting the end right here. He had seen too many people go off to die among strangers. Besides, he could not afford the trip; he had no money. Like many others, he had spent his salary as he earned it.

Miss Parrott exerted all her influence to make him go. She would not acknowledge for a moment that his condition was dangerous. She was firmly convinced that a change of climate would build him up and make him a well man. She finally infused some of her hope into him and he promised to start in a few months when he had saved enough money.

Helen Parrott had a little hoard of her own, the result of a long life of hard work. She had watched it grow slowly but steadily during her life in Boston, and had been adding to it since she came to New York. At first it had stood to her as the wall between her and poverty when old age came and she could work no longer. Later it had become the "home fund," the wherewithal to help furnish that little home which she and her lover had in mind. But she insisted upon lending it to him for his Western trip. In vain he refused, and even showed that the offer hurt his pride. She argued and entreated until he yielded, and left for Colorado her debtor to the extent of all she had.

The letters came regularly, and as one of her friends said, "Helen lived in them." They were usually cheerful in tone, but even when they were despondent Miss Parrott never lost courage. She clung to his last hope with the pathetic determination of a woman who has been disappointed all her life, and who has but one desire left. Fate could not be so cruel as to take him, she thought.

## THE CRUELTY OF FATE.

But fate was just that cruel. Louis McCarthy died in Denver late in September, and his body was brought on here for burial. Miss Parrott attended to everything, going about with a white face and lips firmly compressed, but with no tears—no lamentation. There was but little change in her after the funeral. She was somewhat more reserved, perhaps, and drew more into herself. But she had always been reserved, and only she herself realized how lonely she was.

Ten days ago she went home from Matthews's establishment sick. She had a severe cold which settled on her lungs. Frequent kindly inquiries were made by her

employers, and last Tuesday morning she sent down word that she was much better and would report for duty in a day or two. She remained in bed Tuesday, her friend,

at times. About 8 o'clock Mrs. Randall left her, after arranging her pillows and giving her the last dose of medicine. Miss Parrott thought she could sleep, and, although her



HE SAW SOMETHING DARK IN THE WATER.

Mrs. Randall, being in the room with her almost all day. Towards evening she began to get much worse and talked incoherently

When her friend, had left the room the sick woman arose from her bed. She discarded her night-dress and substituted a light gingham bedroom wrapper. She thrust her feet into a pair of slippers, and, with hair unbound and no outside wrap or head covering, she crept from the room.

## IV.

THE FATAL CLIMAX OF A FORGOTTEN LIFE.  
She stole down stairs with the cunning of madness—for she must have been mad. The heavy front door creaks when it is opened and the lock turns hard. But it was done so noiselessly and stealthily on this night that not a sound reached Mrs. Randall, who was sewing in a room just off the hall. The sick woman closed the door behind her and went out into the dark streets.

What happened next we can only surmise. She may have roamed about for hours before she wandered down to the river's edge. But she must have kept to the dark, side streets for no one saw the wild, half-clad figure, and where she turned at first no one can say.

But the river always had a fascination for her. She probably stole down there instinctively. Somehow she made her way to the North River, very likely by the Pennsylvania annex.

The theory that she leaped from a ferry-boat in the middle of the stream is generally discredited. She was feverish, and perhaps found comfort in the sight of the great body of cold water. She may have fallen in—she may have jumped deliberately—who can tell? The only thing which is certain is that some time between the hours of 8 o'clock and midnight the waters closed above her, and Helen Parrott's life ended.

Mrs. Randall, going to her room about 10 o'clock, missed her. The apartment had evidently been vacated for some time. The discarded night dress lay on a chair. Mrs. Randall was much alarmed at first, but soon convinced herself that Miss Parrott had dressed and gone to spend the night with her friend, Miss Blox, of No. 58 Decatur street. She sent a note there to learn definitely; but it was not delivered until morning. Then Mr. Blox came hurrying over to the Randall residence to say that nothing had been seen of Miss Parrott. Messages were immediately sent out. Inquiries were made and the police were notified. All

knew that Miss Parrott had no other friends to whom she would go.

In the morning Cornelius O'Brien, of No. 2501 Third avenue, saw something dark floating in the water of the North River and Twenty-third street. He drew it out and notified the Sergeant of the Sixteenth Precinct that the body of an unknown woman had been found. It lay there on the dock, inside the ferry house, started at by the curious until 2.30, when it was taken to the Morgue.

## V.

REJOYED BY THE CASH GIRLS AND ALL WHO KNEW HER.

The next day William Blox came over from Brooklyn and identified it as the body of his sister's friend and his own. The brother and sister took charge of matters and buried the dead woman in Evergreen Cemetery. The funeral took place from Earl's undertaking establishment in New York, for the body was in such a condition that it could not be carried to Brooklyn.

"And oh! do say how good she was," urged Miss Blox, with tears in her eyes, when the woman reporter called to see her. "How noble, how unselfish, how true and self-sacrificing she was I can testify. Her life has been full of grief and disappointment. She had no home, no relatives and few friends. But instead of souring her it seemed to make her anxious to help others and to add to their lives the brightness she never had in her own. She was one of the most womanly women I ever knew, and, reserved as she seemed, she would go far out of her way to oblige any one, even stranger. Knowing her as I do, I cannot believe that she committed suicide."

The same thing, in substance, was said by Mr. Matthews. "Miss Parrott's death has cast a gloom over us all," he remarked, sadly. "I never had a lady in my employ who was so universally respected as she. Our little cash girls idolized her. She was a woman whom any American family might have been proud to claim as a member, for she was a lady in education, character and bearing. I cannot feel that she went to her death voluntarily."

But in the records of the Bureau of Vital Statistics Helen Parrott has been set down as a suicide.