

Horrible Tragedy in Philadelphia.

AN AGED LADY MURDERED.

She is Beaten with a Poker and Thrown out the Window.

Her Son-in-Law Supposed to be the Assassin.

He Has Been Arrested.

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 23.

Mrs. Mary E. Hill, aged about sixty-five years, widow of Samuel Hill, was brutally murdered last evening at her residence, at the northwest corner of Tenth and Pine streets. The house which was occupied by Mrs. Hill is a large three-story brick, with double three-story back buildings. It fronts on Tenth street, and on the Pine street side there is a large yard and garden. The house is very handsomely furnished. Residing with Mrs. Hill was her son-in-law, George B. Twitchell, jr., and his wife. The parties had occupied the house about three months, having formerly resided at No. 319 South Ninth street.

The servant girl, who had been out spending the evening, reached home about half-past nine o'clock. After having rung the bell several times she was admitted by Mr. Twitchell. A few pleasant words passed, and then the servant went into the kitchen. She discovered the door open and then went to the yard to sit the venetian shutter. Then she discovered the body of a woman lying just outside of the door. She called Mr. Twitchell and the body was carried into the kitchen. It was found to be that of Mrs. Hill. The body was covered with blood and bore evident marks of violence.

The murder was evidently committed in the dining-room, which is in the second story of the back building. There are two apartments, separated by folding doors. In the larger room there are two windows, and in the smaller room one window. The windows all open on the yard on Pine street. Between the two windows in the large room there is an old style sofa. At the end of the sofa toward Tenth street there was a pillow covered with green rep. This pillow this morning was completely saturated with blood. On the floor, by the pillow, was a large pool of blood, and blood stains were upon the wall over the sofa. Then spots of blood could be traced across the floor, into the back room, and to the window in that apartment. On the window-sill there was blood, and on the pavement, immediately beneath this window, where the body of Mrs. Hill was found, was another large pool of blood. By the western window there is a large rocking-chair, and on the window-sill this morning some cigar ashes were found, indicating that a man had been sitting there smoking last evening.

Policeman Howard, of the Fifth District, was at the house soon after the discovery of the body of Mrs. Hill. After a hasty investigation of the affair, suspicion pointed very strongly to Twitchell, the son-in-law of Mrs. Hill, as being the murderer, and he was taken into custody. At that time he had on his coat and pants and an under shirt. Howard then took him up stairs to get additional clothing, and Twitchell put on a white shirt and a vest. After the prisoner had reached the Fifth district police station it was discovered that there was blood upon the breast of his coat and upon the sleeve. Also upon his pants, vest, and boots. On the shirt were spots which looked as if they had been spurted upon it suddenly. He was locked up to await the result of the Coroner's inquest. He says that circumstances look very bad against him, but declares that he is innocent of the crime. He is very reticent upon the subject, but what little he did say last night after his arrest was evidently with the intention of creating the impression that Mrs. Hill fell or jumped from the window.

Mrs. Twitchell was also taken into custody upon suspicion of complicity in the horrible deed. She remained in the house all night in charge of an officer, and this morning was taken to the Central Station.

The manner in which the murder was committed is not definitely known. The appearance of the room and the examination of the injuries of the deceased, would indicate that she was lying on her left side on the sofa, probably asleep, and she was struck several times upon the head. The first blow must have caused death, as there are no signs of a struggle having taken place, or any indication that Mrs. Hill made any efforts to get away from her assassin. The body was then either carried or dragged into the back room and then thrown out of the window. Taking the theory that Twitchell committed the murder, it may be inferred from the cigar ashes on the window sill, that he was sitting in the rocking chair at the head of the sofa at the time the first blow was struck.

The wounds on the head of the deceased were evidently made by some heavy instrument. In the room where the murder was committed a large iron poker was found. This was covered with blood, and it fitted in the main wound. There is no doubt whatever that this poker was the instrument used in the perpetration of the horrible deed.

Mrs. Twitchell is a daughter of Mrs. Hill, by a former marriage with a man named Price. She is about ten years older than her husband. Last night Detective Warnock had an interview with her. She said that her mother, husband and herself had been sitting in the dining room, engaged in conversation. About half-past eight o'clock she went to her chamber, to go to bed; her mother soon came in, and after talking for some time she went out again; she (Mrs. T.) then read for a brief period and fell asleep; soon afterwards her husband went to bed and both got asleep; subsequently she was awakened by the ringing of the door

bell. She was about to get up, but her husband said that he would go to the door. He got up and put on his pants and coat and went down stairs.

Sarah Campbell, the servant girl, states that she left Seventeenth and Pine streets last evening, about nine o'clock, and walked down to the house. She rang the bell, but got no answer. Mrs. Hill had always been in the habit of admitting her. She rang again, but still there was no answer. Several times the bell was pulled, and then Mr. Twitchell made his appearance at the door. He remarked: "Oh! Sarah, is that you? This is a cold night." She thanked him for opening the door, and passed along the entry. Twitchell said: "I wonder where mother is," and started up stairs. She went to the kitchen to put coal in the range; she found the gas lighted, and a candle burning on the table; the door leading into the yard was open; she went out to close some venetian shutters, and then discovered the body; she called Mr. Twitchell, and the two carried the body into the kitchen.

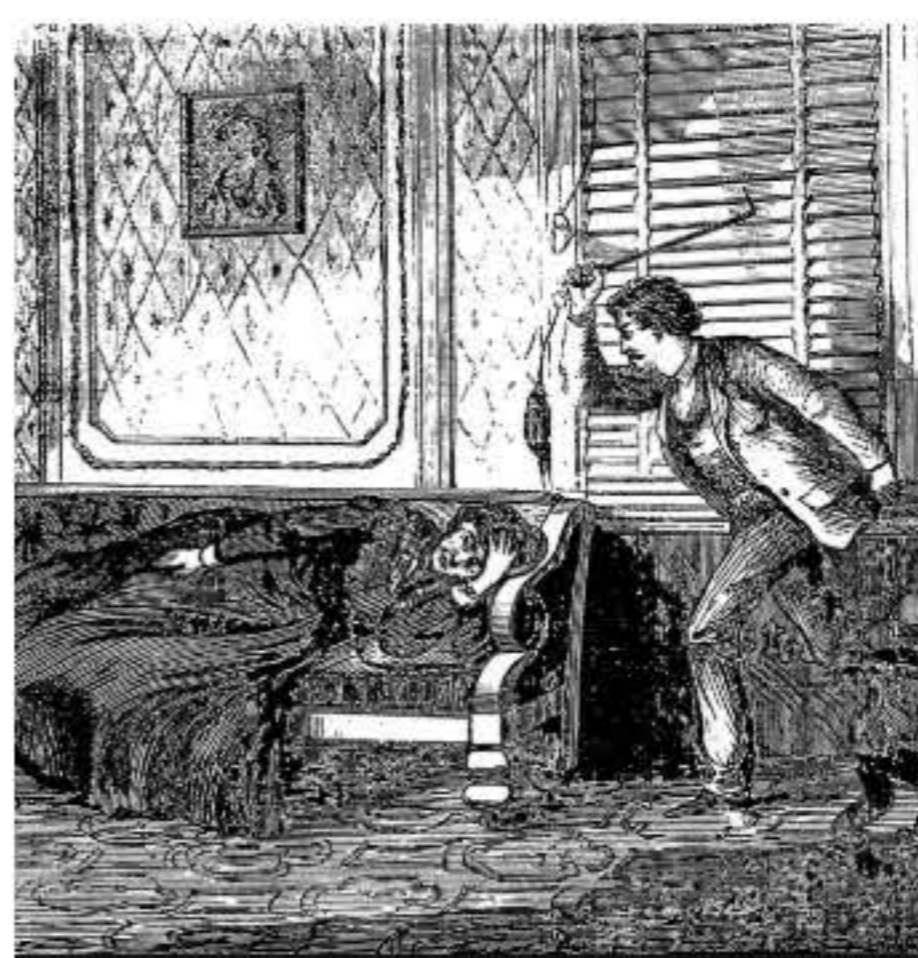
Dr. E. B. Shapleigh, the Coroner's Surgeon, made a post mortem of the body this morning. The head was horribly mutilated. On the right temple was a wound 1½ by 2 inches in size. Into this cut a finger could be readily inserted. Seven separate and distinct gashes were found on the head. The result of the examination will be detailed at the inquest.

Mrs. Hill was possessed of considerable property, which was inherited from her last husband. After her death, however, according to the will of Mr. Hill, the property was to revert to his family. Mr. Joseph Henderson, a nephew of Mr. Hill, was her agent. He says that on Friday last he paid her \$250 which he had collected, and she must have had a considerable amount of cash on hand.

Mrs. Twitchell incidentally stated this morning, that her mother had about \$5,000 in cash and a promissory note she generally carried her money in her bosom, but there was nothing of any value found on her person this morning. Negotiations had been going on for the purchase of the house at Tenth and Pine streets. It is said that the matter had been entrusted to Twitchell, and that he had had the deed made out in the name of his wife instead of that of Mrs. Hill. There had been some difficulty about that matter, and Mrs. Hill had been advised to commence a prosecution against Twitchell for misappropriation of funds.

If the son-in-law did commit the murder, then it was probably done in order to possess himself of this property, and to get out of the way the evidence of how he came by it.

Such a brutal murder has rarely occurred in Philadelphia, and the horrible affair has caused the most intense excitement in the neighborhood in which it was committed. From an early hour this morning up to the present writing a crowd has been gathered about the house and the fence has been mounted and cracks peeped through by parties curious to see the spot where the body of the deceased was found.



THE HILL HOMICIDE.

The following is the continuation of the evidence in the Hill homicide case, as elicited yesterday:—

At three o'clock the Court met and proceeded to pass upon the objection made by the defence, Judge Brewster saying that it was irregular at this stage of the proceedings to inquire into the contents of the deed, but it was competent to prove by the witness that he did not communicate the changing of the name, as he appeared to be the agent for the prisoner in that alteration.

Mr. Hagert here offered in evidence the deed from Elizabeth Hoge and others, Thos. Williamson, trustee of Elizabeth Pleasanton, and the said Elizabeth Pleasanton to Camilla E. Twitchell, dated March 15, 1868, recorded on the 20th of the same month.

Mr. Gilbert resumed—I had not conversed or corresponded with Mrs. Hill on this subject from the time the agreement was completed to July, 1868. In July, 1868, I had an interview with her at my house; Mr. Henderson accompanied her to my house.

Question by Mr. Hagert—What occurred at that interview?

Judge Ludlow—Was the prisoner there?

Witness—No, sir.

Mr. Mann—We object, sir.

The objection was sustained.

Mr. Hagert—Did you ever have conversation with Mr. Twitchell about this property?

Witness—Yes, sir; he spoke of making two stores on Pine street and a private entrance on Pine street, and use the rest of it for a private dwelling; he spoke of this more than once; Mrs. Twitchell, in the presence of her husband, deposited with me a will for safe keeping.

Mr. Mann—We object to this. We do not object to going into the whole history of this family if it referred to this case, but this does not.

Mr. Hagert—I propose to show that she made a will in favor of her husband. The will is in the possession of the defence, and I call for it.

Mr. Mann—You shall have it freely.

The instrument was then produced.

Witness—This is the will; I received it about the time it was dated—October 10, 1863; I returned it to Mr. Twitchell after the interview I have spoken of with Mrs. Hill and Mr. Henderson; I gave it back because Mrs. Hill had come to my house with Mr. Henderson, and wanted to know how that deed came to be in her daughter's name.

Mr. Mann asked to have this latter sentence struck out, on the ground that it was not evidence.

The Court so ordered.

Mr. Hagert—Did you surrender the will at the motion of Mr. Twitchell?

Objected to by Mr. Mann, because it had no connection that he could see with the murder, and on the ground that the question was in improper form.

The objection was sustained on the latter ground.

Mr. Hagert—Did you surrender this will at his own request? Answer yes or no.

Witness—I did.

Mr. Hagert—Did you ever have any conversation with him about Mrs. Hill's life, whether it would be long or short?

Witness—A short time after I sold the house to him he came to my office and said that the old woman had put a large silver plate upon the door, and wanted to know what he should do about it; I told him to let it alone; at another time he said to me, "I have had a terrible time with the old lady; she accuses me of robbing her;" I told him to leave there; these conversations occurred several times; I cautioned him, and told him I did not think such remarks prudent, he came into my office another day and said that a good thing might be made by buying in the interests of the old lady's heirs, for they could be bought for one-third or one-half at the extreme, and the old lady would not live long; on the other hand, he would sometimes argue that she would last long; when he would speak of his troubles with her I told him he had better submit to them and look forward to the inheritance of her estate; he manifested feeling at these interviews; I tried to suppress it; sometimes he would call her a bitch, and other names; but, to be candid, these things did not interest me; I have heard him say he would kill the old bitch; I did everything in my power to break down this feeling; I would advise him to leave the house if he had so much trouble with her; from the sale of the house up to six or eight months ago I had almost daily intercourse with him; I would frequently meet him at the stable, on Tenth street, where he kept his horses, and would walk with him.

Mr. Hagert—How many horses did he keep at the stable?

Mr. O'Byrne—We object. The man's guilt or innocence is not measured by the number of horses he keeps or the time they make.

Mr. Hagert—I ask this to show the pecuniary condition of the prisoner, that he kept three horses and a phaeton, and had no money, and his property was under execution.

Mr. O'Byrne then proceeded, in support of his objection, to argue that it was not competent to show the prisoner's impecuniosity as a proof of a motive.

The Court had no difficulty in admitting the question, citing Eugene Aram's case, Dr. Webster's case, Williams' case and Winnemore's case. If a tumbler of water was drank, and it was proposed to find who drank it, it would certainly be proper to show that a man who entered the room where the water was, was dying with thirst, and on the same principle the Court admitted the testimony.

Mr. Hagert—Mr. Gilbert, you have said that Mrs. Hill and Mr. Henderson had an interview with you; did you communicate to Mr. Twitchell what then occurred?

Witness—I did; I told Mr. Twitchell his mother-in-law had called on me and told me that he and her daughter had robbed her; that she had placed in the wardrobe and bureau \$1000 at one time, and \$1000 at another, and parts of these sums had each time been taken; I told him that I did not feel safe holding that will any longer under those circumstances; he said he would take the will back; I declined to let him have it without an order from his wife, as she had entrusted it to me; he got the order, and I gave him the will; the order was dated July 27, 1868; I do not think he made any other reply to what I said; I have visited the house at Tenth and Pine streets several times; I know they kept dogs there, for it is as much as one man can do to keep them off him if he enters the front door; they were noisy; I never spoke to the defendant after the interview of July 27, 1868.

Cross-examined—We ceased to be friends some eight months ago; all the conversations with him about his mother-in-law were about a year ago; when he made these statements we were friends; I might say that when he told me his troubles we were quite intimate; we used to meet at the stable, and I would go riding with him; I thought he was attached to me; he did not tell me of Mrs. Hill accusing him of robbing her as an instance of how queer she was; I did not hear the word "queer," it was "devil;" he never told me that she would put her money in various places, would forget where she put it and afterward find it; I never heard of this; he never again told me that the kindly relations between them had been resumed; I read that will; I showed it to no one except Mrs. Hill, in the presence of her agent; this was a will leaving her property to her husband and not to her mother; I did not consider the showing the will to Mrs. Hill a violation of confidence, because I considered it unsafe to keep it in my possession after the fearful story she had told me of this man's conduct and his wife's.

Mr. Mann asked to have this explanation stricken out. The Court, relaxing the strict rule of law, struck out the record after the word "no," at the same time saying they found no ground for reflection upon the witness for the exhibition of that will. The taking back of this will was not his motion; it was mine; after Mrs. Hill's account of the conduct of these people I did not think it safe to keep any paper belonging to such people; I called on Mr. Twitchell, but she was not at home, and I left my name; Mr. Twitchell then called upon me and I told him what Mrs. Hill had said, and that I did not think it safe to keep the will; he said he would take it back, and I consented upon the production of an order from his wife; I did not say to him that I had never shown the will to anyone, calling upon God to witness the truth of what I said; the prisoner was at the stable nearly all the time; I did not go riding with him more frequently than with anybody else; I did not go with him very often; we never quarreled; we never had an unkind word; he never reproached me for showing the will to the old lady; he always treated me with kindness, and I returned the same to him; I simply ceased intercourse with him; I was never an agent in any way for Mr. or Mrs. Twitchell.

Randall E. Morgan sworn—I am the Sheriff of the county of Camden.

Mr. Hagert—I propose to show that the execution was issued against the prisoner's property in Camden, and, on the Monday following the murder, was levied.

Mr. Mann objected.

The witness had not the landlord's warrant with him and for that reason was withdrawn, for the present.

Joseph Henderson's Testimony

Joseph Henderson, sworn—I knew Mrs. Hill; had known her some twenty six years; at the time of her death she was the widow of Samuel Hill, who died on February 13, 1866; Mr. and Mrs. Twitchell were not residing with them at this time; they had only been married a year or so then; I was Mrs. Hill's agent after the death of her husband, who was a relative of mine; Mrs. Hill and Mr. Twitchell appeared to be friendly until the latter part of July last; about that time a gentleman called upon me, and in consequence of what he told me I called to see Mrs. Hill; at

this interview Mr. Twitchell was not present, but before I left the house he came into the dining-room and, in a very excited manner, asked me why I had come to create a disturbance in the family, coupling it with, "I give you ten minutes to get out;" I answered that I was in no hurry; he said I would better attend to my own business, and not interfere with other people's; I said I was there on business with Mrs. Hill; he again commanded me to leave in ten minutes, saying he would put me out by force, or get a policeman to put me out; I told him to use his pleasure, but that perhaps the latter would be the better way; he went out as if after an officer, and was followed by Mrs. Hill and Mrs. Twitchell; I remained there a short time, talking with Mrs. Hill, and then took my departure; I used to see Mrs. Hill once a week or once in two or three weeks ever since the death of Mr. Hill; she visited my house and consulted me about her business matters; Mrs. Hill was a woman of considerable means; Mr. Hill left the estate which Mrs. Hill possessed; after these conversations with Mrs. Hill I received a bundle of deeds for the property at Tenth and Pine streets; there is a deed among them to Camilla E. Twitchell; I got this bundle of deeds from Mrs. Hill; Mrs. Hill and I had been to Mr. Gilbert's together, and it was after that she brought the deeds to me; it was the following afternoon.

Mr. Hagert here proposed to prove that this witness informed Mrs. Hill that the deed had been made out in her daughter's name. It was objected to by the defence, and the objection was sustained.

Mr. Hagert—Mr. Henderson, do you know the handwriting of the prisoner?

Witness—I do; I have seen him write; this is his writing. (An instrument, purporting to be a tax receipt for 1867 on the house at Tenth and Pine streets, signed by the prisoner for Mrs. Hill, was shown to the witness and put in evidence.)

Question by Mr. Hagert—Had Mrs. Hill made an appointment with you to go and employ counsel on the Monday or Tuesday following the murder, with the view of instituting legal proceedings for the recovery of the property?

The defence objected because this was a question as to a conversation.

Mr. Hagert said he would be unable to show that this was communicated to the prisoner, but he would argue from the circumstances of his being in the same house with Mrs. Hill, being in constant intercourse with her, that he must have known it.

Mr. Mann argued that it was not competent, more especially in a capital case, to prove one circumstance, of a purely circumstantial case, by other very weak and unreliable circumstances, which, when strongest, did not receive too much confidence in this age.

Mr. Hagert said that he well recollected how firmly Mr. Mann believed in circumstantial evidence when Armstrong, Probat, Williams and Winnemore were hung upon it.

The Court sustained the objection and ruled out the question.

In answer to the District Attorney the witness proceeded: I had no conversation in reference to the recovery of this property, or with Mrs. Hill in his presence; when I made collections for Mrs. Hill they were paid to her at my house; the last payment I made to her was of \$2500, on the Friday preceding the murder, November 20.

Cross-examined—I estimated the personal estate, all in money, that she got by her husband's death, at \$35,000; under Mr. Hill's will she had a life estate in his real estate; I collected the ground rents for her; she collected the house rents, unassisted by Mrs. Twitchell; the income was about \$6000; after her death the property was to go to Mr. Hill's heirs, not to the prisoner or his wife; I don't know that she carried money in her clothing; I do not know that she deposited money in a saving fund; I do not know where she kept her money.

Mr. Mann—Have you not said she carried large sums of money about her person?

Mr. Hagert objected to the question, on the ground that it was not cross-examination, and if it was asked for the purpose of contradiction, the name of the person to whom he said it should be given.

Mr. Mann said he candidly believed the woman was murdered for her money which she carried about her person, and if he could get at any fair means of showing that she made a bank of herself, he would use it.

The Court thought this was not cross-examination and therefore ruled it out.

Re-examined—When I would pay money to Mrs. Hill she would put it into a pocket-book, and then put that pocket-book into a leather satchel, which latter she carried in her hand.

Edward R. Jones sworn—I am a conveyancer; (the deed already put in evidence was handed the witness); the name of Camilla E. Twitchell was put into the body of this deed by the prisoner; Mrs. Hill was not present; he first directed it to be made in his own name, and afterward in his wife's; I made the indorsement on the bundle of papers at the settlement; after the execution of the deed it was handed first to Mr. Twitchell and then to myself to be recorded; I took it from the Recorder's office and gave it to Mr. Twitchell.

Cross-examined—He did not mention Mrs. Hill's name at all.

Mr. Mann here asked that the clothing offered by the commonwealth be delivered to the defence for submission to some expert for examination. The Court required that the name of the proposed expert should be given before such an order could be made. The defence declined to do so, and the Court, for its own security, refused the order.

At 8 o'clock the Court adjourned.

Joseph Henderson. Knew

Mrs. Hill for twenty-six years; she was Samuel Hill's widow; he died in February, 1866. Mr. and Mrs. Twitchell had been married about a year at the time of Mr. Hill's death; was her agent after the death of Mr. Hill, and visited her at Tenth and Pine sts. several times. Mrs. Hill and Mr. Twitchell appeared to be friendly until July last; called at Mrs. Hill's residence the latter part of July. Mr. Twitchell was present at one of the interviews. He came in after the interview, in a very excited state, his wife going for him, and asked why I came there, making a disturbance in the family, and said, "I give you ten minutes to get out of this house." I told him I was in no hurry. He said I had better attend to my business, and gave me ten minutes more. He said if I didn't go, he would take me out with a police officer. Told him that would be a better way. The last payment I made to Mrs. Hill, was the Friday before the murder, two hundred and seventy-six dollars and sixty-five cents.

Cross-examined. I estimated

her personal estate at about thirty-five thousand dollars; it was all in money. She had a life-estate in Mr. Hill's real estate. I collected the ground rents, and she collected the house rents, assisted by Mr. Twitchell. The rental for the present year, ground rents and house rents, was upwards of six thousand dollars. After her death the property went to Mr. Hill's relations. She did not deposit her money in bank to my knowledge; do not know where she kept it. The endorsement on the package of title papers is, "Title papers of premises Tenth and Pine streets, belonging to Mrs. Camilla E. Twitchell." Never saw her place her money in her bosom.