

Ellen L. Pullman

(- 24 Oct 1880)

The Evening Star, October 25, 1880

Sudden Death of Mrs. Pullman

Was It a Case of Suicide

Yesterday afternoon Mrs. Pullman, the wife of Mr. E.J. Pullman, the photographer, residing at and doing business in the upper part of house 935 Pennsylvania avenue was discovered dead in her bed. It is supposed that her death was the result of suicide. Mrs. Pullman had attended the theater the evening before, and arose rather late in the morning, but with the exception of complaining of a slight headache and fatigue she was apparently in good health and spirits during the day. In the afternoon she retired to a bedroom upstairs and laid down telling her children, as was afterwards learned, not to disturb her. Mr. Pullman having a friend visiting him during the afternoon and with him for some time, and towards evening sent his youngest child, aged about 5 years of age, to call her mother. The little one returned, stating that she could not get into her mother's room. Mr. Pullman after a little time, went to the room and knocked and getting no answer, supposed his wife was asleep, and returned to the room below. In a half hour or so he went to the room again, and failing to get a response to his knocks and calls he pushed the door hard when the catch flew off and he went in. Here he found Mrs. Pullman lying dead with her face on the bed. She was holding a handkerchief in her hand, and her face, especially about the mouth was somewhat discolored. Dr. Patterson, the coroner, was at once sent for and noticed an odor of prussic acid, which is one of the elements of cyanide used in the photographer's art. Mrs. Pullman was a remarkably handsome woman, a twin-sister of Mrs. J. Orville Johnson and Lieut. M.A. Austin, of the police. She was about 37 years old and leaves two children, a boy of 9 and a girl 5 years of age.

Dr. Patterson, the coroner, today made an examination and came to the conclusion that death was caused by poison, but whether administered intentionally or not, there was no means of knowing. The circumstances point to the drug having been taken accidentally.