

Jennie Davis (aka Virginia McCann)

(- 12 Nov 1881)

The Evening Star, November 14, 1881, p. 3

Two More **Unfortunates**

Yesterday afternoon at the undertaking establishment of Mr. W.S. Buchly, there lay the dead belles of two courtesans - over one the funeral services were read and over the other an inquest was held. The funeral was that of Leona deForrest, a well-known denizen of 13th street, who died on Friday. Rev. Arthur Foster conducted the services and twenty-five or thirty of the female companions of the deceased were present and weeping bitterly. Numerous floral ornaments had been sent to the undertaker during the morning, with the instructions that they should be placed on Leona's coffin, but in no case was the name of the donor sent. While these services were in progress the coroner was holding an inquest in an upper room on the remains of Jennie Davis, otherwise Virginia McCann, who committed suicide Saturday by taking laudanum. She was a young woman, of rather fair looks, and had been deserted by the man with whom she had lived for several years. The testimony was that of late she had drunk considerably, or, as one of the witnesses stated it, "had not been sober two days out of five weeks." A verdict was given of suicide. She lived on E street, near 11th.

The Washington Post, November 14, 1881, p. 1

The Two Dead Unfortunates

Singular and Affecting Scene at a Funeral -- The Jury's

A singular scene was presented yesterday afternoon in and around Buchly's undertaking establishment, on Pennsylvania avenue. A great crowd thronged the sidewalk in front and the two front rooms on the main floor were filled with elegantly dressed women, whose flash attire and paint and powder marked them as of the class generally recognized as the demi monde. The occasion of the gathering was two-fold. Two of their frail sisters lay asleep in death within the establishment, one having died by her own hand, the other from natural causes. Jennie McCann, alias Davis, committed suicide Saturday by taking laudanum, and the coroner's inquest yesterday rendered a verdict showing that she was driven to the rash deed by excessive intoxication. Her remains lay in an ice-box in the rear of the room, surrounded by empty coffins and burial cases, silent and unwatched, as all interest was centered in her companion in death, reposing in the adjoining apartment.

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A post mortem examination of the body of Jennie Davis, alias McCann, was held in the morning, when the congested stomach and lungs showed undoubted death from laudanum. In the afternoon the coroner's inquest was held in an upper room of the establishment. James B. Collins, L.P. Einolf, Hugh T. Murray, Will F. Page, August Koch and Daniel E. Danaher were impaneled and sworn. The evidence showed that the woman had of late been a great drinker, one witness testifying that she had not been sober for two days in the past six weeks of her life. Another witness testified that the deceased had, on the morning of her death, borrowed the fatal laudanum from her on the plea that she wanted it for cramps in the stomach. The jury then returned a verdict "that the said Jennie Davis, alias Jennie McCann, came to her death, between the hours of 12 m. and 4 p.m. on the 12th day of November, 1881, at the house No. 1103 E street northwest, city of Washington, D.C., from an overdose of

laudanum supposed to be self-administered with suicidal intent.: The remains of the unfortunate woman will be buried tomorrow in Congressional Cemetery, the expense of the funeral which will be a very plain one, to be defrayed by an elderly gentleman who knew the woman in her pure and happy girlhood. Jennie Davis had gradually descended lower and lower in the grade of her wretched life, and at the time of her death had but few friends. It is said that her lover, a Government clerk, some months ago deserted her and that since that time to her death she gave unbridled license to her passion for strong drink.