

Andrea Maria DeFrouville (- 3 Apr 1883)

The Evening Star, April 4, 1883

A Shocking Double Tragedy

A Husband Murders His Wife and Then Commits Suicide

A shocking double tragedy occurred last evening in a quiet neighborhood on Capitol Hill. Frederic de Frouville murdered his wife and then killed himself at the wife's residence, No. 610 South A Street. Since last November, de Frouville and his wife had been separated, and an application for divorce, upon which no decree has been rendered, was made by the wife. About half-past eight o'clock last night, while Mrs. de Frouville was in her parlor with George Buckingham, a young man living in an adjoining house, de Frouville came to the door and rang the bell. Mrs. de Frouville going to the window saw her husband and told him to go away. He demanded admission, and the wife being in fear told Buckingham to get a policeman. Buckingham thereupon left by a rear door, but had hardly left the house, when de Frouville forced the door open. It appears that de Frouville then at once sprang towards his wife, and shot her dead with a revolver, the ball entering her left temple. Then placing the pistol to his own head, he fired and fell, dying beside his wife. The neighbors were at once alarmed, and, running to the house, found the two bodies stretched upon the floor of the parlor. Dr. Bayne was summoned, but his services were useless. De Frouville was about 35 years of age, and his wife a year or two younger. She was a Dane, her maiden name being Andrea Wolstrup. She was tall, handsome and accomplished, being an excellent linguist. They lived apparently in harmony until about two years ago, when, it is alleged, he began to be dissipated and treated her with much cruelty. De Frouville was born in Virginia of French parentage, and at the time of his marriage was employed in the Signal corps. Subsequently he lost his place, as it is stated, through his dissipated habits. Afterwards he secured employment under the Coast Survey, but lost his place from the same influences. Since their separation, Mrs. de Frouville had been engaged as a translator in the Agricultural department. Many stories as to the motive of the murder are in circulation. One alleges that de Frouville was angered at the attentions paid his wife by young Buckingham, and it is said that Buckingham was included in the scheme of murder, but fortunately escaped.

The Unhappy Married Life of the Victim

Mrs. de Frouville's maiden name, as stated above, was Andrea Maria Wolstrup. She came here from Denmark in 1871, accompanied by Col. Sheets, who had been U.S. consul at Elsinore, but had been elected to Congress as a republican from Alabama. He obtained a position for her in the Post Office department, where she acted as translator in the Dead Letter office. Sometime in 1874 she got acquainted with Frederic de Frouville, a Virginian by birth, but of French descent. She married him secretly in Baltimore in 1876, against the remonstrances of her friends, to whom he was known as a wild, reckless man. After that she retained her place in the Post Office department under her maiden name; but upon the birth of a child, which soon died, she resigned her position there. She was afterwards appointed to a clerkship in the Agricultural department through the influence of the late Senator Hill. De Frouville, however, went from bad to worse, and in November last, through John Ambler Smith, she applied for a divorce from him on account of habitual drunkenness and cruelty. In a conversation in St. Marc's hotel, about two months ago, De Frouville expressed his confident belief that she could not obtain a divorce from him. He spoke of her having transferred her affection to Mr. Buckingham; but he still declared that he loved her and could not help it, and would love her as long as

he lived. The only thing he complained of was that she refused to deliver to him his private papers. He was then a clerk on one of the Seacoast and Inland steamers between here and Norfolk. She was seen on the Avenue yesterday afternoon, dressed in a red dress with a black cloak, accompanied by Mr. Buckingham, while de Frouville followed them on the other side.

The Divorce Suit

The bill for a divorce was filed November 19th last by the deceased wife. She set forth their marriage in September 12th, 1877, by Rev. J.W. Osborne, in Baltimore, and she charged that defendant has for three years past been an habitual drunkard, and by his violence had endangered her life. Mr. J. Ambler Smith appeared as her counsel.

Mr. W.T. Johnson, for defendant, filed his answer on December 13th, admitting his residence here and the marriage, but denied habitual drunkenness or violence.

On January 30 a replication was filed, and the case was referred to Mr. John Cruikshank, examiner in chancery, February 10, since which time some testimony had been taken, the witnesses being relatives.

Threatening to Blow His Wife's Brains Out

The testimony of Orsena L. Zimmerman, taken February 28, was the most important in that she testified that on the previous Sunday (February 25) de Frouville said, when perfectly sober, "I am driven to desperation, and I am going to blow her brains out." When she expostulated on his conduct he replied, "I am determined in my course." He was so cool and determined that witness was induced to warn Mrs. de Frouville. This deposition was taken, subject to cross-examination and exception.

No other testimony was taken till March 16th, when George W. Buckingham testified that he had known the parties for about five years; that de Frouville in the last three or four years indulged in drink pretty freely, and, as far as he knew, it seemed to be habitual.

Still Loved His Wife and Believed Her Virtuous

Yesterday de Frouville called at Mr. Cruikshank's office and asked to see Buckingham's testimony, which was shown him. He became excited and expressed his love for his wife and his confidence in her as a virtuous woman. He referred to Buckingham as doing him great injustice, and said he would not attack Buckingham himself, but would get his nephew (a youth about his weight) to whip him. Subsequently he became more calm and left.

Later in the afternoon he drank a little. When the divorce case was referred to he spoke of his wife in the highest terms and thought that the action she had taken had been the result of advice from pretended friends, and he asserted that he loved the very ground on which she walked.

De Frouville's Career Here

De Frouville came to this city when he was very young, but left here when he was a young man for New Orleans, and for a time was employed in the custom-house in that city. He came back to Washington some ten years ago, and had been employed in various capacities from time to time about the Capitol, and in the coast survey office, and was in the employ of the latter at Norfolk in November last, when the above suit was filed. When he returned he stated that this was the first intimation that he had of his wife contemplating such action.

Taking the Risk of Being Shot

Mrs. de Frouville having been warned of his threats some three weeks since, called on her counsel, Mr. J. Ambler Smith, who advised her to have him arrested, and Mr. Smith said it was her duty to do so. She replied that rather than their affairs be made public she would not do so, and would take the risk of being shot. In an interview with Mr. Smith a few days ago, de Frouville said that he was satisfied that his

wife was a pure virtuous woman, and the very fact that she had taken action against him was evidence to him that he ought to be dead.

The Inquest Today

A curious, expectant crowd loitering about in the sunlight in the vicinity of 610 A street, a small two-story brick house marked the scene of the double tragedy last evening. The coroner, Dr. Patterson, arrived about 10 o'clock and viewed the remains. He decided that an inquest was unnecessary. The bodies were left lying in the parlor, where they had fallen after the fatal shot. The friends of de Frouville directed that his body be removed to Zurhorst's undertaking establishment on the avenue. The remains of Mrs. de Frouville will remain in the house until the funeral. About 11 o'clock Coroner Patterson impaneled

The Following Jury:

W.B. Marsh, E.A. Lipscomb, M.J. Shomo, Chas. Beall, Sam'l Cook, Hugh McCaffrey.

The First Witness

was the young man Geo. W. Buckingham, who was in the house at the time. He is about eighteen years of age, and has quite a youthful appearance. He said that he was taking a German lesson last evening with Mrs. de Frouville. They were about half through when the bell rang and she went to the bay window, and he heard a man's voice speaking. He did not hear what he said, but she said, "You can't come in here." The witness then knew it was de Frouville. The latter then began to kick upon the door, and Mrs. de Frouville, turning to witness said, "Run for an officer." He had just got out the back door when he heard two shots. He found two officers and brought them back to the house. The witness never heard de Frouville threaten his wife. She did not appear to be much excited. He had been taking lessons for three months. The witness thought from the man's voice that he was sober. He did not think that she was afraid of her husband, or he would carry out his threats. They had been separated seven or eight months.

Other Testimony

Mr. John E. Buckingham, Sr., the father of the witness, who lives next door, was sworn. He said that Mrs. de Frouville was in his house early in the evening and said she was busy on a dress which she wanted to wear to the matinee this afternoon and left early, and asked George to come in and recite while she sewed. He heard no sound in her house until his son came running in. The witness did not think that the husband had any feeling on account of her intimacy with his son. He never knew of de Frouville making any threats against his son. The witness heard through Mrs. Zimmerman, de Frouville's cousin, that he intended to kill his wife and Mrs. Z. so notified Mrs. de Frouville.

Mrs. Zimmerman was sworn and testified that on the 25th of February she had informed Mrs. de Frouville of these threats. Her motive in doing this was simply to warn the wife. De Frouville left his house shortly after 8 and when leaving he wrote a paper stating that if anything occurred to him he wished her to have certain things of his. When he left he said, "I intend to settle this at once."

He seemed to be perfectly calm. He showed a pistol, but witness did not believe that he was going to do anything, as he had made these threats before. Witness thought he had been drinking a little, else he would not have done it. The witness said that she was friend to both. She handed to the coroner a postal from Mrs. de Frouville, dated March 25th, which read:

"My Dear:--Do me the favor of coming around and take a list of the things, as I think that de F. will feel better satisfied. I think he will feel better. Love to yours and the children.

Yours, Andrea."

The witness also showed a list of things given to her by de Frouville, and were principally personal articles.

James McCadden also testified, but nothing new was elicited.

The Verdict

The jury returned the following verdict: "That the said Frederick and Andrea de Frouville came to their death from pistol shot wounds in the head inflicted with a pistol in the hands of Frederick de Frouville with the intent to commit murder and suicide."

Mr. Max, of the Agricultural department, who said he was a friend of the deceased lady, offered to take charge of the body and see that it was buried. Mrs. de Frouville, he said, was a native of Poland, and had no relatives in this country.

The Evening Star, April 5, 1883

The deFrouville Tragedy Matrimonial Troubles of Long Standing

In the deFrouville wife-murder and suicide case, reported at length in yesterday's Star, it appears that as long ago as February 16, 1879, the wife called on Mr. W.C. Stone, with a view to obtaining a divorce from her husband, charging him with cruelty and threats in the winter of '76 and '77; with kicking her out of bed in 1878; with threatening to brain her with a demijohn, and on February 14th smashing the furniture and threatening to break her neck.

The Evening Star, April 5, 1883

The Two Funerals Today

About noon today a large crowd assembled in front of Zurhorst's undertaking establishment, No. 320 Pennsylvania avenue east, to see the 1st of the unhappy young man, Frederick de Frouville, who on Tuesday night shot and killed his wife, Andrea de Frouville, and then killed himself on the spot with the same pistol. The funeral was a very quiet one, and only a limited number of the deceased man's friends were present--the only relatives being his mother and sister, who came from Cumberland, Md., to attend the funeral. The coffin was a handsome rosewood one, with silver handles and a silver plate, with the inscription, "Frederich de Frouville. Died April 3d, 1883, aged 32 years." The pall-bearers were all friends of the deceased, and were: Edward Quigley, John McNamee, John Pearson, Joseph W. Knight, John M. Shomo and James Douglass. Chaplain Samuel Kramer, of the navy yard, read the funeral service, after which the procession started for Glenwood cemetery, where the interment took place.

The funeral of Mrs. De Frouville will take place from her late residence, No. 610 A street southeast, at 4:30 o'clock this afternoon. The interment will be made in the Congressional Cemetery. The coffin is a handsome black cloth-covered casket, with silver bar handles, satin and lace lining, and has the following inscription on a silver plate: "Andrea deFrouville, died April 3, 1883, aged 33 years." There are none of Mrs. de Frouville's relatives in this city, and Mr. Marx, of the Agriculture Department, has charge of the funeral arrangements.

It Is a Coincidence

that in the deFrouville, Fields-Alexander and Kershaw cases one or more of the parties have been, or are, parties in divorce suits, and that the same member of the bar appeared or was consulted in each case. Mrs. deFrouville, as is stated elsewhere, in 1879, consulted Mr. W.C. Stone as to bringing suit; the wife of Jacques, the hackman, who was wounded in the Fields-Alexander affair, now has a suit for a divorce pending. Mr. Stone being her counsel; and in the case of Kershaw agt. Kershaw, the parties to

last night's assault and beating, a decree of divorce was granted in March 1876, Mr. Stone being the counsel for the wife.

The Evening Star, April 7, 1883

Mrs. DeFrouville's Estate

The Danish minister, M. deBille, has written to the register of wills in regard to the estate of Mrs. De Frouville, stating that as she was a native of the country he represents, being childless, and having a sister and half brother in Denmark, he would ask that a proper person be appointed administrator of her estate. The Register notified M. de Bille that a citizen of the United States would be appointed and every attention would be paid to the unfortunate lady's affairs.

The Evening Star, June 16, 1883

The De Frouville Tragedy

The formal case of dismissal in the case of Andrea de Frouville against Frederick de Frouville for divorce which was filed November 19 last was made today. de Frouville some months since ended the case killing the complainant at her residence in southeast Washington and then taking his own life.