

## Mary Elsie Haslam

( - 12 Aug 1899)

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*The Evening Star, August 12, 1899, p. 1*

### **Was Tired of Life**

### **Elsie Haslam Commits Suicide by Inhaling Illuminating Gas**

### **No Cause Known for Her Rash Deed**

### **Was Found Lying on a Cot in Her Room**

### **Body at the Morgue**

Elsie Haslam, a prepossessing young white woman, about twenty-five years of age, committed suicide at the residence of Mrs. Hines, 826 13th street northwest, this morning by turning on the gas in her room and inhaling the poisonous vapor. No immediate cause for the rash act is known. The girl left a letter addressed to her mother, but neglected to put upon the envelope either the number of her house or the street on which the mother resides.

Mrs. Hines stated to a Star reporter this morning that the Haslam girl came to her house a few weeks ago and asked for a room. She was well recommended, giving the name of a prominent physician of this city as her reference and stating her occupation to be that of a trained nurse.

Mrs. Hines says she did not see much of the girl; that she was gone during the better part of the day, and sometimes went out at night after coming in late in the afternoon. She had a male friend who visited her at first at the house, and with whom she went out with in the evenings, but who has not put in an appearance for the last week or two. The girl, Mrs. Hines also stated, appeared to be not in her right mind at times.

Miss Haslam came in about 11:30 o'clock last night and questioned Mrs. Hines as to where she could get some water, as the bath room on her floor was undergoing repairs. Mrs. Hines noticed nothing unusual in her demeanor or appearance. This morning she saw a light in the suicide's room just before daylight. About 9 o'clock, or a few minutes afterward, a roomer on one of the upper floors in the house left a note with the servant for Mrs. Hines stating that the gas was escaping very badly in his room.

Mrs. Hines immediately investigated the complaint and found the gas coming from the register. She then thought of her eccentric lodger on the first floor, and lost no time in making her way to the door of her room. She found it tightly locked, and immediately sent the servant for a policeman. Fortunately, Policeman Sanford was on the corner below, and quickly answering the summons and obeying Mrs. Hines' injunction, he applied his shoulder to the panel and forced the door open.

### *Heavy Flow of Gas*

The flow of gas from the door was terrible, but Policeman Sanford made his way to the windows and opened them, and then applied water as a restorative to the girl's face. Find that she was unconscious, however, he left Mrs. Hines and the servant to apply such remedies as suggested themselves, while he summoned the Emergency Hospital ambulance. Everything possible was done for the young woman, but she succumbed to the fatal effects of the gas at about 11:40 o'clock, without regaining consciousness.

The deceased was a brunette of medium height; rather slender build, and with a wealth of dark brown hair. When found she was lying on the cot in her room, in a night robe. Every crack by which the gas might possibly escape had been tightly wedged, even the keyhole being stopped up with cotton. So well did the girl make her preparations for the deed that two paperhangers, who were working close by her door, failed to discover the odor until the door was broken open.

Mrs. Hines stated that the girl came to her house from 1117 I street, where, she stated, she had to leave on account of the removal of the family from the house. This was found to be the case by a Star reporter, who interviewed several residents on that street between 11th and 12th streets, but it was learned, further, that the family had moved in order to get rid of the girl, who, it was stated, had indulged too freely at times in intoxicants.

It was alleged that several nights after the family moved out the girl still remained at the house, and that on one occasion the services of the police were necessary to keep her from jumping from a third-story window. She appeared to be in a great deal of trouble, according to the story of one of the family who occupied the house, and said that she would like to get work; that work was the only thing that would enable her to get along, it was also stated that the suicide played a prominent part in the effort to revive Kirby Mobley, the boy who was killed by being struck with a stick at the corner of 11th street and New York avenue a few nights ago, and at that time bore out her statement that she was a professional by her skillful application of remedies to the wounded boy.

#### *Quiet and Ladylike*

Mrs. Grigsby, who kept the house at 1117 I street when the girl roomed there, stated that she had every appearance of being a lady and had always conducted herself in a quiet manner until a few weeks before she was compelled to move on her account. It was also developed that Mrs. Hines had asked the girl for her room, on account of the former's nephew coming to this city. He wanted a room at Mrs. Hines' house, and as she wished to accommodate him she asked Miss Haslam for the room a few days ago, but did not press the matter, and had not said anything on the subject for a couple of days.

No one in the neighborhood where she last lived seemed to know the whereabouts of any of the relatives of the dead girl, although it was stated by some that her family is well to do. The body was removed to the morgue this afternoon and the coroner will probably give a certificate of death as soon as he can view the remains.

*The Evening Star, August 14, 1899, p. 12*

#### **Miss Haslam Buried**

##### **Funeral Services This Afternoon--Interment at Congressional Cemetery**

Funeral services over the remains of Miss Elsie Haslam, the unfortunate young woman who committed suicide by inhaling illuminating gas at the residence of Mrs. Julia Hines, 826 13th street northwest, Saturday morning, were held this afternoon at 2 o'clock at the home of Mr. Joseph Haslam, the father of the girl, who resides at 2013 G street northwest. The interment was at Congressional cemetery.

It is stated that a druggist who has an establishment in the northwestern section of the city was at one time engaged to the deceased girl, and that he, in a measure, was responsible for her being out of employment. From what can be learned it appears that the man in the case received money from Miss Haslam with which to start in business, promising to marry her as soon as he should become established. The girl was generous enough to advance him considerable funds, but he failed to keep his agreement, and this fact operated to make her act in an eccentric manner for some time past. It is said she made a scene outside of his store some time ago, when it is supposed she importuned him to return some of her money. Since that time the girl had an attack of typhoid fever, and many of her friends attribute the subsequent actions that caused her to appear at times to be out of her head to the after-effects of that disease.

The body was turned over to the family Saturday night, after being viewed by Acting Coroner Glazebrook. A brother, Charles W. Haslam, resides in Georgetown. A sister, the wife of Mr. Clarence Thompson, lives in South Washington.