

Eliza McKnew (- 13 Jun 1896)

The Evening Star, June 15, 1896

Tried Suicide

Partial Success of a Husband and Wife's Efforts

A deliberate attempt at double suicide was made Saturday evening by a husband and wife, after thirty years of happy married life. Poverty was the cause of the rash act, and Mr. and Mrs. Jeremiah McKnew the parties. The attempt was made in a room at 306 Pennsylvania avenue, conducted as a lodging house, where the couple had been staying for a week past, and was partially successful, Mrs. McKnew dying from the effects of the poison, laudanum, at the Emergency Hospital, yesterday morning. The husband, however, is on the road to recovery and is now at the home of his brother, Benjamin P. McKnew, 2112 G street northwest.

Mr. McKnew came to this city about seven years ago and until recently was proprietor of the Slater House, at the corner of 2d and B streets, but his business gradually declined and he gave up the hotel business and took charge of the dining rooms at the Hannover Hotel. Sickness compelled him to relinquish that position and since then he had been drifting from bad to worse. Mrs. McKnew had been at work with a family at Takoma Park, but ill-health also compelled her to cease striving for a livelihood, and so at last the couple saw no other plan open but to end their lives.

Mr. McKnew Saturday evening called to the landlady of the lodging house and informed her that his wife was dead. Policeman Reynolds was called, and noting the situation he summoned Dr. Hickling. The latter did all in his power to better the condition of the unfortunate woman, life not then being extinct, and her husband, and later had them removed to Emergency Hospital, where Dr. McGrath and his assistants labored for several hours to overcome the effects of the poison, but without avail in the case of Mrs. McKnew.

In the room occupied by Mr. and Mrs. McKnew a letter was found stating that they had concluded to take their lives and adding that they wanted their bodies to go to a medical college. They added that they wanted no flowers, ministers nor priests.

When informed of his wife's death, Mr. McKnew remarked that it is only a question of time until he shall follow her, and that he is sorry the attempt to end his life did not succeed. The remains of the dead woman were taken to Lee's undertaking establishment, where funeral services of a private character were held this morning. Mr. Benjamin McKnew was very much distressed when informed of the action of his brother and sister-in-law, and claimed that he knew absolutely nothing of their penniless condition.