

Hugh F. Myers

(- 28 Aug 1889)

Myers. On Wednesday, August 28, 1889 at 5 o'clock p.m., Hugh Francis, beloved husband of the late Fannie A. Myers in the 50th year of her age. Funeral will take place from his late residence, No. 470 E street southwest, Sunday, September 1 at 3 o'clock p.m. Relatives and friends respectfully invited to attend.

The Evening Star, August 29, 1889

Hugh Myers Dead

The Man on Whom the Elixir Was Tried Dies--

The Physician's Certificate

Hugh Myers, the man who took an injection of the elixir of life two weeks ago, and of whose illness The Star yesterday gave a report died yesterday afternoon at 5 o'clock. The idea that death was caused by the elixir, which was administered by Dr. Hamilton E. Leach, has largely faded out in the minds of the people of South Washington, and public opinion will, in the main, concur with Dr. Harrison Crook's certificate of death, which will state that Myers' decease was due to typhoid fever, aggravated by Bright's disease, chronic rheumatism, and a serious affection of the heart. The dead man's eldest daughter this morning expressed herself as fully satisfied with the treatment of the case and most emphatically refused to allow an autopsy to be performed. Just before Myers' wife died, sixteen months ago, the husband told her that he would follow her soon, and this agreement he has undoubtedly kept. The funeral services will be held next Sunday afternoon and until that time the remains will rest at 47 E street southwest. Lincoln post, G.A.R., will have charge of the interment and the ceremonies consequent thereon.

The Evening Star, August 28, 1889

Did The Elixir Do It?

A Man Who Received a Dose of it Dying in South Washington

Members of His Family Inclined to Attribute His Condition to the Elixir--

He is Said, However, to Have Many Other Ailments Likely to Kill Him--

A Sensation in the Southwest

In the front room in a two-story brick house, No. 470 E street southwest, is the almost if not quite lifeless body of Hugh Myers, and his condition is today being discussed considerably in South Washington. On the 14th instant, Myers, who was a constant sufferer from rheumatism, called at the office of Dr. Hamilton E. Leach and requested that surgeon to give him an injection of the Brown-Sequard elixir. This, he believed, would rid him of some of his ailments, and now the family and neighbors say it undoubtedly has. The doctor hesitated for some time before he decided to accede to the request of Myers, but finally concluded that it was a good opportunity to test the merits of the alleged discovery, and that same evening procured the necessary materials from a slaughtered ram. The elixir was compounded according to the great physicians' prescription, and in less than half an hour from the dissection of the parts Dr. Leach had injected into Myers' left arm twenty drops of the elixir of life. This was done in the presence of Dr. Harrison Crook, who had been called in by Dr. Leach to witness the operation. Myers said he felt better almost immediately after the injection and went to attend to his duties as a night watchman on 7th street. Today Myers is dying—possibly by this time dead—and

while he has been afflicted by a number of dangerous diseases, any one of them sufficient to cause his death, the neighbors insist that the end has come prematurely and is due to the so-called "elixir."

Statements of Myers' Relatives

The conditions and symptoms, which have developed from time of the injection up to today, were readily given to a Star reporter by members of Myers' family. One of Myers' sisters, who resides in South Washington said she saw him on Thursday morning, the day following the operation and he said to her: "I had that stuff thrown into me last night."

"What stuff?" she asked.

"That elixir of life they're talking about so much nowadays."

"What did you do that for?" was her next query."

"Well," he said, "I believed it might make me well. People told me it would cure me, but it don't seem to be doing it."

"Right after I took it I walked up to the corner of 7th and E streets and there I almost fell down. My legs were almost useless and I staggered against the fire plug. I was blind for half an hour."

"Did that do it?" asked his sister, meaning by "that" the elixir.

"I don't know," he replied, "it might have been that; if it was I'll never say a word about it."

His sister then told him he ought not to have permitted such an operation because his blood was in such bad condition that he might have known he couldn't stand such a powerful change.

What Occurred After the Injection

The injection was given on a Wednesday evening. No beneficial results were visible or felt, but when Myers returned home early on Friday morning his eldest daughter was surprised to see that he staggered. He was not a drinking man but she did not say anything then. After a while he lay down on his bed and he made very peculiar noises. He seemed to be in pain, and when at length his daughter went to him and asked him what was the matter he said he was freezing; that he felt as though there was a lump of ice on his heart. Following the chill came fever and then there was a succession of chills and fever and typhoid fever came and stopped the chills. This complicated matters considerably, for Myers was previously a long sufferer from rheumatism, and had, beyond question, Bright's disease and a serious accompanying affection of the heart. For these ailments Dr. Leach had been treating him for some time, and it is these which Dr. Crook says are carrying him off. Myers complained continually of the pain which was in his left arm (the arm into which the dose had been injected), and on Sunday the second finger of his left hand swelled up to a considerable size. It hurt Myers not a little, so on Monday he asked one of his sisters to get a needle and let out some of the purulent matter. She did so and the outflow was bloody pus and at the last a greenish-tinted semi-fluid. This, the family claimed was evidence of blood poisoning, attributable directly to the elixir, but the doctors dispute the statement.

No Signs of Blood Poisoning

There was no appearance of blood poisoning when The Star reporter went upstairs to look at the dying man. Not one of the symptoms of that dread disease could be seen anywhere. Myers has been delirious almost continuously ever since last Saturday week. Lucid intervals have been so rare and so brief that it has been impossible to consult with him as to his personal or spiritual affairs. He had purchased the house in which he lived and was supposed to have accumulated little money besides, but of this nothing is definitely known.

Around the Death Bed

Since 11 o'clock yesterday morning he has been entirely unconscious, and when the reporter left the room children, sisters and sympathizing friends were weeping over the form of one they loved. Their

subdued cries and the heavy stertorous breathing of the dying man made the scene a painful one. At the foot of the narrow stairway, his face blistered with scalding tears, sat little eleven-year-old Joe--Myers' only boy--weeping as though his heart was broken and bringing tears afresh to many eyes by his sobbing cries of "Papa! Papa!". The other children are girls, one aged fifteen and the other only six. For sixteen months the little ones have been motherless and now they will be alone in the world.

Rev. Dr. Meador, pastor of the Fifth Baptist church, called this morning and did what he could to comfort the stricken ones.

What the Attending Physician Says

Dr. D.H. Hazen, who was called into the case this morning, was seen by a Star reporter this afternoon at 3 o'clock. He had just come from Myers' home, and said that death might be expected to enter there at any moment. When asked if he thought the patient was dying of blood poisoning caused by the elixir he said: "Had I been called into the case without any knowledge of its history I would not have suspected any blood poisoning or other exciting cause. Myers' condition was anemic, was weak, or he would not have submitted to the operation of injection."

When Dr. Leach went to Atlantic City with the Light Infantry he requested Dr. Crook to look after the case. Dr. Leach will probably return to the city tomorrow.

Dr. Crook stated to a Star reporter that the case was undoubtedly and indisputably one of typhoid fever, with which the elixir had simply nothing to do. If the elixir had caused it there would have been active blood poisoning.

Myers' Many Ailments

Hugh Myers was a soldier in the Union army during the war of the rebellion, but was discharged because of disability. He caught cold and it affected his eyes. Although he recovered completely from this trouble he never could sleep as he had previously, and two or three hours sleep was all he required; often one hour would satisfy him. About ten years ago he contracted rheumatism. He was then a member of the fire department of this city doing duty at engine house No. 4. The rheumatic affliction was principally in his left leg, which, after awhile, ulcerated to an excessive extent. He was retired from the department and took up the line of duty--night watchman--which he was following out when he was taken with his illness.