

Thomas A. O'Donnell

(- 18 Nov 1900)

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Sudden Death

Washington Contractor Falls in Stupor and Does Not Recover

Thomas A. O'Donnell, a contractor, who lived at No. 1217 K street northeast, died in the City Hospital in Baltimore about noon yesterday. His death occurred under such circumstances that Coroner Saunders at once started a rigid investigation. The body was sent to the morgue and Dr. N.G. Keirle, the city post-mortem physician, was directed to hold an autopsy this afternoon. Should the doctor deem it necessary the contents of the stomach will be sent to a chemist for analysis.

O'Donnell spent Saturday evening at the Olympia Theater, No. 3 North Gay street. It is stated that he took a number of drinks. About midnight he fell to the floor, and a policeman was called. This policeman, it is stated, declined to care for him, thinking he was helplessly intoxicated and that he might remain on the floor until he got sober. At 2:40 o'clock in the morning, when there had been no change in the man's condition, Sergeant Weaver was summoned. Seeing that O'Donnell was unconscious, he sent for Dr. Thomas Sudler of No. 700 East Baltimore street, who made an effort to restore consciousness. A few minutes later the dying man, whose life, it is believed, might have been saved by prompt action, was on his way to the hospital.

Berney Louis, proprietor of the theater, turned over to the police \$108.63 that had dropped from O'Donnell's pocket. Business cards found upon the dead man revealed his identity. In his pocket the police found a red paper box labeled "Morphine Poison," on which was the advertisement of Powers & Weightman, druggists, Philadelphia. While there was nothing in it, the police believe that it had contained morphine.

From statements made to the Baltimore police it is said O'Donnell reached the theater about 6 o'clock Saturday and remained there until he fell in a stupor. He stated in a conversation with the proprietor of the theater that he had come over there from this city to meet a bricklayer on business. The cause of death may be determined at the inquest, which will be held tonight at the central police station.

Yesterday afternoon information of the affair reached police headquarters from Marshal Hamilton, and Detective Barbee was sent to the house on K street to break the news to Mrs. O'Donnell. Upon his arrival at the house he met Mrs. O'Donnell, who had just returned from a drive with her five children. The shock was a severe one to the widow and she was completely overcome with grief.

Mr. O'Donnell was about fifty years old and was well known in business circles. He had built several public school buildings in this city, and had several big contracts on his hands when he left here two days ago. Relatives went over to Baltimore last night and will probably attend the inquest there tonight. It is likely that the body will reach here tomorrow morning.

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Brought Home for Burial

Contractor O'Donnell's Remains at Rest in Congressional Cemetery

The body of Thomas A. O'Donnell, the contractor who died in Baltimore Sunday, as published in yesterday's Star, was brought here last night by Undertaker J.H. Bradley, a brother-in-law of the deceased. After being prepared for burial the body was removed to the family home, No. 1217 K street northwest. His funeral took place this afternoon, the body being interred at Congressional cemetery.

Dr. N.G. Keirle, who performed the autopsy, reported that no trace of morphine poisoning was found in the remains. The inquest which was to have been held in Baltimore last night was postponed until tonight. It is stated that the Baltimore police board may investigate the conduct of the policeman who failed to care for the dying man when called to the Olympia Theater. A man who was called "Bob" was with O'Donnell in the variety theater Saturday night, and the police will endeavor to have him attend the inquest tonight.