

Charles Stewart

(- 12 Nov 1854)

Stewart. On the 12th instant, suddenly Charles W. Stewart, for many years an officer of the House of Representatives of the United States.

The Evening Star, November 13, 1854

Distressing Suicide of a Worthy and Highly Esteemed Citizen of Washington

With great pain we have to announce the death, by suicide, of Mr. Charles W. Stewart, long and widely known as the faithful and efficient doorkeeper at the central door of the House of Representatives of the United States. The following facts in the case were elicited at the coroner's inquest held upon the body last evening in "the Speaker's room," at about 8 o'clock:

Mr. Stewart was found about 6 o'clock, lying on the sofa, in the Speaker's room, at the Capitol building, perfectly dead. On his person was found \$138; a blank book in which was a memorandum of debts owing to him; and a note, ending "my love to my family the last time,
C.W. Stewart.

In the room was found two bottles of laudanum and a box of ratsbane, both untouched; in the spittoon was found scraps of paper which put together proved to be the wrapper of a quantity of strychnine, marked as such and endorsed, a champagne bottle, and it is supposed that he took the poison in that liquor; the glass in which it was taken was found broken. He took a cushion and laid it on the sofa, where he was found, and died in the position in which he had placed himself. The only evidence of a convulsion was a blood stain on his face, which came from his tongue which he had bitten. The verdict according to these facts.

In addition to these facts, we learn that he was seen between 1 and 2 p.m., of yesterday, by various employees in the capitol, and appeared greatly disturbed in mind, taking leave of some of them and saying that he would not see them again. He is also said to have given the keys of various rooms in the building, which he usually kept (except that belonging to the Speaker's room) to a colored employee there, directing him to open them as usual this (Monday) morning, as he, (the deceased,) would not be there to do so.

Of course various causes are stated as those inducing him to make way with himself. He had accumulated quite a handsome property, and was universally popular, being greatly beloved by his family and immediate friends. Of late, he had been indulging freely in drink. Indeed, we have, within the last month, repeatedly, to our deep regret, noticed him under its influence, when his mind always seemed to wander. We cannot, therefore, doubt that his melancholy death was occasioned by aberration of mind, resulting from too free use in drink. His worthy and distressed family enjoy the commiseration and deep sympathy of thousands in Washington among whom he grew up, all of whom knew well his many excellent qualities of heart and character.