

## **Mattie Vermillion**

### **( - 6 Oct 1877)**

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**Vermillion.** On October 6th, 1877, at 2 o'clock p.m., Mattie, youngest daughter of Clinton and Anne E. Vermillion, aged 6 years 10 months and 6 days. Relatives and friends of the family are respectfully invited to attend the funeral, Tuesday, October 9th, at 3 o'clock p.m., from the residence of her grandmother, Mrs. Mary E. Sword, No. 510 13th street southeast. (Baltimore papers please copy).

*The Evening Star, October 9, 1877*

#### **Sudden Deaths of Two Children An Investigation In Progress**

In yesterday's Star appeared the death notices of Mattie and Harry Vermillion, two children of Mr. Clinton Vermillion, the janitor of the Wallach school building, the first victim near 7 and the second near 5 years old. The older was taken sick on Friday morning at 6 and died on Saturday evening, and the younger on Saturday morning and died on Sunday evening. There are a thousand and one rumors as to the cause of the deaths, some asserting that the confined air of the basement in the school building where they lived originated the fatal disease, and others that, it was something that the children had eaten that caused their sickness. The apartments occupied by Mr. Vermillion and family of six children are in the southwest corner of the Wallach building, consisting of three rooms of which the ceilings are low, but one of them, used as a living room, is tolerably well ventilated. The bedroom of Mr. Vermillion has one window to admit air and light, but that occupied by the children (in two beds) is rather close. There appears to be no dampness whatever about this part of the building, but the floor of the newest addition has water in it, which, however has been pumped out daily. It has been reported that others of the family are sick, but this is not true. The bodies of the two children were removed to their grandmother's residence on 13th street east, this morning.

Dr. McKim, the attending physician, gave a certificate that death was caused by congestion of the stomach and bowels as to the first child, but when the other died, both he and Dr. Ford (who has been called in for consultation) did not deem it proper to give certificate until after a thorough examination had been made, they acknowledging themselves puzzled as to the real cause of death. Yesterday a post mortem was to have been held, but in consequence of a previous engagement by Dr. Ford, it was postponed until 12 o'clock today. Dr. McKim being unwell, and compelled to leave the city, he last evening arranged with Dr. Brackett to take his place. Just before the hour named, Dr. Ford was called into a case which he could not well leave, and the undertaker, Mr. Boteler, who, at the request of the family, had arranged for the funeral this afternoon, called on Lieutenant Noonan, and he sent for the coroner, who will probably empanel a jury this evening. As the examination will necessarily involve an autopsy, it is probable that the funeral will not take place today.

*The Evening Star, October 10, 1877*

#### **Supposed Victims of Poison The Mysterious Deaths of the Vermillion Children**

Yesterday afternoon, Dr. P.T. Keene, the health officer, made a thorough examination of the Wallach school building, in which the two children of Mr. Clinton Vermillion, the janitor, died Saturday and Sunday last, as to its sanitary condition, and with a view of ascertaining if there was anything to cause death about the building. Dr. Keene found the building in first-rate sanitary condition, and could

not find any sources of disease there. The water in the basement of the addition, he was certain had no caused any malaria, and the water-closets having been removed from the inside of the building, in a sanitary view the building is now in better condition than formerly. Dr. Keene will, however, recommend the removal of a stench-trap now to near one of the cold-air ducts, which up to this time can have caused no disease, as the heating apparatus has not yet been put in operation. When this has been done and some measures taken to prevent water getting into the rear basement, the building will be in perfect order.

#### *Post Mortem Examination*

At the time The Star went to press yesterday, the coroner, Dr. Paterson, had been notified by telegraph to make an examination. Dr. Patterson promptly responded with Dr. J.F. Hartigan, and being joined by Drs. D.W. Bliss and C.M. Ford, a post mortem was held. In the case of the younger child, who died on Sunday, the appearances indicated that death was caused by congestion of the stomach and bowels, as certified by Dr. McKim in the case of the older child, and no such indications were found in the post mortem of that child, and consequently they were not able to state the cause. The general indications were of poison, and there are many who are of the opinion that the little ones may have got hold of something poisonous, either in cakes or candy. The contents of the stomach and intestines were taken for analysis, and it will be some few days before the result will be known. In the meantime, Dr. Patterson, the coroner, declines to give a certificate as to the cause of death (in which action the other physicians unite), but consented that the bodies should be put in a vault.

*The Evening Star, November 2, 1877*

#### **The Mysterious Deaths of the Vermillion Children**

It will be remembered that several weeks since that two children of Mr. Clinton Vermillion, the janitor of the Wallach School building, died within a few hours of each other, at their rooms, in the building, and there was considerable conjecture as to the cause of death. A post-mortem examination having failed to satisfy the physicians as to the cause, some of the contents of the stomach of the children were removed for analysis, and this has recently been completed, but no traces of poison were found. Dr. McKim, some time since, became satisfied that the cause of disease was diphtheria of a very malignant type and Dr. Bliss, having well studied the symptoms developed in the sickness, with the post mortem appearances, has come to the same conclusion.