

[Pontin, William S.]

PRAYING OVER HER DEAD LOVER

The Grief of the Maiden who was to have been William S. Pontin's Wife
[From the New York Sun]

The funeral of William S. Pontin, who, on the day set for his marriage to a beautiful young woman living in Thirty-third street, in this city, shot himself on the deck of a Hoboken ferry-boat, was held yesterday [Friday] afternoon in the residence of his uncle, Mr. Thomas Crofts, at 179 Raymond street, Brooklyn. The parlors were filled with a large company of young persons, and many who had expected to attend his wedding gathered about the coffin. Miss Rose H. Plant, the young woman left desolate by the suicide, sat dressed in deep mourning, at the head of the coffin, with her hands clasped together as in the attitude of prayer. A heavy crape veil was draped about her face, throwing into strong relief her light blue eyes and the tresses of light hair that fell about her face. Her eyes moved restlessly, and she seemed to be crazed with a grief which could not find vent in tears. She kept up a continuous low moan, saying, "Oh, my darling! Oh, my darling!"

Her mother sat close to her, and young Pontin's brother sat behind her, almost broken hearted.

The coffin lid was off, and the body seemed wonderfully lifelike. An anchor of tuberose and geranium leaves, entwined with smilax, rested on the coffin lid.

The Rev. H. R. Nye, the pastor of the Clermont avenue Universalist church, who was to have married young Pontin to Miss Rose Plant, conducted the services. He read from the scriptures, and then read, by request, a beautiful bit of poetry, expressing the sadness of saying the last farewell. In his address he said he violated no propriety when he spoke of the fact that the young man who had gone out from the circle of that house had died by his own hand. A wild moan filled the parlors, coming from the lips of the young woman thus bereft of her lover. She said, "Oh, oh my God!" and more that was not intelligible.

The minister was choked with emotion, but he soon proceeded in consoling words. As he spoke of the desolation of the chosen bride she knelt by the coffin, and then arose and kissed passionately the pale lips of the corpse.

As the company filed by the coffin, Miss Plant scanned the face of each person. Her eyes were glassy and tearless. As one lady reached a gloved hand into the coffin to arrange the dress, she grasped the hand and pushed it forcedly aside, saying, "He's mine—my darling." Then she clasped the dead face between her hands, as though it was lying in her lap. She spoke in soft, musical tones, which expressed such intense despair that those who saw and heard her were at once moved to tears.

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As the undertaker drew near to close up the coffin, the young woman uttered a prayer, and all bowed in deepest silence, broken only by the violent sobbing of those in intimate sympathy with her. She then took up the head of her dead lover and covered it with kisses. She clung to the body so long that it was necessary to take her away by force. As she was lead to a seat she refused to take her eyes off the coffin. Turning to her companion, she said, "Oh, they have not covered him yet;" and then she added almost in a whisper, "Don't you think that I could get just one more kiss?"

Pontin's father, in this scene, reeled about like a man intoxicated, and fell into his wife's arms. Mrs. Plant fainted.

Miss Plant followed the body to Greenwood cemetery, where it was buried. Her friends greatly fear the consequences of the shock to her.

No light has yet been shed on the mystery of the suicide. The only reasonable theory advanced is that something occurred on the day of the suicide in the residence of his intended bride, at 307 East thirty-third street, this city. His brother-in-law, Mr. Thomas Burch, saw him at 2 o'clock on the afternoon on which he killed himself. He gave him a wedding present, with which he started to Miss Plant's house. At 4 o'clock he killed himself. At 2 o'clock he was in good spirits, and there was nothing to indicate that he did not expect the greatest happiness from his marriage.

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