ABSINTHE WAS CAUSE OF TRAGEDY

Explanation of the Killing of Miss Hassett and Johnstone.

DEFENSE OF JOHNSTONE

Love-Laden Letters Which She Wrote to Him.

New York, Dec. 20.—The New York World says:

Human passions never played with greater force, with wider swing, than in the romance, the tragedy, in which Kate Hassett and Barry Johnstone were the actors.

Slain by death, with knowing the end was near, Barry Johnstone swore to his best friend that Kate Hassett made a death pact with him, gladly and repeatedly pursued to end her life with him when they should be weary of living, so they might live in all eternity; that, between a pistol shot, he forced a bullet into her head and then obeyed her to fulfill her vow that death, "is eternity." Loving another, she shot him. Then remorse, he killed her.

In his remarkable statement, which follows, Johnstone's closest friend, Samuel H. Wandell, a lawyer of high reputation, makes Johnstone repeat old Adam's excuse, "the woman tempted me."

And Mr. Wandell emphatically asserts the tragedy never would have been carried out had Miss Hassett and Johnstone never met absinthe.

On the other hand, Everett Beckwith, Miss Hassett's husband, declares she was a "true, loyal wife," with whom he lived in perfect happiness for ten years, that Johnstone was insane; that a "strong impersonation may have been put upon Miss Hassett's letters."

A pale, gentle, studious woman," the letters and other views.

Some of her letters, heretofore unpublished, prove that Miss Hassett was more in love with Johnstone, or thought she was, or made him believe she was.

As these widely varying statements would be irreconcilable —

I'll see reminiscences that this romance and its tragedy centres around a brilliant talented and ambitious young woman.

Mr. Wandell's statement is herewith given:

So much has been published concerning the tragic death of Barry Johnstone and Kate Hassett, so many misleading reports had been made, that I felt it my duty to make public the statement he made to me shortly before his death. As there have been some errors made in this account of his confession to me already printed, caused, no doubt, unintentionally, I desire to make a personal statement concerning the matter.

Barry Johnstone was my friend. I should have defended him in court before a jury had he survived his injuries. Now that he is dead I desire to defend his memory and the public shall be the jury.

I had known the deceased intimately for nearly twenty years. I first met him when I was practicing law in the city of Syracuse, where he resided. He was then an usher in the Wieting Opera House in that city. I witnessed his first appearance on any stage.

I have seen Barry since then in various roles. I have seen his rise from an obscure usher to a place in the front rank of the players of this country.

I was with him often in the year of his marriage to Octavia Barbe and frequently met his bride. I know how devoted he was to her and how he suffered when unhappy differences arose between them, which ended in a separation. I was his attorney in the action which she brought for a divorce, but which was never brought to trial on account of the plaintiff having no evidence on which to sustain her complaint. I knew of his infatuation for Kate Hassett, whom I once met casually with him and of his desire to marry her, provided that the legal obstacles in such cases were removed.

I was with Barry on the last day of his life and it was to me that he told the whole sad story of the five tragedies we mourn. How she had played him false, he believed, of the pact between them to die together, of his preparations, for a double suicide and of the terrible tragedy which ended both their lives. So I am prepared today to write understandingly of his life, its lights and other shadows and to end misconceptions and other persons. I cannot allow his many friends to believe that he was guilty of a willful, premeditated murder.

Barry Johnstone's right name was Wellington J. Johnstone. He took his stage name from Barry Sullivan, a celebrated Irish actor, who was well known in this country when the young man at the age of sixteen years, joined William Stoddart's company to test and begin respectably to play in Shakespearean characters.

After a season with Stoddart he followed the usual course of actors, playing in various companies.

A New York paper published in Philadelphia dispatch stating that it had been proved that Kate Hassett was "a faithful wife, and that Johnstone had persuaded her by his perverted intentions and dragged her with letters and telegrams. Then the tragedy.

In order to refute the baseless charge as to the "unknown affections," I will make a few quotations from some of her letters now in my possession.

Following is a hastily written note sent from Mount Pleasant, Ia., on Aug. 16, 1902:

My Own: Am all right. Long letter tomorrow. Impossible before. Run to bed. Must be careful now. Always while breath is left in my body—I am yours. MINNIE.

In a letter written from Aurora, Ill., she says:

"My Darling: Had you succeeded in your from me frequently I should have been even more distressed because I could not write you. The fact that I had been to New York and Syracuse was known here, so I feared the mails. It is easy to arrange things at an office in a small town, so I would not risk sending a letter to you, fearing that it would be intercepted. I don't want to write much. There is nothing to say but what you know. I love you with all of me. I am nothing but what I mean to you. You are all. I must stop this or I'll lose control. I want to cry out wildly to have you come and take me away—to ask you if you really love me, &c. But I wait, dear heart. Barry, love, I do want you so. . . . Send a letter for me on receipt of this to Grace. All is well now. I can't remain in this ignorance of you and your intentions. Tell me you love me. It is all that makes life endurable. I am often tempted to end it and relieve you of me, but I worship you, Barry mine."

In a letter written Aug. 27, 1902, dated "At Sariey, Chicago," she says: "My Darling—I've been here over night. Came in to see the doctor yesterday. I am much better, I think, but, dearest, I simply will not be able to endure that work in Philadelphia, unless you are where I at least can see you once a week. That is all there is to it. I know what it was before when I was in the best of health, and now it would be suicide. With you I can do it or anything. . . Barry, tell me truly how much you love me—that I may dispel this strange uneasiness I have. Of course, it is my loneliness for you, darling."

In a letter written from Aurora, on March 17, 1902, she says: "The summer is coming and with it I hope happiness. You darling, how good you have been to me and what joy it is to a woman that a man like you cares to shower such a wealth of love upon! You do love me I know and I am happy. I think I am. No, I am not for a want, a great void that nothing but you can fill makes me see things, one thought, desire. Sweetheart, save for yourself thoughtfully, won't you? Don't brood—no tense lines about that dear mouth of yours that I have to kiss, fondly, my own."

In a letter from Chicago sent on Aug. 3, 1902, she says: "We must be near each other or I shall die." In a letter sent from New York, Dec. 19, 1901, she says: "My sweetheart, it hurts me to write. I am living through a crisis, missing your gentleness and love sorely. . . . I have much to worry me now. . . . Good-night, my own; I'm off to rehearsal. With all my heart,

"MINNIE."

Minnie was her pet name.

I was terribly shocked when I learned of the shooting affair in Philadelphia, and I was reminded of a note he left for me at my office just before he left to join the Mansfield company. He closed it by saying he was just leaving the city, and added: "We can't always tell what may happen, you know."

I telegraphed him at the hospital offering to go and see him if it was desired, and also wrote expressing my sympathy. I received a letter from his sister saying that he had improved very much and wanted to see me. It was impossible for me to go to Philadelphia until Saturday, Dec. 6. I found Barry in the accident ward of the Hahnemann Hospital.

Barry smiled when he saw me, and, as he shook my hand gratefully, said: "So you've come all the way from New York to see me? God bless you." His voice was strong and he talked freely, though suffering terribly from his wound. He realized his condition—that his life was ebbing away—and was anxious to make a full statement of the case to me.

I sat by his cot and wrote it nearly word for word as he gave it to me. His brother John, of Hamilton, Ont., and his sisters, Addie and Martha, of Syracuse, were there and to us four the tragic secrets of the tragedy were revealed for the first time.

He stated that his friendship with Miss Kate Hassett began in November, 1899, when they were both members of the Modjeska Company. That she made advances and came to him. Since then he had been devoted to her, loved her with his whole heart.

He further said: "Miss Hassett closed the season of 'The Last Appeal' in Boston and immediately took the train for Memphis, Tenn., and rode forty-one hours to where I was with Sidney and James. She was there three days in Memphis and then went with me on one-night stands for a week and then went back. She also came after the close of her next engagement the same season with 'Mrs. Dane's Defense.'

"She came to see me in St. Paul and Minneapolis for a week. After my season closed she came to New York, or vicinity, to be near engagement and stopped off in Syracuse. She was there when we played there and I was there. We went up to New York together and lived at No. 38 W. Forty-sixth street. We were there a week. She was afraid of meeting people, so we left.

"Miss Hassett bamboozled her husband by coming on to New York. She left me there and went on to Chicago, as her husband was there. She had fooled him along all this time by telling him lies. I stayed in New York three weeks after she left for Chicago. She returned from Chicago and we boarded at No. 36 West Hundred and Fifth street. We did not live there as man and wife, but had separate rooms. This was where the most Arthur Elliott, who called to see Mrs. Beswick and her son Alexander. We remained there until I was called to rehearsal with Blanche Walsh in 'The Daughter of Hamilton.' She took her departure and joined Keith's stock in Philadelphia, where she opened on Oct. 27.

"I did not accept Miss Blanche Walsh's engagement, but got an engagement with Mr. Mansfield. I remained with Mansfield until her letters to write convinced me and Mr. Mansfield noticed I was in trouble and was kind enough to let me off for four nights after we had opened in Cleveland so I could go and fix up my affairs in some way. Her last letters were cold and I could see that something had come between us; she did not write often.

"Barry said that he had frequently discussed the question of a double suicide with Kate Hassett. That she had urged him to commit suicide with her, saying she could not live without him. He said: 'She had often suggested to me that we commit suicide together. When in Memphis we had a dispute as to her extravagance. She broke out crying and said I was tired and unfeeling and then threatened suicide. Her husband was urging her to come home and she did not wish to go. She said: 'Barry, we will never part. We will die first.' I told her I'd have a divorce soon and we would be happy together.

"Next Saturday, in Springfield, Mo., she said she would let my back to her husband; she was going to remain with me. She said: 'Oh, Barry, do you love me enough to die with me?' Finally she picked up a knife, held it above her breast, and said: 'I'll do it now.' I said: 'No' and took it from her.

"In New Orleans, when we were with Modjeska, she threatened suicide and pleaded with me to die and commit suicide with her, as we could not live without each other, and our souls could be together. Another time at Niagara Falls she urged me to commit suicide with her because I had objected to her getting drinking with a certain man. She wanted me to end it all with her. Several times she said she preferred to die rather than go on to be separated again and she wanted me to die with her.

"One time when we were living at a boarding house in New York and I had reproved her for extravagance, she said: 'Look here, Barry, when you have no more money and I have no more, we will commit suicide together. We will find the means and end it all, for I could not stand it to have you away from me. Let's turn on the gas now; there is gas in the house.' I had always tried to dissuade her from such rash intentions, but at last I decided it would be best for both of us to go out of the world together.

"If she had refused to commit suicide with me in Philadelphia, I should have thrown the revolver at her feet and left her forever. I did not wait in her room that night to kill her, but it was my intention to ask her to accompany me to my room at Green's and then to commit suicide with me."

"He related how he went to her boarding house on the fatal night. The rest of the story is in his own words.

"I got my supper at Green's and about 8:30 I went to the house on Vine street, and went up to her room, opening the street door with the key I had found in her room. I found her room door locked. I wondered what way I could get in. I found a rope in Elliott's room, which was open and which was situated on the floor above. The rope was in the bureau drawer. I tied the rope to the shutter hinge and let myself down hand over hand and entered her room in that way. I pulled down the blinds as I had found them and waited. I cut the rope off; threw it down beside the window. I did not take this rope there as a means of escape. Then I saw some people out in the middle of the road. I went down into the street and met her.

"She said: 'Why, Barry?'

"I said: 'I have caught you red-handed, and she said, 'You have not; what do you mean?' I said 'You have been false to me since the beginning of appearing with this company. I was warned that it might be so, and I find it is so.' She said, 'Barry, you are mistaken; take me somewhere and let me explain.' I said, 'Come on, then,' and we started down a street below the house. She said, 'You are crazy; you are ill; you are not yourself.' I said to her, 'You have often proposed that we should die together. Now, here is your pistol and here is mine.'

"I had two six-shooters I had bought at No. 27 Eighth avenue, New York, for which I paid the enormous sum of $3.50, with a box of cartridges. I thrust the revolver into her hand and said 'Take it.' She said: 'No, I won't take it, Barry.' I said: 'Take it quick; you are no good, anyway.'

"She grabbed the revolver out of my hand and pulled the trigger, and the bullet entered my left breast below the nipple. I felt a pain there immediately. I shot at her and she fell down screaming. I can't say whether I shot at her two or three times after she shot me. I think I shot her once in the lower part of the body. I then fell into the arms of a sergeant of police, and she was taken one way and I another. I did not shoot myself nor did I try to commit suicide. She snatched the pistol from me and shot me. I had never had a revolver in my hand but a few times in my life. I gave her the revolver I had in my right-hand overcoat pocket.

'She said as I gave it: 'My God! What do you mean? Do you think I'm a fool?' I said, 'I mean business this time.' Then she grabbed the pistol from me. I think some cartridges fell from it, but I am not sure. I heard something falling that sounded like it. She fired when she was standing near me. The other pistol was in my pocket when she fired. I hadn't had time to take it out when she shot me. I then shot her as I have stated. I did not intend to shoot her myself. I had no thought of murder, but I had intended a double suicide. She had often proposed that we commit suicide together, but she was false to the pact of death."

The cause of this terrible tragedy by which two lives were blotted out was unquestionably the effects of absinthe. Johnstone stated to me in his dying confession that Kate Hassett was a confirmed absintheur, and that she had acquired the habit through her acquaintance with a lawyer in Chicago. He declared that he had never drank any of it in his life until the time when the Modjeska Company was in eNw Orleans in March, 1902. It was there that Kate Hassett "introduced" the drink to him. To use his own expression: "She was at it off and on and acquired a thirst for it. I got into the habit of drinking it through her. I took a good many drinks of it, and in Philadelphia, I drank absinthe at Green's, at the Walton and at a cheap place on the corner of Ninth and Race streets. I have drank a good deal of it and seemed to require it. I couldn't stop drinking it."

Dr. A. R. Crain, of No. 125 West Eighty-second street, one of the leading physicians of the city, informs me that if Johnstone acquired the absinthe habit only in March last, that it would give him sufficient time for the subtle poison to undermine his health and reason, and to create an almost irresistible desire to commit suicide.

Then the veil of mystery surrounding the Philadelphia tragedy was lifted by Johnstone on his deathbed. Wormwood absinthe was the cause. The absinthe habit which he acquired through his association with Kate Hassett undoubtedly led him to decide upon a suicide. His purchase of two revolvers confirms his statement to me that he had intended a dual suicide and not a murder. In his confession, he stated: "I had no intention of shooting her. I was going to shoot myself and she was going to shoot herself." He denied emphatically that he had ever used cocaine, morphine or any other drug of that character.

"I was Barry Johnstone's confessor. He had refused to say a word about the tragedy to the members of his family. He was waiting for my arrival. His life was spared just long enough to make the statement to me, and I have given the exact facts as I learned them to the world. I do not seek to palliate his offenses. He has gone to answer them to the Judge of the Quick and the Dead. That he was wholly irresponsible for his acts on that fatal night cannot be doubted. That he intended suicide for Miss Hassett and not murderddd...ddeEsape Hassett am not murder, I fully believe.

SAMUEL H. WANDELL,
No. 68 Wall St., New York.

Facing the hereafter, Barry Johnstone said his conscience acquit him when he met Everett Beckwith, "a fine man."

Surely Beckwith had every confidence in his wife. While Johnstone was insanely jealous of Elliott; while Johnstone, drinking absinthe, was determining to force Kate Hassett to keep her "death pact," she was making arrangements to pass Christmas with her husband at their home in Chicago. There Mr. Beckwith made this statement to The World's correspondent:

"I firmly believe my wife was true and loyal to me. She had told me she was being intensely annoyed by Johnstone and had made up her mind that this was to be her last season upon the stage.

"I know nothing about the letters which it is said, she wrote

WITH COMPLETE RUSSIAN NUPTIALS

Mr. Pavloff and Mlle. Planques to be Married.

EVENT IN WASAINGTON

Bride and Groom Will be Crowned at Ceremoney.

Washington, Dec. 20.—The social feature of this winter will be the marriage of Alexander Pavloff and Mlle. Irene des Planques. Last year the season's event was the marriage of Miss Helen Hay and Payne Whitney. The Russian nuptials will take place here at the Russian Embassy. The ritual of the Orthodox Greek Church is solemnly impressive and the service is known as "the office of crowning." The diadem is used to impress the couple that they have at least reached the highest dignity of life and are henceforward rulers in their household.

The exact date of the ceremony cannot be fixed definitely. Mr. Pavloff, the prospective bridegroom has been summoned to St. Petersburg to confer with the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Pavloff is Minister to Corea and is accounted one of the brilliant young diplomats of the service. He received his training under Count Cassini, the Russian Ambassador here, and was for ten years a member of his staff at the Chinese capital. Mr. Pavloff cannot return to this country before the end of January, so the date of the wedding is fixed approximately between the first and seventh of February.

Mme. des Planques is the friend and schoolmate of Countess Marguerite Cassini, the adopted daughter of the Russian Ambassador and the chatelaine of his household. Mme. des Planques is the daughter of Gabrielle des Planques, President of the board of Directors of the Russo-Chinese Bank. He resides at Kobe, Japan.

It was the intention of Mr. and Mrs. des Planques to have the marriage take place in Paris, but Mr. des Planques was unable to obtain leave of absinthe and in this emergency the Countess Cassini invited her friend to the Russian Embassy here. This was exceedingly grateful to Mr. Pavloff, who regards Count Cassini in the light of a father. Mr. and Mrs. des Planques, however, will sail from Japan in the early part of January and will be guests at the Russian Embassy during the nuptial festivities. Mlle. Janine des Planques, sister of the bride-elect, a pretty little miss of twelve years, will act as crown bearer at the wedding.

The nuptial ceremony will take place in the Ambassador's study on the second floor. This is a stately apartment, forty feet square, and connects with a suite of rooms covering the whole second floor, at the extreme end of the study an altar will be erected, and it will be beautifully decorated with lilies and roses. The lilies represent purity and the roses love.

Bishop Tikahon, the primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America, assisted by Father Hatovilsky, pastor of St. Nicholas' Church in New York City, will perform the ceremony. There will be no nuptial mass. On the morning of the bridal, however, Mr. Pavloff and his fiancee, Count Cassini, and all the members of the embassy, will attend mass and receive Holy Communion. The marriage ceremony will take place at 6 in the evening, and will be followed by an old-fashioned Russian nuptial feast.

Count Cassini will act as the father of honor, and will represent both the Czar and the aged father of the bridegroom. He will head the bridal procession to the altar, clothed in his full court dress, with his sword and insignia of all his orders and decorations.

Count Cassini will bear on an embroidered cushion two gold rings and two silver rings. In advance of him will be the priest swinging a burning censor. Count Cassini will be followed by Mlle. Janine des Planques bearing the two silver crowns used in the marriage rite.

Countess Marguerite Cassini and Mlle. Ludyjensky, daughter of the Russian Consul-General at New York, will act as maids of honor. The maids spread the bridal carpet upon which the couple are to kneel. This is a beautiful square of pale silk pink. They also raise the bride's veil at the proper instant and remove her gloves to receive the nuptial rings.

Following the maids of honor will come the six official witnesses required by the Russian law. These will be Baron Albert Schlippenbach, Consul-General at Chicago, and Baron Fersen, Theodore Hansen, Lieut.-Col. Raspopo, Pierre Rogesvensky and Mr. Routinsky, all members of the embassy staff. Following these will come the bride and bridegroom, who will kneel at the priedieux covered with white satin and ornamented with lilies and roses.

The marriage crowns will be brought from the church of St. Nicholas, in New York. They are of silver, ornamented with jewels, and form a part of the altar service.

The exchange of rings and the crowning of both bride and bridegroom are conducted with appropriate ceremonial. The officiating priest encircles the bridegroom, wishing him peace and happiness, and he then kisses his bride and maids of honor lifting her veil. The priest also takes a goblet of wine and some simple food which he hands to the bridegroom symbolic that he is the family provider. The bridegroom then presents both to the bride, who, after ministering to him by presenting the goblet for a sip and the bread, from which the bridegroom takes a portion, performs the same ceremony herself. This symbolizes that the wife should minister in the household. In the marriage ceremony almost the same psalms and prayers are repeated as in the Roman Catholic Church.

The marriage is followed by a splendid feast, to which all the official and personal friends are invited. It is believed that the President and Mrs. Roosevelt will accept the ambassador's invitation on this exceptional occasion. The banquet will be served in the main drawing room of the first floor. A feature of this is the ceremonious introduction of a roast goose stuffed with raisins and olives. The menu will include many distinctively Russian dishes.

Another feature of the ceremony will be that a surpliced choir from the Russian church in New York will be brought to Washington and will render appropriate selections both at the ceremony and at the banquet.

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Guthrie, O. T., Dec. 20.—The Woods County Industrial company was chartered today to do a general mining business in Woods county. The charter is good for fifty years. This company is organized for the purpose of prospecting for coal in Woods county and for the purpose of marketing coal; also to mine for natural gas, oil, asphaltum, and to manage waterworks systems. The capital stock of the company is $10,000, and it is to be divided up into 1,000 shares of $10 each. This will allow a great number of stockholders to and make the concern stronger.

There are eleven directors, all residents of Alva, and they have the good of the city of Woods county at heart, as well as their own worthy welfare. They are: J. W. Mosdorf, J. D. Blake, H. Bickford, Jeff Bower, E. B. Griffith, J. P. Reed, H. E. Noble, G. E. Nickel, H. A. Stock, W. T. Hatfield, S. J. Rose, J. P. Renfrew, W. S. Fulton and George D. Cerief.

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