

## GRIEF SPED THE BULLET

### Frank Plister Commits Suicide in His Room.

## SHOT HIMSELF WHILE IN BED

### Mad Over Very Dependent of Late Over the Condition of His Aged Mother, Who Is Lying at the Point of Death—Had Been Drinking Heavily for a Day or Two.

Frank R. Plister, a clerk in the Indian Bureau, of Kentucky, committed suicide this morning at his boarding-house, "The Whittier," No. 922 I street northwest, by shooting himself through the right temple.

Frank R. Plister was about thirty-six years of age, and a native of Maysville, Ky. He had resided in this city for some time, and was a Representative in Congress on November 16, 1895. Mr. Plister was appointed to a position in the Smithsonian Institution, and traveled extensively collecting statistics.

On August 29, 1896, he was transferred to the Indian office and assigned to the finance division as a clerk, with a salary of \$100. He held this position at the time of his death.

LEFT HIS OFFICE MONDAY.

At noon last Monday the suicide asked permission to be absent from the office the remainder of the day, which was granted. Since that time his chief clerk, nothing from the absent one until informed of the tragedy this morning.

Mr. Plister was a tall, fine-looking man, a blonde, with light hair, a reddish moustache, and always dressed in the height of fashion, now abraded his limited salary. His fellow clerks say of late he had been very dependent, and sought to drown the despondency in the intoxicating bowl. He had been drinking to excess, they added, since he left his office at ten on Monday.

Last night Plister was suffering from the depression which invariably follows a debauch. He went out and returned to the house about 10 o'clock, so much under the influence of liquor that a gentleman in the adjoining room had to undress and put him to bed.

TRIED TO SOBER HIM UP.

Plister's room is a middle one on the fourth floor. After he had been tucked away in bed, his fellow boarders gave him brandy, whiskey, strong black coffee and other beverages to sober him.

The gas was then turned off and Plister left to himself. A few minutes after midnight a lady neighbor heard a sound as though someone had slammed a door, but Plister was so drunk that he did not get up to see what the sound meant, and so closed his morning, when two ladies on the floor below heard a sound like a pistol shot on the floor above.

No attention was paid to the sound, as one of them thought it might have been made by a falling chair.

FOUND DEAD IN BED.

It was 8:30 o'clock when Jeff, the colored waiter, entered Plister's room to call him to breakfast. The sight which met his gaze appalled him. Plister was in bed, the covers pulled up to his chin. From a gaping bullet hole in his right temple blood had poured across his face and head into the bed, which was saturated with it.

The pistol, a .38-caliber, with pearl handle and silver-plated, was lying on his breast, just below his chin. His hands were raised and rested near the revolver, one chamber of which contained an empty cartridge.

Plister had evidently died instantly.

Jeff, the colored man, was badly frightened, and dashed down stairs to tell the landlord of the wretched place.

LEFT NO EXPLANATION.

The house was thrown into confusion by the tragic event, and Coroner Hannatt was summoned by telephone. He reached the place about 10:15 o'clock, and after inspecting the room and its contents, he places questioning the landlady and boarders, gave a certificate of suicide, the body being turned over to Undertaker Lee to be embalmed.

Plister did not leave any note of word explaining why he committed the deed, but on the table was a note of five lines, in which he had commenced to write with a lead pencil. It began and ended, "Dear Frances," and the handwriting indicated that he was too nervous or excited to finish the note.

Mr. Plister was an amateur artist, and among his most intimate friends here was Mrs. Frances E. Johnston, the artist, No. 1332 V street northwest. Mrs. Johnston called at the Whittier this morning and was shocked to find the body of her friend.

On the table lying beside the note commencing "Dear Frances" was a black-haired letter and numerous specimens of amateur art. The walls of Plister's room are almost covered with art designs, cards, photographs, programs and other things, showing that deceased was of an artistic turn of mind.

WAS A GREAT STIDENT.

At the head of the bed, and gazing demurely down upon the lifeless body, was a painted oval with the inscription "You sleep, I'll watch."

Mr. Plister was a college graduate and a deep student, and frequently burned the midnight oil in his studies and researches.

Mrs. E. C. Plister, the venerable mother of the dead man, is lying at the point of death in Mayville, Ky., and this fact is supposed to have had a depressing effect upon the son. He was very sensitive in this city, and friends of the deceased have telegraphed to his relatives in Kentucky.

In the pockets of Plister was found an accident insurance policy for \$2,000, payable to his mother, which he had allowed to lapse.

Plister had been boarding at the Whittier about two years and was quiet and gentlemanly and quite a loner in amateur art circles. Like most Kentuckians he drank occasionally, but never inebriated while under its influence, and the boarders say he always kept a bottle of old Bourbon in his room.

## MANY YEARS A JUSTICE.

### Squire Lewis I. O'Neal Enters Upon His Seventh Term.

Judge Lewis I. O'Neal this afternoon entered upon his twenty-fifth consecutive year as justice of the peace for the District of Columbia.

His term of office expired last Sunday, and through a misunderstanding on the part of the Attorney General, the recommendation of his reappointment was not made until last Saturday afternoon.

Promptly on Monday morning the President sent the nomination to the Senate, and it was taken from the committee and confirmed by the Senate in executive session yesterday without delay.

Justice O'Neal qualified, and was sworn in for another four years before the general term of court this afternoon. Bond in the sum of \$10,000 was given, being executed by Wash. B. Williams and Dr. Henry C. Brown.

This is Squire O'Neal's fifth Presidential appointment and the beginning of his seventh term.

## WORRIED OVER THE TEXAS

### Secretary Herbert Issues a Long Statement on the Battleship.

## WHAT MR. CRAMP ALLEGES

The Letter from the shipbuilder Forman the Bulk of the Navy Department Communication—Admiral Brown Is Muzzled—What Mr. Cramp Could Have Done.

The Navy Department issued an official statement this morning to demonstrate that any degree of failure, rank with the finest warships in the world, and is not surpassed by any American naval vessel. The occasion for this announcement is Secretary Herbert's approval of a court of inquiry report, which found no one responsible for the unfortunate foundering of the vessel recently at the New York navy yard. Secretary Herbert's statement is as follows:

"In giving out the action of the Department on the findings of the recent court of inquiry, as to the accident which resulted in the sinking of the Texas at the navy yard, New York, I have concluded to depart from my usual custom, and make a general statement about this ship."

"Secretary Herbert then quotes at length the details of the history of the building of the battleship and enumerate the number of her accidents. Continuing, he says:

"LETTER FROM MR. CRAMP.

"This controversy about the Texas has brought out, naturally, from among the naval officers who are acquainted with the ship some very strong defenses, among them Admiral Brown, commandant at the New York navy yard, and Mr. Cramp, who knows more about her than anyone else except her captain. Some statements by Admiral Brown

## DELEGATES FROM RICHMOND.

### Will Be Sent to the Monetary Conference at Indianapolis.

## READY TO DIE FOR CUBA

### Calls to Arms Continue to Be Heard in Various States.

## MOST OF THEM IN THE WEST

### Michigan Lawyer Declares He Will Have Thousand Men Ready by End of This Week—News of Mexico's Death Has Stimulated Recruiting. Wants to Send Medical Supplies.

Grand Rapids, Mich., Dec. 16.—James E. McBride, a prominent member of the bar and one of the leading Republicans of the State, issued the following notice yesterday:

"All Michigan people who wish to free Cuba and annex the island to the United States and forever shut Spain out of American territory, please report at my office this week."

Mr. McBride, in speaking of his move in aid of Cuba, said: "I will have 1,000 men ready to march to Cuba by the end of the present week. Arrangements have been made to take the men to a point on the Florida coast in companies of twenty or more and ship them to Cuba."

Batte, Mont., Dec. 16.—Cuban sympathizers to the number of nearly a thousand held a mass meeting here last night at which the following resolutions were adopted and strong resolutions adopted, urging Congress to recognize the independence of Cuba, and denouncing the Spaniards.

CUBANS ARE ENLISTING.

Omaha, Neb., Dec. 16.—For about two weeks agents of the Cuban junta have been recruiting men to go to Cuba in this State, particularly on the Union Pacific, as far west as Idaho. But few enlistments

## BRYAN NOT LIKELY TO COME.

### Meeting of the Bimetallite Union Executive Committee.

## SKIRMISH ON THE TARIFF

### Senators Aldrich and Vest Indulge in a Tilt Over Tin Plate.

## DINGLEY BILL CALLED UP

### At the Close of the Morning It Went Over Without Action—Increase of Domestic Tin Plate Production Since the Wilson Tariff, Pension Appropriations Passed.

## DANGERS IN RECOGNITION

### Senate Foreign Affairs Committee Takes Up Cuban Matter.

### Acknowledgment of the Independence of Republic of Cuba Will Mean Diplomatic Rupture With Spain.

### The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, with all members present, but Senators Lodge, Harlan and Gray, discussed the Cuban question this morning for one hour and a half, and without taking action of any sort adjourned to meet in special session Friday morning next.

## LAURA DA YET AT PALERMO

### Owners Discredit Report of Her Appearance at Gibraltar.

## BATTLE-SHIP PLATES PAID TEST

### FORCED TO GO TO CHICAGO TO GET AWAY FROM THE TERROR OF THE INDIANS IN INDIA

## TWO MORE RESOLUTIONS ON THE HOOK YESTERDAY

### SENATORS' RESOLUTIONS ON THE HOOK YESTERDAY

## SHERMAN NOT IN IT.

### Refers to Remain in Senate to Golve Into McKinley's Cabinet.

### Superior, Wis., Plant a Total Wreck in Fifteen Minutes.

### Returned now to the alleged 'conspiracy' against navy yards, I state emphatically that I have never handled the subject of navy yard methods except in public hearings before committees, and once in a Washington paper, making no secret of my responsibility for the publication.

## DIAZ'S NARROW ESCAPE.

### Mexico's President Was in Great Danger of Drowning.

### WAR SPIRIT RAMPAANT.

## AN EXTENSION SECURED.

### Mr. S. Friedlander Secures Ten Days More in Which to Make a Settlement.

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## SOME CARTOONETTES.



which, it appears from an interview with him, were misunderstood by reporters, has called forth the following letter from Mr. Charles B. Cramp, by whose permission I give it to the public:

"To the Honorable Secretary of the Navy: 'Dear Sir, The New York and Washington newspapers have recently printed some extraordinary statements concerning the Texas attributed to Admiral Brown. 'At least, I gave them little attention, but they were iterated and reiterated and elaborated from day to day, without disclaimer from the admiral, until they assumed a status of cumulative evidence to the effect that if the admiral was not responsible for them his failure to disavow them was tantamount to responsibility. 'The substance of these statements is that the troubles of the Texas are not due to any defect in the ship, but to a conspiracy among private subscribers to charter and defame her because she was built in a navy yard. 'While the frank absurdity of such a statement is self-evident, I am sorry it is sufficient to give our reputation, and the high rank of its alleged, and thus far not dispelled, source, considerable damage. 'I am, my own private opinion, that instead of 'conspiring' to defame the Texas, I have always defended her to an extent that has made me obnoxious to many officers in the navy, who have been opposed to the adoption of Mr. John's scheme. 'THREE FOR THE COST OF TWO. 'When the plans were under consideration, Secretary Whitney, independently of me, invited the judgment of others, including myself, and I examined the drawings and specifications carefully. My verdict was that the plans were good, unimpaired and practicable. They might not be absolutely the best possible, but they were the best submitted in that competition. 'Returning now to the alleged 'conspiracy' against navy yards, I state emphatically that I have never handled the subject of navy yard methods except in public hearings before committees, and once in a Washington paper, making no secret of my responsibility for the publication. 'In this I did not attack the quality of work done in navy yards, but produced a report which had been made by the Navy Department for the House Committee on Appropriations, showing that on the basis of my bids to build the Raleigh and Cincinnati, I could have had three such ships for what those two cost in the navy yards, and I did this to meet and overthrow a combination which I will not say 'conspiracy' between the New York, Norfolk and Mare Island navy yards against the contract system. 'At the same time, I admitted this high cost was due to the necessary red tape and military methods inseparable from any and all attempts of the government to construct a ship. 'Apart from and beyond the foregoing considerations, I have always and most strenuously deprecated public criticism and discussion of such matters, for the reason that they are used abroad to handicap our industries in competition for foreign work. 'DISCREDITED ABROAD. 'For example, Li Hung Chang asked me: 'Why do the South American republics go to England for their ships?' and I learned that he was prompted to this inquiry by the Chinese government in consequence of rumors to China that British and German makers had had the Chinese authorities that it was because good ships could not be built here. 'The armor-plate investigation, the allegations of defective stability, and many other published criticisms, on our ships have been paraded by the English and Germans in Japan, China and Russia, and the substance translated and printed in newspapers there to our prejudice. 'Far more serious faults prevail in other navies, but they are never known to the public, because it is policy to prevent ill-judged or misconceived criticisms of such affairs. This policy is sound, because certainly may be made good by printer's ink, a conviction which I am sure you share with me. 'In conclusion, I remark that while I have long deprecated this tendency, which I say much about it, I have been pro-

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