

BALTIMORE'S MAYOR COMMITTS SUICIDE

Robert M. McLane, Married Two
Weeks Ago, Shoots Himself.

WORRIED OVER BIG FIRE

Worked Without Ceasing and Was
Criticised in Connection with Re-
building of Burned Section.

Special to The New York Times.

BALTIMORE, May 30.—Robert M. McLane, Mayor of Baltimore, shot himself through the head at 3 o'clock this afternoon at his home, 29 West Preston Street, and died two hours later. Coroner Benjamin F. Hayden of the Central District, after making an investigation, decided that it was a case of suicide, and deemed an inquest unnecessary.

Mrs. McLane, whom he married only two weeks ago, told the Coroner that a few minutes before the shooting, she and Mayor McLane were in her apartment talking. He appeared to be in very good spirits, and they were laughing together over a package which he was tying.

The Mayor remarked to Mrs. McLane that he wanted to put to rights some articles in a bureau drawer in another room, (the same in which the shooting occurred,) and left the apartment.

In something less than five minutes Mrs. McLane heard a noise which she thought was made by a shutter banging to or some article down stairs which had fallen. She called the maid, Lizzie Redchurch, and asked what had happened.

The girl replied that she thought the noise was upstairs, and Mrs. McLane suggested that the Mayor had dropped a drawer.

LYING IN FRONT OF MIRROR.

The maid went upstairs and rapped on the door, and, receiving no reply, entered. The Mayor was lying on the floor in front of a wardrobe mirror. Lizzie Redchurch exclaimed to Mrs. McLane, who had followed her into the room:

"Mr. McLane has fallen and hurt himself."

As Mrs. McLane approached her husband, she saw what had occurred. The pistol was lying on the floor by him. The Mayor was breathing heavily, but was unconscious. She lifted his head and put a pillow under it, and immediately sent for medical assistance.

The Mayor's father, James L. McLane, was among the first to arrive at the house after the tragedy. Five physicians did everything in their power, but the Mayor never spoke.

Dr. Shertzer, the first physician to see the dying man, tells this story:

"I found the Mayor in his bedroom—the third story back. He was doubled up in a heap on the floor in front of a long mirror. He was fully dressed.

"The Mayor's head appeared to be doubled up under his right arm. Near him was the pistol, a five-barreled affair, with one chamber discharged. I straightened him out and secured pillows from the bed and placed them under his head. He was unconscious, and never spoke a word up to the time he died.

"Mrs. McLane was dreadfully distressed, but bore up with wonderful fortitude, and asked me eagerly what the chances were. I replied:

"'There is no hope in the world for him, but send for all the doctors in the neighborhood.'

"When I arrived at the house I know of no one being there except the Mayor, Mrs. McLane, her son Jack, and a maid. When I told Mrs. McLane to send for the other physicians she dispatched the girl and the boy Jack for them."

Coroner Hayden said to-night:

"As much as I regret so to state, I am obliged to give my official opinion that Mayor McLane committed suicide by shooting himself with a revolver. The powder marks on his head show that he pressed the revolver close to his head and pulled the trigger."

CITY INTENSELY EXCITED.

The tragedy has caused intense excitement throughout the city, and by many politicians as well as friends of the young Mayor his death is attributed to worry caused by the great fire which swept away the business section of the city last February. The Mayor felt the burden of responsibility upon him. He labored incessantly. Some of his acts were criticised in connection with the work of making improvements in the burned district, but his public spirit seemed unshaken by the shafts of the critics.

The Mayor's recent marriage is also believed to have caused an estrangement in his family. His wife was the widow of Dr. John Van Bibber, a noted physician. Her maiden name was Mary Lusby. She not only belonged to a prominent family, but was a leader in society, and for years was famous for her beauty. She is about forty-five years old. The Mayor was thirty-six.

Despite the disparity in their ages they had been devotedly attached to each other for years. Their engagement, however, was never announced, and when they went to Washington and were married by the Rev. George Carter of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, that city, the announcement caused a great surprise in official and political circles, though not so much in the exclusive circles of society in which their attachment had long been noted.

Dr. Claude Van Bibber, the brother of Mrs. McLane's first husband, to-night stated that, in spite of the Coroner's official declaration that it was a case of suicide, he believed the Mayor shot himself accidentally, the doctor claiming that the course of the bullet so indicated. He insisted that there had been no coolness or estrangement between the Mayor and his family over the marriage, and that only last evening he and the Mayor called on the latter's father.

Mayor McLane's last days at the City Hall were anything but easy and pleasant. He was not there to-day, and his absence

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was commented upon during the early part of the afternoon, as he had been in the habit of spending at least some portion of every holiday at his desk.

SEEMED UNDER MENTAL STRAIN.

A decided change in him was noticed last Friday. He seemed to be suffering from mental strain. After a meeting of the Burned District Commission and joint Boards of Estimate and Public Improvements, one of the members remarked:

"I wonder what is the matter with the Mayor? He is certainly not himself to-day."

Saturday, however, the Mayor appeared to be in his usual bright spirits. As he was preparing to leave the office for the day, he spoke of the action of the First Branch City Council in holding up the ordinance appropriating \$500,000 of the Western Maryland Railroad surplus for dock improvements. The Mayor said he wanted the ordinance passed, and it went to the Council.

Mayor McLane was elected as a Democrat to the office of Chief Magistrate of the municipality in May of last year for a term of four years. Under the city charter he will be succeeded by E. Clay Timanus, Republican, President of the Second Branch of the City Council, to serve out the unexpired term.

Mr. Timanus to-day said he perceived upon several occasions that the Mayor was greatly worried about something. His physique had begun to show it, and his face frequently wore a pallor that was foreign to his general appearance. At several of the conferences with Mr. Timanus and Mr. Heffner regarding a successor to Reuben Foster on the Burned District Commission there was a noticeable blank stare in the Mayor's eyes, and his entire appearance at times told too well of the heavy strain under which he was laboring. He was usually in a hurry to leave the meetings, and would suggest that matters be accelerated in order that he might get out into the air.

His first real trouble in office came as a result of his failure to recognize the Democratic organization to any great extent and the retention in office of many heads of departments who had served under Mayor Hayes.

Mr. McLane was not in the least disturbed over the criticisms of his course in that respect. He said at the time that the men were kept in office because they were tried and true public servants. He held the public interest to be above that of his party.

MAYOR McLANE'S CAREER.

Distinguished Lawyer and Baltimore's Youngest Chief Executive.

Robert M. McLane was elected Mayor of Baltimore by the Democrats in May of last year after one of the bitterest faction fights ever known there. He was at that time thirty-six years of age—the youngest Mayor Baltimore has ever had.

The Board of Supervisors, which was controlled by the Democrats, decided that the ballots in four disputed precincts could not be counted, and gave the result of the official canvass of the vote as 564 plurality for McLane in a total vote of 95,000.

A few days after the great Baltimore fire last February the Mayor expressed himself as greatly encouraged by the "spirit and grit" shown by his people in their determination to assist in the rehabilitation of the city.

"I realize with the average citizen," he said, "that now is our opportunity to improve the business part of Baltimore. The question of converting certain blocks into public reservations will be considered and a definite conclusion reached with respect to the same. What all must do now is to work together."

Later, when he found that the rebuilding of the burned area was not proceeding with the rapidity and on the imposing scale he desired, he wrote an open letter urging the wealthy merchants of the city, who, he said, appeared to be satisfied with a substantial competence, to make way for their sons and give ambitious young men a chance to show what they could do.

Mr. McLane was born in Baltimore on Nov. 30, 1867. Prior to his election to the Mayoralty his family had already given to Maryland a Governor and to the Republic a Minister to France in the person of his uncle, from whom he took his name.

After being trained in the private schools of his city, Robert M. McLane studied in the Johns Hopkins University, where he followed a classical course, with enough zeal to win for him several honorary scholarships. Upon leaving Johns Hopkins he entered upon his professional studies under the Faculty of Law of the University of Maryland, and upon completing them was admitted to the bar of Baltimore.

His first practice of law was undertaken with his brother, Allan McLane. Not long afterward Robert was appointed assistant to the late Charles G. Kerr, then State's Attorney for Baltimore. He held this position until 1895. Henry Duffy was then elected to the State's Attorneyship, and under his administration McLane served during 1896 and part of 1897.

He then went abroad and, on returning, resumed his private practice until his election in 1899 to the head of the department in which he had served a long apprenticeship under two chiefs. The fidelity and ability with which he executed his office as City Prosecutor was an important element in the campaign in which he was elected to the Mayoralty.

In 1894, with the late William L. Hodge, McLane published a book on the Maryland law relating to attachments, which was widely circulated.

Mrs. McLane as Mrs. Van Bibber was very well known in New York. For several seasons she has been here at the Horse Show, and is a friend of Mrs. Henry Clews, Jr., the Misses Robinson of Baltimore, and Mrs. Alexander Brown and Mrs. Jesse Tyson. At Narragansett Pier and Bar Harbor she has for several Summers received much attention. She has two sons, Ralph and John.