

FOUND MRS. AYER INSANE

DECISION OF A JURY AFTER HEARING EVIDENCE.

TESTIMONY THAT WHILE HER CHANCES FOR RECOVERY ARE SMALL, HER CASE IS NOT HOPELESS—NO SIGNS OF ALCOHOLISM OR THE MORPHINE HABIT—SHE COULD NOT TESTIFY.

Mrs. Harriet Hubbard Ayer was decided to be insane at the present time, and incapable of caring for her own interests, by a jury in Part II of the Supreme Court yesterday afternoon.

The investigation was conducted by the commission, consisting of Dr. Matthew Chalmers and John H. Judge, which was appointed by Judge Andrews on the application of Herbert C. Ayer, the husband of Mrs. Ayer.

Charles W. Brooke represented Mrs. Ayer, and when the jury was called, Dr. Chalmers asked for Mrs. Ayer's counsel. Stephen H. Olin said that he was the lady's representative, not by arrangement with her, but because he had been her legal adviser in the past and was interested in her.

After one jurymen, who said he knew Mrs. Ayer three years ago, and a second, who claimed the acquaintance of the Ayer family, had been accepted, Mr. Brooke began proceedings by reading the commission issued by Judge Andrews.

Dr. William J. Morton was the first witness called. He said that he had been called in to examine Mrs. Ayer last October by her husband and her older daughter, Mrs. Harriet Seymour, who lives in Orange. He found the patient's physical condition very grave, but saw no signs of alcoholism or the morphine habit, or anything of that kind. She had all the symptoms of melancholia.

After that, Dr. Morton stated, he visited Mrs. Ayer every other day for three months. She would sit with her hands folded, staring into vacancy, and complained of hearing voices which came from outside of the house. These voices, she said, summoned her to do improper acts, and used improper expressions, and she begged the doctor to stop them. He induced her to do things, when she resisted his directions, by promising to abolish the voices.

Dr. Morton heard from Mrs. Ayer's attendants that she had suicidal tendencies, and Lena Raymond, her colored maid, told him that sometimes she restrained the woman with great difficulty from committing suicide. Mrs. Ayer was attended by her maid and a professional nurse, and had all the home comforts, but nobody to take charge of her and compel her to obey the doctor's orders.

On Feb. 8 last Dr. George M. Hammond was called in, and he and Dr. Morton signed the certificate for her commitment to Dr. William H. Granger's sanitarium at Bronxville. When Dr. Morton asked her to go to Bronxville she made no objection, and was taken there in a carriage on Feb. 9. The doctor had intended to go only as far as the Grand Central Station in the carriage, but her stupor was so bad that he drove all the way.

Dr. Granger, proprietor of the private asylum, testified. He had just stated that he first saw Mrs. Ayer at his sanitarium on Feb. 9, when she came with Dr. Morton and her colored maid, when Commissioner Chalmers interrupted him and said that Mrs. Ayer was in an adjoining room and might appear in person. It was decided that she should testify, and she came in accompanied by a friend and Lena Raymond.

Mrs. Ayer was dressed in deep black and wore a heavy black veil, the many folds of which could not, however, conceal her deathly pallor. She kept her eyes cast down. Mr. Olin, as her former counsel and so best acquainted with her, asked her various questions.

"Do you know why you are here?" questioned Mr. Olin.

Mrs. Ayer simply shook her head and said, "No," in so low a tone that only her maid, who sat beside her, caught the sound.

"Do you know where you are?"

The woman gave no sign of having heard the question. Then Lena, the colored girl, asked the same thing, but got no reply. Mrs. Ayer lifted her veil enough to wipe away a few tears that had started down her cheeks and showed her face, which was hardly recognizable as the same one that was known for its beauty a year or two ago.

"Do you want to stay here?" asked Lena.

Mrs. Ayer shook her head, and was led out of the room. By common wish of the jury she was not recalled.

Dr. Granger then continued his testimony, saying that he had been connected with Bellevue Hospital and made a specialty of insanity. He said that Mrs. Ayer was admitted to his sanitarium on a certificate signed by Dr. Morton and Dr. Hammond. Her stay at Bronxville had been one continuous examination, as it were, and that she had melancholia beyond a doubt; she was probably incurable. The chances for her recovery were very small, but her case was not hopeless.

Dr. Granger said that Mrs. Ayer had never spoken while in his institution, except to answer questions, and then always in the briefest possible manner. Twice she had sent him a message—once asking for medicine and the other time for her sister. She was always listless, and when he told her of the proceedings of yesterday, and asked her whether she wanted to attend them or not, she said she didn't care.

The doctor said his patient's face showed signs of mental pain and depression of spirits. He had also heard her complain about the voices. There had been no improvement since the present attack began, a year ago.

Dr. Granger had no idea of the cause of Mrs. Ayer's mental condition. He had never observed anything that would lead him to believe it was due to the use of alcoholic stimulants. She had never asked for anything of the kind, and nothing of the sort had ever entered into the treatment.

Dr. George M. Hammond said that he had known Mrs. Ayer six years, and had seen melancholia gradually coming on all that time. Two years ago her face became typical of melancholia. He had not seen her since Feb. 8 until yesterday, and thought she was unquestionably insane. There had been an entire change in her physical appearance in the past six years, and he would hardly recognize her now if he had not seen her in the meantime.

When asked what the causes were, he answered, "Many," and said that over-attention to business was doubtless one. Asked about the others, he declined to state them. He thought the chances of Mrs. Ayer's recovery were small, but were better with institutional confinement.

Lena Raymond, the colored girl who said she had been employed as Mrs. Ayer's maid for five years, stated that her mistress had always been very cheerful until last Summer, but had been less so since then, and she thought she was "gradually going down." Mrs. Ayer had, she said, translated a book about a year ago and looked after her own business affairs, all of which was, of course, a strain on her nerves.

In reply to Mr. Brooke, Lena said that she and a trained nurse had taken Mrs. Ayer to Islip, L. I., to spend the Summer of 1891. They had a cottage there.

"Do you remember hearing Mrs. Ayer talk about suicide?" asked Mr. Brooke.

"Yes; before we went down?"

"Any while you were at Islip?"

"No."

"Did she ever threaten it at any other time?"

"No."

Lena thought that Mrs. Ayer had changed considerably in one year, but not enough so that she wouldn't recognize her. She was better two years ago than five years ago, but had not been so well during the past year.

The maid said she had known Mrs. Ayer to use stimulants once in a while. They were claret and champagne, but not whisky or brandy.

Mrs. Ayer's private secretary, Miss May S. Morrow, said she had been a stenographer at the office of the Récamier Manufacturing Company, 305 Fifth Avenue, of which Mrs. Ayer is President, some three or four years. She knew that Mrs. Ayer owned a majority of the 1,000 fifty-dollar shares in the corporation, but just what the number was she could not tell. She had frequently been in Mrs. Ayer's apartments, but had no idea of the value of her personal property.

Frank J. Sprague, Vice President and General Manager of the Récamier Manufacturing Company, said that Mrs. Ayer owned a little less than two-thirds of the stock in the Récamier Company. He didn't know just how many shares that was, but thought it was 630, more or less.

be reckoned at par for their purposes. Mr. Olin added that, speaking of jewels, Mrs. Ayer had given a box, the contents of which were known to nobody but herself, but were supposed to be jewelry, in charge of his firm, which had placed it in safe deposit.

Between Mr. Olin and Mr. Sprague it transpired that Mrs. Ayer's real estate consisted of a house and lot in Florida. The more exact location was thought to be Jacksonville. It was valued at between \$8,000 and \$10,000, and had a three-thousand-dollar mortgage on it. An offer of \$5,000 had been made for it once.

Mr. Olin went on the stand long enough to say that Mrs. Ayer's only heirs were her two daughters, Mrs. Harriet Seymour and Miss Margaret Ayer, a girl of fifteen or sixteen, who is now in Germany.

The jury was out some twenty minutes. After declaring Mrs. Ayer insane it appraised her property, besides the mysterious box, at \$55,000, of which \$10,000 was for the Florida house and \$5,000 for personal property.

The court will appoint a guardian for Mrs. Ayer at once.

FRICION IN THE UNION LEAGUE.

EXECUTIVE AND ART COMMITTEES - NOT QUITE PULLING TOGETHER.

It is the habit of the Union League Club to hold a monthly exhibition of a loan collection of paintings and other objects of art, to which a number of persons not members of the club are usually invited, among them the artists who loaned their paintings. This monthly exhibition generally has been opened on the second Thursday in the month, and the Art Committee has always worked hard to make the occasion successful, both socially and in an artistic way. But when the outsiders, bearing invitations from the Art Committee presented themselves at the club on the night of the February exhibition, the hall porter declined to admit them and, in some cases, was inclined to be uncivil in his manner.

The Art Committee discovered that the porter had acted under orders from the Executive Committee. On learning this, the Art Committee wrote to the Executive Committee requesting to be informed of the authority under which the invitations issued by the Art Committee had been pronounced valueless. It is said that up to date no formal answer to their letter has been received.

Under these circumstances the Art Committee took no steps toward preparing for this month's exhibition. They felt that their hands were tied until they should learn of the attitude of the Executive Committee. It was fully understood by everybody that the moving cause of the Executive Committee's action was the fact that the opening night of the exhibition, when visitors came in largest numbers, was the night when the formal meetings of the club are held in the large meeting room adjoining the picture gallery. It was said that sufficient privacy was not maintained for the members of the club at such times, because there is no door in the big doorway between the meeting room and the gallery, and the visitors were apt to intrude, perhaps unwittingly, upon the meeting.

As the time for the March exhibition drew near, and the Art Committee made no effort to prepare an exhibition, the Executive Committee bestirred themselves and constituted Thomas B. Clarke and Dr. Alfred E. M. Purdy a sort of art emergency committee to make ready for the usual reception. They had little time to work in, but the exhibition which opened on Thursday evening is considered to be very creditable under the circumstances. Those who know say that the differences between the two committees are likely to be amicably arranged very soon.

THERE WERE SOME BAD THINGS.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT ON THE S. R. SMITH INFIRMARY.

Oscar Craig, President of the State Board of Charities, who was appointed by Justice Cullen of the Supreme Court in August last to investigate the sanitary condition and administration of the S. R. Smith Infirmary on Staten Island, has made his final report to the court.

The troubles at the infirmary, Staten Island's charity hospital, began just a year ago in a quarrel between Miss E. H. Lampe, the Superintendent, and Dr. Markin, the house physician. The trouble grew into a quarrel between the Trustees and medical staff, and six of the doctors resigned. Grave charges were made relative to the sanitary condition of the buildings, the management, and the uncleanly condition of the surgical instruments.

Commissioner Craig made an extended investigation and heard a great deal of testimony under oath. In his report he reviews the whole investigation, and his conclusions are that many evils did exist. He exonerated the Superintendent from all fault except a bad temper; charges the old medical staff with the entire responsibility for the unclean condition of the surgical instruments, and charges them jointly with the Trustees with the responsibility for the imperfections in the systems of drainage and ventilation.

The Trustees have done much to absolve themselves from responsibility, he says, by providing for the remedying of all of the evils in sanitation. He only recommends that they be required to make reports in May and November of the sanitary condition of the infirmary and its clinical history.

W. A. Shortt, counsel for the old medical staff, alleges that the Commissioner has violated the agreement made when the investigation was discontinued and has asked the Commissioner to withdraw his report for amendment.

St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Edward L. Carey, Chairman of the Irish societies that will participate in the St. Patrick's Day parade, called yesterday at Police Headquarters and obtained permission for the societies to parade. The societies will assemble at Waverley Place and Fifth Avenue at 1 P. M. The line of march will be up Fifth Avenue to Thirteenth Street, to Broadway, to Fourteenth Street, around the Washington Monument, up Union Square West to Seventeenth Street, then east to Fourth Avenue, to Eighteenth Street, to Fifth Avenue, to Fifty-seventh Street, to the Eastern Boulevard, to Sixty-eighth Street, and to Jones's Wood.

Denial from Mr. Keene.

James R. Keene lost no time yesterday morning, after he reached his office down town, in denying the reports from Chicago that he was in a big wheat deal there which would show him either \$10,000,000 profits or \$10,000,000 losses. One of the many agencies sent out this statement to Wall Street for him.

"Mr. Keene authorizes us to state that he has no interest, directly or jointly, in any produce, either here or in Chicago, and that the story telegraphed from that city that he was joined with certain parties in a large operation in wheat is utterly destitute of truth."

Delwyn to Stay with His Mother.

Judge Beach of the Supreme Court decided yesterday that Mrs. Marie Heidenheimer is to have the custody of her five-year-old son Delwyn pending the suit for a separation brought against her by her husband, Charles Heidenheimer. Mr. Heidenheimer is, however, to be permitted to see the boy on Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, when Delwyn is to be sent to his father from 11 o'clock in the morning until 6 in the evening.

Old Guard Election.

The election of officers for the Battalion of the Old Guard will be held on Wednesday evening next, at the armory, 84 Fifth Avenue. The officers to be balloted for include a Major, two Captains, two First Lieutenants, two Second Lieutenants, a Treasurer and Secretary, and two active members from the ranks as members of the Executive Board.

Capt. Vanderbilt's Illness.

Capt. Jacob H. Vanderbilt, who is seriously ill with congestion of the lungs at his home on Gryme's Hill, Staten Island, was reported to be in an improved condition last evening. His physician says he has a wonderful amount of vitality for a man over eighty-five years old, and he hopes for his recovery from this attack.

Before the Nineteenth Century Club.

At Sherry's, Fifth Avenue and Thirty-seventh Street, on Tuesday evening, March 14, the Nineteenth Century Club will be addressed by Col. John B. Weber and Mr. George Kennan, on "The Russian Empire a Menace to Civilization."