

Reppert's crime- Description of operation

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REPERT'S AWFUL CRIME

**A Young Blacksmith Choked His
Wife to Death on Saturday**

AND TRIED TO KILL HIMSELF

**He Made Four Different Attempts at
Self-Destruction, But is Still Alive
and There is a Possibility of
His Recovery.**

Frederick A. Reppert, the blacksmith, who on Saturday morning in a fit of jealous rage strangled his wife to death, and who, in his frenzy, on beholding his awful deed, inflicted almost mortal injuries on himself, is still living. He is occupying a cot in the Allentown Hospital and has chances of recovering from the results of the horrible attempts he made to do away with himself. The doctors who examined his self-inflicted injuries on Saturday afternoon gave as an unanimous opinion that the man could not survive longer than a few hours. All indications went to show that the powerful constitution of the man was striving hard with death for the mastery, with all chances in favor of the latter, and it is not surprising that his end was momentarily expected. A slight change for the better, however, set in and Reppert's friends sent for Dr. M. F. Cawley, who at one time was his physician. Drs. Cawley and G. F. Seiberling hastily dressed the man's wounds. From the large gash in the head, inflicted with a hatchet, the doctors removed particles of bone and sewed up the wound temporarily. Part of the skull pressed on the left half of the brain, causing a paralysis of the right side of the body. Reppert was still unconscious when the doctors left him on Saturday evening.

Dr. Cawley sent Sanitary Inspector Reiss to remove the blood and other traces of the tragedy and instructed him to remain with Reppert during the night. Yesterday the doctor made another visit and found the man resting quietly. The pulse had dropped from 120 to nearly normal and the breathing was natural. Reppert opened his eyes and appeared to recognize the doctor and pressed his hand. He showed more signs of returning consciousness, but was unable to speak.

Last evening Reppert was removed to the Allentown Hospital and Drs. Cawley and Seiberling operated upon him to relieve the pressure on the brain. They were assisted by Drs. Hartzell, Albright, Schaeffer, Martin, Yost and Lear. The patient stood the operation well, though the chances are against him.

The examination proved further that Reppert must have made desperate efforts to kill himself.

There were cuts of about a dozen blows inflicted by the hatchet. These cuts are on a space of about one-half inch by four inches and less than half an inch apart. There were a number of small bones, possibly half a dozen, of the size of from one-eighth to one-fourth of an inch square, wedged into the brain. These were removed and the pressure thus released. A large vein on the brain was cut by a blow and that caused the excessive bleeding.

Reppert's brothers have secured a private room for him, and a report received from the hospital late last evening was that he was resting well and his pulse and respiration were comparatively good.

The double tragedy created intense excitement and hundreds of people flocked to the scene of the murder and suicide.

THE COUPLE'S DOMESTIC LIFE.

The couple was married about two years ago. The wife's maiden name was Ella Latschaw and previous to her marriage resided at Topton, Berks county. The couple began housekeeping in one of Elias Bittner's frame houses, No. 38 South Howard street. The home is tastily furnished and all gave evidence of tidiness and thrift.

THEIR MARRIAGE A FAILURE.

The couple had not resided long on Howard street until it became known to the neighbors that the domestic life of Mr. and Mrs. Reppert was not as happy as it should be. Reppert and his wife had frequent quarrels, and the whole trouble seemed to be caused by a feeling of jealousy between the two. Reppert charged his wife with being on the streets too much, and she, in turn, accused her husband of not acting as he should. The quarrels occurred at frequent intervals; but it was noticed by the neighbors that after they had made up they were the most loving couple that could be found anywhere. The quarrels between the two increased in frequency, however, during the past several months, and, on several of these occasions, Mrs. Reppert told her neighbors that she was afraid her husband would kill her. She, however, continued her practice of absenting herself from home, and, at times, remained away for whole nights. A few days ago Reppert bought a revolver and told his wife if she did not mend her ways he would kill her. To a neighbor he intimated that he was about tired of his wife's actions, and that he would soon end the trouble. Mrs. Reppert threatened that if he did not get rid of the revolver she would leave him entirely. He promised to do so, and a few days ago he handed her the money which, he said, he had purchased the revolver with.

On Friday Mrs. Reppert, after another violent quarrel with her husband, told her neighbor, Mrs. Frank Schlicher, that she could stand her husband's cruelty no longer; that she was afraid of her life, and would not sleep at home any more. That evening she prepared supper for her husband as usual, but, after she had cleared away the dishes, she left the house and was not seen there again until Saturday morning. Reppert did not leave home that evening.

THE FATAL QUARREL.

Mrs. Reppert was seen to return to her home at about 6 o'clock on Saturday morning and soon after the neighbors heard them again quarreling. The two went out into the yard, where more harsh words were exchanged. Soon after returning to the house Reppert was heard to chase his wife over the bare floor in the hall up stairs, then down stairs and making threats to kill her. The noise was kept up for nearly half an hour, and then their were cries of "help," "murder," followed by a dead silence. Neither Reppert nor his wife appeared outside the house, and, after nearly half an hour had passed, Mrs. Schlicher, suspecting that something was wrong, called the attention of the employes of Butz, Frederick & Co.'s planing mill, on the opposite side of the street, to the matter. The house was locked up, however, and no one cared to assume the responsibility of entering the house to ascertain how affairs stood. Finally Mr. Frederick telephoned to the mayor's office. Chief of Police Mc-

Gee responded. He found the kitchen door of the Reppert home unlocked. No answer came to his knock and he entered, followed by Mr. Frederick. They found no one on the first floor. Mr. Reppert's clothes lay in a heap on the floor back of the kitchen door.

TRAGEDY DISCOVERED.

On reaching the second floor the men found the door of the first room open. They entered and saw, lying diagonally across the foot of the bed, with her feet hanging partly over the side, the dead form of Mrs. Reppert. An examination showed that she had been strangled to death. There were finger marks about the throat and on the left side there was a slight abrasion. The woman was fully dressed. Several buttons of her waist were open, showing her neck. On the left cheek there were marks of a heavy fist blow and the left shoulder was scratched. The bed was in disorder, as it had been left by Reppert. On the bureau Chief McGee found an open razor, partly wrapped in a handkerchief. The razor was evidently a new one, and both it and the handkerchief were saturated with blood.

A HORRIBLE SIGHT.

The remaining rooms on the second floor were searched, but failed to reveal any trace of Mr. Reppert. A noise on the attic attracted the attention of the men, who, upon going up stairs, were met with a horrible scene. On the bare floor, dressed only in his night shirt, lay Reppert, still alive, but fairly wallowing in blood. The sight was sickening. The man was unconscious, but was turning and twisting about as if in great pain, covering the floor for some distance with his blood, which soaked through the ceiling of the front room on the second floor. Near the head of the stairs lay a bloody hatchet and a large pocket knife with the blade open, also covered with blood. Fastened to a rafter directly over Reppert, was a noose made of twine, an eighth of an inch in diameter. This was also saturated with blood and it is probable that, after falling in his attempt to batter out his brains and bring about death in that way, Reppert tried to hang himself, but, becoming weak, he fell back to the position in which he was found.

Dr. R. D. Fry, who lives nearby, was called and made an examination of Reppert's injuries. Coroner Yost was also notified and several other doctors were called into consultation. The top of Reppert's head had apparently been battered in by the sharp edge of the hatchet, and a gash three inches long, extending through the skull into the brain, was inflicted. Three smaller cuts, which only touched the skull, were near the largest gash. On the right side of the throat there was a gash six inches long, inflicted with the razor, several gashes were on the left wrist, where the man had tried to sever an artery, and a gash in the chest showed where he had tried to reach his heart. It is probable that after Reppert killed his wife he cut his throat with the razor in the bed-room, but failing to cause death with one slash of the instrument he went upstairs, and, in desperation, tried to batter out his brains with the hatchet. Falling in this, he jabbed himself with the knife in the wrist and chest, and then tried to hang himself.

DID HE INTEND MURDER?

It is the generally accepted theory that Reppert did not really intend to commit murder. It is believed that, being a powerful man, he, in his blind fury, went further with his work than he intended. Then, seeing the results, he decided to end his own existence.

POST-MORTEM EXAMINATION.

Coroner Yost held a post-mortem examination before the inquest. He was assisted by Drs. Lear, Schaffer, Cawley and Fry. They discovered that the thyroid cartilage was fractured and caused strangulation.

THE CORONER'S INQUEST.

Coroner Yost at noon empanelled a jury consisting of Joseph Gehringer, Benjamin Burger, Paul Livingood, Calvin Kistler, Frank H. Frederick and Herman J. Michael, and the taking of the testimony was begun at 3 o'clock, after the post-mortem examination was made.

Mrs. Frank Schlicher, sworn, said: I must get up early. I heard a spat at Reppert's. I heard Mrs. Reppert scream, and then all was still. After I heard her holler I told Mrs. Bright, residing with us, and we then watched to see if he, Reppert, was leaving. Between 8 and 9 o'clock I told Mrs. Frederick about the suspicions. I saw nobody else go into the house. I told Mrs. Frederick that Mrs. Reppert said yesterday she was afraid to stay home last night, as something might happen. She said she wanted to go home, but he persuaded her stay, saying she should pack his clothes, he would leave to-day (Saturday). On account of her talk yesterday I had strong suspicions and Mrs. Frederick told Mr. Frederick, who notified the police. I saw Reppert Friday evening, and everything was all right. Mrs. Bright said she saw Reppert wash himself at the hydrant this (Saturday) morning before 6 o'clock. During the week he told me there had to be an end to these things if he would reach the scaffold. He was dressed when he washed himself. I don't know if she was at home over night or not. Her name is Ella and his name is Fred. She is 22. Her parents reside at Topton; named Latschaw. She was away a good deal evenings; sometimes he was with her and other times he was home. He was a little peculiar in actions. He had a strong temper and she was often afraid of him. Before this week he always said he would not hurt her. He comes from Mertztown. He was was 24 year old on March 5.

Frank Frederick said he got home and saw the women standing around and they told him what Mrs. Schlicher said and I told them I would call the police. No one responded at the police station for some time. Called the mayor's office, but he had just gone out, then called up Mr. Reichenbach, and he told Chief McGee, who did not have an officer to send. After waiting some time I called up the mayor's office again and told the chief this matter should be looked into. He said under the circumstances he would come up. He came and I went along in. We investigated the first story and found it all right. The chief then when up stairs and upon his not

returning soon I went up and met him at the stairs. He said she was dead, but he was still living and asked that a doctor be sent for. We went for Dr. Fry, who made an examination. If I had thought things were as they are I would have gone in earlier, but Reppert was of a strong temper and I did not like the idea of intruding. These stories of her disloyalty, I think, are overdrawn.

THE VERDICT.

The jury, after examination and deliberation, rendered a verdict that the cause of Ella Reppert's death was being strangled by her husband, Frederick Reppert.

Frederick A. Reppert is a son of Samuel Reppert, of Mertztown, and was born twenty-four years ago at that place. He learned the blacksmith trade at that place and when his brother, W. C. Reppert, moved here he came with him and has been working since at his shop, at Maple and Hall streets. This was five years ago. It is also said that he had learned shoemaking in one of the local factories. Four years ago he was hostler for Dr. A. J. Yost. Reppert's father, two brothers, W. C. and Al. Reppert, and one sister, Mrs. Al. Kline, of No. 736 Mulberry street, this city, are living.

Mrs. Reppert was a daughter of David S. Latschaw, of Topton, and was 21 years old. Her Christian name was Ellen. She has resided in this city for several years. Before her marriage she was a servant with Charles Krause and Edwin Trexler. At the home of her husband's parents on April 17, 1897, by Rev. D. K. Humbert, she was married to Mr. Reppert. They have no children. The parents and several brothers and sisters survive.