

REV. RICHESON WILL DIE SOON

(Continued from page 1.)

preacher attained in his larger sphere of usefulness made a marked impression upon him. Surrounded by influential friends and associates his ambitions widened. He began to pay court to Miss Edmonds, of Brookline, the daughter of Moses Grant Edmonds, a prominent Baptist layman and trustee of the Newton Theological seminary, under which Richeson had been graduated. Miss Edmonds was prominent socially and was wealthy in her own right, as well as entitled to share in the estate of some \$880,000 left by her grandfather. Entrance to the exclusive home of the Edmonds had been easy to the minister as the pastor of the church the family attended and in a short time he was accepted as suitor for the daughter's hand.

At the same time Richeson was meeting Miss Linnell as formerly. But one day he borrowed the diamond ring he had given her, on the pretext that the stone needed resetting. He did not return it. Eventually the newspapers announced the engagement of Rev. Mr. Richeson and Miss Violet Edmonds. The Linnell family demanded an explanation. The minister promptly declared the story a "newspaper fake" and was believed.

The invitations to the wedding of Richeson and Miss Edmonds were sent out the afternoon of Saturday, October 14. The same afternoon, Richeson dined with Miss Avis Linnell at a little restaurant in the Back Bay. While there the girl appeared depressed. At times tears rolled down her cheeks. When she returned to her lodging place, however, she seemed cheerful, although quickly excusing herself and hurrying away to her room.

Groans were heard coming from a bath room of the association quarters shortly after 7 o'clock that evening. The door was broken in and Miss Linnell was found partly unconscious and apparently in great agony. Half an hour later she died without recovering consciousness.

A belief that the girl had committed suicide was at first general, but her family was disposed to discredit the report and a thorough investigation was made. Soon after the girl died, it was learned that some one had telephoned to Richeson, as the girl's nearest friend, and informed him of the circumstances. He coldly denied at first that he knew the girl at all. Then finally admitting that she had been a member of his former parish in Hyannis, he suggested that her brother-in-law in Bridgewater be notified. Before hanging up the receiver he asked: "Did she say anything before she died?"

The theory of suicide was dispelled when the real conditions surrounding the death of Miss Linnell were made known. The girl had been sitting in a chair with her feet in a tub of hot water, while beside her was a fresh change of clothing. The autopsy revealed the fact that she had taken a dose of poison and the conclusion was drawn that she had done so in the innocent belief that it would remedy a condition that later would be a cause of great embarrassment.

On the day following the girl's death, Rev. Mr. Richeson preached what was to be his last sermon in the Cambridge church, and in his prayer referred briefly to the death of a near friend. That afternoon, dining with a member of his parish in Somerville, he was able to eat but little and spent much time on a couch in apparent mental misery. He explained that he was overcome by the recent death of a "dear friend." That night he went to the home of Moses Grant Edmonds in Brookline, father of the girl to whom he was to be married a week or so later, and there remained in seclusion through the next few days preceding his arrest.

Scores of police and newspaper men took up the mystery of the death of Avis Linnell. It seemed apparent at the outset that the belief in a suicide theory was one which the murderer had planned to foster. Given the crime and the reason for it, the next step was to find the man responsible for the condition of the victim. The police had not far to seek and the newspapers made no pretense at mystery in directing their suspicions. The girl had but one sweetheart and she made no concealment of her affection for Richeson.

In a week's time material evidence

began to accumulate. A woman declared that Richeson had telephoned from her home making an appointment for the afternoon of October 14 with some one at the Young Women's Christian Association rooms. Richeson's landlady admitted her boarder had returned a bowl to her with the remark that she had better wash it thoroughly as it had been used to mix paste which had contained poison. The most damaging evidence, however, came from William Hahn, a druggist of Newton Centre and friend of Richeson. According to Hahn, Richeson came to him four days before the Linnell girl died and bought a considerable quantity of cyanide potassium, explaining that he wanted it "to kill a dog which was about to have puppies." A Cambridge confectioner told of Richeson's coming to his store on the afternoon Miss Linnell died and purchasing a peculiar shaped jar of candy, identical with a jar found in Miss Linnell's room. The minister had taken a Boston bound car in front of the candy store. A woman came to the police and told of seeing the pastor and the weeping girl eating together in a restaurant on the same afternoon. As a result of this information the police felt warranted in taking definite action.

The evening of October 19 Chief Inspector Dugan and members of his force went to the home of Mr. Edmonds on Devon street, in Brookline, to arrest Rev. Richeson on the suspicion that he was guilty of murder. Admission to the home was denied, although the hour was early. The police had no search warrant and did not feel justified in breaking into the magnificent residence upon the uncertainty of Richeson's being inside. They therefore remained on guard all night, frequently knocking upon the doors and windows and calling upon the occupants to open and admit the officers.

The weary vigil was kept up until daylight, when a maid who appeared in the kitchen was prevailed upon to notify Mr. Edmonds that the officers were outside and would break in if the door was not opened at once. At 7 o'clock the police were admitted. Richeson was found in bed. He was ordered to dress and accompany the officers. Before leaving the house he took in his arms Miss Violet Edmonds who was weeping hysterically. "Do not worry," he said. "Everything will come out all right." The minister came out of the house in the murky dawn, passing between two rows of police, newspaper men and curious neighbors, and was taken to police headquarters in Boston in a taxicab to be arraigned.

The case was sent for October 31 for a hearing and Richeson was committed to the Charles street jail without bail. Within a few days the wedding invitations of the minister and Miss Edmonds, summoning the guests to the Edmonds home on October 31, were recalled.

Before the day of the hearing arrived, a special session of the grand jury was called and an indictment charging murder on five counts was found. Richeson was taken into court to plead to the charge of murder on the day he was to have been married to Miss Edmonds. The trial of the case was set for January 15.

Richeson had early written to his church asking that judgment be suspended until after the grand jury sitting. On November 1, he forwarded his resignation, but the church on November 6, after a stormy meeting, refused to accept it. Later a second letter of resignation was sent, and accepted by the church on November 24.

The police had even at this time a far from satisfactory case against Richeson. The container of the poison which Miss Linnell had taken could not be found. It was believed some vial or box might have been left in the bathrobe of Miss Linnell, which had been buried with her. The body was disinterred in Hyannis on October 24 and brought to Boston for a post mortem examination by five prominent physicians. The cause of death was confirmed, but no additional evidence was found. At the same time the police began an investigation into the life of Richeson. Every important act of his life from the date of his birth at Rose Hill, Va., 35 years ago, until his advent in Cambridge was gone into. It was found that he went to school early at Amherst Courthouse, Va., high school, then went to Carrollton, Mo., to work for a brother and attend a local academy. Three years later he went to Liberty, Mo., and entered William Jewell college to study for the ministry. While a student he supplied pulpits in Kansas City, Mo., Stewartville, Miss., El Paso, Texas, Louisville, Ky., and other places. His life had not been an undisturbed one and many tales were related of his entanglements with

young women. At Liberty, Mo., while in William Jewell college, he had been engaged to the daughter of a professor. The young woman lent Richeson money to pursue his studies and up to the time of his coming to Hyannis believed she was to be his wife. In the meantime she developed tuberculosis, which still necessitates her remaining in Salt Lake City, Utah. The one bright ray of light in Richeson's career appeared to be that he repaid the money loaned him as fast as possible. The final amounts were sent from Hyannis shortly before he came to Cambridge.

Richeson was expelled from William Jewell college for cheating in examinations shortly after he had been ordained as pastor at the First Baptist church in St. Louis. For a time he worked as a conductor on the street cars of the latter city and was prominent in a strike of street car men, his fiery eloquence making him a natural leader.

While at Budd Park Baptist church in Kansas City, Richeson became involved with a widow. One Sunday she appeared unexpectedly during the church service. Richeson upon seeing her, fell in a faint. A brother of the woman called at Richeson's rooms and the young minister left town suddenly. A note to the deacons explained that he had been driven away by jealous women.

At another church three young women interrupted the service one Sunday. Simultaneously rising, each inquired of the minister if he intended to carry out his promise to marry her. The sensation led the deacons of the church to write for the pastor's resignation.

Richeson entered Newton Theological seminary in the fall of 1906 and graduated in 1909. During his course he earned money by working in restaurants and in shoe stores. He was called to the Hyannis church in 1909 and remained there until June, 1910, when he resigned to accept the pastorate of the Immanuel Baptist church in Cambridge. Rumors of his interest in women while a preacher in Massachusetts have been current. Miss Edmonds, upon the arrest of her fiancé, left Cambridge to escape publicity and it is said, has been engaged in charity work.

Interest in the case was intensified on December 20 when it became known that Richeson had mutilated himself in his cell at the Charles street jail. The public apparently lost all sympathy for the prisoner following this strange act, which was interpreted as a confession of guilt. At Hyannis, the home of Avis Linnell, the minister was hung in effigy, with a placard on the dummy reading: "Guilty. Read Luke 17:2." In Boston, a conference of Baptist ministers was called and Richeson was formally deprived of his title of Reverend.

Richeson confessed his guilt in a statement written by himself on January 3 and given out by his counsel on January 6. The confession was addressed to his counsel and read:

"Deeply penitent before my sins, and earnestly desiring as far as in my power lies, to make atonement, I hereby confess that I am guilty of the offense of which I stand indicted. I am moved to this course by no inducement of self benefit or leniency. Heinous as is my crime, God has not wholly abandoned me, and my conscience and manhood, however blighted and depraved, will not admit of my still further wronging by a public trial her whose pure young life I have destroyed. "Under the lashings of remorse I have suffered and am suffering the tortures of the damned. In this I find a measure of comfort. In my mental anguish I recognize there is

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still, by the mercy of the Master, some remnant of the divine spark of goodness still lingering with me. I could wish to live only because within some prison walls I might, in some small measure, redeem my sinful past, help some despairing soul, and at last find favor with my God. "You are instructed to deliver this to the district attorney or to the judge of the court. Sincerely yours, Clarence V. T. Richeson."

Richeson was taken into court on January 9, pleaded guilty of the murder of Avis Linnell and was sentenced to be electrocuted at the Charlestown state prison in the week beginning on May 19.

A negro murderer, Henry H. Butts, has been the constant companion of Richeson since his last act of self mutilation. The negro has taken a certain pride in serving Richeson, who has become so attached to the attentions of Butts that the negro has been allowed to remain, although his crime calls for imprisonment at Charlestown.

The counsel for the condemned man bent their efforts during the past few weeks to securing support for a petition for a commutation of the death sentence to life imprisonment. The ground alleged is insanity due to abnormal traits, which according to lawyers would not constitute legal insanity, but have a unique character of their own warranting clemency.

Richeson, on April 26, sent a petition for commutation of sentence to Governor Foss. It read: "I respectfully request that the sentence of death pronounced against me by the superior court for the county of Suffolk be commuted to imprisonment for life, and I leave the presentation of this request and the reasons in support thereof with my counsel. Clarence V. T. Richeson."

Simultaneously with the presentation of the petition, Counsel William A. Morse and Philip R. Dunbar, of Boston, and John L. Lee of Lynchburg, Va., filed numerous depositions relating to evidences of insanity on the part of members of the Richeson family in Virginia and as to peculiar acts and traits of the prisoner.

Governor Foss took the matter under advisement.

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At the close of business April 18, 1912.

RESOURCES.	
Loans and discounts	\$298,201.63
Bonds, warrants and securities	78,947.06
U. S. bonds to secure circulation	25,000.00
Real estate, furniture and fixtures	81,911.34
Cash and slight exchange	198,268.68
Total	\$591,428.71
LIABILITIES.	
Capital stock paid in	\$100,000.00
Surplus and undivided profits	8,815.49
Circulation, outstanding	25,000.00
Deposits	457,613.22
Total	\$591,428.71

In addition to Capital Stock the individual liability of Stockholders is \$100,000.00.

INTEREST PAID ON TIME AND SAVINGS DEPOSITS.
W. S. CHANDLER, President. M. C. HORTON, Vice-President.
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