

'IS THERE SUCH A THING AS LOVE?' EDITH LAVOY THOUGHT THERE WAS, FOUND IT 'ONLY A DREAM'

Pretty Teacher's 200 Letters to William Creasy, Now Indicted for Killing Her, Tell of Passion and Despair, but Fail to Solve the Secret of Her Tragic End

HER 'SWEETHEART BILLIE' IN ONE NOTE IS AN 'OIL CAN' SHE 'HATES' IN ANOTHER

Meanwhile Freeport, L. I., Vainly Puzzles Over Mystery—Was It Murder? Yes, Her Friends Assert—Suicide? She Shot Herself, Creasy Insists in Jail

DID the romantic secrets of Edith Lavoy's life—and the tragic secret of her death—die with her? Did the little school teacher of twenty-two, perhaps broken of heart, kill herself with the revolver of the man she loved? Or did this man, William Creasy, a Kentuckian, once engaged to Edith, murder the girl because he had wearied of her? Or because he was jealous?

These are the questions they are asking today in Freeport, L. I., a community which recently has seen much of tragedy, the town where Edith Lavoy taught in the public school and met her death on Friday night, June 23.

Edith loved Creasy with a vast devotion. That is, she loved him once. Whether this love existed at the time of her death nobody knows. Indeed, in a late letter she spoke of her "hate" for him.

But certain little phrases in some of her letters to Creasy laid bare the heart of the girl. And now and then a poignant touch of pathos!

"Don't worry about me falling in love," she wrote once. "I have given up hope. I thought I was once, you know, Bill, but I found it was only a dream. God, is there any such thing as love? I am afraid not for me."

And, again, this in another letter to Creasy: "Billy, dear, how are you these lovely, LONELY spring days? So glad you love Miss Veith so much. Billy, I know she must be a wonderful girl."

Who is Miss Veith? What part did she play in Creasy's life? Was Edith's heart at the breaking point when she wrote to the man she loved—or had loved—"So glad you love Miss Veith so much?"

On the other hand, who are the other men who figured in Edith Lavoy's life? What part did they have in it? What, for instance, of George Davidson, to whom, in a letter just before her mysterious death, Edith wrote:

"I was happy because I was with you. I thought of you many times." And in another letter to Davidson she referred to a surprise visit by Creasy. "I am not nervous, but just annoyed," was her comment. "Do not worry, George, dear, and I'll let you know how things are just as soon as I know."

"Murder!" Say Her Friends; "Suicide!" Is Creasy's Answer

Creasy, whose home is in Kentucky, at Fort Thomas, is now in the Mineola jail, Nassau County, held without bail on an indictment charging murder in the first degree. Arraigned on the indictment, he pleaded not guilty. He insists that Edith shot herself with a revolver she found in the pocket of his coat.

Yet Miss Lavoy's relatives and hundreds of her friends and acquaintances in Freeport rise up to deny Creasy's statement. They say he killed the girl who loved and respected; the girl who was found in the living room of her boarding house at 156 North Main street, Freeport, with a bullet through her head and blood trickling down either side.

"Murder!" they cry. "Suicide!" replies Creasy, and looks scornfully from behind the bars at all who come near his cell. "You planned to kill her," they accuse.



Edith Lavoy, the school teacher who was shot and killed in the parlor of her boarding house in Freeport, L. I.



had taken it away from him in April when he came to see her. "You threatened to kill her with it and she took it away from you," cry her friends indignantly.

"She used to go to the picture show, and when she left she would sometimes stop at the ticket window and say, 'That was a good picture tonight,' or 'Oh! I didn't like that picture at all.' She was just as happy as could be, and if she was despondent she didn't look it."

Pupil and Friend Alike Shocked by the Tragedy

The day after her death a dark-haired, nice-looking boy about twelve years old was seen pacing up and down the sidewalk.

"What's the matter sonny?" a man asked. The boy twisted and turned his cap, his hands nervously picking at the button, "Oh! isn't it awful?" he said. "Isn't it the most awful thing you ever heard? She was my teacher."

She was his teacher; attractive, fun loving, "like all young persons," said an older resident of the town, "but we knew nothing but good of her, and I never heard a word of criticism or condemnation of her character."

Edith lived with Mrs. Anna Smith. "She was a lovable girl in every way," said Mrs. Smith as she sat quietly rocking on the porch of her home. "She was that," agreed a roomer who sat near, busy with a piece of embroidery.

"And then to have this happen—" Mrs. Smith gripped the arms of her chair and her eyes blurred. The other woman, looking through tears, pricked her finger and jerked the needle through a tangle of thread.

William Creasy, who is thirty-one, had come from Kentucky to see Edith Lavoy. He arrived Thursday night of last week and was with Edith at various times during the day and part of that evening. The next day he saw her several times and was with her until 10:30 o'clock the night of her death.

The first of June Miss Lavoy still had Creasy's revolver, and he sent her a telegram demanding it. The telegram was telephoned to the school, and Miss Lavoy, thinking that it was a message from her mother, asked Edna Shoemaker, principal of the school and a close friend of hers, to take the message.

On June 4 Miss Lavoy wrote to Creasy saying that Miss Shoemaker had been greatly shocked at the message: "What on earth do you do such funny things for? Don't you suppose I am known around here?"

The same week she also wrote: Darling Boy: Will be so glad to get home again, but I do get so tired of living some times. It seems we are here only for trouble. No, Billy, mother is no better, and am so anxious to go to her. I fear mother will never be well again, and if such is the case I want to go, too. It never rains but it pours. Good night, darling boy.

One of the last letters Edith Lavoy wrote was dated June 7. In it she said: So sorry, Billie, you are not feeling

sees fit to take me. Certainly there must be sunshine everlasting in our heavenly home, and that is worth while working for and looking for.

There is no happiness on earth, and I shall not look for any. You are not friendless and will not be so long as I live. I am your true-blue, sincere friend, and always will be, and you know the old saying goes, 'No man is useless while he has a friend.'

Pieces of letters were found in the yard of the house where Edith boarded, and they are being patched together. An uncompleted letter was found pushed under a blotter on the desk. It was addressed to Edith's family. It read:

Dear Everybody: This sure has been a busy week, and it will seem good when everything is done. All my "cherubs" made their grade and every one passed regent geography.

The weather down here for the last week has been just fine; by that I mean plenty of rain, so it made it nice and cool.

Last Sunday I went to East Orange, Bloomfield and Newark, N. J., to visit George's folks. We had dinner at his father's at Bloomfield, and an elaborate dinner at his brother's in East Orange. By the way, George sends mother his

sorry you have not received either of the two letters I mailed you this week, but I am sure the fault is all my own, as I am almost positive I addressed same Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth streets. Of all carelessness! Wonder if you could get them by calling up the postoffice? I wrote you Monday and yesterday.

The first was thanking you for the happy day I had Sunday, George. I was happy because I was with you. I felt too guilty to think that you had to go back on that slow trolley, George.

I thought of you many times. The letter was a hasty note, the contents of which I will tell you personally when I see you. My thanks for the folder. You are so thoughtful about everything. It's the little things that really count. In fact, they are the big things after all.

I cannot recall telling you that we were going up by boat, but must have, as I see one of the time-tables is the Hudson River Line. Mercè beautiful! Well, George dear, how is the world treating you? Suppose you are the same busy boy as ever. George, if you have the time and care to run over some evening before I go home, I'll be only too glad to see you. Just a nice, quiet little chat with you. Now please, do not feel it is compulsory. I would just like to have you know that you are welcome. Hastily, but—U know.

EDITH.

Affairs With Other Women Revealed by Creasy's Trunk

Creasy and his wife, who was Miss Elsie Cortell, and now lives in Huntington, W. Va., were divorced. In his trunk, which was found at the Freeport station, were letters from many women and envelopes containing articles of women's apparel, with the names of the women to whom they belonged on the envelopes and details of Creasy's relations with each of the women.

At one time, soon after Edith Lavoy's death, Creasy made several statements against the girl's character which he later denied. But with the brother and sister of the dead girl standing before him in the jail, he defiantly insisted that what he said was true and that she had had other affairs. Leroy Lavoy sprang forward to strike the prisoner, but the jail attendants seized



The boarding house at 156 North Main street, Freeport, L. I., in the parlor of which Edith Lavoy was found dead and Creasy sitting in a chair beside her



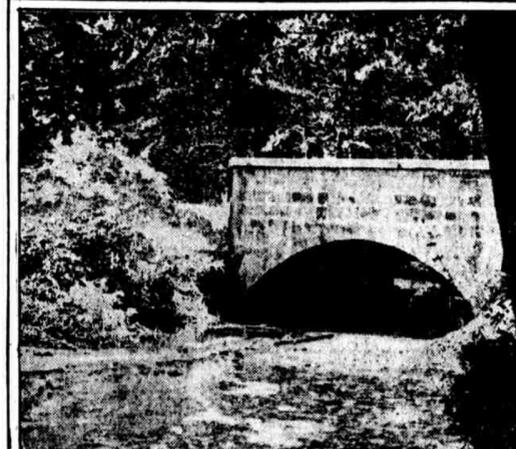
Above—William Creasy, the Kentuckian to whom Edith Lavoy wrote 200 endearing letters and who has been indicted for first-degree murder in connection with her death

best regards and says he'd like to have another game of pinch-me with her. He has a studio now in New York and is quite a success.

Well, Hazel and I were picked again this year to be ushers. Not too tickled about it, either. Billy, much to my surprise, popped into my classroom this morning. I am not nervous, but just annoyed, that's all, as I have so much work to do. Do not worry, George, dear, and I'll let you know how things are just as soon as I know. Hastily, EDITH.

P. S.—Say, George, I sealed this letter twice now without telling you what I wanted. Billy, much to my surprise, popped into my classroom this morning. I am not nervous, but just annoyed, that's all, as I have so much work to do. Do not worry, George, dear, and I'll let you know how things are just as soon as I know. Hastily, EDITH.

A second letter to George written just a few hours before Edith's death said: George Dear—I am so very, very



The "Kissing Bridge" on the outskirts of Freeport, L. I., that at first had an important position in the police theory of Edith Lavoy's death. It was then thought the couple had entered into a suicide pact and had intended to end their lives at this bridge

other card, undated, bore just a few lines. "You said you didn't want me to write any more, so am just saying good-night." ME. (x)

On May 23 Edith again expressed her desire to die. The letter read: Darling Boy: Will it make you feel any better to really know that I am lonesome for you tonight? I speak the evening at Mrs. Shoemaker's, or I would have gone insane. Oh, I don't know how I can wait six weeks until vacation comes.

Will kiss your picture good-night, and God help us both. Oh, how I wish I could die, but I can't go till God wants me. Lonesome and heartbroken, ME. (xx)

well, but, of course, you must look at things in a different light. It is just a matter of will power, Billy. I have been under the weather, but I've just come to the point where I know I must do differently. Why, my folks would be horrified if they could see me at times. It would be enough to end my darling mother at once. So I must brace up for her sake if not for my own.

Billy, don't you think you ought to show consideration for your mother, too? Remember, Billy, they are our best friends. Certainly acting as we have won't bring us anywhere but to some insane asylum. Oh, how I wish I were dead! So many times, but let God's will be done! I mean to do my work in this world so I shall not fear death when God