Miss Minnie Mason,  
90 South Union Street

Miss Mason, who was Mr. Eastman's nurse during his last illness, first met him when he was suffering from a streptococcal infection of his throat in May, 1927. Dr. Audley D. Stewart, Mr. Eastman's physician, called the Nurses' Central Directory and the Registrar telephoned to Miss Mason, who took the case. Mr. Eastman had gone into Miss Cherbuliez' "office" in his home a day or two previously and said, with an attempt at lightness, "I have a new disease. Look at my neck." His throat was not extremely sore and the infection did not affect his speaking but his neck was very badly swollen. Mr. Eastman was not confined to bed, and intubation (the putting of a tube into the larynx through the glottis to keep it open for breathing) was not necessary. Miss Mason remained at Mr. Eastman's home for ten days until he recovered from the throat condition.

She was not particularly annoyed by him for she seemed "acquainted" by having seen his picture in the newspapers frequently, and they got along pleasantly, although Mr. Eastman was not talkative. He was satisfied with her services for when the time came for Miss Mason to leave he said "You have been a comforting nurse—you let me alone." Miss Mason had been coached by Miss Cherbuliez, who suggested "Go in and do what you have to, and don't talk more than you have to." Mr. Eastman, to pass the time during his illness, read newspapers, "Popular Mechanics" and other magazines. He did not read detective stories at that time.
At Christmas-time of the same year Miss Mason was at home in Newark, N.Y. (near Rochester) when a telephone call came in from Rochester. It was from Miss Bailey, Registrar of the Nurses’ Directory, who said that Mr. Eastman had a case of grippe and wanted her to take care of him. Miss Mason came to Rochester and took care of Mr. Eastman for several months, until he went to Alaska in May, 1926. He was a little more friendly then when she had been there previously, but he was by no means voluble. He often waited to see how the other person responded to a joke or an amusing situation and if they smiled he did also. Usually the other person indicated his feeling first.

Mr. Eastman greatly admired Miss Mason’s spic-and-span white nurse’s uniform. When he planned to go to Alaska (on one of the small steamers owned by Campbell Church of Seattle) to shoot at black bears, he said to Miss Mason “I’d like to see that white uniform worn aboard the boat.” However, Mr. Eastman did not take Miss Mason, but took Dr. Albert D. Kaiser, his physician, on the Alaska trip. Miss Mason accompanied Mr. Eastman to Oak Lodge, N.C. in 1929, 1930, and 1931 and she wore the uniform while there. Mr. Eastman, before they started, asked “Are you going to wear the uniform on the train?” She answered “Oh, no! It would look as black as the colored people down there if I did that.”

Mr. Eastman was not cantankerous or “fussy.” If a pill happened to drop on the floor and Miss Mason started to throw it away, he interrupted and said “Give me that one. I’ve eaten many worse things than that.”
Miss Mason went to Mr. Eastman's home in the spring of 1931 and remained during the last year of his life. He did not complain of aches or pains but he had trouble in walking as the result of a paralytic stroke. Mr. Eastman never spoke in a despondent way but he obviously didn't think that people should live after they got old. Mr. Eastman and Miss Mason once discussed the problem of old age. Miss Mason said "Look at the case of your mother. She was 85 when she passed on, but she enjoyed living right to the end." Mr. Eastman replied decisively "I don't want to ever be as old as that!" and turned to his reading which indicated the conversation was finished. Occasionally he made such remarks as "I'd terribly hate to become as helpless as Walter Hubbell (his former legal adviser whose mind had been clouded for several years before his death.) There was no decline in Mr. Eastman's mental keenness, yet he may have feared the possibility of mental breakdown.

He amused himself in the last year or so of his life by reading detective stories at the rate of one a day. They were obtained from Scranton's Circulating Library. Harvey, the chauffeur frequently went downtown with the books Mr. Eastman had read and brought back an armful of new ones.

Mr. Eastman was not always by himself in his last years. Although his home concerts were reduced in frequency and in attendance he continued the Saturday afternoon luncheons, which were attended by Mrs. Harold Gleason, Mrs. Katherine Whipple, Mrs. Bayne-Jones, and Mrs. Marion B. Folsom. Mr. Eastman enjoyed the society of younger persons more than that of older ones.
He had the interesting habit for a number of years of throwing newspapers or books on the floor beside his chair when he had finished with them. On one occasion he carried this habit into another field. The housemaid found his silver-handled clothes-brush on the floor and, as she thought it had fallen there accidentally, she replaced it on the dresser. The next day she again found the brush on the floor. She replaced it but Mr. Eastman explained that he was through with it. "I don't want the brush. I threw it on the floor," he said. The maid liked the brush so it was given to her.

When Mr. Eastman read he usually sat on a leather settee, which was placed between two long couches in front of the fireplace in his sitting room. He sat there for hours at a time, always dressed in his business suit, and wearing shoes—not slippers. No one was asked to read aloud to him, but he had Miss Mason (or Miss Cherbuliez) tune the radio. All day and late into the evening they selected good programs of music for Mr. Eastman, who usually continued to read while he listened. If the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra or something especially interesting were on the air, he laid aside his book. "Pomp and Circumstance," a march by Sir Edward Elgar, was a favorite selection. If Mr. Eastman wanted to listen to the radio after 11 o'clock at night Miss Mason let him tune for himself. Mr. Eastman played no cards or other games with Miss Mason. Nor did he pass the time (in himself) writing social letters, although sometimes at home or at Oak Lodge she wrote a few social letters for him. In the last years Mr. Eastman did not go to his "workroom" on the third floor except on one occasion to see something, when he stayed for about twenty minutes.
Miss Mason found that Mr. Eastman could be informal and humorous when one became acquainted with him. One day when he had difficulty in getting to his feet from the couch Miss Mason said jokingly "Let me at him; I'll get him up!" Dr. Stewart, who was present teasingly said "The powerful Katrinka!" Mr. Eastman caught up the phrase and frequently after that he called Miss Mason "the powerful Katrinka." Miss Mason said that Mr. Eastman combined gallantry with humor. When he and she were to pass through a doorway in the house Mr. Eastman waited for her to precede. She did not walk rapidly enough so he said "Skat!" and "shooed" her through the doorway.

There was no indication of Mr. Eastman's feeling despondent toward the end. He continued to go for a drive in his automobile every afternoon that the weather permitted. His private railway car was engaged, several weeks before he died, for an Easter trip to Oak Lodge, as in previous years, so the thought of self-destruction had, apparently, not long been in his mind. The last day of his life Mr. Eastman got up at the usual time, dressed himself, read the newspaper and was shaved by his barber. When the end came at about noon it was a blow for which no one associated with him was prepared.
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