

CONVICT GEE.

Interview with the Man who Dies Tomorrow

AND TALK WITH EXECUTIONER RADCLIFFE.

Sidelights on the Last Act in the Carleton County Tragedy.

(Staff Cor. Daily Herald.)

Woodstock, July 20.—Situate on Maple street, just one building back from the main street of this town, or immediately in rear of the Record Office, is the Carleton County jail, on which the public eye is focussed at the present time, for the reason that immured within its walls is a human being condemned to suffer the ignoble death of the scaffold.

The jail is a new building of brick, with stone trimmings, attractive in appearance without and neatly fitted up for its purposes within. On the ground floor is the sheriff's office and the cells, and on the second and third floors the sheriff finds ample accommodation for his family. Usually the prisoners confined within the prison are men who have committed some slight misdemeanor, or are thrust in for debt or vagrancy. Never before has Carleton County's pride been wounded by sheltering a convicted murderer, and the execution of George Gee, to take place at an early hour Friday morning, will be the first death on the scaffold ever witnessed in the county.

The story of Gee's crime has been often told, but all the harrowing details are again revamped and form the topic of conversation in this town today. Gee is within the shadow of the gallows for shooting to death his cousin and sweetheart, Milly Gee, who in an evil hour bartered her honor to her own brother-in-law, Benny Gee, a man whose wife is residing in a New England city, engaged, it is said, in a questionable business. George Gee, crazed with liquor and jealousy, came upon the girl and Benny Gee in a compromising position in the latter's one room shack in the straggling settlement of Holmesville, in the Parish of Kent, and discharged a bullet from his rifle that ended the girl's life.

Such in brief is the story of the crime which the unfortunate youth (he is only 23 years old) will expiate on the gallows Friday morning. His arrest, trial, conviction and sentence by Chief Justice Tuck in April last, are still fresh in the public mind.

In company with Hon. C. H. LaBille this afternoon I visited Gee and had a talk with him through the bars of his cell. Pulling the bell of Sheriff Hayward's office, that courteous gentleman kindly admitted us and we found ourselves in the presence of Radcliffe, the public hangman who has come down from his home in Toronto to discharge what he considers a public duty. We were duly presented to the executioner, not for business purposes, and found him a very affable, intelligent fellow, nearly six feet high, broad chested, swarthy in complexion, with a prominent black mustache. He does not present the picture so often drawn of him in the newspapers. He is not the repulsive looking character he has been represented. He at once registered a complaint with the chief commissioner of public works at the utter lack of facilities of the Carleton County jail for carrying out his official duty, but was informed by the sheriff that the county alone was responsible for the publicity surrounding the jail premises. There is no enclosure around the building to hide the cells or other apartments from the public view, and while we talked in the sheriff's office a curious crowd surrounded the jail, and from one vantage ground could even view the condemned man in his cell. Sheriff Hayward also pointed out the difficulties of the situation, so strong a feeling 's there in the town against the tragedy soon to be enacted within its limits that it has been difficult for the sheriff to secure materials and workmen to erect the scaffold, and the high fence intended to screen it from the public view. Some of the mills demurred at sawing the lumber and carpenters refused to work at its creation. However, two men were secured and their hammering was distinctly audible to the convict.

The drop to death will be nine feet, with a hole in the ground four feet deep, so that there is not likely to be any hitch in Radcliffe's gruesome ceremony Friday morning.

After a chat with the Sheriff and Radcliffe, the former led the way to Gee's cell and presented us to the convict, whose greeting was cordial, and entirely free from nervousness. We talked to him of his coming doom, comforting him as best we could, and he told us that he was fully prepared for the terrible ordeal through which he is so soon to pass.

He declared his faith in religion and its power to save even such as he, and said that he faced death without terror relying on a higher power for strength to carry him through. Gee is not at all a bad looking fellow, and there is much sympathy for him in his dire straits. He is undoubtedly the creation of his environments at home. No father's or mother's guiding counsel has ever been exerted to lead him in right paths, and he grew up illiterate and without the slightest moral training. He can neither read or write, and the only religious instruction he has ever received has been imparted to him since his sentence to death on the gallows. Evidently he has profited from the latter and professes to be ready for his compulsory leap into the great unfathomable mysteries of the Beyond. We bade him be of good courage on taking leave of him, and his assurances that he would not flinch came strong and certain.

We had just turned the corner of the jail corridor when an unusual incident occurred, meeting Radcliffe at that point we stopped to take leave of him when Gee called for the hangman and requested an interview which was promptly granted. It was the first meeting of the hangman and his victim and the two were chatting freely through the prison bars when we both took our leave of the Sheriff. Gee was anxious to know the exact hour fixed for the execution, but Radcliffe was non-committal on that point.

Before we left the jail we were shown Walter Cammack, who is to answer for his share in his father's murder of William Doherty on Sunday night at Ruthers Glen, in the same parish that witnessed the Gee murder. The younger Cammack is a strapping big fellow of the ordinary woodsman type, about 35 years old, and not at all prepossessing. His eyes are like those of the fox, but he appeared quite unconcerned as to his position and calmly whittled a stick. These are sorrowful days for Carleton county, with one condemned murderer in her custody and two others accused of the crime awaiting their turn in the courts of justice.

TOY GARDENING.

It Is of All Sorts the Most Pitiful and Ridiculous.

Our counsel is to avoid all mimicry in gardening as we would avoid it in speech or in gait. Sometimes we do not mind being repetitious. "In gardening," we say, "almost the only thing which costs unduly in money or in mortification—is for one to try to give himself somebody else's garden."

One of the reasons we give against it is that it leads to toy gardening, and toy gardening is of all sorts the most pitiful and ridiculous. "No true art," we say, "can tolerate any make believe which is not in some way finer than the reality it simulates. In other words, imitation should always be in the nature of an amiable condescension. Whatever falseness, pretension or even mere frailty or smallness suggests to the eye, the ineffectuality of a toy is out of place in any sort of gardening." We do not actually speak all this, but we imply it, and we often find that the mere utterance of the words "toy gardening" has a magical effect to suggest all the rest and to overwhelm with contrition the bad taste and frivolity of many a misguided attempt at adornment. At that word of exorcism joints of cerulean sewer pipe crested with scarlet geraniums, rows of white cobbles along the walk or drive like a cannibal's skulls around his hut, purple paint kegs of petunias on the scanty doorsteps, crimson wash kettles of verbenas, anthill rockeries and well sweeps and curbs where no wells are, go modestly and forever into oblivion.—G. W. Cable in Scribner's.

FIRST PIANO MAKER.

Two Specimens of Cristofori's Work Still in Existence.

It was a harpsichord maker, Cristofori, in the employ of the Duke of Tuscany, who in 1711 made the first successful piano. As curator of Ferdinand de Medici he had a splendid collection of Belgian, French and Italian instruments to look after, and this undoubtedly aided him, though the model was so crude that the inventor could never have dreamed a monument would ever be erected in his memory. There are only two grand pianofortes of Cristofori in existence.

One decorated in gold and Chinese figures is in Florence, and the other is in the Crosby-Brown collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Three documents attest the authenticity of this last instrument, which was purchased from Signor Diego Martelli.

From this feeble beginning a long list of names could be mentioned of men who helped perfect the piano. But factories alone could never have achieved without royalty to encourage and virtuosos to play. Frederick the Great or-

dered five pianos for his palace, where they can be seen at the present day. Marie Antoinette was a patron of the art, and Clementi in England and Mozart in Germany introduced the instruments, so it became a part of life. It was in Pleyel's concert room that Chopin played, and our later firms have brought out a long list of artists—Jozseffy, Paderewski and others.

Doctor's Fee Remained in the Well.

"The queerest fee I ever had offered to me was by an old farmer up in Monroe county," said a prominent physician who is also something of a sportsman. "I was up there one year for the trout fishing, and one evening I was summoned from the hotel where I was stopping to attend an old woman in the neighborhood who had suddenly been taken ill. After I had fixed her up her husband said to me: 'Doc, I don't know what your charge is, but I ain't got no ready cash about me. I'll tell you what I'll do, though. See that well over there? There's one of the finest trout you ever seen in that there well, an' if you can catch him he's yours.' I had no tackle with me, and as I had to return to the city next morning I missed the opportunity to collect my fee."

The Imperial Eagle.

The imperial eagle, the largest of the species known, flies to a height of from 10,000 to 15,000 feet. It is a native of South America, and its habitat is among the lofty mountains of that country. Its power of flying to high altitudes is only exceeded by the condor of the Andes, which is said to have attained the height of six miles, or within one mile of the greatest height ever attained by a balloon. The eagle sails in the air at heights ranging from three to five miles and when seen to soar upward by an observer on the earth's surface disappears from sight in about three minutes.

The New Anthem.

It was a new anthem, composed by the village organist, and this was its effect: The soprano started off with the very laudable though rather startling announcement, "I will wash." Straightway the alto, not to be outdone, declared she would wash. And the tenor, finding it to be the thing, warbled forth he would wash. Then the deep chested basso, as though calling up all his fortitude for the plunge, bellowed forth the stern resolve that he also would wash. Next a short interlude on the organ, strongly suggestive of the escaping of steam or splash of the waves, after which the choir, individually and collectively, asserted the firm, unshaken resolve that they would wash. At last they solved the problem by stating that they proposed to "wash their hands in innocency."

Nelson's Nightcap.

Not long after the battle of the Nile Nelson invited Dr. Burney to stay with him at his house in Merton. Dr. Burney was both a composer of music and a writer of books on musical subjects and was on terms of friendship with all the great men of the day. Having forgotten to bring a nightcap with him, he borrowed one of Nelson's. Before going to bed he put on the cap and sat down to read, as was his habit, but was soon surprised to find the cap in flames. These he put out at once, and then gathering the remains sent them to Nelson with these lines:

Take your nightcap again, my good lord, I desire.

I would not retain it a minute. What belongs to a Nelson wherever there's fire

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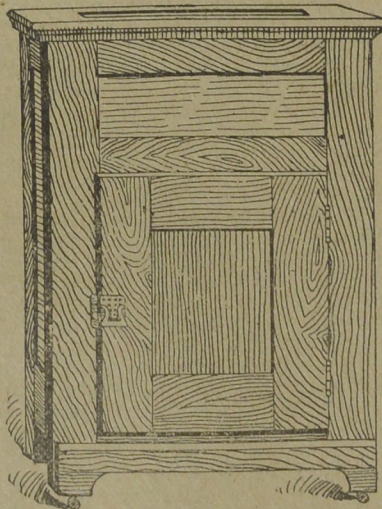
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