

Interesting Facts About the Late Assassins.

SIXTEEN HOURS IN THE CELLS.

[From the Washington Chronicle.]

Rev. Dr. Gillette, pastor of the First Baptist Church, improved the solemnities of the past week by an appropriate discourse, especially to young men.

He had never been more impressed with the importance of this duty than during the sixteen hours which he passed with the convicts in the penitentiary, between Thursday afternoon and that of Friday.

On Thursday Dr. G. was called upon by Assistant Secretary of War Eckert, who invited him to visit the cells of the doomed convicts for the purpose of administering to them such spiritual consolations as were needed. Stepping into the Secretary's carriage, he at once accompanied him thither. On their arrival Mr. Eckert introduced him to other officers, and then to the prisoners.

Their first call was upon Payne, whose real name he soon ascertained to be Lewis Thornton Powell, his middle name being after the Rev. Dr. Thornton, a Presbyterian clergyman of Charleston, South Carolina.

Powell welcomed him, and at once proceeded to relate his early history. His father was a Baptist minister. The convict had been from infancy brought up under religious influence. At 12 years of age he was by his own father consecrated to God in baptism, and became a member of the church. In direct opposition to the wishes of his family he entered the rebellion. For a time he endeavored to retain his religious character, but became acquainted with Gilmor. This was his second great step downward. That was followed by his getting into Mosby's gang, which was far worse. His next companion was Booth.

Dr. Gillette found Powell to be a young man of cultivated mind, ingenious, frank, candid, and an earnest applicant for Divine favor.

In conversation, he referred to his mother and wept bitterly; to his sisters, to the pleasant seasons once enjoyed by him in the church, the Sabbath school and the social circles.

Powell frankly stated his conviction of the enormity of his crime. The moment he fled from the house of Secretary Seward and leaped into the saddle of his horse, his mind was quickened into a realizing sense of the horror of the damnable deed which he had perpetrated, and he became miserable, wretched—life itself became loathsome.

The Doctor here corrected two points in the published statement. It was reported that he wore "a jaunty hat." That hat was placed upon his head by the advice and hands of Dr. G., when Powell's hands were pinioned behind him. Dr. G. suggested the hat on account of the intense heat of the sun.

Secondly, it was said on the morning of the execution he ate heartily, etc. On that morning he positively declined taking any food; and he was equally persistent in refusing stimulants of any kind.

His last prayer was, as suggested by his friend, the Doctor, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Dr. Gillette here addressed his audience with deep feeling, referring to his own sons, to the sons of his congregation, to the young men of this city who habitually visit drinking-houses, restaurants, etc.

The preacher then visited Harold, and his description corresponded with those already published. With great eloquence he described the scene in which Harold's sisters were present. One of them read to him from her prayer-book; and after Dr. G. had offered prayer the same sister followed in an invocation to the Throne of Divine Grace on behalf of her brother, which affected all present.

His next call was on Atzerott. He at once commenced remarks which criminated Mrs. Sarratt, but was gently reminded that higher duties now devolved upon him—a preparation to meet his God. In this he acquiesced. For twenty-nine years, he acknowledged, he had been steeped in sin, the victim of base passions, and of the wiles of artful, designing men. His wonder was, if his soul could be saved! Rev. Mr. Butler, the Lutheran preacher, soon arrived, and attended him most faithfully. From the latter clergyman we learn that he professed to have found peace with Heaven.

The peculiarities of the Catholic Church prevented him from offering any assistance to Mrs. Sarratt, for she was well attended by the Rev. Fathers Wiget and Walter. Dr. G. described the scene of the daughter's hasty return to her mother's cell—the anxious inquiries of that mother, "Is there any hope?" She replied, "Hope is gone!" "Oh, Fathers Wiget and Walter prepare my mother for death!" In her agony, she fell against the speaker in the doorway, and said, "Hope is fled."

The Doctor stated that these remarks were made strictly in a religious point of view, that being the place for none other.