

GILLETTE FACES JURY

Women Testify to His Wooing of Grace Brown.

DEAD GIRL'S FATHER ON STAND

Tears Well to His Eyes as He Recalls Endearing Name by Which His Daughter Was Known at Home—Prosecution's Theory Is that Girl Was Killed by Blow from an Umbrella.

Special to The Washington Post.

Herkimer, N. Y., Nov. 19.—The taking of evidence in the trial of Chester E. Gillette, charged with the murder of Grace Brown, was begun to-day, and twenty-one witnesses were examined during the two long sessions. What sensation was not furnished by the witnesses was furnished by the spectators, for seldom has such a dense crowd of curious, sensation-hunting persons associated in a court of law as that which squeezed itself into the courtroom here to watch the young defendant stand trial for his life.

In the morning, when he was brought over from the jail to the courthouse, across the street, he was met by a crowd which hung on the courthouse fence and gathered on the steps to watch him go through. He was met by another crowd when he got inside, and from that time on throughout the day he was not free from a jam of morbid persons, who had gathered to look at him and watch his motions as he sat in court. In the morning the courtroom was well crowded, but in the afternoon the curiosity-hunters and seekers after thrills gathered in numbers which made the attendance at the morning session comparatively small. Two-thirds of those present were women and young girls.

Prisoner Is Composed.

The prisoner faced the crowd, which was not an absolutely hostile one, yet it was certainly not friendly, with the same apparent composure which has marked his attitude ever since the beginning of the trial. There were four bailiffs with long old tipstiffs, and whiskers almost as long as the staffs, to keep the crowd in order. They had their work cut out for them all afternoon to keep the jam of people quiet enough so that the judge and counsel could hear the testimony.

When the afternoon session was over a good share of the crowd waited outside the courtroom to see the prisoner led back to the jail. When he came out handcuffed to one of the deputies, he had to walk through a lane of people, mostly women, who stood with their necks craned to get a look at him.

Called on Brown Girl on Sly.

The prosecution spent the day in laying the foundation for the evidence which

they hope to bring forward in the future. All of the twenty-one witnesses came from Cortland or South Otselic, and were called to prove that while Gillette was friendly with the Brown girl at the factory and went to see her on an average of twice a week, he did not appear with her in public.

The dead girl's father was the first witness called to the stand. He is a short, slight man, with hard work written all over his thin face, and a long, drooping mustache, which gives him a mournful expression. He told of meeting Gillette in Cortland once when he was on a visit to his daughter, Grace, and said that this was the only time he had ever seen him, until the man was captured after Grace Brown's death. The district attorney and one of the deputies brought in a trunk and set it before the witness. He identified it, and also identified a large crayon portrait, which was brought in as that of his daughter, Grace Brown. The only sign which the old man gave of breaking down was when the prosecutor asked him if his daughter was known by any other name than that of Grace.

Tears Well to Father's Eyes.

"Yes," he replied, "we called her 'Billy'—'Bill,' Brown."

He choked, and the tears seemed perilously near his eyes. The prisoner, too, seemed more affected than he did at any other time during to-day's testimony, for he appeared to be swallowing hard and stuck his tongue in his cheek nervously.

Mrs. Ada Hawley, the married sister of the dead girl, testified that while Grace Brown was living at her house in Cortland, Gillette came to see her on an average of twice a week. Mrs. Hawley brought her few months' old baby to court with her, and while she was on the stand the child slept in the arms of Mrs. Brown.

Nearly the whole remainder of the morning session was taken up with the testimony of fellow-employees in the Gillette skirt factory, who told of the attentions Gillette paid to Grace Brown during working hours. According to their evidence, his attentions were so marked that they caused a reprimand from Gillette's uncle and his uncle's son, who feared that both the young man and the girl were neglecting their work in the shop.

Gillette Often with the Girl.

The witnesses said that, although Gillette was often with the girl in the shop and her home, he was seldom seen with her outside, though he was often seen at dances and other social affairs with other young women.

N. H. Gillette, the uncle of the prisoner, related how he had brought the boy from Zion City, where his father and mother were, and given him a position in his factory. Young Gillette got a salary of \$10 a week, and was apparently often short of money and in debt. From other witnesses it developed that when he started to the Adirondacks he had \$20 and a mileage book on the New York Central Railroad.

Most of the afternoon session was used in the identification of letters which had been found in Gillette's desk and Grace Brown's trunk after the girl's death. These probably will be put in evidence to-morrow, and are likely to produce the first sensation of the trial.

One of the last witnesses of the day was A. B. Raymond, an old man with a querulous voice and sharp wit, who runs a hotel and summer resort at Little York Lake, which is about seven miles from Cortland.

Brown Girl Cried When with Gillette.

He said that on about June 15 Gillette and a girl, whom he identified as Grace Brown from a picture which was shown him, had driven up to his resort at about 9 o'clock at night. Gillette had asked for one of the round-bottomed boats, which Raymond rented, to go out on the lake with the girl. The witness said that the round-bottomed boats were more easily tipped over than were the others which he had, but also added that they were easy to row and were generally preferred. All his boats of this description were in use, and Gillette took the girl out in a flat-bottomed craft. When the pair returned in about an hour, Raymond, who was hitching their horse, noticed that the girl was crying. On cross-examination the attorney for the defense tried to shake Raymond's identification of the girl as Grace Brown, but was unable to do much with the witness.

Harriet Benedict, the Cortland girl, Gillette's attentions to whom the prosecution is trying to establish as a possible motive, arrived here to-day, accompanied by her father, a Cortland attorney of some prominence. She will probably take the stand to-morrow.

Theory of Prosecution.

The theory of the prosecution as to the death of Grace Brown, is that after getting her in the boat on Big Moose Lake Gillette rendered her unconscious by striking her on the head with a heavy-handled umbrella. The prosecution will try to prove that he had such an umbrella with him. The handle was of horn and was heavy enough to make a formidable weapon in the hands of a man of average strength. The theory of the prosecution is that Gillette used this umbrella so forcibly that the handle was broken off and that he then used his tennis racket. It is said that the umbrella was found in the woods near Big Moose Lake with its handle broken and the body of it badly smashed.

Crane is expected to testify that before Gillette left Cortland he purchased such an umbrella. Crane will also testify concerning the mode of Gillette's life in Cortland. The man now accused of the murder of Grace Brown is said to have lived very quietly there. His reputation was the reverse of "town sport." He is said to have spent most of his evenings in his room studying. He took a course in a correspondence school in mechanical engineering and is said to have worked hard. He was a regular attendant of the Presbyterian church, and his society friends, at least those known to the citizens of Cortland, were chosen from among the other young people of the church. He had, it was supposed, no bad habits.

This is the same young man who sat in court on Saturday and heard himself charged with the foulest of crimes, without moving a muscle of his face, except for an instant, when the prosecutor surprised everybody by asserting that he had an eyewitness to the murder.

Gillette regained his composure entirely when he returned to the jail, after the court session was over. He slept like a top on Saturday night, and this morning seemed refreshed and cheerful, after a Sunday of rest.