

WANTS TO HANG.

Murderer Rawlings, of Georgia, Asks the Governor Not to

SUSPEND SENTENCE.

He Begs the Governor Not to Pay Any Attention to Silly Appeals for His Reprieve, But Let Him

Be Executed At Once

From his cell in a Georgia jail a condemned murderer is sending forth appeals to stop all efforts to save his life and demanding to be hanged.

This unique example among murderers has written a letter to Governor Terrell, of Georgia, insisting upon his rights as a murderer legally condemned to go to the gallows on the day named by the trial court—May 4.

Through the newspapers, when they interview him, he makes the same demand.

This anomaly among condemned sentenced murderers is a former clergyman, the Rev. J. G. Rawlings. I call with him at Valdosta, Ga., are his three sons, Leonard, Milton and Jesse convicted for complicity in the murder last June of little Willie and Carrie Carter, children of W. L. Carter, with whom Rawlings had been at feud for years.

As the actual shooting of the children was done by Alf Moore, a negro, who confessed, declaring that Rawlings paid him to do it, many persons interested themselves in efforts to have the sentences commuted to life imprisonment, and the case was even carried to the Supreme Court of the United States.

Rawlings' emphatic and open repentment of these efforts to save his life created a sensation in Georgia, which has not yet subsided. In his letter to Governor Terrell he said: "I respectfully urge your Excellency not to interfere with the speedy execution of the death sentence. I am tired of the business, and I want to be hanged as soon as possible."

URGED THE GOVERNOR TO LET HIM HANG. "My boys are innocent, but I do not believe there is any hope for them and they feel as I do, that the sooner we are hanged the better. We are suffering more than death now. The delay and uncertainty are far worse than the gallows, and I hope you will do nothing to prevent a speedy execution of the death sentence."

Being interviewed for this newspaper, Rawlings made this remarkable demand still stronger. He said: "I am desperate. I don't care anything about the decision of the Supreme Court, and I had rather be dead than to stay shut up in this dark and stifling cell another day. I will suit me exactly to be hanged tomorrow, and the sooner it is done the better I shall like it."

"I have written to my attorney, Mr. Cooper, asking him not to take any further steps in the matter, and to let it go as it stands. I have written to the Governor demanding my rights. I don't care anything about my own fate, so far as it affects me personally, and I have only wanted to live thus long in hope of being able to do something to save my innocent boys."

"I expect to die like a man, and one of the greatest regrets I have is on account of my mother. I have just written her, though, that I shall go to my death bravely. She is old now, and can't bear up under such affliction even as well as my wife can."

"But that can't be helped. I am entitled by sentence of the Court, to be hanged by the neck until dead, and in simple justice I demand my legal right—I insist upon no interference with my execution."

The United States Supreme Court has decided not to interfere with sentence of the trial court. But Rawlings' attorneys have still the plea of insanity to argue—and the condemned man's strange demand, in itself, is considered a good ground for such a plea. But this fact does not give rise to any suspicion that the murderer is playing an "insane dodge," as he is too earnest and emphatic and logical in his demands for his right to be hanged.

Milton and Jesse, who are to hang with their father, are not so anxious to go to the gallows, and they say that the old man is crazy, and has been for years. Both of the boys have made a pathetic appeal to the Governor for clemency, stoutly claiming that they are innocent of the crime for which they were convicted.

GLAD WHEN HE IS HANGED When Rawlings was told that the United States Supreme Court had refused to interfere in his case he was whistling "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord." He continued to whistle as the news was broken to him and finally said:

"It is no more than I expected and I am not sorry. I looked for no favors from the United States. I will be glad when we are hanged. I reckon we will be at peace then."

The men have been confined in jail for a little more than ten months and the monotony of a dingy 10 by 12 foot cell has told sadly on their spirit and demeanor. They occupy a corner cell in the jail, with windows over looking base through bars.

asides, and as they sit day by day looking out through the bars at the people passing by, or as they pace restlessly up and down the narrow confines, reflecting on the time when they, too, were free to go and come as they please, it is not hard to understand that they have found jail life so irksome.

The elder Rawlings maintains that he has absolutely no hope of his soul's salvation, and says he is certainly doomed to go to hell. He believes he has committed the "unpardonable sin," and has appeared to become incensed with the spiritual advisers who during his long incarceration, have gone to the jail to minister to him, and have attempted to disabuse his mind of the idea that he is doomed to eternal punishment if he repeats acts of his sins. He was once a minister of the gospel, and says he has studied the Bible closely for years, with the result that he is convinced that mortals sometimes reach a stage, where they are beyond the pale of God's forgiveness.

The crime for which Rawlings and his three sons—Milton, Jesse and Leonard—were convicted was committed on the night of June 13, 1905. On that night Carrie and Willie Carter, daughter and son of W. L. Carter, a farmer, living ten miles north of Valdosta, were shot down in the yard of their father's home, and an attempt made by the assassins to kill the rest of the Carter family.

The girl, aged fourteen, and her brother, sixteen years old, went out of their father's house soon after the evening meal to investigate the incessant barking of their dog, and as they reached a point near the garden fence, a few yards from the house, both of them were shot down, the little girl being killed almost instantly and the boy lying to drag himself back to the door of his home. For some time his parents were afraid to open the door to take him in for fear that another volley from the assassins, who were secreted in the shade of some trees nearby, would end the lives of other members of the family.

The boy lingered until about sunrise on the following morning, and the girl's body lay in the cotton field, where she fell until after daylight. In the trial of Rawlings and his sons, witnesses swore that the girl's head had been battered into the ground by the heels of the murderers, or by the stocks of their guns, as she lay dead.

Suspicion at once fell on J. G. Rawlings, as he and Carter had been enemies for a long time. It developed that Rawlings spent the night at Valdosta, and as the coroner's inquest the next day Carter and his wife and daughter swore that they had recognized the Rawlings boys as the assassins, as they walked around the Carter homestead in the moonlight on the night before.

The boys were arrested that day, and on the following day, as the elder Rawlings and his wife drove into town and to the jail with some clothing for their sons, the father was taken into custody and locked up with his boys.

Alf Moore, a negro was arrested at Staunton, thirty miles north of there two days later, charged with complicity in the crime, and made a confessor of the whole affair. He swears that the elder Rawlings hired him to go and kill the Carter family, promising him \$100 for the work, and sending his three sons to see that the murders were carried out as arranged.

At the trial Moore claimed that when they reached the Carter home, Rawlings, that his nerve failed him and he refused to take any part in the murders. He maintained that Milton and Jesse Rawlings fired the shots that killed the two Carter children, and that he (Moore) then became frightened and ran away. His testimony was corroborated in many points by the testimony of the Carter family.

After the conviction of the men, Rawlings acknowledged that he hired the negro Moore to kill the Carters, but that his boys were not present, knew nothing of the arrangement between him and the negro, and had absolutely nothing to do with the murders. He has stoutly maintained this all the time.

Furthermore, Rawlings says he did not intend to have any of the Carters harmed except the old man, and that it was not any part of his arrangement to kill other members of the family. On the other hand, Moore swears that he had positive instructions, as also had the boys, to kill the entire Carter family and then burn the house.

If Moore was actuated in turning State's evidence by a hope of escaping the full penalty of the law for his part in the tragedy, he was doomed to disappointment, as the jury brought in a verdict of murder in the first degree, and he, too, was sentenced to death, along with J. G. Rawlings, Milton and Jesse. Leonard Rawlings was sentenced to the penitentiary for life, and served a few weeks, later being brought back to jail here on an order from Governor Terrell, to await the result of the appeal made by their attorney to the Supreme Court.

Alf Moore has also escaped the death penalty, so far, as his testimony was considered very essential in case the Rawlings obtained another trial.

J. G. Rawlings is forty-nine years old, and in addition to his three sons is the father of two interesting girls, who are now budding into womanhood. Milton Rawlings is about twenty years old, Jesse eighteen and Leonard sixteen. The boys are away from home the average in appearance and intelligence.

BOYS SAY FATHER IS CRAZY Rawlings was a well-to-do farmer, and before his numerous troubles with the law he prospered up to the time of

A Year of Blood. The year 1903 will long be remembered in the home of F. N. Tackett, of Alliance, Ky., as a year of blood; which flowed so copiously from Mr. Tackett's lungs that death seemed very near. He writes: "Severe bleeding from the lungs and a frightful cough had brought me to the death door, when I began taking Dr. King's New Discovery for Consumption, with the surprising result that after taking four bottles I was completely restored, and as time has proven permanent cured." Guaranteed for sore Lungs, Coughs and Colds at

the murders, was a very popular man among a great number of people. In fact he had more friends, it is said, than Carter had. He was very hospitable and a good neighbor and his home was always open to his friends, where they were entertained in the best manner possible.

Milton Rawlings, the eldest son, has written their attorney, John B. Cooper, of Macon, requesting him to institute lunacy proceedings against his father and, if possible, have him committed to the insane asylum, as he and his brothers are confident that the elder Rawlings is a crazy man. It is understood that this will be the next step of the attorney, and if he is unsuccessful in that, the last page of the famous case will have been written and Rawlings will expiate his crime on the gallows as he insists is his right.

Since his conviction the elder Rawlings has spent much of his time reading the Bible. He has a habit of reading aloud, and this habit nearly caused a duel to the death between Rawlings and Henry Hickey, said to be from New York, who is under sentence for picking pockets while a circus was exhibiting her last Fall.

Rawlings was reading the Bible aloud when Hickey cursed him Rawlings made at Hickey with a knife, which he had been allowed to have, and Hickey drew a razor, which no one knew he had. The men were soon slashing one another and inflicted several wounds before they were separated.

Such episodes as this, manifestations of an ungovernable temper, have been frequent in Rawlings' career—though, up to the time of the murder of the Carter children, he was able to keep out of serious difficulty. There is no doubt that he was sincerely religious, and when his passions were not inflamed by some infringement of what he considered his personal rights he was a kindly and charitable man.

It is characteristic of him to still insist upon his personal rights even when they condemn him to the gallows.

What Is Needed. The beautiful is needed in our community life. We all have characters to build, strengthen and maintain. We need the beautiful. Dress and live as savages and would soon become savages in action. The city or village totally void of beauty would be the abode of the sensual, immoral and lawless. A community of taste and beauty must necessarily be composed of refined and cultured people, and true leads to higher morality. There are about our village many things that commend it. There are things that are capable of improvement. Public sentiment will do much toward beautifying our dwelling, our streets and alleys. Neatness, taste and beauty will help us all. Our moral life would be higher and our social life purer.

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—S. B. Hartman, M. D.

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