

THE MAN WHO ELECTROCUTES.

Silent Executioner Who Regards His Calling In Purely Business Way—Holds Patents on Apparatus.

New York Sun.

When he killed the Van Wormer boys in the State prison at Dannemora last week State Electrician Edward E. Davis finished his 74th execution by electricity. Of these 71 occurred in this State, two in Massachusetts and one in Ohio.

This man who invented the electric chair, owns the patents on it and is the only man who can absolutely be depended upon to conduct an execution without a hitch, is remarkable in other respects. Thus, wherever he goes he flocks by himself. He rarely speaks to anybody unless he is spoken to first, and then he is found to be a most affable person, more than anxious to talk about himself and his work.

He will cheerfully answer any question put to him, no matter how personal it may be. About his work he is absolutely cold blooded.

He looks upon an execution as a matter of business, nothing else. In this he reminds one very much of little Joe Atkinson, the old Tombs hangman, who was as cheerful an executioner as one would care to meet.

"My dear sir, I do not kill these men," said Mr. Davis just after the Van Wormer execution to an inquirer. "The people of the State of New York, acting through a judge and jury, kill them.

"I am simply the instrument of the law. I work the machinery by which the State of New York takes the lives of murderers."

Davis is a little gray haired man of 60. Ask a New York politician who is the hardest man to find in the city and he will tell you Tim Sullivan. Ask a State official at Albany, especially Superintendent of Prisons Collins, who is the hardest man in the State to find and he will tell you it is Davis.

Davis is a living mystery. He slips from place to place, never maintaining residence in a given locality for any length of time and rarely letting any one know where he is.

Every once in a while he appears suddenly in Albany, maps out his work for the next few months, and then goes away again, whither nobody knows. He can be absolutely depended upon, however, to put in an appearance at a State prison where there is to be an execution several days before it is to take place.

He goes right to the death chamber and gets everything in readiness, and after the execution he goes away as silently and as mysteriously as he came.

The State pays Davis \$150 for each man he kills. It has tried repeatedly to buy his patients, but he will not sell. If he should die there are probably plenty of men who would be able to work his apparatus, but it would be more or less of an experiment, even if an electrician willing to do the work could be found.

Davis' mysterious movements are attributed by some to a fear of assassination. Davis was asked about this recently and laughed heartily. He receives many threatening letters, he said; but pays no attention to them.

The night before an execution Davis goes to bed very early and leaves word that every precaution is to be taken not to have any noise around his room. He sleeps like a top and wakes up bright and early.

His work in the death chamber, outside of preparing the apparatus, is very slight. He looks on while the keepers strap the man in, then puts his hand on the switch and at a signal turns on the current. He never leaves the switch after the

first shock until the man in the chair is officially declared dead.

Very naturally, some people have an aversion to Davis because he is the State executioner. Far from being annoyed by this, Davis is rather amused.

At a recent execution Davis took dinner at a hotel near the prison. Several regular boarders at the hotel refused to sit at the table with him, preferring to wait until he was through.

Davis calmly ate his dinner, reading his paper the while, and then smoked two cigars while the hungry boarders waited for him to get away.

Davis has no assistant. He does his work alone, and, unpleasant as the work may seem, he certainly does it well.

Rheumatism Secondhand.

"Well," exclaimed Mr. Queer-case, "you can talk as you like about physical affliction, but the largest that ever struck me was when I had the rheumatism in my brother."

"Rheumatism in your brother!" exclaimed his auditors in concert. "What are you telling us?"

"I'm just giving you a case of stalwart affliction that ought to bring your sympathy out by the roots," was the reply.

"The kind of rheumatism that he had was the kind that hangs over the edges and threads on the adjacent martyrs. Why, the way he'd yell and keep me awake at night and have me tying on bandages and rubbing joints and smelling all sorts of lotions, and the way he would kick me out of bed when his other leg hurt him too much, was energizing. Primary rheumatics is bad enough, but to have to take it in a secondary form is petrifying."

Woman's Home Companion.

The November Woman's Home Companion contains sixty four pages of seasonable matter. The chief feature is the first instalment of a novel prize-contest story entitled "The Trilemma of Albertine," in which the reader is asked to help solve a woman's choice in love. Other features are "The Progressive Work of the Jews in the United States," by Rabbi de Sola Mendes; "My Recollections of Abraham Lincoln," by his Law Clerk; "The Sad Love Story of Buchanan," "Old Home Week," "The Adventures of a Puritan Maid," etc. The fiction element is unusually good, and there are several illustrated pages of interesting fashion notes by Grace Margaret Gould. The Nature Study Club, which forms such a strong feature of this magazine, is unusually interesting. Published by The Crowell Publishing Company, Springfield, Ohio; one dollar a year; ten cents a copy.

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