

THE ALLEGED POISONING CASE IN BALTIMORE.

ARREST OF MRS. ELIZABETH G. WHARTON.

Great excitement was created in Baltimore in July, 1871, by the rumor that Mrs. Elizabeth G. Wharton was charged with poisoning several persons, visitors at her house.

The lady, charged with the crimes, moved among the most highly respectable, wealthy and influential circles in Baltimore, and extreme caution had been exercised by her friends and the officers of the law in keeping secret the facts of the case, for fear, doubtless, that there might be exaggerated and injurious reports. On the 23d of June General Ketchum, an old army associate and friend of the late Major Wharton, and intimate with his family, arrived at the residence of Mrs. Wharton, on Hamilton Place, intending to spend a few days. On the 24th of June, the day after his arrival, he was taken suddenly ill, and died on the 28th.

During his illness he was attended by Dr. P. C. Williams. While General Ketchum lay ill Mr. Eugene Van Ness, for years on intimate terms with the family, called to spend the evening. Shortly after his arrival Mrs. Wharton offered him and several other persons, who were present, glasses of beer, which she said contained drops of gentian (a strong tonic), and her hospitality was accepted. In a brief time Mr. Van Ness became very sick and had to remain in her house. His family were notified, and Dr. Chew was summoned to attend him.

As the sudden death of General Ketchum had excited remark, the unexpected illness of Mr. Van Ness also created a suspicion of crime. At this time General Ketchum had not been buried, but his remains had been removed to Washington by his friends. Professor William E. A. Aikin, of the Maryland University, was

requested to analyze his stomach, and after a patient performance of his work, reported twenty grains of tartar emetic. In the meantime Mrs. Wharton had continued her preparations to leave on Monday night, July 10th, for Europe, via New York, intending to sail on the Wednesday following.

On the 10th July, 1871, the following warrant was issued:

"Please issue bench warrant, on the oath of Deputy Marshal Jacob Frey, for the apprehension of Mrs. Henry Wharton, residing at 263 North Eutaw street, Baltimore, upon the charge of feloniously, willfully and of her malice aforethought, poisoning, killing and murthering General Ketchum, of the United States army, 28th June, 1871. Issue also bench warrant against the same party for attempting to poison Eugene Van Ness, on the 24th of June, 1871, on the oath of Deputy Marshal Frey.

"FREDERICK PINKNEY,

"Deputy State's Attorney for the city of Baltimore."

Marshal Frey immediately visited the house and laid the warrant and notified Mrs. Wharton, Miss Nellie Wharton and two colored servants in the house that they were in custody. Messrs. I. Nevitt Steele and John H. Thomas were promptly engaged as counsel by Mrs. Wharton's friends. They requested Judge Gilmore to be present in the city to receive an application for bail, if they thought proper to make it. His Honor complied with the request and decided to refer the case to the Grand Jury. Shortly after Mrs. Wharton was regularly presented and committed to jail. Her daughter was allowed to occupy her prison