

THE DEATH WATCH.

A Custom that Has Been in Vogue from Time Immemorial.

Measures of Precaution to Prevent Self-Destruction.

Nevertheless Several Condemned Men Have Killed Themselves.

The custom of placing a death-watch upon a condemned prisoner, just previous to his execution, is one that has been handed down from time immemorial.

In the old English common law, it was one of the Sheriff's duties to perform all executions, and he was bound to see that a condemned criminal paid the penalty that the law imposed in capital cases.

This was incorporated in the law of this State a century ago, and ever since that time the Sheriff has assumed the charge of condemned persons in capital cases ten days before the time of execution, and during that period they are watched day and night.

The theory of the law was that as the time of death approached the condemned man would be more strongly tempted to make some desperate effort to escape his doom, by breaking jail or else by ending his life by his own hand, and that it was necessary to place a more careful watch upon him for this reason.

He must not be left for an instant out of the sight of the officers of the law whose loyalty duty was to see that the gallows was erected at the proper time.

Many his duty was on record where men, driven to desperation by the horror of the impending doom, have even tried to dash their brains out against their prison walls rather than be led to the scaffold and strangled to death.

It is to prevent just such attempts as these that the death-watch is established. The law in this State provides that the watch shall consist of two deputy sheriffs, each for one night, and that they shall be relieved every eight hours successively from the time their watch is begun until the execution.

For this service each deputy is paid \$24 a day. As a special duty, Sheriff's men take charge of the prisoner in this manner the responsibility of the execution is placed upon the Sheriff's men.

The question has been asked why should not prisoners under the death sentence be watched as closely as this during the whole period of their imprisonment?

Ward O'Boe, Sheriff of the county, says that the keepers exercise almost as strict supervision as the Sheriff's officers, and in his experience at the Tombs no prisoner has ever attempted his escape because he had been sentenced to be hanged.

They never seem to realize that they have no chance of escape, and that they are right upon their death-watch.

The death-watch unneries them more than anything else, and well it might drive them to attempt their lives," said the Warden.

IN THE OLD BAY STATE.

No Statutory Death-Watch, but Strict Guard Over the Condemned.

(SPECIAL TO THE EVENING WORLD.) BALTIMORE, Aug. 22.—There is no statutory provision in this State about the establishment of the death-watch on the eve of executions.

After sentence the prisoner is taken to the County Jail and there secretly kept until the arrival of the execution day.

The Sheriff is responsible for his safe custody, and he is in the language of the statute executed with the penalty of death to be done upon the body of the condemned.

Proper provision is made in the law for cases of respite, pardon and commutation. In case of other cause the time originally named in the sentence for the execution shall have elapsed, the prisoner may be hanged thereafter as soon as may be.

It has been a rule in Suffolk County Jail not to permit the intimate friends of persons under sentence of death to convey food to them, at least for some considerable time before the date set for execution.

The death-watch varies from twenty-four hours to forty-eight, or even longer in the case of highly nervous persons.

It is well known in this community that it was the fixed policy of Sheriff Clark, during whose long term of more than twenty-eight years all the capital punishments have been inflicted, not to allow any tampering with prisoners.

That is to say, in vulgar parlance, pumping them.

It has also been the policy to direct persons under sentence of death to repose their spiritual and legal advisers.

THE DEATH WATCH IN CONNECTICUT.

Established by Custom and Not Through a State Law.

(SPECIAL TO THE EVENING WORLD.) HARTFORD, Conn., Aug. 22.—A. W. Spaulding, for the past nine years Sheriff of Hartford County, says that he knows of no law in Connecticut providing for the death watch over condemned murderers.

It has been the custom in Connecticut for

very many years to set a watch over such criminals as are appointed to die, and so far as he knows it is invariably done.

Sheriff Spaulding announces several reasons for this, the principal one being that the Sheriff must have every precaution to prevent the escape or suicide of the condemned.

In other words, he must produce him alive, if possible, at the time specified for execution.

When a prisoner realizes that he must surely die an ignominious death, he is very apt to become desperate and resort to suicide if a chance presents itself, and it is always well to watch him closely the last few days.

Sometimes, too, if he is harboring a grudge against any one who must come in contact with him there is danger of violence.

Many condemned murderers prefer a death watch if he is all agreeable—as they like to talk, and forget as near as possible their impending doom.

A well-known Hartford lawyer concurs in Sheriff Spaulding's opinion that there is no law in Connecticut providing a death watch.

In the lawyer's opinion a death watch is put over a condemned murderer simply to guard against the gallows being cheated.

Eighteen years ago Wilson, the convict in the Connecticut State Prison who murdered Warden Willard, was hanged in Hartford.

This criminal almost succeeded in killing himself early on the morning of his execution by driving a piece of pointed wire into his heart.

He was undoubtedly in a dying condition when carried to the gallows.

This suicide was attempted in the presence of a death watch.

OUT IN ILLINOIS.

A Death Watch Didn't Keep Louis Lingg from Suicide.

(SPECIAL TO THE EVENING WORLD.) CHICAGO, Ill., Aug. 22.—The representative of THE EVENING WORLD lately interviewed Sheriff Matson in regard to the practice of putting a death watch on criminals condemned to die.

Mr. Matson is the brilliant gentleman who allowed "Boulder" McGarrigue to escape by the bath-tub route two years ago.

He is also the individual in whose care was Louis Lingg, the condemned anarchist, who blew off his head with a bomb a few days before he was to have been hanged.

Mr. Matson is decidedly in favor of putting a watch on condemned criminals.

"It is necessary," said he, "in order to prevent them from committing a crime. A man gets desperate in the face of death and makes up his mind to kill himself rather than die on the gallows."

"Another thing, as the hour of his execution approaches, the prisoner has the temptation to devise and carry out some scheme of escape, of which, in his other moments, he would be incapable."

"But the death watch plan is not an altogether sure preventive of the suicide of murderers, as shown by the fact that although a death watch was placed over the anarchist two weeks before he was to be hanged, Mr. Lingg managed to escape the noose."

The general feeling here is that there is something useful in the death watch, and not a little of utter worthlessness.

The laws of this State do not prescribe a death watch, but leave the matter to the discretion of the Sheriff of each county.

BELIEVED IN MARYLAND.

The Death Watch Declared as Necessary for the Gallows.

(SPECIAL TO THE EVENING WORLD.) BALTIMORE, Aug. 22.—"What is the use of setting a death watch over condemned murderers?" repeated Mr. Norman B. Scott, an eminent legal authority of Maryland.

"Why, it is to maintain the majesty of the law. There is no State statute bearing on the case, but it is custom and custom makes common law."

"From the mosaic law contained in Holy Writ to Blackstone's Commentaries, and from that unapproachable English authority to the custom of the present day, a death watch is as necessary to carry out the sentence of a court in such a case as in the gallows."

"The death watch in Maryland is stationed at the door of the prisoner as soon as sentence is pronounced by the Judge, and it continues in the solitary cell of the condemned until it has passed the critical inspection of this death sentence."

He dissected and analyzed the food in search of poison or any indelible weapon that may be susceptible of opening an artery and giving out the life blood to cheat the law.

"Useless? No. To allow a condemned criminal to cheat the law by suicide is to rob the penalty of murder of half its terror. To be hanged by the neck, and if you are dead, is the punishment of death that has stayed many a murderous hand."

"To be allowed to take your own life as a penalty in its stead would be a sacrifice to the criminal, and it is the duty of the State to choose of ways and means."

"True, many sentenced murderers are buoyed by hope that the extreme penalty of the law will not be at last inflicted, and for that reason would not anticipate by suicide; but in case of anticipated death the law justifies the care now taken of such criminals."

Rather Glad Than Otherwise.

(From Judge.) A gentleman, with his card-case in hand, rings the bell.

"Are Mr. and Mrs. B. at home?" "Yes, sir."

"Very well; then I'll call again."

TO TEST JACKSON'S WORTH.

PARSON DAVIES WILL ARRANGE MATCHES WITH THE ENGLISH PEDESTALS.

Dempsey and the Marine are Both Said to Be in Fine Condition—The Sullivan Box Getting Athletics for the Sullivan Box—Gavin and Buckley Seen to Fight—Greek George Wins in Wrestling with Melidon.

Parson Davies, just before his departure for England, said that Jackson would give a sparring exhibition in Liverpool, and then proceed to London, where he expects to get on a match between Jackson and Jim Smith. He will obtain permission of the California Athletic Club to let Jackson spar at least eight rounds under Queensberry rules.

Mitchell and Slavin will also be given an opportunity to try conclusions with "the blackie," and, in fact, all the British pugilists of note will have a chance to ascertain just how good a man Jackson is. Should the Parson get on a match with Smith, efforts will be made to induce the latter to meet Jackson at San Francisco on his return.

As the time approaches for the Dempsey-LaBianche fight, the interest in the probable outcome increases among the friends of both men. Dempsey's admirers are just as confident of his success as a prizefighter as the Nonpariel states that no one need be fooled about his condition; he will be in as good form as ever. The Marine's friends assert that he is better than ever in the ring, and will make the fight his own.

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Col. Milburn says that as Miss Kate Chaston is going to give a benefit for ornaments for the sick babies at the Madison Square Theatre, which she has already declared will be more lucrative than his own, he will present his own benefit as an author's fund on August 23.

He will be in the Union Square Theatre, but was unable to arrange matters. This can be seen in the "Nana Sahib," "Madame Bonifas," "A Post Card," and other plays and adaptations.

Little Nannie Lehland, the four-year-old niece of Alexander Conk, is to appear as the baby in "Bootsie's Luck" with Miss Chaston at the Madison Square Theatre Monday night. "Bootsie's Luck" will be rather comical.

Young Robert Campbell, son of the late Robert Campbell, will be connected with the management of his father's play, "Siberia." Little Campbell is a nice, gentlemanly lad, with many friends.

The play entitled "The Fairy's Well," in which Carroll Johnson, the musical comedian, is to make his debut as a star, is founded upon a legend of A. H. Hall's. One scene will show a man in a mountain precipice. The hero will resume a dreamy man from the scene at the Bijou Sept. 5. Well will be rather comical.

Manager Price, of Mansfield's company, brought with him from London a canvas bag containing a quantity of good English cigars. He presented the bag, empty, to Mr. A. P. Dunham, who has a fine collection of cigars. Mr. Dunham laughs it in the eyes of every summering comedian who visits him. He doesn't seem to fear the consequences of his rashness in the least.

Miss Margaret Mather is to appear for the first time in "Gretchen" in San Francisco very shortly. Miss Mather will not be seen in this city until Jan. 20, when she will appear at the Grand Opera House.

Manager E. G. Gilmore, who is popularly believed to love music, has been asked to organize a band for the bridge-jumper, to jump from a representation of the Brooklyn Bridge in "The Old Homestead." Of course the band will be in a large tank, but the stage of the Academy is a large one. Mr. Brodie will not be engaged to support Dennan Thompson.

Mrs. Yeaman, the only and imitatable, leaves Harpagan in San Francisco. She will be replaced by Hattie Moore. Mrs. Yeaman, it will be remembered, is under contract to Augustus Daly.

Frank Sanger has heard that somebody is trying to use a certain furniture effect, that belongs to the American comedy, "The American rights of which he owns. The comedy is now running at the Opera Comique, London. Mr. Sanger says he will present his own states, and he generally means what he says.

It is said that Miss Zoe Tibbory, Lydia Thompson's daughter, will not be a member of her mother's company. Miss Tibbory, according to the latest, is to star under the management of Napier, and will play "Romeo and Juliet" and "Masks and Faces."

Eringer, of the firm of Klav & Erlinger, was in a foolish fix yesterday because of the publication of a para-raph in THE EVENING WORLD stating that Ben Ford, stage manager of the Great Metropolitan, had consented to let an actor have his hair cut. Mr.

Walter Player was standing near the cart-shed. His face was full of discontent. It did not get better when Lucy came up to him.

"Good-day," she had not seen him for some time. He looked a little better, but she felt that she was to leave Low Edge?

He put up one shoulder and looked uneasy. "I've looked very well, and I could hear a sound of reproach in his voice."

"There's no money to pay men or rent side. I owe still a few shillings which I did not get to trouble Rogers with. I thought," his face flushed, "this Michaelmas, when you come home, you'd make me lend me the cash. You know that my mother would not let me. I would take it all, child," he said, pleadingly.

She gave him a cordial smile. "I wish it had been more, father; then you might have done without so much help from others."

There was a pause. Lucy stared into the opposite wall, with her hands clasped behind her.

"You have not told me what we are to do, Lucy. How do you mean to live?" "What we were to do?" She had been thinking, but she could not find a way.

"We ought not to lose that. Then he closed his eyes with a look of relief, as if he had shifted his burden on to competent shoulders."

Lucy began to walk up and down the long row of stalls, and she had a mind to. The bright happiness of those past six months had been, then, only a momentary dream. She must now begin to think of her own strength and energy; yes, she must work to support her father and to pay his debts. She stopped in her track. Her father was coming. The girl began to ask herself what she could do. The idea of teaching suggested itself to her, as she continued her walk, she asked her father how much she could earn as a teacher.

"At last she came back to the sofa. Her face was red, but she looked hopeful. She went over her sleeping father, listened, and then she went softly out by the door at the further end of the long room."

PLAYS AND THEIR PLAYERS.

ADVANCE PLOT OF EDWARD E. KIDDER'S "POOR RELATION."

Lydia Thompson's Daughter to Star as Juliet—Steve Brodie Proposed for a Tank Drama—Leap—Mrs. Leslie Carter Reading Hard for Her Debut—Kate Chaston's Benefit for the Babes' Fund.

Here is the story of Edward E. Kidder's play, "A Poor Relation," which is to be produced at Day's Theatre Monday night. Noah Vale, a shabby-genteel inventor goes to a rich relative, who is to examine the plans of a great invention. Mr. Vale, as before said, is shabby—and hungry. He faints in his relative's drawing room, and his plans are stolen from him by Jasper Street, his relative's partner, an evildoer with the heroine. This girl is accused of the theft by her stepmother, Vale, to save her, she declares that he never had any plans. Vale goes to his garret and Street visits him. The villain gains the confidence of the inventor and Street engages him as foreman in the factory. The heroine comes to see Vale, and is found at his home by her father and stepmother, the latter, who hates the girl, being jealous of her success as a prizefighter. Mitchell and Slavin will also be given an opportunity to try conclusions with "the blackie," and, in fact, all the British pugilists of note will have a chance to ascertain just how good a man Jackson is. Should the Parson get on a match with Smith, efforts will be made to induce the latter to meet Jackson at San Francisco on his return.

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MERRY MORSELS OF MIRTH.

SHARP AND SPICY PARAGRAPHS FROM THE PENS OF OUR FUNNY MEN.

He Was a Baseball Umpire.

"Now, then, young fellow, yer want'er hand out yer pocketbook and watch yer quick 'er I'll blow the whole top of yer head. Do yer best, friend. I judge you are not aware that I have been a baseball umpire for three years!"

The New West.

Usher (at reception in Chicago, pompously, as Mr. Foot and daughters enter)—Mr. Foot and the Misses Foot!

And yet they say Chicago has no culture.

De D. D. D.

Do Dummy (accidentally running into stranger)—Oh—aw! Beg pardon!

Van Gungum (groping)—Beg pardon yourself, sir!

A Great Advantage.

"What's the good of a fishing club?" asked a traveling man of a friend. "It's all right to go fishing if you want to, but why can't you and a few of your friends go ahead and fish?"

"It's plain that you don't see the advantages of the fishing organization. Now, when we go fishing we have a complete under landing under the constitution and by-laws."

"Ah!"

"Yes, and you can bet that when we get back from a trip every man of us tells exactly the same story."

The World Suffered by Comparison.

Committeeman (ordering badges for the graduating class of Columbia College)—The design is to include a graduate in uniform and a representation of the world in relief.

Jeweller—How large would you like the figures?

Committeeman—Oh, made the graduate about two inches high and the world about half an inch in diameter.

Use for the Ulni.

McCrackle: I see that a movement is on foot to induce the government to coin half-cent pieces.

McCorkle: Yes; it is thought that more people could be induced to contribute to church collections in that case.

Fully Equipped.

Fond Mother (to her fully prepared to enjoy yourself at the picnic?)

Prudent Daughter: Yes, indeed. I have two umbrellas, waterproof and overcoats, and Charley has two lovely new life-preservers.

The Fly in the Ointment.

"Doctor," asked Camso, "do you think we are going to visit the United States this year?"

"No," said some people are talking of an extra session of Congress," replied the doctor, gloomily.

A Point Well Taken.

"Well, my dear, how would Farmer Brown suit you for a husband? He seems uncommon sweet on you lately."

"Perhaps so, father; but his hair is so red that I don't like it."

"True, true, my child; but you should recollect that he has very little of it."

Somery, beaming with smiles; and there he sat Lucy, and a grave, awkward expression took their place.

"I hope I see you well, Miss Somery," he said, stately.

Somery remarked the change of tone. He looked anxiously from one to the other.

"What is it, Miss Somery? Do you feel ill?" the farmer's voice was so feeble that the question sounded pathetic.

Rogers stared defiantly; he felt too nervous to speak.

"Let's not get on in this. I can't go to see you at last," she said, gratefully. "I have been wanting to thank you for giving us this cottage."

"Why should you thank me? I am glad to have a man in it. It turned away and began to talk to Somery. Lucy waited. Her father tried to draw her into the talk, but Rogers would not leave it; he would not utter a word to her.

"I don't like to see you, indoors, and came out again with her hat on."

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