A PLAN PROPOSED.

How Will Electrical Executions Be Accomplished?

THE LAST THING IN KILLING.

How Various Nations Do Their Criminals to Death—New York State the First Community to Adopt the Newest Thing in Capital Punishment.

After Jan. 1, 1889, murderers in New York state will depart this life on a streak of lightning. Any man who has been sentenced to death will go off so quick that he won't know anything about it. The subject of putting murderers to death by electricity has been agitated in the Empire state for more than a year.

After mature deliberation it was concluded that hanging would have to go.

Hanging has been the fashionable mode of punishment for centuries, but a commission appointed by Governor Hill concluded that it was too harrowing. They made a number of experiments, and finally decided upon electricity. A bill was passed by the legislature, but no provision was made as to the way the fluid was to be applied. Finally the Medico-legal society took the matter up, appointed a commission, and the result was that a particular form of applying the electricity was suggested. This way of killing off the refuse population will probably be used in New York state hereafter. Three ways of applying the fatal electricity were proposed, but none of them answered the purpose. One was passing the electricity from wrist to wrist through the body, another was passing the current from the head to one of the wrists, the third was to pass the current completely through the prisoner's body from head to foot.

A CURRENT IN THE BRAIN

The objections to these methods were that the prisoner might have convulsions. It was desired, of course, to take the utmost care of the prisoner. He was to die as pleasantly as possible. Then the attendant under this method might make a mistake and be struck himself.

The commission finally concluded that the best way would be to have the current pass through the head from the top to the back of the neck. One electrode is fitted to the top of the prisoner's head, another placed in contact with the small of his back. The top electrode connects with the positive pole, the bottom with the negative pole. A leathern rest holds the prisoner's head and hands keep him from moving. The current, in going from one electrode to another, does not keep in a straight line, but spreads out and goes through the entire brain. It resembles somewhat a bundle of faggots tied at the two ends and swelling out in the middle. The seat of consciousness being in the brain, and the headquarters for all the nerves being located there, it is of course as plain as day that, when an electro-motive force of 3, 30 volts is applied, the prisoner is bound to die. The great beauty of this system is that the prisoners don't know it either.

Here we have a villain who is too bad to stay around and commit murder any more. Step up, ladies and gentlemen, and gaze on the way it is done. Here we have a stout table covered with rubber cloth and having holes around its borders for binding. Prisoner, come up here and lie on the table. Attendant, bind the prisoner to the table. Here is an electrode (the negative one) which comes up through the table and touches the small of the prisoner's back. Here we have a helmet, to which the other electrode is joined, and the helmet is put on the prisoner's head. The electrode now touches the top of the prisoner's head, which has been moistened by warm water. Prisoner, are you ready? Then, let 'er go, Gallagher, and the thing is done. The man is as dead as a door nail. Another modification of this method is to let the prisoner sit in a chair. Some prisoners will undoubtedly prefer to sit in a chair, while others who were born tired will prefer to lie at full length. Everything will be done in regard to the comfort of the prisoners, and their taste will be consulted in every particular.

THE DEATH APPARATUS.

This, in brief, is the way the prisoners will "kick the bucket" after the 1st of January.

When Elbridge T. Gerry, Mathew Hale and Alfred P. Southwick were appointed last winter to investigate the matter they took the trouble to look up the various methods of punishment in different countries.

EARLY MODES OF EXECUTION.

Hanging is a very old institution. The earliest form of the gallows was undoubtedly a stout tree and a convenient limb, and they seem to have retained their popularity ever since the hanging of Ai by Joshua, as recorded in the Bible.

Hanging was used and known by the English in the Thirteenth century. They probably got it from the French. It is recorded by a French historian in 1343 that a knight, who had been judicially put to death, was hung on the gibbet after the breath had left his body. The first use of the primitive gallows seems to have been to exhibit the body after death. The first gibbet used in England to expose criminals was in the reign of Henry III. The first to be executed by the drop was Earl Ferrers, May 5, 1760. After his arms had been secured by a black sash and a common halter passed around his neck, he mounted a part of the scaffold eighteen inches above the rest, and the signal being given by the sheriff that part of the floor sank under him to a level with the rest, and he remained with nothing to stand on.

It seems to be fairly settled that sensation, reflection and mental horror accompany the physical tortures of those who are in the act of strangulating. Examples are frequent of those who commit suicide by hanging attempting to regain their foothold, finding the tortures of strangulation greater than they had conceived. It is reported of a woman, executed in 1800, "that the rope slipped her cap partially from her face, and while hanging at the halter's end, by a mighty effort she put up one of her hands sufficiently to draw it down again over her distorted features."

METHODS NOW IN USE.

Here are some of the different methods of executing criminals:

Auto-da-fe, or execution by the Spanish Inquisition, usually by burning.

Beating with clubs, practiced by the South African tribes.

Beheading or decapitation, known to the Greeks, Romans and Jews, and used formerly in England and France, and now in China and Japan.

Blowing from cannon, employed in quelling a rebellion among the Sepoys in India.

Boiling, formerly used in England in the case of poisoners.

Burning, a familiar mode of execution in the time of the early religious persecutions.

Burying alive, employed among barbarous tribes and even in civilized countries.

Crucifixion, a very ancient form of execution.

Decimation, employed by military tribunals where every tenth man was chosen by lot to die in cases where a large number of soldiers mutinied.

Dichotomy, or bisecting, mentioned in the Bible, where it is written men were sawn asunder.

Dismemberment, used in France in the Seventeenth century.

Drawing, in vogue in ancient Syria, Greece, Rome and Persia.

Exposure to wild beasts, an ancient punishment.

Flaying alive, formerly used in England.

Flogging with the knout, used in Russia.

Garroting, a punishment originally devised by the Arabs and Moors.

The guillotine, hari-kari, impalement, poisoning, hanging, pounding in a mortar, precipitation, pressing to death, the rack, running the gauntlet, shooting, stabbing, stoning, strangling and suffocation.

It will be readily seen by the observant reader that any one of these methods might be improved upon so far as the physical comfort of the victim is concerned. In countries where these modes of punishment were and in some cases are now practiced, the main object was to give the prisoner as much suffering as possible. He was held up as a terrible example. Now, however, the main object is to get the prisoner out of the way as soon as possible. In order to understand how quick a man can die under the force of electricity, let us consider first how fast a man can think. Well, it takes just one-tenth of a second for a nerve to communicate with the brain, according to Professor Hemholz. Now Professor Tyndall estimates that an electric discharge occurs in one hundred thousandth of a second, or ten thousand times more rapidly than nerve transmission. So you see that if it were possible a man would die by the process described ten thousand times before his nerves would have time to communicate with his brain.

Last winter, for the purpose of ascertaining the effect of the electric light current on the action of the heart, the thorax of a chloroformed dog caught in Buffalo was opened, so that the lungs and heart could be seen in action by forcing respiration as in conscious life. At the instant when the current passed through the heart it became a mass of quivering flesh. It was noticed that an attempt to breathe was made after the current was passed through the dog. This indicated that the brain had not lost its susceptibility to impressions, and shows that in execution the current should be passed through the center. It should not be forgotten, however, that the dog was from Buffalo. The commission could have selected no tougher subject than a Buffalo dog. There can be no question, however, that electricity is the thing to do the business.

HE LET HIMSELF DROP.

A Veracious Story of a Very Strange Accident.

Here is a large and elegant story told in a Lowery, Blount county, Ala., dispatch to The Huntsville Mercury. You are not obliged to believe it unless you want to:

A party of Birmingham capitalists, largely interested in the minerals of the region, and some prominent railroad officials were here on a tour of inspection, with the view of opening some beds of iron ore and selecting the most practicable route for the extension of the new railway that leads up this valley.

This, indeed, seems to have been the true battle grounds of the gods, with "Pelion piled upon Ossa," or the utter confusion of the geologists, who cannot account for red iron ore in one side of a mountain and brown on the other, with veins of coal immediately underlying the top on both sides, so it was determined to leave them out of the party and carry along a practical man familiar with the formations peculiar to this valley for all geological information necessary in making an approximate estimate of the amount of solid and loose rock to be encountered on the extension. Accordingly an old foreman, Mr. Mertz, who had been in the valley on the new road since April, and had also had large experience in railroading in the west, was selected. He was an intelligent, sober and industrious man, who regularly once a month sent the greater part of his earnings to his wife and children in Kansas. He gave his opinions only after the most careful examinations, and the gentlemen had implicit confidence as to their accuracy.

The party reached a perpendicular bluff about fifteen feet high, when Mr. Mertz climbed down to a ledge about six feet from the top, and with his hammer was investigating the character of the stones and its probable thickness. The gentlemen above heard several blows from his hammer, then apparently a quantity of loose rocks falling, and immediately a terrific explosion. They were all considerably shocked, but not otherwise hurt, and at once went to the edge of the precipice, where they detected the strong odor of dynamite, but to their consternation could see nothing of Mr. Mertz. After a careful search some small pieces of his clothing were found hanging in a tree about thirty feet from the ground, but that was all. The question for the scientists to settle is, what caused the explosion? A number of people from Birmingham have visited the place, but I have heard only one plausible theory, and that was advanced by Mr. Schultz, a scientist. It is known positively that Mr. Mertz had no dynamite with him, and Mr. Schultz says the only possible way to account for the explosion is that he had constantly, for a number of years, been handling dynamite and nitro-glycerine, and that so much had been taken into his system by absorption that it was only necessary for him to receive a slight jar to set it off, which was done when he struck the ground on falling from the ledge.

Whether his story is true or not I can't say, but give the facts as they happened, and they can be substantiated by a number of citizens in this vicinity and Birmingham.

Thought He Was in "Lunnon."

"Say, peeler, me boy, where am I?" asked a well dressed, middle aged man with a decided English accent, of Officer Ripple on Broadway and Thirtieth street last night.

He appeared to be dazed, as if recovering from long sleep.

"You are in New York," replied the policeman.

"That can't be, yer know," said the stranger. "I'm in London, and I want to go home, bobby."

The officer took the Englishman around to the Thirtieth street police station, where he told a strange story.

"My name is Henry Johnson," he said, "and I am 37 years old. The last thing I remember previous to accosting the officer was walking down Cheapside, in London, it seems only a few hours ago. I have no recollection of crossing the ocean, and I know no one in America."

Upon Mr. Johnson's person was found a letter dated London, Oct. 10, and addressed to "Henry Johnson, No. 46 Endymion Terrace, Finsbury Park, London."

It was from a lady and advised "Dear Henry" to stop drinking. Mr. Johnson grew restless and ill in the station, and he was sent to Roosevelt hospital. Capt. Reilly does not know what to think of his queer prisoner, whose strange story seems to be corroborated by his actions.—New York Morning Journal.

Delicate Scales.

Guide—Now, ladies and gentlemen, you wouldn't believe it, but it's true, that these weights are so delicate that they mark the difference between a blonde and a brunette hair.

Tourist (opening memorandum book)—And which weighs the less?

Guide—The lighter one.—Life.

The Indignant Wasp.

"Oh, you swindler, you have a stone inside you!" as the wasp said when he ate into the plum.

Few people are more virtuously indignant than the cheat when he finds himself outwitted.

THANKS.

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No. 8—Butte and Helena Express, 12:00 p. m.
No. 10—Marysville Passenger, 10:00 a. m.
No. 20—Rimini Accommodation, 5:00 p. m.
No. 7—Wickes, Boulder & Calvin pas'r, 2:45 p. m.

DEPARTURES FROM HELENA.

No. 1—Through West Bound Limited, 4:15 a. m.
No. 2—Through East Bound Limited, 6:40 p. m.
No. 7—Helena and Butte Express, 8:00 a. m.
No. 9—Marysville Passenger, 5:00 p. m.
No. 10—Rimini Accommodation, 8:15 a. m.
No. 8—Wickes, Boulder and Calvin, 8:00 a. m.

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116	Ar. Winona	11:15 pm
152	" La Crosse	12:01 am
191	" Fr du Chien	1:49 am
258	" Dubuque	3:58 am
278	" Galena	4:05 am
285	" Savanna	4:30 am
332	" Oregon	6:10 am
431	" Chicago	9:00 am
439	" Peoria	6:20 pm
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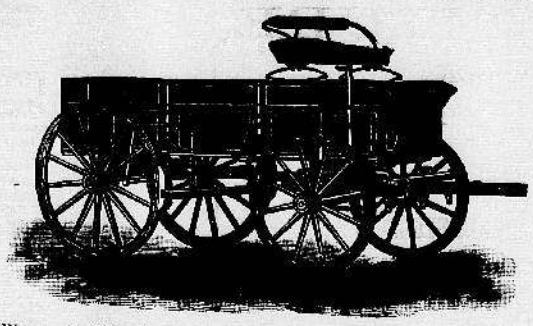

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