

# THE FATAL CHAIR

## Kemmler Dies a Terrible Death by Electricity

### PRONOUNCED DEAD YET ALIVE.

He Revives After Being Shocked Into Insensibility.

### HORROR-STRIKEN SPECTATOR FAINTS.

A Current Runs Through Him Until His Flesh Burns.

### THE DOCTORS' AUTOPSY.

#### A Sickening Scene.

Some of the witnesses turned away from the sight. One of them lay down faint and sick. It takes a long, long time to tell the story. It seemed a long time reaching a climax. In reality there were only 73 seconds in the interval which elapsed between the moment when the first sound issued from Kemmler's lips until the response to the signal came from the dynamo room. It came with the same suddenness that had marked the first shock which passed through Kemmler's body. The sound which had horrified the listeners about the chair was cut off sharply as the body once more became rigid. The slimy ooze still dripped from the mouth and ran slowly in three lines down the beard and on to the grey vest. Twice there were twitchings of the body as the electricians in the next room threw the current on and off. There was to be no mistake this time about the killing. The dynamo was run at high speed and the full current of 2,000 volts was sent through the body in the chair. How long it was kept in action no one knows. To the excited group of men about the chair it seemed an interminable time. For the men who stood in front of the volt metre in the adjoining room and throw the switch backward and forward time had no measurement. Dr. Daniel, who looked at his watch excitedly, and who had an approximate idea of the time at least, said that it was four and a half minutes in all. The warden's assistant, who stood over the dynamo, said that on the second signal the machine was run three and a half minutes. It will never be known with any degree of certainty what the space of time was. No one was anxious to give the signal to stop. All dreaded the responsibility of offering to the man a chance to revive or to give again at least those appearances of returning animation which had startled and sickened the witnesses a few minutes before.

#### An Odor of Burning Flesh.

As the anxious group stood silently watching the body, suddenly there arose from it a white vapor bearing with it a pungent and sickening odor. The body was burning. Again there were cries to stop the current, and again the warden sprang to the door and gave the quick order to his assistants. The current stopped and again there was the relaxation of the body. No doubt this time that the current had done its work, if not well, at least completely. Dr. Fell said, "Well, there is no doubt about one thing. The man never suffered an iota of pain." In after consultations the other physicians expressed the same belief. It was some mitigation of the horrors of the situation to believe this. There was some consolation in the thought that those heavy, hoarse sounds were not the evidences of suffering. But mitigation was slight, extremely slight, when it developed that on another and just as important a point, one on which the success of the experiment seemed to depend largely, if not altogether, these same doctors disagreed very materially. Was Kemmler dead when his chest moved and his lips gave forth those strange, ghastly sounds? Was he breathing or was there involuntary or phenomenal action of the chest muscles?

#### The Doctors Disagree.

Some of the eminent experts in attendance said that while the body was still warm in the chair there was no doubt that there were signs of returning animation, that the respiration (for respiration they believe it to be) was growing stronger, and that in time if the current had not been turned on he would have revived. Others, and among them Dr. Spitzka, stated with equal positiveness the conviction that the first shock killed Kemmler instantaneously. Dr. Daniel and Dr. Southwick (the father of the system of electricicide) believe that Kemmler was dead, but they think that the current should have been continued longer than seventeen seconds, which was the official time of the first contact. There is no way in which a positive determination of this question can be made. It will always remain a mystery.

#### The Autopsy.

The autopsy was begun at about 9 o'clock. It was in charge of Dr. Jenkins, of New York (who handled the knife), Dr. Daniel, Dr. McDonald and Dr. Spitzka. Dr. Fell prepared the blood drawn from the body for examination under the microscope. It was found when the body was spread out on the table that a very severe rigor mortis had set in. There was little relaxation, and it was with difficulty that the corpse was straightened out. On examination it was found that the second electrode had burned through the skin and into the flesh at the base of the spine, making a scar nearly five inches in diameter. The heart, lungs and other organs were taken out and were found to be in good, healthy condition. They will be preserved for future examination. The brain also was taken out, and it, too, will be carefully examined.

The examination of the brain showed that the brain was hardened directly under the spot where the electric current had come in contact with the skull, and that the blood at that spot was hardened, showing that the current had direct action on the brain.

#### Verdict of the Doctors.

The following brief statement was dictated by Dr. Spitzka before the witnesses left the execution room:

There is no doubt that consciousness was

abolished instantly at the first contact. The first current did not destroy all vital phenomena, but some reflex phenomena of vegetative life resisted, and that I think you can safely say was due to the fact that the voltage was not constant or strong enough.

Concerning the strength of the voltage, Dr. Spitzka said that he had written to Dr. McDonald some time ago expressing a fear that it would be too weak. Dr. Spitzka said that he had noticed some curious phenomena in connection with the experiment—one of them the post mortem signs, which appeared immediately after the first shock. It was shortly after this that Dr. Spitzka said: "I am no friend of electrocution. I am sure this settles electrocution; that man deserved, if a man ever did, a quick death." Later Dr. Spitzka said to the special correspondent of the United Press (and both of these expressions of opinion were carefully noted and are now transcribed from original notes.) "I believe this system of execution superior to hanging," and to this last expression of opinion Dr. McDonald, who was standing by gave a hearty assent. Dr. Southwick was satisfied with the execution as a first experiment. He said that Kemmler was dead at the moment of the first contact, and that there was no respiration afterward. There was nothing but muscular contraction. Besides, as there was no consciousness after this first shock it did not matter whether or not the current was kept on all day. The law provided that the current should be kept going until death occurred. Dr. McDonald said there was no doubt that unconsciousness was instantaneous.

"Had the voltage been higher," said Dr. McDonald, "the time would have been long enough."

Dr. Balch said, "The man was instantly unconscious. Sensation was dead in him after the first shock, but I think that if he had been allowed to continue to respire he would have revived."

Dr. Daniel expressed belief that Kemmler died at the first shock. He said he thought the execution was a success, and that it had demonstrated the superiority of electricicide over hanging.

#### Dead at Last.

Almost immediately attendants began to unbind the corpse, and finally the mask was removed. The eyes were found to be half closed and without a glassy stare. The lids were lifted and tests of the pupils with bright lights were made. The optic nerves were dead. There was no contraction of the pupils. Where the mask had pressed the forehead there was a livid mark. The nose and the region of its base was of a deeply livid hue. Purple spots soon began mottling the hands, arms and neck, and the doctors said he was surely dead. One of the Buffalo doctors seven minutes after the straps were removed cut the skin at the temple for a microscopic specimen of the dead man's blood. It was examined and found slightly coagulated. Warden Durston produced his death certificate, which was read and signed by each witness of the execution.

Warden Durston was asked to state the pressure at the time the current was first applied. "About 1,700 volts," was the response.

#### A Waif and a Wanderer.

Kemmler was born in Philadelphia thirty years ago, brought up in ignorance, never learned a trade and for years has been a waif and a wanderer. He did not know whether he had a relative living, although shortly after he came to Auburn he received a letter from a man living in Ohio who was probably his uncle.

So he grew up like a lost child and naturally, because his father was a butcher, worked more at that than at anything else. It was the only business of which he had the least knowledge. Some three years ago in Camden, N.Y., he married Ida Porter. The day after his wedding he learned that she had another husband living. Immediately he left her and ran away to Buffalo with Mrs. Tillie Zeigler. There he became at once a huckster and a drunkard. The woman, too, was cursed with a taste for liquor. They quarreled continually. She frequently stole his money, and, taken altogether, their life was as degraded as could be.

One night, crazy with drink, they had a row about a few cents, and he struck her on the head with an axe. Next day she was dead. That night, in the station-house cell, he was plied with liquor until he grew talkative, and told enough to convict himself. That is the whole story of his life, common enough in its beginning, and uncommon in its ending only because he was the first to die this new death ordained by the law.

#### Something Wrong With the Dynamo.

While this was proceeding and the witnesses examined the chair of death, the belt was run upon the dynamo, in the south wing of the prison, and the incandescent test lamps in the ante-chamber glowed faintly. The current was on: the strange power was coursing the circuit. The evidence was there, but how feebly they burned! Thus exclaimed Dr. McDonald, who was the only one who got into the ante-room, and that while ignorant of the warden's desire to keep its secrets inviolate. In response to Dr. McDonald's comments Electrician Davis remarked that there was something wrong about the machinery down there, referring to the dynamo end of the circuit. This remark took place before the electricizing, it is well to remember, and was undoubtedly as true a few minutes later, when the bolt was applied to Kemmler.

#### More About the Last Scene.

Two and one-half minutes had been consumed in securing him with straps after he sat down in the chair, and from time to time the moment all was ready five and a half minutes had passed. Then the warden leaned over and nodded his head to some one who stood in the secret room at the fatal switch. There was a quick, convulsive start of the bound figure in the chair, a little squeaking sound of straining straps. Breathless watchers had every sense bent upon the moveless wretch bound head, hand and foot, and no sound save birds' songs in the bright sunshine outside the windows. The bar of a heavy shade at one window was lifted by the straying breeze and fell back against the bar. The noise was slight, but to the tense and breathless watchers in the death chamber it seemed equal to the sound of clashing arms. Dr. Spitzka and Dr. Shrad, drawn by deep interest almost unconsciously from their places, moved on tiptoe to places by the chair. But all was still and no man spoke.

Opinions of the New York Journals. The Herald says in one respect at least

the execution of Kemmler was a dismal and unfortunate failure. It will fail to end the unparalleled controversy that has been waged over the substitution of the dynamo for the gallows. On the contrary it must revive that controversy and give to it a vigor which it never had before. The failure of yesterday's experiment was due not to the system, but the bungling, inefficient way in which the execution was managed. The fault was with the doctors and electricians. No backward step should be taken hastily. So great a reform is not to be abandoned without good reason. The bungling work of yesterday does not warrant a return to the barbarity of the gallows. Had the execution been properly and efficiently managed in would have proved the success of the new system beyond all dispute.

The Tribune says there are only two possible methods of execution that our civilization will sanction, electricity and the rope. It is only because we are so familiar with the hanging that its utterly brutal conditions are tolerated. To witness the long and desperate struggles of a poor wretch who is undergoing the slow process of strangulation is to witness a spectacle of unspeakable horror. It is probable that the spectacle of Kemmler's death was equally dreadful, but it is also probable that sensation fled at the first approach of the electric current. This execution cannot be regarded as anything more than an experiment, and as an experiment it was not a success. Unquestionably there were serious defects in Warden Durston's mechanical arrangements. The switchboard should have been in the execution room, and the hand of an experienced electrician should have directed the movements of the lever. There should have been no failure in the development of a steady, regular current. To these two circumstances, which can of course easily be obviated hereafter, some of the horrors of this particular case may be ascribed. That there will now be a loud outcry against the new law is to be expected, and probably all sorts of expedients will be resorted to prevent another application. Such expedients ought not to succeed. While we cannot consider it settled that the law should endure, further tests of its desirability should be had. These will be in the interest of mercy and civilization.

The Times says yesterday's trial was of necessity an experiment, and it was not conducted with that care and coolness that were requisite to ensure success, but it was made clear that with the current that has been recommended for the purpose, with application free from defect in construction and operation, and with a firm and confident application of the process, there could hardly be any question of instant painless death. It would be absurd to talk of abandoning the law and going back to the barbarism of hanging, and it would be as puerile to propose to abolish capital punishment because the new mode of execution was botched in its first application.

The World says the first experiment in electrocution should be the last. Its results strongly condemn this method of putting criminals to death as very cruel and very shocking.

### MISSIONARY RIVALRIES.

Mwanga's County the Theatre of a Sectarian Difficulty.

A London cable says: A letter has been received from Rev. E. C. Gordon, one of the English missionaries at Uganda, in which he says that the Protestants and Romanists combined their forces and together defeated the Mohammedan party and set Mwanga again on the throne. This was in February. It was done without the assistance of the British East African Company's expedition, which, when the fighting was going on, was in Uganda, on the north shore of Victoria Nyanza, at least 50 miles east of the scene of trouble.

Then Dr. Peters, the German traveller, appeared on the scene and induced Mwanga to sign a treaty placing his country under German protection. The Romanists strongly favored this action, but the Protestants, who are all converts of the English missionaries strongly opposed it. They said that Mwanga had already accepted the flag of the British East African Company, which Jackson had sent him, and that the British Company therefore had a prior claim. The Protestants, however, were compelled to yield, and Dr. Peters left Uganda and started for the coast with the signed treaty. Of course this treaty has been nullified by the Anglo-German agreement.

The dissensions between the Protestant and Romanist parties are serious. Before they combined to reinstate Mwanga, however each side took an oath that in the event of its securing the chief authority under the King, it would not molest the other party. In consequence of this compact, though there is much bad feeling, no open acts of hostility have occurred between the parties. The Romanists, who are numerically stronger than their rivals, have the ear of the King, and hold the best places in the Government.

#### Lady Dunlo's Victory.

A London cable says: Lady Dunlo's victory in the divorce suit has brought that fair songstress not only glory but lucre. She is simply overwhelmed with offers of all kinds, the latest of which is one from Ted Marks to accept \$300 a week and travelling expenses for a tour of America, in return for which she would be only expected to do one song and dance each evening, with a possible encore, the whole not to keep her on the stage more than fifteen minutes. Lady Dunlo refused the offer, saying she will not appear on the stage for some time to come. She promised Mr. Marks, however, that if ever she decided to go to America, he should have her preference for acting as her manager.

#### A Stony Barometer.

A Finland paper mentions a curious stone in the northern part of that country which serves the people instead of a barometer. This stone, which the call "limakur," turns black, or blackish gray, when foul weather is approaching; fine weather has the effect of turning it almost white. The Finns regard the stone with superstitious reverence, but the scientists say that its changes in color are due to the salts contained in its composition.

The German newspaper directory enumerates 3,203 German periodicals, against 2,982 in 1889 and 2,729 in 1888.

### LONDON'S NEW BISHOP.

A Very Popular Canadian Priest to Succeed Archbishop Walsh.

A cable despatch to the New York Catholic News from its Rome correspondent says that Rev. Dennis O'Connor, of Sandwich, Ont., Canadian Superior of the Basilian Fathers and Superior of Assumption College, of Sandwich, has been appointed Bishop of the Diocese of London, Ont., to succeed the Most Reverend John Walsh, who was appointed Bishop of Toronto last year.

Father O'Connor, D. D., is a Canadian by birth, 50 years of age. He early determined to devote his life to the Catholic faith, and entered St. Michael's College at Toronto, Ont., with the intention of fitting himself for the ministry. He graduated with high honors at the Toronto college, studied for two years in France, and after visiting all places in Europe important for their connection with religious history, took orders in the church.

Returning to America, Father O'Connor was made a professor of St. Michael's College, his alma mater, but soon resigned to accept the position of superior of the Assumption College at Sandwich. When he entered upon the duties of his new office the college was barely in existence. It was located in some deserted army barracks below Sandwich, but under the guiding hand and untiring energy of Father O'Connor it steadily advanced in efficiency and prosperity until it has reached the position that it now holds among Canadian educational institutions.

The success of every project that Father O'Connor has undertaken has been due to his great ability as an organizer and the broad and liberal view that he has taken of everyday affairs. Father O'Connor has continued at the head of Assumption College during a period of 22 years, up to the time of his present appointment, and his masterly efforts will soon be felt in the new position that his profound learning and liberal ideas has won for him.

### THE MISENER MYSTERY.

Probability That a Clue to Unravel It Has Been Discovered.

A Buffalo despatch says: A new and very probably important witness has been found in the Grand Island mystery case. The witness is a young woman named Mason, who, when the murdered man Misener lived at his home near Port Colborne, Ont., resided with her grandfather at the little German village of Stonebridge, in the township of Humberstone, about a mile from Port Colborne. She there became acquainted with Misener and "kept company" with him, but lost sight of him for a couple of years, until she met him again on Grand Island, where he was working for Ackerman. She is represented as claiming that Ackerman was jealous of Misener. The girl then worked at Sheenwater, and one night when she and Misener were out walking they met Ackerman. The latter was very angry and swore he would get even with Misener for taking his girl away from him. The girl said her brother told her that Ackerman and Misener had a fight over chopping some wood one day. She will be called as a witness for the State when Ackerman comes up for trial next September.

### COMFORTING FOR SMOKERS.

Lepers Engaged in Turning the Fragrant Weed Into Cigars.

A Washington despatch says: That leprosy is prevalent among the Cuban employees of the great cigar factories at Key West and Tampa, Fla., there is now no doubt. Private advices state that leprosy is known to exist among those at present working as "strippers" and carters. In these cases the disease has broken out beyond doubt, but the symptoms are not yet so serious as to incapacitate them from work. In other cases the sufferers live at home while other members of their families go out and work, returning home and spending their evenings with the lepers. Leprosy has been found to exist lately in several States, but such cases are under the control absolutely of the local State authorities. If it is represented to the Health Bureau that leprosy exists in Key West or Tampa, or that it has caused the infection of tobacco, an investigation will be at once ordered, and steps taken to quarantine the tobacco. As yet, however, nothing has been done, because no information of an official or special character has been received.

### PRISONERS REVOLT.

Strange Scene at the Charleston State Prison Yesterday.

A Boston despatch says: For some time trouble has been brewing at the Charleston State Prison owing to the objection of the inmates to the Berillon system of measurements. This afternoon the convicts in the harness shop, numbering over one hundred, refused to obey orders, and all at once set up a terrific yell, and missiles of every description were sent flying in all directions. The windows on the north and west sides were demolished. Then they dashed forth into the yard and rushed for the walls. The sentries began firing, and other prison officials were quickly at hand, and with drawn revolvers soon massed the men in groups. After a hard fight, in which clubs were freely used and many convicts' heads badly crushed, about fifty city police arrived and the convicts were finally locked up in their cells. It is feared several convicts escaped. The rising is said to have been instigated by "Chicken" Walsh, one of the most desperate members of the old Albany street gang.

#### A Teacher Charged With Manslaughter.

A Pontiac, Mich., despatch says: Miss Jennie Webb, school teacher, has been arrested on the charge of manslaughter and is out on 400 bail. The warrant states that she severely punished Frank Cook, a boy 10 years old, and that he died from the injuries received. The sad affair happened just at the close of last year's school, and opinion as to the guilt of the accused is equally divided. The boy suffered intensely for many weeks before death, being unable to eat anything, and became simply a living skeleton.

There are those who are apprehensive of trouble in France incident to the present condition of affairs political, and think it cannot be long deferred.

### THOSE CANADIAN RAILWAYS

Probably Refusal to Permit Sealing Cars at Vancouver Will Come.

A Washington despatch of Wednesday says: The Secretary of the Treasury today sent to the Senate his answer to the resolution introduced by Senator Cullom, on July 16th, relative to the Canadian Pacific Railroad. That resolution was very sweeping in its terms, and desired particularly to know whether a United States customs agent is stationed at Vancouver, B.C., who seals the cars of the Canadian Pacific Railroad containing merchandise in bond to the United States, and from what places that merchandise comes. The resolution also asked for information as to the manner in which goods imported by the Grand Trunk Railroad are bonded and whether any law is violated on that account. The answer of the Secretary of the Treasury will not be satisfactory to the Canadian railroads. The Secretary does not give any specific indication as to what he intends to do, but the inferences from his reply are important. The answer shows that it is the purpose of the Treasury Department to change the existing method of inspecting and sealing cars at Vancouver, and that the United States customs agent will not hereafter be permitted to bond merchandise imported from China and Japan for transportation to the United States in the cars of the Canadian Pacific under the United States Treasury seal. It is understood here that this will be rather a serious matter for the Canadian Pacific, inasmuch as a considerable portion of the bonded business, which it has transacted through the agency of the United States customs inspector at Vancouver, consists of importations of Chinese and Japanese merchandise. It is evident that the Secretary of the Treasury intends to forbid the use of the United States consular seal for any merchandise imported into British Columbia from China or Japan, or from any other country, except such as can be termed a contiguous country to the United States.

The answer of the Secretary to the inquiry whether or not the Grand Trunk Railroad is conducting its elevator system at Port Sarnia, Ont., in violation of the United States revenue laws, is answered with less directness by the Secretary. He refers to the provisions of the law under which this permit was originally granted, and states that he does not know that the privilege is in violation of the law, and is not prepared to say that to continue this permit would endanger the revenues of the United States. It is understood from information outside of this answer that further inquiry is to be made in the matter of the Grand Trunk Railroad. The answer of the Secretary of the Treasury can only be regarded as preliminary to the general inquiry. All through the letter he states that the subject referred to in the several resolutions of inquiry of the Senate are under investigation.

### AN ITALIAN VENDETTA.

Savage Fight Over a Girl—Two Killed, Others Dying.

A Bound Brook, N.J., despatch says: A terrific fight occurred in the Italian settlement, known as the "Gravel Pit," in the outskirts of Bound Brook yesterday. Several years ago an Italian girl came to this country and began to work in the Bound Brook mills. She was engaged to a lover in Italy, but in a short time was married to one of the Bound Brook Italians. Yesterday a brother of the jilted lover visited "Gravel Pit" and met the faithless woman, who carried a child in her arms. He struck her over the head with a bottle. The husband interfered, and in a moment the two men were fighting. A free fight followed. The occupants of the shanties all turned out and fought viciously. All sorts of weapons, including heavy pieces of split railroad ties, spades, shovels, pickaxes and knives, were used. In a few minutes the ground was covered with bleeding and groaning victims. During the night two of the wounded men died in great agony. Others are in a dying condition. Five arrests were made.

### TO SEE HIS GRANDMA.

Emperor William Meets With a Royal Reception at London.

A London cable says: The German Imperial yacht Hohenzollern, with Emperor William and his brother, Prince Henry, on board, arrived at Osborne at 10 o'clock this morning. The Queen signalled "welcome" to His Majesty from Osborne house, her palace on the Isle of Wight, as the yacht entered Cowes roads. The Prince of Wales and the Duke of Connaught, on board the royal yacht Albert, went out to meet the Emperor. A number of members of the royal family awaited his arrival on the private landing stage. One German ironclad accompanied the Hohenzollern. It was also escorted into the harbor by five British torpedo boats. As the Emperor landed a salute was fired. Entering a carriage, His Majesty drove to Osborne house, where the Queen, the Princess of Wales, the Duchess of Edinburgh received him at the entrance. As he entered a band played the German and English national anthems. The Emperor wore his British admiral's uniform.

### Advertising for a Husband.

In the "wanted" columns of a German contemporary is the following announcement: "A pretty widow, with three children from 8 to 12 years of age and a flourishing estate, with a cow and 100 thalers in hard cash, can be married at once. Offers to be made to — Mill."—London Daily News.

The Chicago theosophists have passed a resolution condemning the practice of hypnotism or mesmerism, alleging it to be a source of serious moral and physical evil, the more dangerous because so little understood and beyond the complete control of its practitioners.

A monument in memory of Todleben has been erected at Sebastopol.

During a hunt a lieutenant fired at a rabbit, but missed it and narrowly missed the major of his regiment, who was in front of him. "Donnerwetter!" exclaimed the major. "I say, lieutenant, are you shooting at rabbits or for promotion?"