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R. STIRLING, KINGSTON Agent for The Equitable Life Assurance Society, of New York, and Western Fire

Assurance Company, of Toronto.

EXECUTIONS OF WOMEN.

Other Murderesses Who Have Paid the Death Penalty.

The law itself makes no distinction of sex in the matter of punishment for murder, but a practice which has in many states grown into an unwritten law has generally dictated the issuance of a change of the death sentence, through the governor or other pardoning power, to a life imprisonment. Every state has had its women murderers, and almost every one has now, gathered into a nook of some one of its penitentiaries, a group of women placed under lock and key for the term of their natural lives, in partial atonement of the lives they have taken.

In New York state there are nearly a dozen such, and the King's county jail at Flatbush, just back of Brooklyn; has become a sort of harbor for this class of criminals. A row of cells at one end of a long corridor has been set apart for them, and each cell has in it all the comforts and adornments which its life tenant can secure. Of the eleven women now under life sentence in New York not less than eight have been saved from the gallows by the exercise of the governor's staying power. Henrietta Robinson, the veiled murderess of Rensselaer county, now in the asylum for insane criminals attached to the state prison there, was sentenced to be hanged in June, 1855, and now after thirtytwo years of prison life she is the doyene of the blood stained colony, so to speak. She was saved from strangulation by Governor Clark. There is a quartet of them, all told, in the Auburn asylum. The others being Agnes Agar of Erie, saved by Governor Seymour in 1863; Eveline Johnson whose sentence in 1874, was reduced by Governor Dix, and Catherine Johnson, also of Erie county, whose neck was spared by Governor Fenton in 1864. Polly Frisch, in Kings county jail, dates her long term of twenty-eight years from the act of clemency extended by Governor Morgan in 1859. With her are Jane Brooks, whom Governor Seymour spared in 1863, and Wilhemine Weick, who was spared by Governor Tilden in 1809. Every one of them has lived on beyond her official savior. Onondaga county jail has the other female life prisoner against whom the death sentence had at one time been uttered. She is Antoinette Haight, and she was sent there by Governor Cleveland in April, 1884. While some have been fortunate or other-

wise in having imprisonment take the place of strangulation, the practice has not been an invariable one in New York. During the present century four women have suffered on the gibbet. Margaret Houghtaling, generally known as Peggy Dinsmore, murdered lear child and was hanged in the city of Hudson Oct. 17, 1817; Mrs. Van. Valkenburg was hung for husband poisoning at Johnstown Jan. 24, 1846; Mrs. Runkle was executed at Whitesboro Nov. 3, 1849; Mrs. Anne Hoag was a notable victim-she was hanged on July 30, 1852, in the court house at Poughkeepsie, Duchess county, in company with a negro murderer named Jonas Williams. In her youth she was a belle and had been courted by many young men of eastern Duchess. Hoag won her and the pair settled at South Dover, where in 1851, a young man came as a boarder in the family. The husband charged irregularity on the part of the wife, and a few days after died of poison. Judge Barculo presided at the long trial, and the day first set for execution was May 7. 1852, but before that date she had given birth to a child, and the date was changed to July 30. Gov. Hunt was much beseeched to modify the sentence, but he looked at the convincing testimony and refused to interfere. The Poughkeepsian of July 31, 1852, speaking of the removal of the child, said "a most interesting scene occurred in the separation of the child from the unhappy mother. It appeared as if the last prop of life, the very cores of the heart, were being severed. When with the most endearing caresses, amid tears and sobs, the mother looked for the last time on that innocent babe. As it passed away from her sight she exclaimed 'Now let them execute me, I have nothing to live for." From this time, it is said, she exhibited no signs of fear, and she went to the gallows declaring her innocence and died with few struggles. No woman has since stood under the gallows in New York till now. The Tombs yard in New York city, where over 30 executions have taken place, has not vet witnessed that of a woman.

In other states the records on this subject are not very readily accessible, being generally lost in the dust of county court houses. Mississippi, Texas, Arkansas and other states as well claim that no woman has ever been legally strangled on their soils. Wisconsin and Michigan have abolished the death penalty and Iowa did the same for a time, but after a trial of clemency concluded that hanging was a good institution. New Jersey has the reputation of making little distinction between men and women in the vigorous execution of her laws and Bridget Dugan, at Newark, in 1867, paid the great penalty for the murder of her mistress.

The widest attention was directed to the question of the execution of women when, in 1865, Mrs. Surratt took her place in the line on the scaffold within the government grounds on the banks of the Potomac at Washington, and with the other conspirators

concerned in the Lincoln assassination plot was duly punished. Gen. Hancock was the military commandant of the post at that time, and the execution had about it all the dread certainty and unsentimental exactness with which it was possible to surround it. There went up a cry for mercy in her case, but the country generally stood by and said amen.

Judge Lynch has had much to do in the way of disposing of female desperadoes-bad women made worse by the company of bad men. The first woman to feel the drawing of the vigilantes' noose was Inez Paria, in California, in 1851. It was in the rush of the gold fever, and at Downeysville, in the Bodie district. Fourth of July had been celebrated in a drunken revel, and the woman, who was a monte dealer in a gambling tent, being ill, left the table early to retire to her cabin. A big Scotchman followed and made rather flerce love to the woman, only to fall an instant later with his breast laid open by one thrust of her dirk. There were many Scotchmen in the district and they organized a court and promptly decided upon the infliction of the lex talionis. A bridge over the Yuba river was the place, and the culprit having made her church confession, came with a lighted cigarette and with her jaunty Spanish costume at its brightest. The affair was voted a big success by those who carried it out.

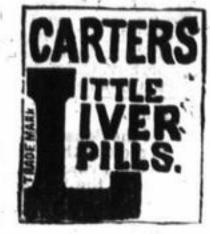
Since that initial performance scarce a year has gone by that has not seen the disposal of some objectionable women in this way. During the first six months of 1885, for instance, the newspapers told of ninety-nine victims of Judge Lynch, and of that number three were women. In 1884 the lynchings ran up to 195, while in 1883 they were less than 100. Early in the last named year a man and wife, Cuddegar by name, were lynched side by side at Ouray, Colo., for the murder of their adopted daugh-

Montreal Announcements.



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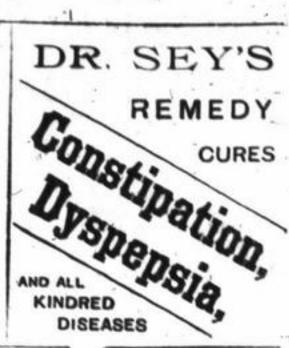


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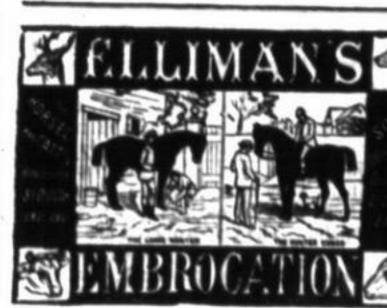
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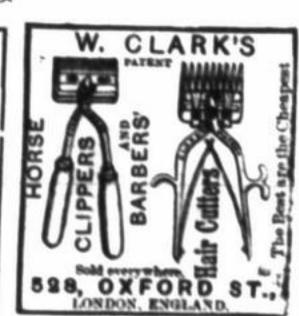
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English Announcements





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ter. America has not yet had its counterpart of Betty, the Roscommon hangwoman, nor can it muster many of the traditions and legends which are found in European annals on the subject, but dozens of women have suffered here by law and scores by lynching, and in every case with very positive proof of bleasty guit.

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