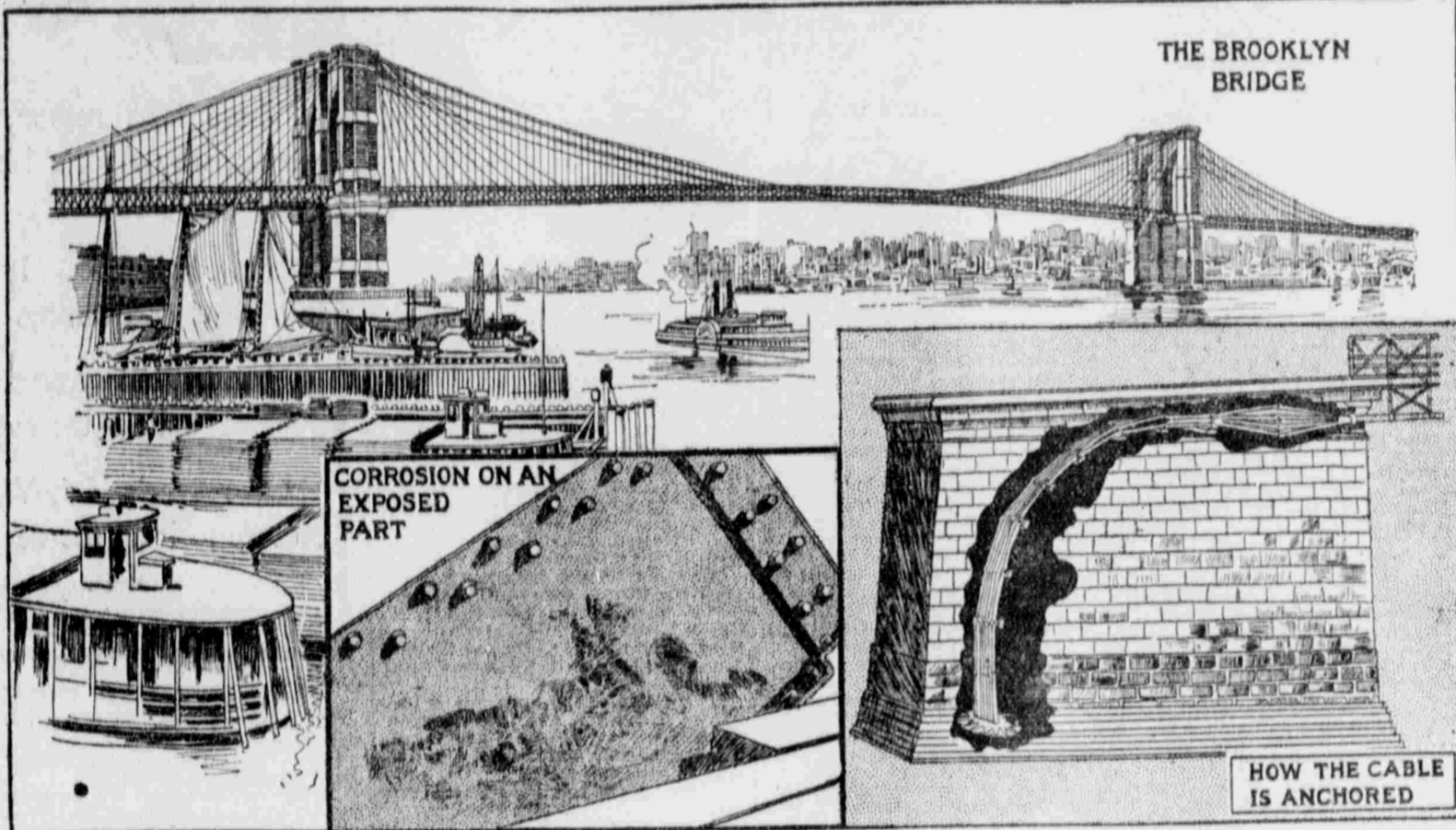


# The Passing of One of America's Most Noted Wonders; What Expansion and Electricity Have Brought

**T**HE engineers of the department of bridges of the city of New York have decided that the time is not far distant when the Brooklyn bridge must be condemned and rebuilt. It is also stated authoritatively that while there is no immediate danger to the structure, the completion of the new Manhattan bridge and the subway tunnel, both now under construction, should be the limit of the old bridge's term of usefulness and that its reconstruction on a vastly more comprehensive scale should be entered upon at that time.

At the time of its completion—twenty-one years ago last May—many positive statements were made concerning the great achievement. One of them was to the effect that the giant structure would prove adequate to the demands of traffic for generations to come. It did not take long to demonstrate the fallacy of that proposition. Its first decade was scarcely spent before the utter inadequacy of the wonder was apparent to all. It was also declared on the occasion of the bridge's opening to traffic that it was practically indestructible, an enduring monument to the skill of its builders and the progressive spirit of the city and the progressive spirit of the city and the progressive spirit of the city.

It is some local prophet had risen during the ceremonies attendant on the opening of the bridge and predicted its treatment which the new structure would be called upon to undergo he



would have been discredited most promptly. The Brooklyn Bridge railway was opened to the public on Sept. 24, 1883, and since that date the service has expanded from a single car every five minutes to a four car train every fifty-five seconds during the busy time of the day. The passenger traffic has increased from 15,400 a day to about 150,000. In 1897 the trolley cars were permitted to use the bridge as a roadway. It is estimated that the total number of daily round trips made by these cars rather exceeds 4,000. The actual number of persons carried over the bridge within twenty-four hours has been approximated at 283,064. At least 200,000 cross over by the promenade and carriage ways.

Inadequacy, however, is by no means the worst that has befallen the splendid structure. The very means that have been devised to relieve it of its stigma of incompetency have led swiftly to its early dissolution. Mankind has been so absorbed in the amazing benefits conferred by electricity that little account has been taken of its capacity to destroy. Its very power to end animal existence speedily and painlessly has been utilized to make man's part in the administration of justice

less onerous and repugnant. It has won its way into the hearts and minds of men until there is none who looks upon it as an enemy. Without yielding an atom of its mystery it has become the familiar of men and has been assigned the role of obedient servant. It has been so circumspect outwardly, so tractable, that man has almost ceased to regard it as one of the least understood and most to be feared of natural agencies.

All the time that man has been gloating over his cleverness in harnessing this mighty force and guiding it with a steady rein there has been mischief brewing. Noiselessly, without external manifestation of any description, but never ceasing and forever drawing nearer the final catastrophe, electricity's almost forgotten power of chemical decomposition has been going on. To this unseen disintegration is due the systematic undermining of the Brooklyn bridge, the steel foundations of the adjacent skyscrapers and the miles of underground metallic mains and wires in the vicinity. According to the reports of the most expert electricians in the country, the great steel spans over the East river and all the property lying between the termini of the bridges and within a two mile radius of them are being disintegrated and corroded by the stray electric currents and their devastating power of electrolysis.

When electricity was first used this danger was almost entirely overlooked. Even the croakers, those who saw no merit in the new power, made no point of the matter. This neglect on the part of scientists to sound a note of warning is the more remarkable from the fact that electrolysis had been known to chemists for many generations. It had long been an undisputed and frequently demonstrated fact that composite substances could be separated into their elements by the electric current. Against iron pure and simple

the current is inert. Steel, however, is not an elementary substance. Besides iron, it contains silicon, manganese, sulphur and phosphorus. The presence of these elements in small quantities seems to be essential to the integrity of steel, and anything which disturbs the chemical union by which they are held together converts the substance known as bessemer steel into a worthless, corroded mass. That is the fate of the Brooklyn bridge and its fellows similarly handicapped, victims of the unscientific conclusions of practical scientists.

It must not be concluded that the bridge has been a failure in every sense of the term. On the contrary, it has been one of the most unqualified successes of the present age. As a practical demonstration of a giant conception it has established its right to exist. It has contributed immeasurably to the expansion of the metropolis and has been one of its most potent magnets to attract the visitor. Neither has it been a financial disappointment. Its original cost was about \$17,000,000. Three years ago the total receipts had already exceeded \$19,000,000.

The first car crossed the bridge on Sept. 4, 1883. At first the entire rolling stock of the bridge railway consisted of twelve cars thirty-six feet and twelve cars forty-eight feet in length. When travel was light only one car was used. It soon became necessary to form trains of two or three cars. These cars were run by cable power and were switched by locomotives from the incoming to the outgoing platform of the terminals. Within a short time traffic had increased so rapidly that it became necessary to lengthen and widen the platforms in order to be able to run longer trains. This process of extension has been repeated many times, and every possible scheme has been tried to secure additional transportation facilities.

FRANKLIN TWISS.

## Francis Marion Cockrell, Senator for Thirty Years; New Member of the Interstate Commerce Commission

**T**HE recent decision of Senator Francis M. Cockrell of Missouri to accept the position on the interstate commerce commission which President Roosevelt offered to him some time ago adds new distinction to that already prominent body. Senator Cockrell's term in the senate will expire on March 4, and it is understood that he will not assume the duties of the new position until that time. He will succeed James D. Yeomans of Iowa, whose term as commissioner expired on Jan. 7. There was some question as to the old commissioner's ability to hold over until his successor is ready to assume the duties of the office, but the president reappointed Mr. Yeomans for a term which will expire at the time Senator Cockrell is at liberty.

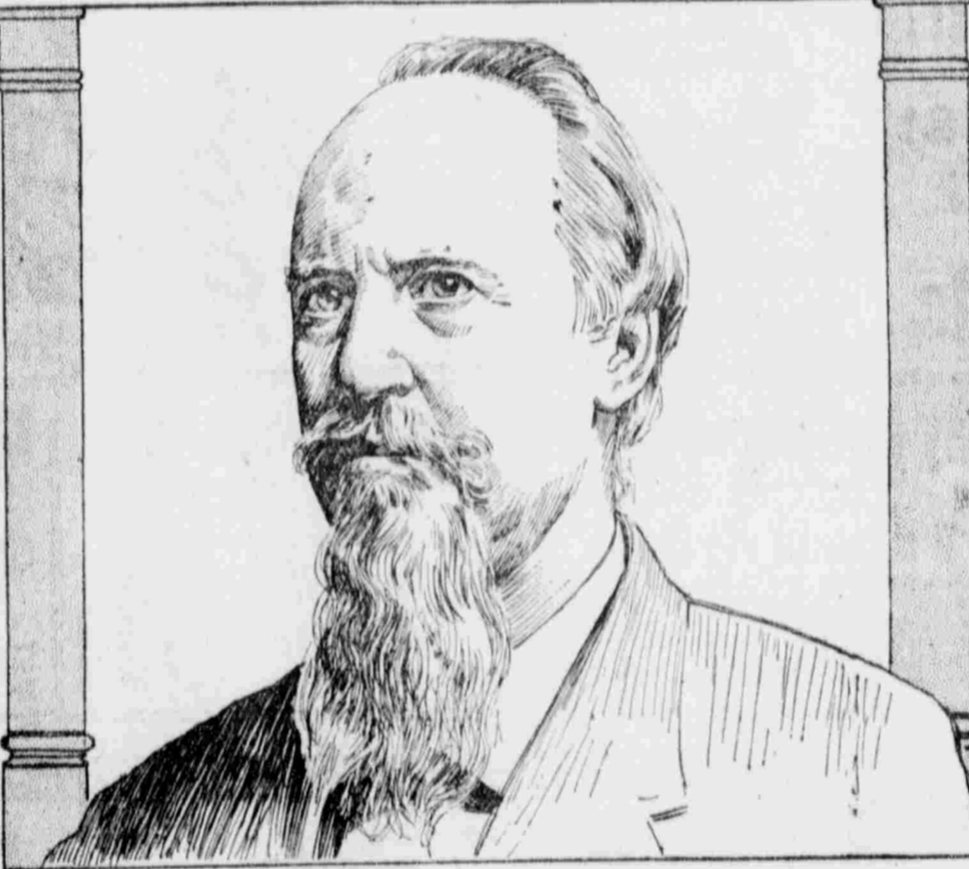
There are few names in recent American history that rival in interest the one devoted to the genesis and development of the interstate commerce act. At the close of the civil war railroads began to spring into existence with amazing rapidity. Short lines which had been built as feeders became trunks with a network of branches on every side. Some of them crossed the continent, and many so called systems bisected several states in their course from start to terminal. Owing to the enormous mileage constructed and the frequent building of parallel lines competition became intense, and as a result discriminating and unfair methods soon put the agricultural interests of the country—which of necessity were most deeply concerned in the carrying problem—on the defensive and in time produced a strong antagonism between the railroads and the public. This general dissatisfaction was strengthened

by the rise of various powerful corporations which were able to accumulate enormous treasure by their ability to influence the carrying trade and by discrimination in rates to drive individual dealers and small companies out of business.

The evil became so unendurable that some of the states began to seek a remedy in legislation. Some of them created railroad commissions clothed with drastic powers to fix maximum rates and to superintend all the minutiae of railroad management. The state of Massachusetts was content to undertake advisory powers. The states in the great grain growing belt were unable to enforce their radical measures of railroad reform, and the offenders declined to accept the advice of the Bay State, excellent though it undoubtedly was.

A general demand arose for federal intervention. National regulation of traffic was recommended by President Arthur in 1883, but it was not until four years later and after debate sufficient to revise the policy of a government that the act became a law. Under the provisions of this law all common carriers by rail or by rail and water are subject to control. It prohibits special rates to individuals and declares that no particular locality or kind of traffic shall be given a preference. It prohibits the practice of making higher rates for a short distance than for a long one except by authority of the commission. It makes unlawful any arrangement between roads to pool traffic and divide the proceeds. It insists that all roads shall make their rates public and shall not change them without proper notice.

The act created a commission of five members with power to require reports from railroads as to their operations, to hear complaints and to investigate any alleged violation of the act. The



commission may compel the attendance of witnesses and in case of a refusal to appear may invoke the aid of the United States courts. If the commission finds any railroad guilty of an infraction of the act it may proceed to enjoin

it, although the body's action is subject to review by the courts. Francis Marion Cockrell was born in Johnson county, Mo., Oct. 1, 1834. He was educated at Chapel Hill college, a small institution of learning in Lafayette county, Mo., which has long since passed out of existence. After graduation he studied law and practiced his profession at Warrensburg, Mo., until the breaking out of the civil war. He served in the Confederate army and

rose to the rank of brigadier general. At the return of peace he resumed his law business at Warrensburg. He prospered moderately, accumulating property worth \$50,000, which was considered quite a fortune in those days.

and in that part of the country. Cockrell did not succeed in keeping his earnings for many years. He engaged in a business speculation, having for a partner a man who proved to be dishonest. Cockrell was not under any legal obligation to pay his defaulting partner's debts after he had absconded, but he chose to do so, and it took everything he possessed to do it. The transaction added greatly to his already excellent reputation for probity, and it eventually landed him in the United States senate. Before going to Washington he had never held a public office of any kind. His election to succeed Carl Schurz in 1875 was the triumph of a poor man over the combined wealth and ability of his opponents. When Senator Cockrell's present term expires he will have been a member of the senate for thirty years, a record of continuous service surpassed by only one living man, Senator Allison of Iowa.

Of tall stature, prominent features and with eyes which do not show the approach of old age, Senator Cockrell is a figure among public men long to be remembered. He is now seventy years of age, and he has the appearance of a patriarch. His hair and beard are snowy white, and he still wears the broadcloth costume of antebellum days. In startling contrast to his unconventional appearance, Senator Cockrell is endowed with the manner of a courtier. He is an exceedingly modest man and is inclined to belittle his own ability. Of two things, however, he confesses that he is somewhat vain. One of them is the fact that he has never lived beyond his salary as a member of the senate, and the other is that he has never voted any other than the Democratic ticket. Whenever any of his colleagues have had the temerity to criticize his public career he has referred to this steadfastness with telling effect.

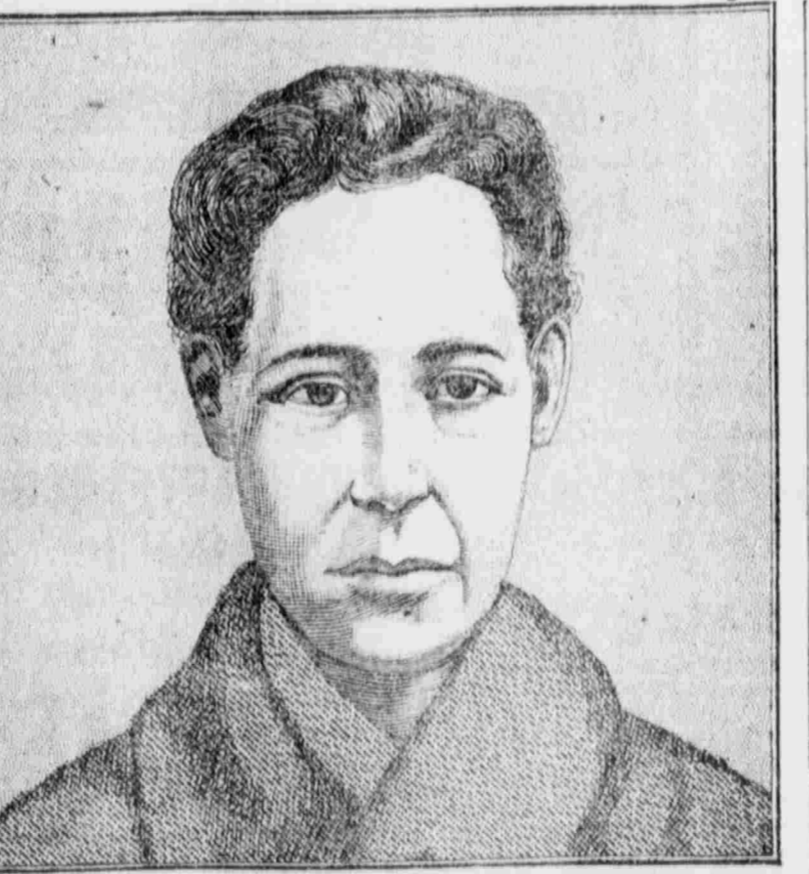
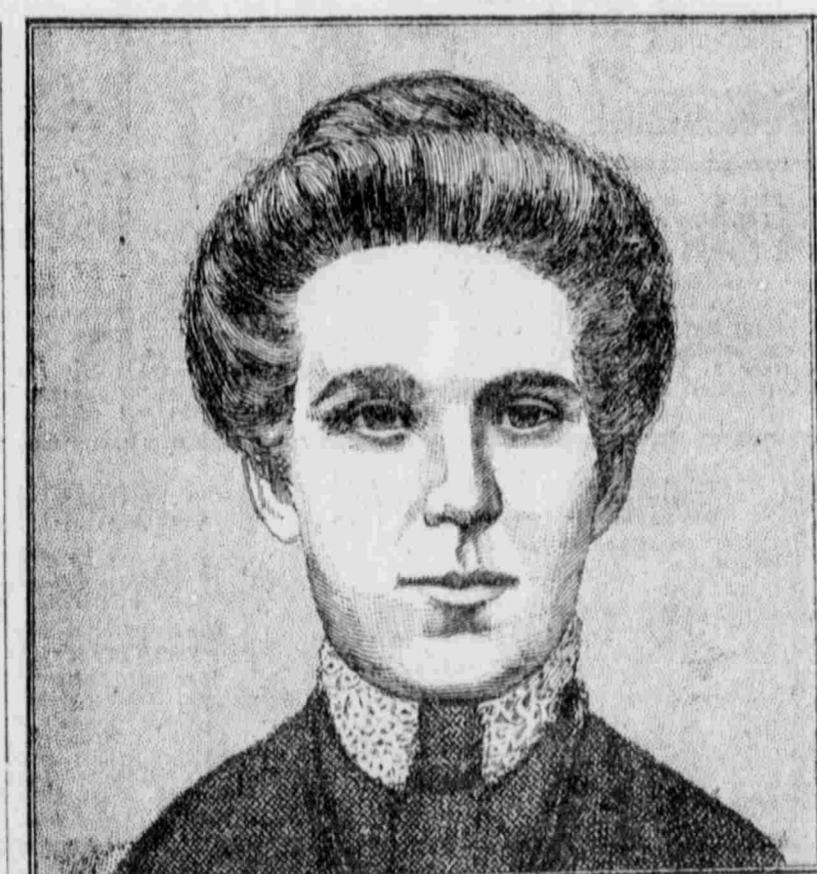
ELBERT O. WOODSON.

## The Question of Capital Punishment for Women; Difficulties In the Way of Its Abolishment

**A**FTER an interval of several years of comparative silence upon the matter the discussion over capital punishment for women, pro and con, has recently been reopened with all its old time vigor. The circumstances which brought about a revival of the subject were the conviction and condemnation to death of two women, Mary A. Rogers of Vermont and Kate Edwards of Pennsylvania, for the murder of their husbands and the subsequent exhaustive effort of a philanthropic and sympathetic woman of wealth and leisure to save them from the gallows.

In both cases the crimes were atrocious and the details revolting. In both instances the motive was the basest known to civilization. Both of the unfortunate women had preface the awful final criminality with the most unwomanly and unpardonable fault. There was absolutely nothing in the sordid history of the crimes to temper the most exacting judgment, except—and the exception in this case is the entire contention—the fact that they are women.

There is no doubt whatever that the infliction of the death penalty upon a woman is abhorrent to civilized mankind in general. It is also a fact that the feeling of moral abasement which is attendant on every such execution is rather stronger in men than in women. For men there is always the additional reflection that the consummate test of chivalry has been violated. This sentiment was especially marked during the administration of Governor Roosevelt at the time of the execution of Mrs. Martha Place, the first woman to suffer the death penalty of electrocution, which had been devised by the state of New York from commendable humanitarian motives. In the struggle



that was made to save the miserable woman from the killing current it was urged rather illogically, but not pathetically, that it was both unmanly and undignified to condemn a woman to a death the merits of which had not yet been sufficiently demonstrated by men.

In February, 1887, Mrs. Roxalana Druse was executed at Herkimer, N. Y., for the brutal murder of her husband. Her accomplice was her daughter Mary, who saved herself by pleading guilty to murder in the second degree. She is now serving a life sentence at

the Onondaga penitentiary in Syracuse. For months preceding the execution of Mrs. Druse the country rang with protests against carrying the sentence of the law into effect. David B. Hill, then governor of New York state, was fairly bombarded with petitions for a

commutation. He was obdurate, however, and, like Governor Theodore Roosevelt many years later in the case of Mrs. Place, took the ground that an application for mercy must be based on something more substantial than the plea of sex.

The execution of Mrs. Druse and the suddenness with which the newspapers dropped a subject which for months had occupied a prominent place in their columns led to the assumption that the new campaign against the execution of women had been abandoned. That this was not so, however, was made manifest when it was learned that during the same year a number of permanent organizations looking to that end had been formed. The case of Mrs. Place brought about some activity among these organizations, but her case had never been as nationally discussed as that of Mrs. Druse, and the activity was naturally more nearly local.

With reference to Mrs. Rogers and Mrs. Edwards and the efforts in their behalf there has been that disadvantage, in the case of the former at least, that until recently no one imagined that the extreme penalty would be inflicted. But when the legislature refused to pass a bill to abolish capital punishment and immediately thereafter defeated a measure looking to the commutation of the sentence of Mrs. Rogers to one of life imprisonment the advocates of the abolishment of the death penalty for women realized that they had very little time in which to work. Portions of the country, personal appeals were made to the governors of Pennsylvania and Vermont, and addresses to the people of the United States were sent out through the press associations.

For some reason the case of the Rogers woman in Vermont has excited more sympathy and attracted more attention than that of the Edwards woman, though it is difficult to find in either a single extenuating circumstance. The governor of Vermont has no authority to pardon a prisoner convicted of a capital crime, but he may grant

reprieves, so that in the case of an executive who might disapprove of an execution it would be a simple matter to delay it until the end of his term.

Michigan was the first state to abolish the death penalty. It was an long ago as 1847, and she seems never to have had cause to regret it. Her criminal statistics make an excellent comparative showing. In 1852 the little state of Rhode Island followed Michigan's example, and a year later Wisconsin became the third of a trio of states which abandoned "legal murder." It was almost twenty years afterward before there was any addition to the list. In the latter part of 1872 Iowa cleared her statute book of the institution, and four years from that time Maine began the experiment. After a trial period covering three years Iowa became convinced that crime was on the increase and restored the major penalty. California also made an unsuccessful experiment. In Kansas the signature of the governor is necessary before a sentence of capital punishment may be carried out. Even the state of New York, with its cosmopolitan population, once tried to do without the terrible corrective, but it was found to be impracticable. The total number of legal executions in the United States during 1904 was 105. Of these 100 were for murder. In many of the states the presiding judge is empowered to change the supreme penalty to life imprisonment, and in some of them the trial jury is given the same authority.

It is indicative of the growing tendency to abandon legal death that so few convictions are secured in the United States. The average number of murders for the last few years in the Union has been about 1,500. The average number of executions has been rather less than 125. It is an actual fact that the number of lynchings in some years has exceeded the legal executions.

AUGUSTUS B. WAGNER.