

The OBSERVER

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MURDER.

One of the safest professions is that of murder. In the dark ages men were organized in bandit gangs for purposes of rapine and plunder. If a person desired the death of an enemy he hired some thug or gang of thugs to go out, waylay and kill him. It was a plain matter of business. For value received an unprincipled brute would commit any crime.

Times have changed, of course. It is no longer considered quite safe to hire one's neighbor to slay one's enemy. Yet if one but attend to his own killings, it seems neither an unusual nor a very dangerous undertaking.

There is always a chance that a murderer may have to pay the penalty stipulated by the statute, but the chance is really very slight. In the first place if an assassin is reasonably cautious in picking the time and circumstance for his crime the crime will probably never be cleared of mystery. In a few weeks the police will give it up and it will remain an unsolved puzzle.

In the second place even if the criminal is caught and placed on trial, there is still a small probability that he will be convicted. Or if conviction comes, it will be for some degree of crime less than charged in the indictment.

Then may come appeals to higher

courts, and the dozen and one devices known to the legal profession to thwart justice. Everything combines to make it difficult to exact the capital punishment of one even clearly guilty of capital crime.

Unless a murder be committed under conditions of revolting cruelty, it has become next to impossible to convict its perpetrator of the crime in the first degree. The law against taking human life as old as society itself, is no longer in full force. It has been practically invalidated in this day of a boasted civilization.

Particularly true is this in the United States. Human life is cheapest in the country dedicated to its sacred liberties. Figures for a recent year show that whereas in Germany convictions followed in 95 per cent of murder cases, they followed in only 1.3 per cent of such cases in the United States.

More people are murdered here, and fewer people suffer penalties for the crime of murder, than in any other civilized country on earth. Even the "heathen" people, to whom we send missionaries and for whose conversion to christianity our good people are constantly praying, show far greater respect for human life.

A recent report made by the police department of Cleveland, Ohio, the largest city in Ohio, shows that 41 murders were committed there in one year. And in the explanation of those 41 murders three people were sent to the penitentiary for terms running from one year to five, three were sent to a reformatory for terms of indeterminate length, and two were sent to the workhouse for periods not exceeding six months. And that was all.

What a travesty on justice! How far can a nation advance which holds human life so common that no greater those who despoil it?

Police must be more efficient and courts more insistent on adequate punishment for those guilty of capital crime. But back of both police and courts is public sentiment which makes both what they are. In the last analysis the public is at fault.

THIS DATE IN HISTORY.

January 17.

1706—Benjamin Franklin born in Boston. Died in Philadelphia, April 17, 1790.

1771—Charles Brockden Brown, a pioneer American novelist, born in Philadelphia. Died there on Feb. 22, 1810.

1781—Americans under Gen. Morgan defeated the British under Col. Tarleton in battle of Cowpens, in South Carolina.

1810—Masquerades and masked balls were prohibited in Philadelphia.

1848—Milwaukee received its first telegraph message from Chicago.

1854—A mob of women destroyed the railroad bridges and crossings at Erie, Pa.

1862—John Tyler, tenth president of the United States, died in Richmond, Va. Born in Greenway, Va., March 29, 1790.

1878—Victor Emmanuel II, king of Italy, buried in the Pantheon in Rome.

1885—The British defeated the Mahdi's troops in battle of Abu Klea.

1901—Kingdom of Prussia celebrated its bi-centenary.

1911—Charles F. Johnson elected United States senator from Maine.

"THIS IS MY 66TH BIRTHDAY,"
Don M. Dickinson.

Don M. Dickinson, for many years one of the leading lawyers and politicians of Michigan, was born in Oswego county, New York, January 17,

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1846. As an infant he was taken by his family to Michigan and at the early age of 21 he graduated from the law department of the state university at Ann Arbor. His ability as a campaigner led the democrats to make him the chairman of their state central committee in 1876 and four years later he became the Michigan member of the democratic national committee. When Grover Cleveland was elected president he made Mr. Dickinson postmaster general. Two years later he left the cabinet to resume his law practice. In 1896 he represented the United States before the international commission appointed to settle the Bering Sea claims and a few years later he was one of the members of the court of arbitration to adjust the controversy between the United States and the republic of Salvador.

The republican state convention of Maine will be held in Bangor, April 10.

Among the speakers to be heard at the annual dinner of the League of Republican State Clubs to be given in Washington next month will be Governor Hadley of Missouri, Governor Goldsborough of Maryland, former Vice President Fairbanks of Indiana, Job Hedges of New York and John Hays Hammond of Massachusetts. J.

C. Capers, president of the league, will be toastmaster.

There will be only 132 delegates in the next democratic state convention in Pennsylvania, which is less than half the number in the last convention. The number of delegates has been reduced by reason of the small

vote cast for the democratic candidate for governor in 1910, upon which the basis of representation is fixed.

The first candidate to announce for the republican gubernatorial nomination at the primaries in Maine next June is William T. Haines of Waterville.



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