

moment of his arrest until the hangman's cap finally closed upon his features. Palmer, the prince of modern poisoners, was completely unconcerned and unruffled, as well through the prosecution of his atrocious villainy, as through every phase of his prison life, trial, and execution. He laughed at the absurdities of the witnesses in court and the jests of the counsel, as heartily as any of the spectators; he smiled upon the jailors, chatted with the execution officials up to the last moment, in the most complacent manner, and finally stepped up to the scaffold with a light and elastic step, adjusted his head to the noose with the utmost precision, and died without a struggle. Dr. King, of Brighton, is evidently one of precisely the same class. He administered the poisonous drugs to his poor helpless victim with smiles and caresses, and neither her intreaties nor her sufferings were of any avail in deterring him from his diabolical perseverance. When he had accomplished his end and found himself suspected, his presence of mind did not desert him for a moment. He had an object in view, and he was still prepared to carry it out suspected or not; and the emergency was only productive of a more barefaced expedient for the purpose of carrying his designs into execution. During the trial he was cool and collected, and seemed to enjoy its funny side as much as any one; and there can be no doubt that the same law of callousness and insensibility that marks this peculiar class of human beings, even in meeting the scaffold, will hold good in this present instance.

It is remarkable that, whatever may be the conduct of this class of murderers after detection, the studiousness and dexterity with which they plan and execute their villainy, are invariably the most refined and complete. Poisons are therefore their common agent, and latterly, since science has surrounded them with so many dangers and pitfalls, the subtle vegetable poisons, and especially strychnine, have been enlisted into their service.

Poisoning is now becoming alarmingly prevalent in almost every country. In the U. States and England it has increased largely during the last few years, and there can be little doubt that the number of such cases brought to light, bears but an imperfect relation to the amount that actually exists. Cases are frequently transpiring in which the victim has been successfully disposed of and where detection is more the result of accident than of knowledge or systematic discovery. In the case of James Stephen, who was convicted at the New York Assizes, during the present month, of poisoning his wife by administering arsenic, the victim had lain quietly in her grave for a whole year before suspicion attached itself sufficiently to the murderer to warrant