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With reference to the new method of execution by electricity, introduced in the State of New York, it does not seem to be clearly understood whether the object is to make death easier, or merely to substitute one form of capital punishment for another. If it be the former, it might be suggested that the idea should be carried a little further, and that the criminal should be allowed to select the mode of death most agreeable to him. It may be noticed in the case of suicides, that inclinations differ widely in this particular. The pistol, the razor, the halter, the gas blown out, and various poisons, all are adopted in turn, and the convict might ask, if you are anxious to give me the happiest despatch, why not let me have something to say in the matter? The *Lancet*, from the physician's point of view, discusses the subject as follows:—"A collar is to be put round the neck, the top of the head is to be armed with a moistened pad or cap, and finally the victim is to be strapped in a chair before the fatal switch is applied. Supposing that the fatal switch is instantly fatal, in what manner it is more humane than the guillotine, or the easy asphyxia from suspension by the neck, it were, indeed, difficult to explain. But, strangely, the promoters of this new method praise and support it, not for the wholesome dread that it may excite in the mind of the would-be murderer, but for the happy mode of despatch to which all murderers will be subjected when the chair of death comes into public service. Whichever be the right theory on this subject, we believe the use of this new instrument of death, as advanced by its advocates, to be fundamentally unsound. If it be right to have a mode of death for criminals that shall excite some terror, as many wise and logical legislators believe, then we have already the very means for exciting that wholesome alarm, a means also which long time and custom have sanctioned, and which had better not be abrogated while this form of punishment lasts. We

take the opposite view, that the perfect painlessness of death by the electric shock will divest the punishment of some of its terrors. Then the mere implantation of this notion will only lead a certain class of the worst criminals to set their lives upon the cast, and to accept the more resolutely the hazard of the die. With all respect, then, to our American *confrères*, we do not think that the grounds or reasons they have entered on for a change in the mode of executing criminals are quite worthy of their vocation. We do not know that Mr. Carleton's view about the direction of the current of electricity through the head and neck, as the most fatal direction is or admits of being, proved. But, in the report of the Medico-Legal Society, and specially in a paper in the *Scientific American*, one of the ablest of periodicals of its class, there is a great deal of scientific matter which is worthy of serious study on its own merits alone. The one statement of the reporters, that the alternating current is more fatal than the continuous, is of itself, if it be confirmed by further experiment, of considerable importance, having about it some physiological bearings which are of moment."

Lord Macnaghten was called recently as a witness in an Irish case against the Bushmills Distillery Company, for permitting deleterious and poisonous matter to be discharged from their works into a tributary of the river Bush. The learned judge was exhibiting some specimens of water, and explaining with more of argumentative statement than was pleasing to the respondent's counsel, who interrupted by saying:—"I must really ask Lord Macnaghten to remember that he is a witness. He may be a lord, and a law lord, but he comes here as an expert in fishery and chemistry and water, and if he will kindly remember that and answer the questions put to him, we shall get along faster and more smoothly."

The list of causes before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, when the sittings were resumed after the Christmas Vacation, contained sixteen appeals, but none from this province, or from any part of Canada.