

**'TIS A FEARFUL THING TO SEE A SOUL TAKE WING.'**

By John M. Fleming

On Monday morning of last week, in a dimly lighted, bare little room, at the Rockview penitentiary, a man died. He did not die naturally from choice, neither did providence take from him his life. The man died paying a debt. The debtor was society. The debt, the life of a fellow man. The State acted as agent and shortly after seven o'clock the obligation was paid and the entry under the name of William Watkins was removed from the ledger.

The twenty-five year old negro boy had broken the sixth commandment. He had wantonly killed James Harward, Chester county farmer who had befriended him and given him employment for three years. The murder was willful, deliberate, and premeditated and nineteen days after it had been committed a jury of twelve men decreed that Watkins should die in the manner prescribed by law, death in the electric chair. He was transferred from Chester county jail on Saturday. He had been confined there since the crime occurred, January 10, 1931. Promptly at seven o'clock on Monday morning he was electrocuted.

We witnessed the execution and only the immortal lines of the poet can convey our impression.

"Oh, God, it is a fearful thing To see a human soul take wing."

It was a beautiful morning. The grim hand of fate had sent a warm spring sun to radiate the light that would be the last the young negro would see. The shadows from the main cell block draped the death house in an appropriate black as the hour of doom approached. One guard and several prison officials escorted the witnesses to the ground floor of the execution building where each one signed their name in a large book.

At five minutes of seven the immense iron barred door at the front of the circular staircase that leads to the upper rooms was opened and we were escorted to the death chamber above.

The room where 207 men and one woman have breathed their last is appalling in its simplicity. The only light was one near the chair which shed an unnatural pallor over the entire room. The blinds on all the windows were lowered and only faint cracks of light were permitted to enter. The chair sits on the immediate right of the entrance and it is necessary for each witness to pass within touching distance of the grim instrument in making his way to the concrete bench which is built around the back and side of the room.

The chair is perhaps the most commonplace looking instrument that ever before has held within its grip the power of taking from a man his most cherished possession. It resembles very much an ordinary wooden arm chair with the exception of the fact that the straps are plainly seen and a canopy is overhead. It is surrounded by ropes that are placed after the witnesses are seated. Within this small enclosure stands the executioner, the attending guards, the doctor and the officials in charge.

After the six men who have been designated as official witnesses and the newspaper representatives have taken their places the grim business of the execution is proceeded with like the smooth workings of a clock. A board containing several light bulbs rests across the arms of the chair and is connected with the two terminals where the electricity enters. The witnesses are informed that a test will be made to show that 2000 volts are running through the chair and that the mechanism is in perfect working order.

After the test, the executioner removes the board, taking two sponges dips them in a tub of salt water that sits on the floor near the chair. He places one sponge in the head piece of the other in the terminal point that is connected to the left leg of the condemned man.

The door leading from the corridor of the doomed is opened by a guard and the final feet of the last mile come into the prisoner's view. The young negro walked with unflinching step. The priest was the first to enter and following closely behind was the young man who was about to pay his debt to society. On either side walked a prison guard but the man's arms were free and he was walking calmly and without any apparent fear. The priest stepped to the front of the chair and the young man placed himself in the final resting place of his short career of crime without assistance or verbal instructions. The guards stepped to the chair and adjusted the straps in a brief moment. One across the man's chest, one under each arm, one around each wrist, and one each leg. The executioner adjusted the mask and head-gear and turned immediately to his switchboard. He plunged the switch—the figure in the chair stiffened. The lights above the switch board dimmed as the amperage was decreased. Again the lights flashed up brightly and a wisp of blue smoke circled heavenward from the chair. Four times this procedure was repeated. Once the executioner left his post and walked to the front of the modern guillotine to view the man he had executed. Then he released the switch. The entire amount of time that had elapsed was only three minutes. The man was rendered unconscious one-fourth-hundredth part of a second after the switch had been thrown.

The doctor stepped to the body and bared the chest. He listened for a moment and then turned to the witnesses. "Gentlemen," he said, "I pronounce, William Watkins, dead."

The witnesses arose and filed past the body in the chair to the outer chamber where the official papers were signed.

The reaction of such a sight is hard to discern. One revelation comes in the fact that no matter how mild a murder may be death in the electric chair could not be near as horrible. The anticipation is the only punishment. There is no physical suffering. After the grim sight was over and we were once more out in the sunshine we could not help but remember another verse written by Byron.

"He died as erring man should die Without display, without parade. Meekly had he bowed and prayed As not disdainful priestly aid Nor desperate of all hope on high."

**A NEW SCHOOL FOR LEADERSHIP TRAINING**

A standard school of leadership training will be held in the Evangelical church of Bellefonte during two weeks in June. The following credit courses will be offered: "A Study of the Pupil," "The Old Testament," "The Life of Christ," and "The New Testament Church." The registration fee will be \$1.00. Credits from this school will be accepted for the international diploma.

**TAPPING FOR MAPLE SYRUP**

When Calvin Cooledge, in referring to the springtime flow of maple sap, said the "earth is again pouring out her first seasonal beauty," he spoke poetically but not adequately, according to Martin L. Davey, head of the Davey Institute of Tree Surgery. The earth has merely furnished the crude materials, principally water, Davey explains. Sugar-laden maple sap is a product of the growing season in the previous year. Its first use is as food for the tree. The maple tree manufactures more of this food than can be used during the current season, and stores the balance for use the following spring.

When early spring arrives the sap, which was congealed during the winter, returns to liquid form, and flows freely. Along comes ingenious man to tap the tree and obtain its food, to be boiled down as syrup and sugar and made into candy for his own delight.

But even in this man cannot entirely outwit nature. The cells of the tree retain a major portion of this stored-up supply of sap. Man gets only the smaller part. If he could get all of it the tree would not be able to put forth its buds and leaves and in time would die.

**TRIAL LIST FOR MAY COURT.**

Fourteen common pleas cases have been listed for trial at the May term of court. One of them is that of Thomas Morrison against the Borough of Bellefonte and Burgess Hard P. Harris for damages for alleged injuries in a fall on the icy pavement of Burgess Harris in the spring of 1930. Another case, if it comes to trial, gives promise of some sensational testimony. It is that of Mrs. Pasqua DiBartola against Stella Shaffer for damages for the alienation of her husband's affections. The list is as follows:

Kato Coal Co. vs. New York Central and Hudson River Railroad Co. Trespass.  
Ralph A. Smith vs. New York Central and Hudson River Railroad Co. Trespass.  
Henry Brown vs. Harry Abramson. Appeal.

W. C. Shoemaker and J. C. Shoemaker, trading and doing business as Shoemaker Bros., vs. H. E. Dunlap. Trespass.

Thomas Morrison vs. The Borough of Bellefonte and H. P. Harris. Trespass.

John O. Todd and Evelyn M. Todd, in their own right, and Hazel Christine Todd, by her parents and next friends, John O. Todd and Evelyn M. Todd, vs. F. W. Hoffman. Trespass.  
R. T. Hafer vs. P. H. Gentzel. Assumpsit.

J. J. Beckwith vs. The P. R. R. Co. Trespass.

W. F. Bradford, J. W. Bradford and V. A. Auman, co-partners trading and doing business as Bradford and Co., vs. Raymond Walker. Assumpsit.

Lilah V. Hockenberry vs. John Hockenberry. Feigned issue.

Nathan Teitelbaum, trading as Keystone Commissaries and Employment Service, vs. Bellefonte Central Railroad Co. Trespass.

Standard Accident Insurance Co. vs. Alex C. Bailey and Lewis Stein, trading as Bailey & Stein. Assumpsit.

Paul Holt, by his next friend, Ella Holt, vs. M. F. Calderwood and Mrs. M. F. Calderwood. Appeal.  
Mrs. Pasqua DiBartola vs. Stella Shaffer. Trespass.

Sunday morning, May 3, Rev. Otto C. Miller, superintendent of the children's home at Mechanicsburg, will speak in the Methodist church in Bellefonte. In the evening of that day he will speak at Pleasant Gap.

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**REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS.**

John W. Eby, et ux, to Allen C. Witmer, tract in Walker Twp.; \$1.  
Allen C. Witmer, et ux, to Howard Struble, et al, tract in Walker Twp.; \$1.

John E. Ertle, Trustee, to C. J. Grenoble, tract in Miles Twp.; \$52.  
R. P. Haugh, et ux, to Elsie Grenoble, tract in Miles Twp.; \$1,000.

Adam H. Krumrine, et ux, to George C. Harper, et ux, tract in State College; \$1.

George C. Harper, et ux, to Fred B. Hicks, tract in State College; \$1.  
John U. Reuf, et ux, to Theta Building Assn., tract in State College; \$1.

I. G. Gordon Foster, et al, to O. K. Harlam, tract in State College; \$400.

John L. Holmes, et al, to O. K. Harlam, tract in State College; \$1,500.

Robert W. Roan, to Orvis C. Smeltzer, et ux, tract in Benner Twp.; \$5,700.

Maria Hollobaugh to Robert S. Muirhead, tract in Spring Twp.; \$1,150.

Reno A. Lepley to Elsie Noll Gill, tract in Marion Twp.; \$1.

Bellefonte Cemetery Association to Mrs. Annie Kramer, tract in Bellefonte; \$25.

Mary J. Forcey, et al, to Mike Chieppor, et ux, tract in Philipsburg; \$5,000.

John Hruska, et ux, to John Hruska, et ux, tract in Rush Twp.; \$1.

William R. Saucerman, et ux, to Joseph Harpster, et ux, tract in Ferguson Twp.; \$900.

James H. Holmes, et ux, to Lynn R. Daugherty, trustee, tract in Potter Twp.; \$1.

Donald Snyder, et ux, to Philip Figaro, et ux, tract in Bellefonte; \$350.

Savilla L. Florey, et bar, to Ellen J. Breon, tract in Gregg Twp.; \$1.

Ellen J. Breon, et bar, to Savilla Florey, tract in Gregg Twp.; \$1.

Alexander Flegal to Annie Koral, tract in Philipsburg; \$1.

Howard B. Baumgardner, et al, to Mary B. Shuman, tract in Union Twp.; \$1.

C. D. Bartholomew, et ux, to Annie G. Harrison, tract in Potter Twp.; \$533.

Maude E. Auman, et bar, to John O. Eisenhuth, tract in Haines Twp.; \$200.

Rose E. Cowher, et al, to Thomas P. Cowher, tract in Taylor Twp.; \$1,100.

**FRESH ROUT IN CREEKS RESENTED**

Complaints against the placing of liver fed nursery fish in streams just prior to the opening of the trout season and placing them in large numbers instead of scattering them out, were heard on all sides from sportsmen on the first day of the present trout season.

The number out for the opener was about the usual number, hundreds being along the banks of all the streams. One sportsman declared he believed there were ten fishermen for each trout.

A few reported getting the limit but many declared that the greater part of the trout were the comparatively tame fish of the nurseries which were unused to the streams and were caught with comparative ease.

Owing to the low water last year no stock was placed in the streams. Under the new ruling of the Game Commission, the commission now places all of the fish. Sportsmen complain that the commission was late in getting this done and that where they did stock streams they dumped a whole can at one place.

With the nursery fish together in large schools, they remained together in the streams, generally in pools along the banks, and were easily caught, sportsmen pointed out, and estimated that during the first few days of the season practically all of the stocked fish of legal size have been removed by fishermen. All of the stock placed were brook trout.

**POTATO EXPERT WRITES BOOK ON CROP GROWTH**

Dr. E. L. Nixon, plant pathologist of the Pennsylvania State College, well known as Pennsylvania's "potato wizard" and nominee for the 1931 Capper award of \$5000, is the author of "The Principles of Potato Production," a new book off the press.

Good seed, foliage protection, value of humus, proper potato mentality, and adaptations for economical potato production are covered in this book, which is one of a series on vegetable production edited by Dean R. L. Watts, of the Penn State school of agriculture.

Parts from twenty-seven standard automobiles were used by a Florida man in building a car so small that only one person can occupy it.

It requires more than 16,000 cattle to furnish one pound of aureolin, an extract used in the stoppage of bleeding and as a remedy for hay fever.

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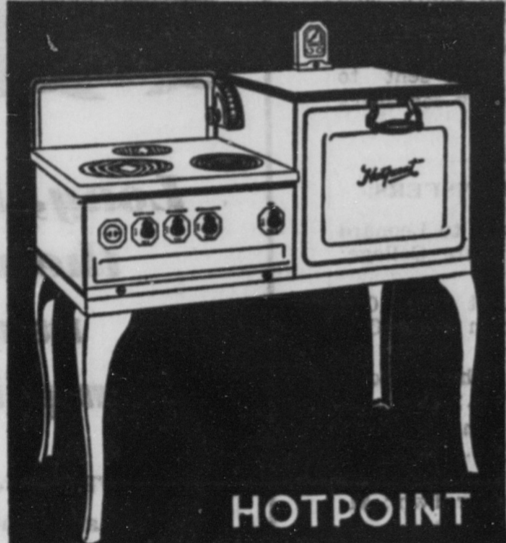
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A West Penn customer who recently purchased an electric range says:

"One evening, just as I put the potatoes on my electric range for boiling, some callers came. I entertained them for about five minutes, then, since they would not accept my invitation to dinner, I went to the kitchen and turned off the current under the potatoes. "Almost two hours later I prevailed upon my callers to stay for dinner. When I again went to turn on the current I

found, to my great surprise, that the potatoes had long since finished their cooking in the heat stored in the burner and in the heavy "steam-seal" aluminum pan. It hadn't seemed that the current was on nearly long enough, yet the potatoes were splendidly cooked, ready to mash and serve."

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