

DECISION STOPS POLICE 'SWEATING'

WASHINGTON, Jan. 10.—In the criminal court yesterday, in connection with a case on trial, Justice Stafford ruled out of the evidence the signed statements of the defendants which they are said to have given the police. The effect of the ruling is practically to abolish the "third degree" and to exclude hereafter such evidence as the police may "sweat" from prisoners.

OHIO FLAUNTS DEATH PENALTY TO THE MORBID PRISON VISITORS

Electric Chair Is Shown by 'Lifer' to Each Caller Who Cares to Pay 25 Cents.

By Jessie M. Partlon.

In the annex of the Ohio penitentiary at Columbus I found four men condemned to death in the electric chair.

Just outside the room where these men count off the days and minutes in trembling hope and ghastly fear, stands the fatal chair, with its hideous panoply of straps and bolts and death-dealing wires.

For the consideration of 25 cents, the state of Ohio exhibits this death chair to the morbidly curious, six times a day.

Standing before the instrument of vengeance, you could touch a little door in which is a round peephole.

BEHIND THIS DOOR WAIT AND LISTEN THE VICTIMS OF THE CHAIR UNTIL OVERWROUGHT NERVES GIVE AWAY AND MANICUAL SHRIEKS RING THROUGH THE ANTE-CHAMBER OF DEATH.

Six times daily these men die in anticipation.

Searing the Doomed.

At first the sing-sing tones of the "lifer" who manipulates the chair for the amusement of the curious crowd must strike the acutely sensitive nerves of the condemned like a red-hot iron.

A woman may ask: "Does the electricity burn them? Can you SMELL their flesh cooking?" both common questions.

The condemned man must picture the deputy warden at the switchboard, the grave-faced men come to see him die, hear the sorrowing priest's gentle voice.

Strange that man should be so cruel to one clothed in our common humanity, who must live the same life and come to the same resting place, when all's said and done!

To the left of the electric chair you will see a large board covered with black cloth. ON IT ARE THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THOSE WHO DIED IN THE CHAIR. This is where the crowd lingers longest. These were men; the chair is but a monstrous piece of mechanism.

A Thought.

Does the thought ever filter through their minds. "Even so might we and ours sin and suffer and die this shameful death—but for better training, greater opportunity, a fairer birth!"

Then, shuddering, do they turn from the gallery of death as the attendant thought pierces their consciousness: "So, too, we might be pilloried for public shame, years after we have paid the penalty of our crime; we, and all who bear our name."

Another convict who must spend his life behind these forbidding walls is at your elbow importuning you to buy an "Annex Souvenir."

For each of the 28 men so pictured, at least five persons suffer a greater penalty than death.

Think of the agony and shame, the social ostracism, the perpetual punishment the family of the condemned are thus made to suffer.



Little children growing up, protected by some sad-eyed mother from the blighting knowledge of their father's crime, come home one day from school, ashen white, with tragic countenances, all childhood killed within them.

Adding to the World's Woe.

In ever-widening circles, the punishment supposed to be reserved for the sinner is dealt out to the innocent, adding immeasurably to the world burden of woe and misery.

On the back of the horrible "souvenir" I bought in the Ohio penitentiary there is this paragraph:

"No. —, Alfred Knapp, electrocuted August 19, 1904, for the murder of his wife, Hannah Goddard Knapp, at Hamilton."

When I read that brief history it was not the weak, youthful face of Alfred Knapp that came before me, but the memory of a disrupted family; AN OLD FATHER AND MOTHER, BROKEN HEARTED; THEIR SONS AND DAUGHTERS SET AGAINST ONE ANOTHER, AND BABY LIPS FORBIDDEN TO LISP THE DESPISED NAME.

I remembered the secret flitting

from place to place; brothers who denied their identity to escape the same; the impotent anger and deep despair when that hidden blot crept out to damn them in every community, wherever they sought to hide.

Think of the vigil of that old mother, who rose at dawn on the day the state took its pound of flesh—her boy's life—to pray heaven's mercy against man's mercilessness!

Is there no better way? Must we continue to spread social devastation through the age-old thirst for blood! Is there, then, no virtue in the teaching of Christ?

"The bruised reed I will not break," He said, stirred by the pitilessness of man to his brother. In an age of light and boasted humanitarianism, with 2,000 years of Christianity behind us, we break the frail reed of man's soul on the law devised for his protection.

The next article in Miss Partlon's series will be on "A Day in Police Court."