

A TRYING SPECTACLE — ELECTRICITY DECLARED A FAILURE.

When the company, numbering 21, had assembled in the little room, Kemmler was brought in. "Now, gentlemen," said the Warden, "this is Kemmler. I have warned him he has got to die, and if he has anything to say he will say it." Kemmler said — "Well, I wish every one good luck in this world, and I think I am going to a good place, and the papers have been saying a lot of stuff, that is not so. That's all I have to say." And he turned his back on the jury, took off his coat and handed it to the warder. The hole had been cut from the band of the trousers down so as to expose the base of the spine. When the coat was off Kemmler turned in the direction of the door and began to unbutton the vest. Warder Durston called attention to the fact it was not necessary to remove his vest. Kemmler calmly buttoned it again, and carefully arranged his tie. "Don't hurry about this matter," said the Warden, "be perfectly cool." He was by all odds the coolest man in the room. He sat down in the electric chair as quietly as though sitting down to dinner.

The operators began immediately to adjust the straps around Kemmler's body, the condemned man holding up his arms so as to give them every assistance. When the straps had been adjusted the arms were fastened down. While the straps were being arranged Kemmler said—"Take your time; don't be in a hurry. Be sure everything is all right." Two or three times he repeated these phrases, and Warden Durston reassured him with the remark that it couldn't hurt him, and that he (Durston) would be with him all through. When the straps had been adjusted to the body, the warden placed a hand on Kemmler's head and held it against the rubber cushion which ran down the back of the chair, Kemmler's eyes turned towards the opposite side of the room, and then the condemned man made one or two remarks in a perfectly clear and composed tone of voice. "Well, I wish everybody good luck," was one of them. Deputy Vieling unfastened the thumb screw which held the figure at the back of the chair in its place, and began to lower it so that the rubber cup which held the saturated sponge pressed against the top of the head. When the cup had been adjusted, Kemmler said, "O, you'd better press down further, I guess. Press that down." So the head-piece was unclasped and pressed further down. While this was being done Kemmler said, "Well, I want to do the best I can; I can't do any better than that." Warden Durston took the leather harness, which he adjusted to Kemmler's head. It was a muzzle of broad leather straps, which went across the forehead and the chin of the man in the chair. The top of the strap pressed down against the nose until it flattened it down slightly over the face. As the harness was put into its place, Dr Spertzka, standing near the chair, said softly, "God bless you, Kemmler," and the condemned man answered softly, "Thank you." The electric current was turned on and there was a sudden convulsion of the frame in the chair. A spasm went over it from head to foot, and the twitching of the muscles that the face underwent gave it an expression of pain, but no cry escaped from the lips and no sound to suggest that consciousness lasted more than an infinitesimal fraction of a second. The body remained in a rigid position for 17 seconds. The jury and witnesses, seated up to this moment, came hurriedly forward and surrounded the chair. There was no movement of the body beyond the first convulsion. In a short time the doctors found that life was not quite extinct. As the group of horror-stricken witnesses stood by Kemmler's lips began to drip spittle, and in a moment more the chest moved, and from the mouth came heavy stentorian sounds, quickening and increasing with every respiration. There was no voice but that of the Warden crying to the operator to turn on the current, and the wheezing sound and half-groan which forced itself past the tightly-closed lips. Some of the witnesses turned away from the sight, and one of them fell down in a faint. As soon as possible the current was renewed. The shock was applied for the third time, and Kemmler was pronounced to be dead. The physicians say that he was unconscious from the moment of the first shock. Smoke appeared at the back of the body, where the flesh was burned by the intensity of the current. The voltage at the first shock was eighteen hundred.