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The next day the parsons came again, and brought with them a colonel who read to us the king's order—which was, that every fifth man was to be hung, for firing on the king's troops; but, as some were dead, there were but nine of us and, out of the nine, but one had to die. This was to be decided by throwing dice on the head of a drum. Whoever threw the lowest was to be executed.

It was then agreed that the oldest must throw first. I was the youngest and had to throw last. The first was blindfolded, and two dice put in a glass tumbler. He was led to the drum which was put in the room, and there cast the dice on the head of the drum. And so we went up one by one, to cast the awful throw of life or death. All of my companions, except one, threw high: he threw four. As I was the last, all his hopes were that I should throw lower than he. As for my part, I was indifferent about it, for I had resigned myself to fortune. I took the glass in my hand, and gained the prize of life, for I threw five. My poor companion, who threw four, was led away from us, surrounded by clergy, to be executed the next day....

Col. Ellis P. Bean, 1801
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