

OLD-TIME PUNISHMENTS.

The Manner in Which Criminals Were Tortured in the "Good Old Days."

Tearing to Pieces by Horse-Power—Rack-ing, Beheading—The Swinging Ham-mock—The French Root—Burning Alive—The Pillory—The Stocks and the Drunkard's Jacket.

In these days, when the quality of mercy is such that even the woes of domestic animals are regarded, and police officers are appointed to see that horses are not over-worked, and that cattle whose flesh is designed for food are put to death in the most humane manner possible, it is difficult to appreciate the lack of tenderness that characterized our ancestors, and that at no distant day. Cruel and unusual punishments are so expressly forbidden by our Magna Charta, the Constitution, that a thrill of horror runs over the country when, as a few days ago, an offender is put to death by a mob under circumstances of unusual brutality. Yet less than two centuries ago punishments as cruel as that inflicted by the people of Texas on the criminal who had provoked their wrath were not exactly every-day occurrences, but sufficiently common as to attract little attention and cause less comment. The unexpressed theory of old English law was that the punishment of the criminal was not so much for the benefit of society as for revenge on the criminal, and accordingly any and every means of torture that could be devised was put in practice to satisfy the desire for vengeance before the victim escaped by death from his tormentors. The object was not to secure the removal of the criminal from the world, since this could have been done by a single stroke of a sword or ax, but to inflict on him the greatest possible amount of torture. With this end in view, speedy death was not desired, and anything that tended to shorten or alleviate the sufferings endured by the victim was regarded as so much abatement from the demands of justice.

Nor were these horrible cruelties inflicted by irresponsible persons simply from a wanton desire for vengeance, but were according to the deliberate orders of a regularly constituted court of justice having formal sessions and proceeding in an orderly way to subject human beings to the most frightful sufferings. But at that time torture was a recognized method of obtaining evidence. When a criminal would not confess his guilt, the rack and the thumbscrew were ever ready to compel him to do so; when a conspirator refused to divulge the names of his associates in crime, he was tortured until he did, and not infrequently a more than usually resolute man died under the hands of the torturers rather than implicate others. When a witness, even though not suspected of being implicated in crime, did not testify according to the wishes or preconceived opinion of the judges, he was immediately suspected of perjury and was put to the torture in order to compel him to give evidence more in accordance with the ideas of the Court. When such means of getting evidence were in vogue in regard to witnesses who had no interest in the case, regard for the feelings of the criminal himself could not be expected.

Even the suspected criminal was liable to death in its most horrid form if he refused to plead. When a person accused of a crime for which the punishment was death refused to plead, that is, stood mute on his arraignment, either refusing to speak or replying intelligently, he was subjected to the *penne forte et dure*. He was taken back to prison, and in some low, dark room was stripped and laid on his back. His body was burdened with very heavy weights; once each day he received a portion of the meanest bread or the worst water, eating one day and drinking the next, the weights being increased every day until he died. The punishment in early times was believed to have continued only until the prisoner was willing to answer, but latterly, after it had once been ordered, the victim could not save himself. This dreadful torture was devised by feudal noblemen for the purpose of compelling the prisoners to plead, and thus, if proven guilty, of securing a forfeiture of all the lauds and estates of the criminal. The goods and personal property of a man pressed to death might be forfeited, but his landed estates could not be touched, and so there were instances of persons who thus suffered death in order to secure their property to their families. This dreadful penalty was inflicted occasionally, at least, in England until 1772, when the statute was repealed. The only instance of its infliction in the American colonies of Great Britain was that of Giles Cary, the husband of a reputed witch, in Massachusetts, in 1692, who, aware that he had no chance of life before the tribunal organized to convict him, determined to save his property for his children and so refused to plead. Although 80 years of age he stood the torture for several days, and by his heroic example stopped the Salem witchcraft madness.

Akin to the pressing to death was another device often employed to compel criminals to confess. It was similar to the pressing, however, only in the matter of weights on the breast, for in every other particular it was far more painful, the torture indeed being so exquisite that few men were able to endure it more than ten minutes without fainting. It was known as the "hammock test." Cords were tied to the ankles and wrists, and the body was drawn up from the ground, so that it hung in a swinging position, as though in a hammock. A heavy weight was then laid on the stomach, and the body was kept in constant oscillation, swinging to and fro. This extreme torture was often applied to Jewish bankers in the German and Italian States to extract from them forced loans. A European institution, it crossed the Atlantic, and was used by the Buccaneers to compel Spanish captives to divulge where they had hidden their treasures.

Burning to death was for ages the common legal punishment for witchcraft, and so frequently was it applied that Barrington says that in England alone during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries not less than 3000 persons were burned to death for witchcraft alone, to say nothing of those who suffered the same punishment for unnatural crimes.

There were epidemics of witch-finding; one broke out at Geneva in 1515, and in less than three months over 500 unfortunate men and women were burned to death in the great public square. When employed the punishment was made as cruel as possi-

ble by using dampened wood, and it often happened that the feet and legs of the sufferer were burned completely away while his body was untouched by the flames. Even the piteous prayer, "Let me have more fire, that I may soon die," waivered from the flames by more than one victim, was granted only as a special favor, and in cases where there appeared to be cause for unusual leniency.

Horrible as was the burning to death with its lingering torture, it was exceeded in terrors by the frightful punishment devised as a penalty for such crimes as attempting the life of a king. The arms and legs of the victim were tied to the harness of four strong horses, which were driven in opposite directions, and he was thus miserably torn to pieces. Sometimes, as in the case of Damians, who in 1757 stabbed Louis XV., the horses were unable to do the work. Damians was condemned to this dreadful torture, but was so powerfully built that although two horses were harnessed to each limb, their stoutest efforts could not tear his body asunder. In vain were they urged by the voices and whips of their drivers; they tugged and strained and dragged the miserable wretch to and fro about the square, but all in vain. The man frequently fainted under the torture, but whenever he did so the horses were stopped and he was carefully revived with stimulants. After the barbarous scene had continued for three hours, and it was clearly shown that the horses could not accomplish the work assigned them, a message was sent to the King to ask permission to sever the tendons of the man's arms and legs; this was done; fresh horses were secured and the dreadful work finally completed.

Grievous sights were those which were almost daily witnessed in the streets of any capital of Europe a century or two ago. At the city gates or arches, at the entrances to bridges and in other public places, the several heads of persons put to death by legal process were publicly exposed, and in some cases the heads were accompanied by the quarters of the body, which were distributed among the various public places of the city as a warning to evil-doers. On one page of Pepys' diary he tells of meeting, in a public street, the carts containing the heads and quarters, or dismembered limbs, of several noblemen whose conspiracy against the King had been discovered and who had been "hanged, drawn and quartered." This was, in the time of Pepys, a common punishment. When it was desired to show unusual favor to the condemned, he was allowed to hang until dead, when the body was taken down, disemboweled and dismembered; but when the sentence was inflicted in its full severity, the man was hanged until insensible, then cut down and revived, his body marked with chalk for dismemberment, the limbs cut off, a surgeon being present to check, as far as possible, the flow of blood, and thus prolong the life and agony of the wretched creature, and, finally, the viscera were removed and burned. At least one case is noted of the sufferer surviving until his entrails had been consumed before his eyes.

But human ingenuity was exhausted in the effort to provide sufficiently cruel tortures for the punishment of those who conspired against the lives of kings and noblemen, or, what was deemed equally atrocious, attempted to subvert their authority. On May 14, 1610, Henry IV. of France was assassinated by Ravalliac, a religious fanatic, who to-day would be sent to an insane asylum. On May 27 the assassin was put to death by being torn to pieces by horses and in the manner already described. This, however, was but the end of a long series of elaborate tortures which lasted almost the entire day. His teeth were drawn, his hair pulled out by handfuls, his ears were cropped, his nose sliced away, his lips cut off, his finger and toe nails were torn out, his flesh pinched away with red-hot nippers; he was racked; thumbscrews were put on his hands, and "French boots"—mechanical devices by which the flesh of the legs were crushed to a pulp—were placed on his lower limbs. His eyes were cut out, his tongue torn out by the roots; his whole body was seared with red-hot irons and salt and poisonous acids were applied to the raw and bleeding flesh. At every stage in these cruel proceedings skilled surgeons gave him close attention, and when, in their opinion, the particular kind of torture then in progress had gone far enough, it was immediately suspended and restoratives administered in order that the poor wretch might not escape his tormentors by dying too soon. Finally, the wretch of a human body was torn in fragments by horses, and it is said that after this last horrible ordeal had been undergone the body gave signs of life for several minutes.

But it is almost impossible to mention any form of cruel torture which has not, within the last 200 years, been resorted to in order to make the punishment of crime more terrible. Rings were put round the legs and wedges driven between them and the flesh; prisoners were shut up in cells so low and narrow that the only position possible was one which cramped every muscle; they were laid on their backs and by means of a funnel water was poured down their throats until the most extreme agony resulted; the body was fastened on a frame by means of cords and then smeared with honey to attract flies, ants, wasps and bees; prisoners were hung up in cages suspended by the arms with weights tied to the ankles; large trees, by means of ropes and pulleys, were drawn into proximity, an arm and a leg were tied to each, the restraining ropes were released, and the victim torn asunder by the flying back of the trees. Melted lead, wax, or boiling water was poured into the ears or mouth, one or more limbs were immersed in boiling oil, the whole body was suspended over a slow fire, ears were cropped, noses were slit, hands or feet were cut off, bones were broken on the wheel, and dozens of equally cruel means were employed to punish offenses, often of minor grade. Less than 200 years ago libel was punished in England by cropping the ears and slitting the nose. Only sixty-two years ago forgery was punishable by death, and men were executed for this offense. In the reign of Elizabeth dozens of crimes, many of which are now classed as misdemeanors, were punished with the ax or halter. At the time Blackstone wrote 160 different offenses were visited with the death penalty, "without the benefit of clergy," while about 200 more were occasionally punished with this extreme penalty.

In view of this bloody array of horrible penalties, the pillory, the stocks and the drunkard's barrel sink into insignificance. All three were designed to hold the offender up to public scorn and ridicule, for, in spite of the guard always furnished, os-

tensibly to protect the prisoners, the public were generally permitted and sometimes encouraged to insult and injure the unfortunate persons condemned to these punishments. Though not considered cruel a couple of centuries ago, either the pillory or the stocks would now be regarded as very inhuman. In either case the prisoner was compelled to remain for some hours in an exceedingly constrained and painful position, which racked every nerve, and meantime was pelted with rotten eggs, decayed vegetables and fruit, and sometimes with stones by the rabble that always gathered on such occasions, even the drunkard in his barrel, compelled to promenade the streets of his native town, had no easy time, for words are sometimes harder to bear than blows, and ridicule is occasionally the worst form of torture, but in view of the mercilessness with which justice was meted out to evil-doers in those cruel days it is not likely that the libeler who stood in the pillory, pilterers who sat in the stocks or drunkards who wore their barrel-jackets through the streets regarded their punishment as extreme, but rather considered themselves as fortunate in not being put to the rack to make them confess and then hanged outright for confessing.

English Poet Laureates.

Tennyson will be the last poet laureate, if Mr. Gladstone's example be followed. When questioned in Parliament respecting the succession to what is technically a patent office at the disposal of the Lord Chamberlain, the Prime Minister has brusquely declared that he has no intention of recommending the appointment of a poet laureate. It is not known whether he has reached this decision after discovering that poets like Swinburne and Morris having the most valid claim to the succession were indifferent to the honor, or whether he has perceived the impracticability of continuing the traditional court custom by a mediocre appointment which would degrade Tennyson's memory. Possibly he answered the question impulsively, and revealed characteristic impatience over an attempt to draw him out on what he had considered a trivial matter when his time and thought were engrossed with the cares of state; or he may have deliberately determined upon the abolition of the office as a convenient way of escaping from an embarrassing position. Mr. Gladstone, while markedly deficient in humor, is sensitive to ridicule, and may have foreseen that he would be laughed at, let him appoint whom he might. Then again it is not improbable that the Queen and her Prime Minister may not agree upon their standards of English poetry. The effect is the same, whatever may have been the motives which have controlled it. The laureateship is allowed to lapse.

It is singular that a statesman who has won renown from his Homeric studies and Hellenic scholarship should be instrumental in abolishing an office distinctively Greek in origin. Mr. Gladstone probably has never dissented from Sir Henry Maine's generalization that whatever is progressive in modern civilization is Greek; and at any rate he must have recognized in the laureateship the last survival of the classical custom of crowning the poets in musical contests among the vine-clad hills and olive groves of Peloponnesus. From Greece the tradition passed to Rome, and in the Middle Ages it was revived in Germany, Spain, Italy and England. In Germany there was a succession of court poets from Ulrich von Hutten to Karl Buerger, and finally the Imperial privilege was conferred upon universities and practically abandoned. In Spain the laureateship never acquired distinction, but in Italy Petrarch was crowned in the capital, and Tasso, after aspiring to the same honor throughout his troublous life, was buried with the laurel on his cold, white forehead. Whether Chaucer received from the Crown a pension and a cask of wine, or whether Spenser was entitled to the rank of laureate in Elizabethan times, may be a controversial matter; but from Ben Jonson's acceptance of a small life annuity until Tennyson's death the succession has been unbroken. It has been an unequal circuit of genius and mediocrity, Jonson, Davenant, Dryden, Southey, Wordsworth and Tennyson sharing the cheapened honors of Shadwell, Tate, Pove, Emsden, Cibber, Whitehead and Warton; but whether in its high or low estate, the laureateship has been a reminiscence in prosaic England of Greek culture and love of beauty and harmony refracted through the dense gloom of the Middle Ages.

The earliest English laureates were employed to furnish odes for royal entertainment when Italian masques were produced at court. They were expected to earn their pensions and to work for their tierces of malvoisie and canary wine. Even as late as Pye's term of royal patronage an equivalent in verse was rendered for the honor of appointment. Sir Walter Scott declined the laureateship because he considered the obligation to write for the court a degrading one, and Southey and Wordsworth could only be induced to take it when they were released from compulsory service. Perhaps it is this offensive tradition of official patronage of men of letters which has tended to discredit the office and to reconcile Mr. Gladstone to its abolition, notwithstanding its classical origin and reminiscences. Sturdy Dr. Johnson struck the vigorous blow for the emancipation of literary genius from patronage when in his famous letter to Lord Chesterfield he asked: "Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached the ground encumbers him with help?" But Burns went even further when in "For a' that and a' that" he formulated a democratic creed for the republic of letters. The laureateship in its earlier stage had borne the impress of "the guinea stamp"; "the tinsel show" of "the riband star and a' that" was reflected in the relationship of dependence upon the favor of great men at court. The king of men for whom the future English poet must write is "the honest man tho' e'er sae poor"; and for that democratic function, as a Prime Minister with hard Scotch sense perceives, no laureateship is needed.

A fountain marking brush, in which the brush part is attached to a tube through which the ink is supplied from a compressible reservoir in the handle.

Tommy had just returned from Sunday-school, and his mother asked him if he had been a good boy.

"Not very," he replied.

"Then you didn't get a good-behavior card?"

"Yes, I did. I saved the money you gave me for the heathen, and bought two cards with it from the other boys."

EPIDEMIC IS FEARED.

American Health Officer on Cholera in Germany.

Dr. Kempster, a special health officer of the United States, has just arrived in Berlin after a tour of inspection of Hamburg, Bremen, Cassel, and Nettleben. He said he was convinced that the present year would witness a fierce outbreak of cholera all over the continent, and that instead of being sporadic, as in 1892, the plague would sweep the whole of Europe. He related an ominous incident connected with his visit to a certain large town, the name of which he desired to reserve for his official report. He asked the local health officer to take him to the worst slum in the town. "There is none," said the officer. "Every slum and fever hole has been cleared out."

HUNDREDS OF CASES SUPPRESSED.

He also discovered discrepancies between the published figures of the military on cholera and the number of cases registered on government lists. In one town the local health officer told him the total number of cases of cholera was thirty-eight, but, obtaining access to the official record, he found that there had really been 780 cases, of which 350 had been fatal. The Doctor said the towns alluded to were not in Germany. They are probably in Russia. Dr. Kempster also related the following incident: A Bremen lighterman and his assistant died of cholera aboard their boat while lying off the city. The boat was sent to Hamburg, no one in Bremen, as far as is known, having boarded it or come in contact with it. Several days afterward a widow and her daughter, living at the river side, died of Asiatic cholera. The series of infection of these cases could not be traced until Dr. Kempster, co-operating with a Hamburg officer, proved that the widow had washed some clothes from the lighter-boat.

EARTHQUAKES IN THE OCEAN.

They Produce the Largest Known Waves Which Always Carry Destruction.

While we usually think of earthquakes as taking place on land, they do, indeed, occur with equal devastation in the ocean. That point in the earth at which the explosion or breaking takes place is called the earthquake focus, and from it what are known as earthquake waves pass to the surface.

What do these earthquake waves resemble? Take a basin full of water and dip a glass tube in it. Blow through the tube and you will see bubbles rising to the surface and circular waves passing out. The disturbance at the bottom of the basin corresponds with the explosion or snapping of the crust at the earthquake focus, with this difference, that instead of water waves the latter produces earth waves, passing through the ground. When the city of Lisbon, Portugal, was destroyed the earthquake took place in the bottom of the sea, fifty miles west of the city. Yet it so agitated the water that a wave sixty feet high dashed over Lisbon, destroying it and its inhabitants in the space of sixty minutes. Another earthquake occurring just off the coast of Peru made such a gigantic wave that a large vessel was thrown seven miles inland.

These are called earthquake waves. They are the largest known waves, and are caused by the heaving and rocking of the bed of the sea. In deep water such waves are not very high, but their motion extends far down into the ocean. When they reach shallow water, however, they heap up like a gigantic wall, and, with a force more terrible than fire or sword, they sweep on bearing destruction with them. Huge ships are tossed like straws far inland, or mingle their ruin with that of a harbor town.—[St. Nicholas.]

New Things.

A device by which complete horseshoes may be made from a roughly bent bar at one operation by means of dies.

A composite material for pavement, composed of asphaltum, coal tar, petroleum, paper or wood pulp and lime.

A wood water pipe constructed of staves, with beveled edges, clasped together and covered with cement and wood veneering.

A flexible material for roofing, made up of a sheet of textile fabric combined with layers of asphaltum, burlap and crushed rock, imbedded in the asphaltum.

A self-locking bolt comprising two sections, one being provided with a reduced notched portion which is driven into and engages in notches in two yielding prongs of the other section.

A reaping or mowing machine in which the knives are divided by conic shells located on a horizontal axis in such a manner that the stalks of grain are forced against the cutting edges.

A metallic fastener for envelopes consisting of a disk and triangular fingers at right angles thereto, the points of the fingers being bent inwardly to facilitate clamping under pressure.

A machine for widening or deepening water courses, consisting of a cable with agitators attached and connected to a tug at one end and at the other to a truck traveling on the bed of the water course or harbor.

An interesting example of bringing the energy of a water privilege to a locality more convenient for manufacturing purposes is that reported of the Nonotuck Silk Company which is supplying its mills at Leeds and Haydenville with electric power generated at a rocky gorge a third of a mile from one mill and one and three-fourths of a mile from the other mill; in one mill the motors directly drive lines of shafting, while in the other mill they act as auxiliary to the water wheels and regulate them, and also with the engine at times. The motor belts upon the main shaft, which is driven by two water wheels, the latter being run at full gate without any regulator, but the motor serves as a regulator, running at uniform speed and furnishing the remainder of the power. On the water falling too low for the water wheels and motor to run the mill, a steam engine is belted to the main shaft, the motor and water wheels furnishing their full capacity and the engine regulating the whole.

NO MORE SMOKE.

The New System by Which Every Atom of Fuel is Consumed.

According to the Berlin correspondent of the London Standard, the problem of smokeless combustion of coal seems at last to be solved by a newly patented process which is exciting an immense sensation in Germany. The patent has been taken out by a company, which has already made contracts with a number of large commercial and industrial concerns—among others with the North German Lloyd, the Hamburg-American Packet Company, Schichau, and the Vulcan Works at Stettin—for the introduction of its new system of firing.

In the construction of their new firing apparatus, the patentees have departed from all the methods hitherto employed. The coal is no longer burned in lumps, but is reduced to powder by means of the ordinary centrifugal mills. The new system which is called "automatic and smokeless coal-dust firing" is extremely simple. At the place where hitherto the coal was introduced into the fire grate, that is to say, at the furnace door there is a movable pear-shaped apparatus, consisting principally of a fire chamber lined with a fire brick. One aperture of this hollow pear opens, in the direction of the axis of the boiler, into the mouth of the hitherto employed furnace, from which the fire grates, fire bridges, etc., have been removed. The opposite aperture of the hollow pear is intended to admit a current of air. By means of an ingenious automatic contrivance, coal dust, supplied through a funnel placed above the current of air, is continually conveyed into the current of air and thence into the fire chamber, where it is immediately brought into combustion by means of the small fire which is placed there. When this has once taken place the coal dust conveyed by the current of air continues to burn in one regular, intense flame. The current of the air which brings the coal dust into the apparatus is regulated so as merely to convey the dust thither, whereas the further supply of air necessary for combustion is sent into the zone of combustion at right angles and it radiating jets. By this arrangement the coal dust and the air in the zone of combustion are intimately and thoroughly mixed whilst the speed of the current which introduces the coal dust is diminished.

It will thus be seen that the combustion of the coal which this method produces is extremely thorough, for each particle of fuel floats in the air and is brought into contact with the oxygen necessary for its combustion, so that it is totally consumed the moment it enters the sphere of combustion. The proof of its being totally consumed is seen in the fact that not even a trace of smoke is perceptible. With the pressure of a finger the supply of coal dust and of draught can be perfectly regulated, and thereby an equable generation of heat secured.

Among the further advantages of the new system of firing may be mentioned the diminished wear and tear of steam boilers, the absence of fire grates and fire bridges, the ability to start or to stop instantaneously, the absence of heaps of cinders and ashes, and the avoided necessity for high chimneys. It is further claimed that this method of firing is suitable not only for steam boilers, but also for all kinds of heating, welding, smelting and burning processes, that it can be used in all sorts of manufactures, and that by it not only ordinary coal, but also brown coal, charcoal, turf-powder, etc., may be burned.

The Medical Trap Door.

We really wish our esteemed contemporaries the doctors, would explain to us exactly what they mean when they say that So-and-so has died of heart failure. Of course, we know in a general way that a citizen dies when his heart comes to a determined stop and no doubt that consumption might be loosely described as heart failure on the ground that it is the reverse of heart activity. But the term is now employed as though it described some specific complaint, like consumption or Bright's disease or diphtheria, and we are building up within ourselves a yearning curiosity to know just what it means.

Mr. Thompson, we will say, is a large man, of liberal ways of life, with florid complexion, a jocular nose and a coming appetite for rum and water. He eats with catholic taste and Brobdignagian energy. He drinks as does the panting hart which finds an unexpected fountain in the desert. Some fine day Thompson dies with his boots on, so to speak; that is to say, he reaches for his glass of hot whiskey toddy, misses it, and passes. Several eminent physicians gaze upon the cadaverous, wag their heads mournfully and say, "Heart failure." Within a week old Joskins, round the corner, takes a tumble. Joskins is cadaverous and long, built like a tuning-fork and equipped inside of him much like the crane of song and story. He eats little, drinks less and mirrors his generation in a bilious eye. Somebody leaves the door ajar and Joskins blows out through the chink into another world. Doctors come and ponder over him and say "Heart failure" once again.

We do not understand it. We wish we did. What is heart failure anyhow? Is it a new disease, or is the term merely a scientific subterfuge?

The Cameron Highlanders.

It is recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Cameron Highlanders that there once was a scheme in the Commander in Chief's mind to draft them into other corps. This was in 1797, and the regiment was but four years old. The Commander in Chief was the Duke of York. When the horrid report reached the ears of Alan Cameron of Errach, who had raised the regiment and was its Colonel, he went to headquarters to protest. With the vehemence proper to a Highlander in a rage and the punctiliousness of a Scotchman who had made a bargain, he denounced the scheme as a breach of faith to himself and a violation of the letter of service on which the men had been enlisted. "It is more, Sir," he swore, "than you or your father dare do to draft the Camerons." The Duke of York answered that they should go to the West Indies—as a punishment, presumably. "You may tell the King, your father, from me," said the undaunted Errach, "that he may send us to— I if he likes, and I will go at the head of them, but he damn'd draft us." They were sent to the West Indies, and died of yellow fever, and were depleted to fill the ranks of the Forty-second; but the cadaster was never broken up, and the Seventy-ninth lived to go through many fights, from Corunna to the Alma.