

THE RUSSIAN KNOT.

BARBAROUS INFLICTIONS ON THE WORST TORTURES.

Its Inhuman Use on Victims—Only Lately Abolished in the Czar's Domain—Cruel Instrument Obsolete—Politics of Enlightened Russia.



EXPANDING civilization sheds very slowly its forms of legal cruelty. England, less than a century ago, used to hang men for trifling crimes against the sacred rights of property. Russia only just lately has abolished the use of the knot, though the father of the present Czar favored the removal of this blood-stain from Russian rule. Alexander II. invited all the governors of provinces and penal settlements to report upon their experience with the knot. Without exception they had favored its abolition. In many places it was revealed that the local police resorted to it on the slightest provocation; that they spared neither age nor sex; that delicate women and tender children were frequently maimed for life by its use. Nor was this all. Statistics were submitted which showed that within the past ten years 3,000 persons, convicted of petty offenses, had died from its effects.

The knot is first heard of in the reign of Ivan III. This was toward the close of the fifteenth century. It was an instrument even more hideous than anything now known in Russia—a whip with a handle nine inches long, and a very complex lash composed of six pieces held together by two metal rings and ending in a beak-like hook.

The edges of the lash were sharpened to a fine point. Every blow cut as with a two-edged sword. To heighten the effect, the trained executioner, by a deft and artistic motion, pulled the lash toward him while recovering, so that the cunningly devised hook brought off a long, thin strip of flesh at every blow.

The trousseau of the gentleman who was being operated upon, consisted only of a pair of drawers. He was fastened flat on his belly on an inclined frame, the hands and feet extended at full length and firmly bound to iron rings at the extremity of the frame. With a refinement of ingenuity, the head of the sufferer was often so closely confined that he could not get relief for his feelings in howling.

Not every one could handle the knot successfully. It required a nice combination of qualities, native and acquired. Having first been born, the executioner must be made. A cold and cruel spirit, an iron nerve and great strength—these were the gifts which some fairy godmother must have showered upon him in his cradle. A long apprenticeship would be necessary to develop these excellent attributes. Usually the chief executioner was some criminal who had himself been condemned to the punishment he was saved to administer.

During his moments of leisure from active employment it was his business to give instructions to pupils. A sort of lay figure was used for practice. The chief executioner instructed his apt and willing scholars in the art of dealing their blows so that the injury might be graduated according to the nature of the crime or the size of the bribe which the executioner might have surreptitiously received.

If the executioner were inclined to mercy he could inflict immediate death by making the victim dislocate his own neck. Or he could protract the agony for an hour or so by cutting into the loins.

With the original knot, a sentence of from 100 to 120 lashes was equivalent to a sentence of death. Indeed, in many cases the victim died under the operation long before the number was completed. That was a pity. The kindly Russian heart, with kindness tempered by a severe sense of justice, looked on the criminal as a cheat if he died without receiving his entire sentence. Therefore, from time to time the severity of the knot was modified until the offender could receive a sentence of 2,000 lashes.

The last knot in use—the knot which has just been abolished—was an ordinary three-thonged lash tipped with leaden balls, and known as a pistol. It is only fair to say that since the accession of Alexander II. even this had been used only in certain penal settlements—notably in Siberia.

The horror of the present day, however, is as nothing to the horror of the past, but stories of executions by the knot in comparatively recent times are horrible enough.

Take for example the testimony of a British merchant, resident in Russia in 1836. The condemned criminal was a murderer, twenty-five years of age. He was stripped to his trousers and boots and fastened to the stage. The knot in this instance consisted of a handle a foot long, with a piece of twisted hide of similar length. To this was attached by a ring a piece of thong of almost metallic hardness, perfectly flat, about an inch broad and four or five feet long. After every seventh blow the thong was changed lest it might have lost some of its hardness by use. The executioner stood some five feet from the victim. He slowly raised the knot till it had attained the proper elevation, then he brought it down with awful force upon the middle of the culprit's back.

A deep, crimson mark nearly an inch in breadth and extending from the neck to the waistband of the trousers showed where the horrid thong had hit. A scream, or rather a yell, of agony rang through the air. Every fibre of the

poor wretch's body seemed in a state of violent and instantaneous contortion. Whack! whack! whack! came the blows in quick succession till the eighth had been reached. Each blow was followed by the same frightful yell and shudder. Then the chief executioner gave place to an assistant, and so one relieved the other until the tale was completed. The screams of the victim became weaker until about the fiftieth blow, when the criminal's head fell to one side and he seemed unconscious of any further pain. When all was over his back presented a hideous spectacle. It was one mangled, bloated mass of deep crimson hue. He was returned to the prison, where he died next day.

Even more frightful are the accounts of the punishment known as running the gauntlet, which was practiced until a comparatively recent period in the Russian army. One cannot help but shudder at reading the accounts of eye-witnesses to these hideous proceedings.

DEATH OF THE BIRDS.

The Fearful Effect of the February Cold Snap in the South.

The readers of "Our Boys and Girls" have been told of the great damage done to the orange-groves and the fig trees of the south by the cold "snap" of last February, but there is another loss that we who live there have suffered, about which very little has been said. The severe weather not only killed our trees but the thousands of bright-plumed birds that have heretofore enlivened our forests and groves with their beautiful coats and their sweet songs.

The bluebird, that harbinger of the early spring, did not give us his merry greeting this year. His bright blue jacket and brown-red breast were missed by everybody. Seven little blue forms, dried and decayed, were found in one old post on our place, where the poor creatures had fled in vain for shelter.

The blue jay still struts about with his usual dignity, but only here and there, showing that his tribe has suffered fearful losses. The peculiarly sad note of the turtle-dove this year seems to mourn for the death of all her family.

The effects upon the several tribes of the oriole seem to be the most curious. They evidently look upon man as the worker of all the evil they have suffered. Formerly it was an easy matter to find their swinging nests near to almost any country house, and they appeared not to be afraid of men. Now they have hidden their nests far out in the forests and they are shy even of the breeze as it rocks the cradle of their young. Even the few humming birds that are left will not come to suck the pot plant as was once their daily habit. The woodpecker, though only a summer visitor, is spending his vacation at other resorts this season. His lazy call and his constant drumming upon some dead tree, so common in summer before, are conspicuously absent this year. But the fell destroyer was no respecter of persons or rank; the royal family succumbed as well as the peasantry. The mocking-bird, the queen of the bird race by virtue of her genius and inheritance, is almost destroyed, except along the Mexican Gulf. A hundred miles back it is hard to find one. The gum-tree and its berries, which have been held as her home and her feeding ground as far back as history runs, is now the feeding ground of her commonest subjects, the sap-sucker and the yellow-hammer. I have heard but two singers this year within a scope where in former years I have heard 200.

In losing a crop of oranges, figs and vegetables, we lose dollars and a few luxuries whose place may be supplied by the other sweets. The trees will grow again after a few years, but it will be many years before our groves and forests are full of birds again.

G. W. H.

A Commonplace Life.

The trouble is with you, my dear girl, that you count little things as of no worth. Where we have one great remuneration to make we have a thousand little ones, and life, which you are inclined to call commonplace, is not so, for every day can be made rich in beautiful deeds. God, who is just, is merciful, and when temptation comes to you, even if you fail, He remembers that you tried to do what was right, and so is tender in His thought of you. There is not one of us who achieves, even for one day, what we long to. But, my dear, we can always try for it. We can be ready for the trouble that is before us and equip ourselves by prayer and good thoughts so that we can meet it bravely, and, possibly, overcome it. Of course, that is what we wish to do, and yet if we are not strong enough, if we fall by the wayside, we must get up and try again, and keep on trying. That, in itself, will give us strength. And as the years go on and youth begets and to the past, it will always, because of this trying, be easier to do that which is right and merit "that peace which passeth all understanding."

A Blind Man.

An intensely reserved man, Ibsen is not at all fond of talking of himself or of his works. At a dinner some time ago the wife of a well-known artist, being seated beside him, insisted on conducting the conversation to that end and finally maintained at length that his "Hedda Gabler" was an impossible woman. "But, madam," he answered, "I drew her from the life." "Yes, Herr Doktor, but I am a woman. I should know. I say again, it is impossible that such a woman should exist." This was too much for Herr Doktor, like a flash he turned on her. "Idiot!" he ejaculated, which was naturally the end of that conversation.

AN OFFENDED OSTRICH.

An Innocent Kitten Mistook His Legs for Saplings and Climbed Up.

(From the Philadelphia Press.) The ostrich at the Zoological Garden stood in the long yard adjoining its cage in the deer house yesterday. It gazed contemplatively through the bars of the fence at the world beyond and shivered every once in a while as the cool breezes swept down upon it. It was thinking of the difference in climates and wondering whether if it buried one of its eggs as it used to do in the long grass during such weather the cool wave would hatch out an ice cream churn.

While it was revolving the question in its mind a playful kitten came through the fence into the yard. It was a pretty kitten—pure white, except for a few blotches that looked as if somebody had thrown an ink bottle at it, after carefully removing the cork. The kitten went running along the yard until it came to the ostrich. Thinking its long, thick legs were young saplings the playful kitten gave a run and quickly climbed up them and was soon on top of the ostrich's back.

The huge bird did not know what to make of it at first, and went cawing around the yard as though the plague were after it. Round and round it went until red in the face it came to a sudden stop. The kitten never moved. It had taken a firm hold of the ostrich and did not propose to be shaken.

"I stood the earthquake this morning," said the kitten; "I guess I can stand this."

Finding that the strange beast refused to be thus summarily disposed of the ostrich became less scared and more angry. It curled its neck and twisted its head so as to get a fair look at the kitten. The kitten never wincing. It began to think it had barked up the wrong tree, but it was determined to see the matter out. The ostrich aimed a blow at the undesirable rider with its beak, but it dodged. It tried it again, but the result was the same. Again and again the agile head and long neck rained sledge-hammer blows at the tricky little kitten. It escaped them all, though some were too near for comfort.

Finally the kitten got scared. It ran out on the ostrich's neck to get out of the way. Then it smiled. The ostrich couldn't hit it there. Its smile did not last long, however. With a sudden movement the ostrich stretched its neck backward, encircled the kitten round the waist, and squeezed it until it was dead. Then it unwound itself and placidly looked at the dead animal. After a moment or two of contemplation it picked up its victim and flung it as far as it could. Then it calmly resumed the meditations that had been so ruthlessly interrupted.

The Irish Police Surgeon.

Police Surgeon—Is the man dangerously wounded?

Irish Police Surgeon—Two of the wounds are mortal, but the third can be cured provided the man keeps perfectly quiet for at least six weeks.

NOTES OF THE DAY.

A Maine paper claims to have a correspondent 4 years old—the youngest in the world.

A naphtha spring has been opened at Grosni, in the Caucasus, which throws jets of the fluid to a great height.

A Lowell man, while on a hunting trip recently, succeeded in performing the remarkable feat of killing two foxes at one shot.

The cities of London, Glasgow and Manchester are considering the question of establishing a system of municipal fire insurance.

There is a hen at Danbury, Conn., that must be going in for a course of calisthenics. She has just laid an egg in the shape of a dumbbell.

In Turkey even objects of prime necessity are sold on credit, and in that country, as well as in Russia, the time allowed is, in most cases, twelve months.

In Spain four-fifths of the transactions are done on a cash basis, while in Portugal great liberality is shown and quite long credit is generally allowed.

The late drouth in New Hampshire has killed thousands of young trout, many of the small breeding brooks having dried entirely up this season that were never dry before.

MEN OF MARK.

An Ohio man has started a nickel popular subscription for Mark Twain.

George Lord of San Bernardino, Cal., is said to be the world's oldest Mason. His age is 98 years.

Ex-President Harrison expects to spend the months of November and December at Saratoga.

Congressman Heatwole of Minnesota will be the handsomest member of the next House of Representatives.

Fitzgerald Murphy, author of "The Silver Lining," the great free silver play, began life as a reporter on the New York World. He is not yet 30.

A Washington Market, New York, butcher is known as "The Sweetbread King," and does the largest business in that edible delicacy of any man in the country, his annual sales being about 200,000 pairs.

It is a curious fact that Li Hung Chang, who is not a tobacco smoker, has one of the finest collections of smoking utensils in the world. He has pipes of all ages and from all parts of the world. He keeps adding constantly to his treasures in this line.

G. Bernard Shaw, author of "Arms and the Man," has been a figure of some prominence in literary London for five years, during which time he has alternately attracted attention as art critic, novelist, socialist and playwright. He is a tall and rather slender young Irishman of perhaps 28 years, a non-smoker, a wit and a vegetarian.

TO LIVE AT CAPITAL.

BEAUTIFUL HOME THERE FOR MRS. G. W. CHILDS.

Widow of the Late Journalist Will Pass the Remainder of Her Days Amid Congenial Surroundings—The Mansion in Detail.

Washington Correspondence.

THE middle of October will see a new addition to the many famous widows who have chosen the capital for their home, and the loss of Philadelphia will be Washington's gain, for at that date Mrs. Childs will take up her permanent residence in this city.

Being possessed of great wealth it was natural that Mrs. Childs should select the capital, and it is now about seven months since the building has begun to rise from its foundations. The situation is a fine one, being in the center of the block on K street, just between Fifteenth and Sixteenth streets, and in a most fashionable neighborhood, but an equally convenient one to the central part of the city. The White House is only three blocks



MRS. G. W. CHILDS.

away, on the next square are the homes of Quay, Madame Bonaparte and Secretary Hoke Smith, while on the same square and just at the left of the Childs house is the huge home of Senator Hale. To the right are the houses of the first secretary of the Argentine legation and the spacious grounds of the home of Representative Hill.

The house is four stories high, counting the cellar, which is a most commodious one. The material is a small, pale yellow brick and the stone work around the bottom is Avondale rock or granite from Pennsylvania. There are about forty rooms in the whole building, and all are in nice proportion. The entrance is on the right side of the mansion and is a large doorway, over which is a pretty carving. Steps lead up to the wide main hall, which is on the second floor. The hall runs almost the entire length of the house, and on it face the rooms of that floor, while from it runs a broad stairway up into the third story. As one enters the hall the first object which catches the eye is an immense open fire-place, over which is a mirror whose frame is of antique oak and whose work about the fire is of redstone.

The largest room in the house is on this floor and it is the library, which extends all across the front of the building. The chamber is in a mahogany known as Baywood, which is a light tint, almost of a cherry shade. The walls are tinted with a sage green, the cases, doors, mantel and cornices are of the wood and the effect is very fine. There are huge windows that will make the room a delightful place for reading. Adjoining the library is the parlor, or drawing-room, as it is now called in polite circles. This room is much smaller and cozier than the library and

from which she can look down into Senator Hale's yard. From this "den" one steps into the sitting room of Miss Peterson—a chamber which is much like that of Mrs. Childs' and will also be handsomely furnished. Adjoining this is the bed room of Miss Peterson, and next to that is a bright chamber which will be used as a sewing room.

On the fourth floor are several large, handsome rooms which will be used as guest chambers, and are furnished in luxurious style. At the back of the fine rooms, which face the street, will be the neat and comfortable quarters of the servants.

A small yard is on the left of the mansion and at the back is a pretty stable and carriage house.

It is safe to say that the Childs residence will become one of the sights of the city and the social world will when the next season opens find that the Quaker City has sent to the capital one of its most attractive ornaments. Washington has already within its gates many famous women. Mrs. General John A. Logan, Mrs. General Phil Sheridan, Mrs. Nellie Grant-Barstons, Mrs. Blaine and Madame Bonaparte, as well as Mrs. Harriet L. Johnston, among the number.

Where the Lemons Grow.

Few Americans, says the New York Tribune, are aware of the fact that if it were not for the little island of Sicily now there would be no lemons, nor are many aware of the great importance of this commerce and of its necessity to the United States. The production of lemons in America is so limited at the present time, both as regards quantity and seasons, that all of California's and Florida's products do not supply 50 per cent of the country's needs. After the months of August and September, when our domestic lemon crops mature, but for Sicily we should be without any lemons whatsoever, except for a few that Spain sends us, during the rest of the year. Accurate figures show that from September 10 to April 30 during the last five years the importations from Sicily have been about 1,300,000 boxes every year, each containing 300 lemons. This is equal to 390,000,000 lemons.

Next to the drawing room is the dining room, which is quite large in dimensions. The tinting of this room will be dark brown with golden trimmings. At one end is a high mantel of dark wood, oak, which has been stained till it is almost black and thus has an air of great antiquity. The top is surmounted by a large mirror. On the left hand is a big buffet of the same wood, on which the silver and china will be displayed, and just opposite is



THE CHILDS MANSION.

the plate cabinet, also of dark oak, in which the rare pieces of plate will be shown against a background of rich velvet. Adjoining the dining room is the butler's pantry. This apartment is fitted up in unique style.

A dumb waiter descends into the kitchen and all about the rooms are closets and shelves, while around the top of the chamber is a balcony which allows access to a second set of closets up high against the wall. A staircase admits the servant to the china when more is needed and thus all of it is before the eyes of the mistress, but does not occupy the floor of the room. Just at one side is a small closet with a strong steel door—this is the vault for the protection of the handsome silver.

Just below the butler's pantry is the cold-storage room, in which the edibles are kept and into which the ice is put direct from the wagon. This room is on the ground floor, just below all the apartments before described. Here is the huge kitchen with long ranges extending across one side of the room. Next to it is the laundry, which has handsome tiled tubs and a big, tin-lined room in which the clothing can be put when wet and dried by steam.

Across the hall is the lamp room and adjoining is the wine cellar. This is just below the main entrance on the floor above and has around the walls wooden racks with little curves cut in them, so that the bottles will lie safely on their sides. Adjoining is the store room for groceries, and next is the servants' dining room, a large, cool, comfortable chamber. All of the ground or cellar floor is in neat colors, finished in light wood with as much pains as if it were the drawing room. At the back of the house runs an elevator, which is an important feature of the establishment.

On the third floor, that above the parlor and dining rooms, are the chambers of the mistress of the mansion and her guest, Miss Peterson, who is a niece of Mrs. Childs. The first room on this floor is facing the street, and is a beautiful and spacious bath room, finished in the softest and most attractive tints of a delicate pink and gold. A gracefully carved mantel is at one side, rich tiling floors a part of the place and the tub is of porcelain and full of gleaming spigots. This is Mrs. Childs' own private bath room. Adjoining is her bed chamber, which is a spacious apartment. It is light and airy and will be finished in delicate tints of the softest shades.

Opening into her bed room is what is known or rather will be known as "Mrs. Childs' den." It is a cosy little room, in which she can spend her time in reading and writing, and just in front of the window is a tiny balcony



MISS PETERSON.

from which she can look down into Senator Hale's yard. From this "den" one steps into the sitting room of Miss Peterson—a chamber which is much like that of Mrs. Childs' and will also be handsomely furnished. Adjoining this is the bed room of Miss Peterson, and next to that is a bright chamber which will be used as a sewing room.

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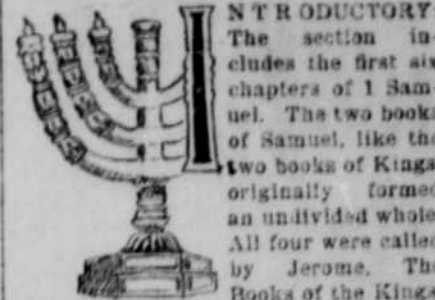
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THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

LESSON IV SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27—THE CHILD SAMUEL.

Golden Text: "Speak Lord for Thy Servant Heareth"—The Condition of the Jews at the Close of the Period of Judges.



INTRODUCTORY: The section includes the first six chapters of 1 Samuel. The two books of Samuel, like the two books of Kings, originally formed an undivided whole. All four were called by Jerome, The Books of the Kings.

The books are called the books of Samuel, because they record the life and ministry of the great prophet and judge. They are called books of Kings because they record the introduction of royalty among the Israelites.—Johnson. It is generally agreed that the book is a compilation from different sources, including the writings of Samuel himself (1 Sam. 10:25), the book of Nathan the prophet, and the book of Gad the seer (1 Chron. 29:29; 2 Chron. 9:29). Samuel was born about 1140 B. C.; and the date of this lesson is therefore twelve years later, 1134 B. C. (The exact dates of this period are all of them somewhat uncertain.) Place: Shiloh, the religious capital of Israel, seventeen miles north of Jerusalem, and half way between Bethel and Shechem, nine or ten miles from each. Samuel: Twelve years old; Eli, about 75 years old, high priest and judge. Today's lesson includes 1 Samuel 3:1-13.

1. And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision. (Samuel was now only 12 years old. There was no written word. There was no recognized prophet "whose word came to all Israel.")

2. And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see:

3. And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep;

4. That the Lord called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I.

5. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou callest me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. (And he ran unto Eli. Unacquainted with the visions of the Almighty, he took that to be only Eli's call which was really the call of God. Such mistakes we make oftener than we think.)

6. And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

7. Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him.

8. And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child.



(High Priest.)

9. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10. And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel. Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

11. And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. (Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord. He did not recognize his call, he did not know how God communicated his will to his prophets. This was his first experience, as is stated in the last part of the verse. 8. The third time, God kept repeating his call. For he knew it was not from unwillingness to hear and obey that Samuel did not answer him, but from inexperience. Indeed, Samuel's prompt obedience to Eli's supposed call was the assurance that he would answer God's call whenever it recognized it.)

TEMPERANCE TALKS.

Every drinker has the devil for his master.

An animal will not disobey the laws of nature.

"Death loves a shining mark," and so does whisky.

The boy of to-day is the man of tomorrow. Are you setting him a good example?

The devil will assure you that "just one drink will do you no harm." That devil is a liar.