

Hangmen and the Gallows.

Formerly hangmen were of the best families. A hangman says that the Earl of Arundel was hung by his son-in-law, the Earl of Marshal. The hangman's dress was peculiar. He wore a clean white apron, and if he beheaded a state criminal, was dubbed "esquire." All the rest of his life he was no small honor in often times to be a hangman; and there is a recorded instance of a certain lady, wife of a hangman, who said, "that any bungler might put me to death, but my husband alone knew how to make a man die sweetly." This lady died shortly after. The Romans, however, as well as the Germans, did not esteem that official in such high repute, as they did not allow him to reside in town, although the gallows were always within the city limits. It dates back to the days of Constantine the Great, who abolished execution. It is not a pleasant thing for a man to have in his household, yet the gallows in the Italian part of the fourteenth century, had one erected in the front of his house, and repaired it each year; and in France gallows used to stand before the houses of the territorial seigniors, and as of single, double or triple frame, so they indicated the rank of their owner to be that of a gentleman, knight or baron. In early days, gallows, especially those in English vogue, had hooks attached for the purpose of eviscerating and quartering the bodies of the criminals. Those barbarous appendages have long since been abolished, and the gallows of to-day is a very simple sort of an affair. Two upright posts with a cross-beam make the framework; two cross-pieces, fastened into the principal posts, and receiving the trap, are placed horizontally, make the platform. The traps are generally supported by a center prop constructed on the principle of the carpenter's rule. And generally to secure the safety of the platform, two temporary props are arranged near the outer edge of the trap. The step ladder rests upon the left side as you are in front of the gallows. A noose rope dangles from the cross-beam over head, and a small cord near the center prop. This is the picture, then, of the gallows of the present day. In the fifteenth century the top of the gallows moved up and down like a pair of shears. At one end the hilt, the other a weight. The latter was raised by a pulley placed around the criminal's neck, and the weight at the other end lifted him from the ground. Sometimes an iron hoop with a strong chain was fastened around the body, but the chain was no longer than the hilt, so that when the latter was cut the hoop slipped to the arm pits and left the criminal exposed; if a murderer he hung three days. Stone gallows were formerly used in Spain, and sometimes ornamented with a knife cut in the center of the cross-piece. The Roman gallows were very simple, and called a furca. But innovations and new-fangled notions have even crept into the gallows business. Dr. Sam Johnson told Sir Walter Scott "that men were to hang in a new way; that Tyburn had been not even a gallows, but a guillotine." Goetz and Sbea, who were hung in Cincinnati in 1869, were hung from patent gallows, consisting of a platform with a double trap, which fell upon the touch of a pedal communicating with a lever below.

In Distress.

A policeman was passing down Richmond street last Wednesday afternoon when he heard a woman's voice lifted in high lamentation; opening the wicket, he strode up to the door, where a woman was lying prone on the steps, bedewing the rubber foot-mat with her briny tears. "What is the matter, man?" he said, gently. "Ooh, booo, oo—h?" said the stricken female. "Now, don't take on so," said the club carrier, with tremulous gentleness; "tell me what is the matter." "Ooh, I'm, a—oooh, oooh—h!" and she wept afresh and copiously. "Why, my dear, dear madam," said the officer, "what great sorrow has befallen you? You are a happy home? Where are you this evening? Why are the fountains of your being broken up, and your beautiful eyes become springs from which the aqueous fluid—"

"Ooh, booo-hoo!" she wailed. "What sympathetic officer was not pleased. He backed off a step or two, and, as his great heart throbbled in sympathy with so much suffering, he could but make one more effort at comfort. "Madam," said he, and as he spoke his voice grew husky with emotion; "madam, I sympathize with you from the bottom of my heart, and, while you do not seem disposed to trust me, yet if there is anything in the world which I can do to lift this sorrow from your heart, let me do it. I assure you it is no idle curiosity. I would be your friend. I will avenge your wrongs, and the services of one loyal and true man, yours if you will accept them. I would not pry into that which does not concern me, but I know that some great sorrow is upon you, and, gently, tenderly, I would raise the pall that hangs about your life, dress the wounds that have been opened in your tender heart, and pour the balsam of consolation over them." He did not notice in his vehemence that the woman had stealthily risen, but she had, and, launching the foot-mat full in his face, she said: "Get out of this, you mean old blatherskite! You're meaner than that old guardian in this dime novel who wouldn't let his nigger marry the handsome trapper. If I had to cry about what I had it's none of your business." Two blocks away a policeman flicked a bootblack off the sidewalk by the ear, and muttered: "If women ain't the curstest-fool't animals in the world, kill me for a bull."

Cincinnati Breakfast Table.
Some one has suggested that if the inventor of the phonograph would bring out a little machine to be attached to the front door, which would say, "When the landlord called for the rent, 'Come again next month,' it would have a good sale. So it would; and if he wanted a name, for it might call it the postphonograph.

Flying—A Vision of the Future.

Flying. Putting commercial considerations aside, and looking merely at social ones, how great an alteration will there be in the ways of civilized beings if flying is brought within the reach of all who can buy an engine and some durable wings. To take the most poetic relation of life, what a different thing will courtship be when lovers seek the clouds, as of course they will, and when vows are exchanged in the air. Lord Lytton tried to describe something of this sort, but his hero was a clumsy fellow, who could not learn to manage his wings, and constantly had to be caught by the women who loved him. Very different will be the case when the vigorous and well-trained young Englishman, who will take the lady whom he admires out to fly just as ladies are now taken out for a drive, or will, perchance, urge his suit when hovering outside her second-floor window, and will perch on the sill to learn his fate. Then, in the more advanced state of life, in the ordinary routine of commonplace daily existence, what strange alterations will occur! Our ancestors would have laughed at any one who had told them that the time would come when every man and woman would have under their feet men's streets who were being dragged to and from their daily work; and it is equally difficult for us to conceive that perhaps in the next century the peaceful rambles by the Regent's park will give way to the sky overcast suddenly darkened at the great flocks of city men who are flying to their homes in the far northwest. There will, of course, be some inconvenience from the general acquisition of powers of flight; but then every great advance in the history of the world has had its certain amount of suffering. Thus it is terrible to picture the feelings of the quiet householders when he learns that a large number of school boys have recently been let loose, and are flying about the neighborhood; or that the crew of a man-of-war recently paid off have bought aerial machines and may appear at any moment. Such drawbacks as these will, however, be trifling when compared with the vast advantages which men will gain from the power of flight. The first and most important of these will be the facility which will be given for the pursuit and detection of crime. It is not easy to picture a flying policeman, or to imagine injections to move on coming from above the chimney pots; but it is perhaps possible to realize how perfect a feeling of security the inhabitants of London will have when they know that all over the metropolis watchful inspectors are poised in mid air, and that soaring constables are on the look-out. Let it be hoped that when these days come men will not forget to whom they owe so much, and will regard the members of the aeronautical society as benefactors of humanity, and worthy of enduring fame.

Divorce in Other Lands.

An Arab may divorce his wife on the slightest occasion. So common is so common is the practice that Burckhardt assures us that there has been Arabs more than forty-five years of age who were known to have had fifty wives, yet they rarely have more than one at a time. By the Mohammedan law a man may divorce his wife orally and without any ceremony; he pays her a portion, generally one-third of her dowry. He may divorce her twice and take her again without her consent, but if he put her away by a triple divorce conveyed in the same sentence, he cannot receive her again until she has been married and divorced by another husband. By the Jewish law it appears that a wife could not divorce her husband; but under the Mohammedan code, for cruelty or some other cause she may divorce him. Among the Hindus, and also among the Chinese, a husband may divorce his wife upon the slightest ground, or even, without assigning any reason. She is under the absolute control of her husband. The law of France, before the revolution, following the judgment of the Catholic church, made marriage indissoluble, but during the early revolutionary period divorce was permitted at the pleasure of the parties when innocentibility of temper was alleged. The Code Napoleon restricted this liberty. On the restoration of the Bourbons a law was promulgated, May 8, 1816, declaring divorce to be abolished; that all suits then pending for divorce by mutual consent should be void, and such is now the law of France.—*Albany Law Journal.*

A Novel Cash Drawer.

At a late exhibition in Falmouth, England, a "patent check till" was exhibited, which is certainly remarkable, if it does one-half of what is claimed for it. According to the official description of this friend of the shopkeeper, "it will check every penny taken and paid better than keeping a cashier and using check books. It occupies no more time than the ordinary till. If an assistant should take money from a customer and neglect to put it in the till, it can be detected at once; if only a part of the amount is put in, it will show how much was withheld. If any cash has been taken out, it will show the amount. The till cannot be opened without its being known, and the number of times it will show how much money there ought to be in at any time. Any amount of change can be left in for use, and yet none can be taken away without its being known. It can be left any length of time without being cleared, and will show the amount there ought to be in without counting the cash. It can be used as a desk, or set on a level with the counter top if required. It shows the number of customers and upon each assistant, and if a line is drawn across the paper close to the glass every hour, it tells the number of customers at any given time. And all these advantages are worked up with the best statement, 'interest on any and cost of working, half-penny a day.'"

"Do you make any reduction to a minister?" said a young lady to a salesman. "Always. Are you a minister's wife?" "Oh no, I am not married," said the lady, blushing. "Daughter, then?" "No." The tradesman looked puzzled. "—I am engaged to a theological student," said she. The reduction was made.

A Queer Story.

Some months ago a man who had become pretty well-known on the east side as a German adventurer of high family, but eccentric habits, died of a fever in the insane asylum at Ward's Island. He was known as Christian Minck and, according to his own statement, his father was of noble family and was attached to the court of Wurtemberg as private secretary to the king. The knowledge of this fact led a Seventh Street undertaker, Isaac Smith, to take the body and attempt to preserve it on speculation, in the hope that the family would receive it and pay all expenses. He wrote to Germany, and in the meantime, transferred the corpse to Ferdinand Brown, another undertaker, at Second Street and Avenue A. Mr. Brown interested Middleton & Warner, the allekton proprietors, in the case, and they coated the body with their preparation, also hoping to be ultimately paid. The body was advertised, was shown unsatisfactorily, and alluded to the fact that the family had once been deceived regarding the son and would not again forgo money. Thereupon the body was taken to the morgue and the work accomplished by the patent. The body was in a semi-putrid condition when the first coating was given it during the hot weather of July 3d, and the specimen, which was regarded as a unusually favorable advertisement, was shown to hundreds. The men who had kept it were, therefore, surprised some weeks ago by the newspaper announcement that Herr Minck was on his way to this country to recover the remains. An investigation, made through the German consular offices, and by other means, led to a somewhat sensational result. The insane dead man, instead of having been Christian Minck, was identified as Otto Berger, Jr., and his story of his family was untrue, though it bore, except in names and localities, a remarkably forcible resemblance to the truth. 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