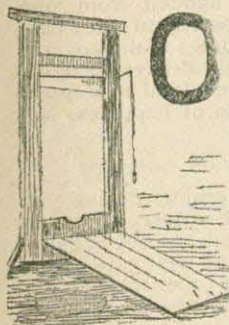


MISCELLANEOUS.

Written for this Paper
DONE TO DEATH.



ON Friday, September 14, unless death or the Governor's clemency intervenes, Enoch Davis will pay the penalty for having murdered his wife at Vernal, Uintah county, June 6th, 1892. The circumstances of Davis's measurably shiftless life, the lack of family concord, the killing, and the hiding of the body in a potato pit, were graphically related in the columns of the NEWS a few days ago, and need not be repeated here. It is enough to say that the case has been through the full judicial course, to the highest tribunal of the land, and this has decreed on the law and the evidence that Enoch Davis must die. His death before September 14, or the exercise of reprieving power by the Governor, are the only means that appear as possibilities to change the destined course under the courts' procedure.

A chief reason for the desire to spare Davis's life is the belief that he knows where the famous Dead Man's mine in Uintah county is, and that the information of its whereabouts is the price of securing commutation of his sentence to life imprisonment. There may be other reasons, but that comes out most prominently. Davis is said to have made the discovery shortly before the crime was committed, and to have secured a bagful of gold nuggets. But he killed his wife and his arrest put a stop to his gathering the glittering metal.

Davis is to be shot, he having elected that method, from the choice which is given in the law of hanging or shooting. There has been only one man hung in Utah, and that was more than a third of a century ago. The procedure is too barbarous. All other condemned murderers have expressed a preference to die by the quick process of a rifle ball rather than the jerking, strangling, barbaric method of dangling on the end of a rope till life becomes extinct. So Enoch Davis made his choice, with the understanding that on the day of execution he would peer into the muzzles of five or six Winchester rifles, in the hands of unseen officers, and hear the "Ready—Aim—Fire!" of the official in charge.

What more he may hear or will feel cannot be told by mortal man; for Enoch Davis will be instantly placed beyond the possibility of describing his emotions. The method is certain, expeditious, clean, and merciful as an execution can be. There is none of the disgusting spectacle which usually attends executions in different parts of the civilized world. Of all methods of slaying a murderer, that prescribed by the Utah law is the most civilized.

The last murderer that was executed in Utah was Fred. Hopt, alias Fred.

Welcome. His was the most famous murder case that the Utah courts have handled. He killed John F. Turner, son of ex-Sheriff John W. Turner, of Provo, July 3, 1880. He was run down in Wyoming. In the Third district court in Salt Lake City he had four trials. Four times his case went to the Supreme court of the United States. Three times the action of the lower courts was reversed, but in the fourth trial it was sustained, and on Thursday, August 11, 1887, more than seven years after the commission of the crime, Hopt was shot within the penitentiary walls. He preserved an outwardly calm demeanor, though the suppressed excitement may be realized when it is known that just before the time of execution his pulse beat 160 a minute—nearly three times the normal rate. When he was led out to die he took his position near the northeast corner of the penitentiary enclosure, about 20 feet from a canvas-covered structure which had been put up for the executioners, and through small holes in which there pointed out the barrels of five Winchester rifles.

Before Hopt sat down he made a brief speech. Then as he settled himself in the chair he uttered an oath—a fact not published till now, but the reasons existing for keeping it quiet at the time have passed away. Then Marshal Dyer gave the command: "Ready—aim—fire!" The sharp crack of the rifles rang out on the air so close together that it hardly could be discerned that more than one shot had been fired.

For an instant—and it was only an instant—Hopt's body remained motionless. His head bowed slightly forward, and body, chair and all began to fall over backward, forced by the concussion of the bullets with the body. The body went steadily down to the ground, so gently that when it stopped Hopt's hat remained on his head, the rim being caught at the back of his neck. The terrible ordeal was over. Death had been instantaneous. The dead man's mouth opened once and closed again. Then all was still. Four bullets had passed through his heart, two centering it, and lodged in the adobe wall beyond.

Many and varied have been the ways in which the nations have inflicted capital punishment; the quality of these methods as to mercy may be ascertained by comparison. The ancient Germans dragged criminals at the tail of a horse till life was extinct. Crucifixion was practiced by several of the oriental nations, but did not produce death for several hours, and strong men have been known to live so long that in mercy their executioners hastened their end.

The method of killing by skinning alive, by boiling in hot lard or oil, by disjuncting the body on the rack, or driving spikes into the brain, or crushing in an iron frame punctured with spikes, are principally inventions of the middle ages. So was the practice of hanging a person on the limb of a tree in such a manner as to let death occur naturally from starvation, or by letting the crows pick out the eyes and tear the flesh. This was a punishment not infrequently inflicted in Spain for highway robbery.

Hanging has been the favorite mode in England of exercising capital punishment. It has been the penalty not only for murder but for other offenses, even the stealing of sheep having been regarded as deserving of death by that process. For treason the punishment at one time was: first, dragging at a horse's tail along the street from the prison to the place of execution; second, hanging by the neck, yet not so long as to entirely destroy life; third, plucking and burning of the entrails while the patient was yet alive; fourth, beheading; fifth, quartering; sixth, exposure of the head and quarters in such places as the king directed, as was the case with the Corean conspirator recently. By degrees, beheading was substituted in England for this elongated punishment in the case of nobly born offenders, and hanging in the case of men of low degree. Thus the simple method of capital punishment superseded the afflictive style.

One of the most horrible of the afflictive methods is that which has been often practiced in the West Indies, and which is said to be occasionally used there now, when the provocation is great. This is performed by hanging the delinquent from a post by means of a hook inserted under his breast bone. In this manner the sufferer is prevented from doing anything to assist himself, and all persons are prohibited, under severe penalties, from relieving him. In the climate of the Indies his sufferings are intensified past expression by the frightful heat of the sun, and by the myriads of insects which feed upon his lacerated flesh. Men have been found of such remarkable endurance that they have suffered this unutterable torment for twelve days before death finally gave relief.

Garroting is a punishment principally employed in Spain. A metal collar is put about the neck of the culprit, and a screw at the back of the collar is turned in such a manner as to crush the spinal cord, causing almost instant death. Then there was the death in the cage method, which never obtained very extensively; the condemned man was hoisted in an iron cage on a gibbet, and left to die of thirst and hunger. The breaking on the wheel was a more expeditious, though perhaps no less brutal, method. The victim was placed on bars crossed like the letter X, and as this turned on a pivot blows were administered with a club until the condemned was beaten to death, usually the chief bones of the body being broken before the spark of life had fled.

It is asserted that death by drowning is one of the easiest, though persons who have passed through the earlier stages of the process and then have been resuscitated do not advocate that view. At one time parricides were sewed up in a sack and thrown into the water. Those who were classed in Germany as meaner criminals were put under hurdles into bogs or ferns, while malefactors were hung. The Anglo-Saxons drowned all women who were convicted of stealing, and King Richard, the Lion Hearted, made that the legal punishment for any soldier who killed a fellow crusader. Criminals were drowned in England until the early part of the seventeenth century, and in Scotland till 1685. In 1611, in Scotland, a man was officially drowned for stealing a lamb. It was at one time the habit