

BLOOD VENGEANCE.

LAW AND CUSTOM CONCERNING THE BLOOD-FEUDS OF PERSIA.

The "Square of the Gun" in Teheran—Some Peculiarities of the Law—The Results of the Time-honored Practice.

In the center of the town of Teheran—the seat of government of Nussir Deen, the king of kings, the Asylum of the Universe—is a large square, it is called the Square of the Gun. The huge pieces of ordnance that give its name to the place is very like one of the cannon which stand behind the horse guards. Clustered round it are a group of weary-looking men. They are murderers; safe for the time being from the law generally even from the avenger of blood: the place is bast or sanctuary. Under the shadow of within touch of this gun the murderer, even the traitor, is safe. Let him once leave this refuge, if only for a few yards, and the criminal will fall into the hands of the law or the clutch of the avenger of blood. For in Persia the murderer has not so much to fear the laws of his country as the vengeance, legal or otherwise, of his victim's relatives. Blood has a price, and the price must be paid, or the criminal must be prepared to shed his own. The price is not arbitrary: it is fixed at so much for a freed man, another price for a woman, another for a slave. Nominally, and according to the religious law, even the hairs of a man's beard have a price (in cameis) if extracted by violence. And within the last twenty years we have known a case of a Mussulman who went in a regular account in this form to a European.

Col. Ivanoff—one of the high Russian officers who conducted the Khivan campaign—is still a young man, very tall and handsome, with a fair complexion and a full thick beard. This beard has won him the appellation of Sara-Sakal-Tura, "The Yellow-bearded Chief," and the natives of Turkestan never speak of him, nor address him, by any other name, not even at official meetings. The following incident affords a good example of his faculty of keeping cool and calculating in the midst of danger. Once, when accompanied only by three Cossacks, an interpreter and a few natives (Djighites) Ivanoff found himself surrounded and attacked by a band of at least 100 Turkomans. The Russians immediately grouped themselves close together, back to back, and opened fire. Ivanoff had a six-chambered revolver; he fired five shots, and reserved the sixth in spite of the desperate attack of the enemy. When reinforcements arrived, when this handful of Russian troops was saved, and the general, severely wounded, had been carried to camp, somebody ventured to ask him what he had reserved that shot for. "Why, for myself," replied Ivanoff, very coolly. "I kept watching to see if the Turkomans had asses. If I had felt the touch of a lasso, the Turkomans might have had my corpse, but never a living prisoner."

Time sometimes, though rarely, heals these feuds. A man gets tired of being hunted, of feeling that he may be shot or stabbed or poisoned at any moment, and he compromises; he gives the family of his victim a horse or money or so many bags of dates, or perhaps even the hand of his daughter in marriage. Or perhaps a youth of 20 will shoot down an aged man, the murderer of his grandfather, whom perhaps he has never seen; and, fleeing to the arms of his delighted mother, will exclaim: "I have avenged our blood"—thus bringing a "blood feud" on his own head. These are some of the results of the universal practice, in the south of Persia, of carrying arms. It must be remembered, too, that the murderer in these cases is not locked upon with horror; he is simply a man who has done his duty. North of Shiraz these blood feuds are uncommon; and an Ispahani would certainly prefer the price, or, failing that, a decent sum in cash, to judicial revenge. As a rule, in the present day, a murderer is executed, and never handed over to the tender mercies of his victim's friends, but legally the relatives can themselves take the guilty man's life.

The Kabyles are an indigenous people living in the mountains in the south of Algeria, who retain many of their savage habits. The most disgusting sight I ever witnessed was the devouring of a snake by one of these savages. It was raw and probably living when the process commenced. The reptile was apparently of the garter kind and about two and a half feet in length. He began at the head and swallowed inch by inch, as the boa-constrictor devours an ox, wandering around meanwhile among his company, who were on the levee just ready to embark for Sontay, followed by a crowd of his comrades, apparently half-strangled, but allowing no one to interfere till the tail was finished. Then he gave the signs of satisfaction that usually follow a good meal and received the congratulations of his friends.

The Laco Weed in Kansas. The laco weed, which has appeared with frightful rapidity on the Kansas range within the last eighteen months, to the dismay of stockmen, will doubtless disappear within the next eighteen months. Two years ago this singular plant had free swing in the Texas Panhandle and New Mexico, but now it has nearly disappeared in those sections. The devilish plant has not come to stay. It is a tramp, and, like other nuisances of a similar ilk, it makes itself mighty disagreeable to the localities where it effects a temporary lodgment. This plant does not have the appearance of guile, for chemists have failed to detect any poisonous qualities therein, but it is an established fact that horses and cattle are made mad by eating it, and that it produces abortion in cows.

The United States treasurer is still in occasional receipt of pieces of legal tender notes and silver certificates. It is evident that the same parties are mutilating notes with the intent to defraud the public. The method pursued is to tear from a note so much only as will not exceed two-fifths of the note, (three-fifths being redeemable under the rule at full value), then to join the piece detached with other pieces obtained in the same manner, and thus obtain one full note composed of the several pieces. The public are again cautioned against taking any piece of note unless it is evident from the number on the two ends and other appearances that the two pieces are of the same note.

Jud Lafagan: By constantly looking back many have been "blinded" in front. Many live as if they were a small and the world their end.

INDIA THE EXCITING CAUSE

Almost Everything Warlike Which Has Taken Place Lately, "Gath" in Gneinat Engineer.

The prince of Wales has been to India on a tour, and India is at this moment the cause of almost every thing which has taken place every where. The revolt on the isthmus of Panama, which burnt the town of Aspinwall the other day, was occasioned by nothing but displacements and rivalries over the Panama canal, which has been attempted by the French in imitation of the British canal to India in Egypt. The civil war in Central America, where Barrios was killed, was caused by the disturbance of an American treaty to make a canal through to the Pacific ocean and get another route to India. The fight in the Saskatchewan country of Canada arises from nothing but the building of a railroad through that wilderness to the Pacific with the object of doing trade with Asia and India, for all Asia was the India of Columbus, China and Japan included. The fights in various parts of Africa is for nothing but a railroad or other means of communication across Africa to India. The battle between the Russians and the Afghans is nothing but British and Russian intrigue in Asia to get the advantage of each other.

Unquestionably the time is not far off when India will be a still greater question than it is at present, and will absorb the attention of the whole world, for the reason that India is used by Europe as a make weight against the United States. If we monopolize cotton they begin to raise cotton in India; if we make too much profit on wheat and corn they begin to raise wheat and corn in India; if our railroads absorb British money they begin to lay railroads in India. On the other hand the Russians are the only people who are opening communications directly from the north of Europe toward India. The Russians built by American enterprise much of their railroad system, which now extends to the Caspian sea, and they have incipient roads beyond it carrying them far toward India overland by a route which is, timetely for us, preferable to the Suez route, because it carries many other things by the water route have to pass through the tropics and must spoil.

A Russian Officer's Coolness.

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London in Brief

- About 3,000 horses die each week.
- About 129,000 paupers infest the city.
- About 11,000 police keep good order.
- About 120,000 foreigners live in the city.
- About 10,000 strangers enter the city each day.
- About 9,000 new houses are erected annually.
- About 700,000 cats enliven the moonlight nights.
- About 2,000 clergymen hold forth every Sunday.
- About 620 churches give comfort to the faithful.
- About 125 persons are added to the population daily.
- About 25 miles of new streets are laid out each year.
- About 500,000 dwellings shelter the population of London.

The Formidable and the Inflexible.

The formidable, which has just been launched in France, and which is classed as the most powerful ship in the French navy, as a steel vessel of 11,441 tons, with an estimated horse power of 8,500 and a speed of fifteen knots. She draws twenty-five and three quarters feet of water, and carries armor ranging in thickness from seventeen and three quarters to twenty-one and one half inches. Her armament consists of three seventy five ton and twenty light guns. The only completed ship in British navy which is her equal in size, power or armament is the Inflexible, which is of iron and which has not exhibited the speed which the Formidable is expected to attain.

Covers the Case.

Col. Tom Saffold said: "I was talking with Gen. Toombs the other day and he said: 'Saffold, the greatest vice to which the human family is a devoted is gambling, and yet do you know where is not a word in the Bible in condemnation of it?' Gen. Toombs is an error. The tenth commandment covers the case. 'Thou shalt not covet' stares, or ought to stare, every gambler in the face. At the bottom of every species of gambling is the covetous desire to get the money of other people without just recompense."

The Great Bulletin Panacea.

"Doctor, how do you think I am doing to-day?" "Only fairly, sir. In our bulletin issued at noon we said we feared a fatal change almost any moment." "Then you are issuing bulletins on me, are you?" "Yes, sir." "Then please send out and buy me a ticket to Liverpool. I'll go to Europe this summer and see you later. That blessed bulletin gives me renewed life and strength."

Concerning Soups.

A family doctor, in Cassell's Magazine declares that clear soups are not wholesome and have too much refinement in their composition to be more than trifled with. He says that all green vegetables are better mashed, and should be eaten separately and not with the meat.

PALACE CATTLE CARS.

The Transportation of Live Stock from a Shipper's Point of View.

A writer in a recent number of the Age of Steel, published in St. Louis, describing from personal observation the cruel treatment to which cattle are subjected while being driven from Texas to Kansas City, and from thence transported by rail to the eastern seaboard cities. The description, although written apparently in the refrigerator car beef traffic interest, is no doubt substantially true, if, indeed, it does not fall short of the truth in depicting the abuses practiced in live stock transportation. The details need not be recapitulated. It is enough to say that they are revolting to every humane instinct, and a reproach to civilization. The trouble is not because suitable cars cannot be built, or that cattle cannot be fed, watered, and rested while on their journey; but it results from the necessity of cheapening the cost of transportation by carrying as many cattle as possible in car, and by continuous running, so as to make the trip in the quickest possible time. This will do very well for stock districts that can be made in from twelve to eighteen hours, but when cattle are driven long distances to points of shipment, and are then packed into cars to remain there from fifty to 100 hours, with imperfect feeding and no outside rest, the case is very different. If cars could be made so as to give the animals plenty of room to lie down, and at the same time be supplied with feed and water, without increasing the cost of carrying them, it would have been done long ago.

"Palace" cattle cars were invented and patented a dozen years ago, with ample provision for making the cattle comfortable and saving them from the protracted misery which they have now to endure. One of these cars was thirty-six feet long and nine and one-half wide, which is ten feet longer and one foot wider than stock cars usually are. It would carry sixteen cattle of ordinary size and give them plenty of room, but no such cars are running on the roads now, because competition will not admit of it. No road is going to carry cattle in palace cars, packed in as loosely as hyenas and tigers in a traveling menagerie, while a rival road, by prodding and tail-twisting, carries twice as many in the same number of cars of the common kind. The best car, from a shipper's and transporter's point of view, is one that will carry the greatest weight of Texas steers to the square foot without killing the steers before reaching their destination.

Childish Amusements of the Japanese.

In many respects the Japanese are a puerile people. The sports and games of the child and the youth are those of the father and grandfather. The social disparity between father and son, mother and daughter is not so marked as in other countries; the boy is a man in every way but physically; the duties of youth are those of old age and it is perhaps owing to this close relationship that the amusements, recreations and pastimes of the race at large are nearly coincident. Kioto is full of funny, trifling, nonsensical little shows and performances, and of innumerable toy and laudable shops, which places are quite as well patronized, and with just as much enthusiasm by the old folks as by the neophyte. What would we think in America to see a middle-aged man sauntering along the street with a large bald head upon which they bestow as much care and attention as though it was a genuine baby. Such sights are not uncommon in Japan, and it is quite common for the ladies to carry their dolls with them when going out for a call.

A German University Student.

The statement is made that the Americans make up one-eighth of all the students at the German universities. It is easy for an American, or any other foreigner, to become a student. He has only to present his passport, or a line from the minister or the nearest consul representing the nation to which he belongs, and to pay a few marks, in order to get his matriculation papers, printed in rotund Latin, and a card vouching that he is responsible in case of misbehavior to the university authorities, and next to the local police. His status as a "student" gives him many privileges, and at the same time he is not required to attend any lectures or do anything else that a young man in good health and with a fair appetite for beer does not wish to do.

Effects of the Imagination.

Some years ago a woman applied at a London hospital for treatment for a nervous affection. After listening to a recital of her symptoms, the doctor made her shut her lips upon a clinical thermometer. Upon removing it the patient exclaimed: "Why, I declare, it has done me good already." The doctor humored her delusion, and refrained from any other treatment than a few more applications of the magical glass tube. She was soon cured. A parallel case is now cited by The Philadelphia News, in which a hysterical patient, having been cured by magnetism. The magnet was of wood, but capped with metal, so as to seem cold to the touch.

A Dangerous Half-Truth.

Doctors often say to you, "Be sure you come to me at once. I can arrest disease at an early stage; but delay—hesitate! hesitate!—and you are lost!" This is just one of those dangerous half-truths where our doctors do us no small advantage. If you call the doctor in for every little ailment, you will get into an artificial state. Nature will strike work, and you will never be well without the doctor's or with him either. If you always take opiate, you will never sleep without them; or tonics, you will never eat without them; or stimulants, you will never work without them.

A Hint in Oratory.

Dr. Beecher once said to us at the seminary when giving a lecture in oratory: "Young gentlemen," said he, "don't stand before a looking glass and make gestures. Never mind your gestures. Pump yourself brim full of your subject till you can't hold another drop, and then knock out the bung and let nature caper."

Lieut. Greely's Vision.

Lieut. Greely is said to be haunted day and night by visions of his long period of starvation in the arctic regions, and his physicians assert that the only way he can preserve his sanity is to mingle freely with others.

Philadelphia Call: Men who think the world revolves around them as a center are drunk with conceit.

The Russian government is about to experiment in balloon steering by electricity.

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