

Hell on Earth--The Most Wicked Place in the World

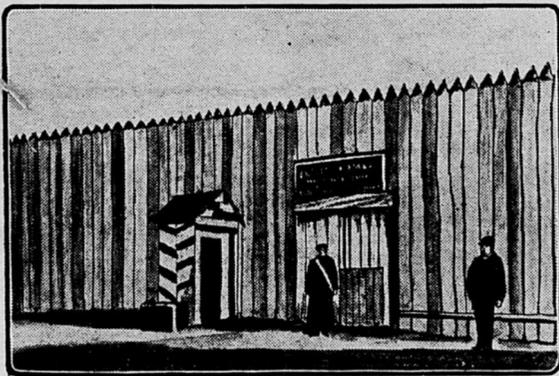
It Is Found on Saghalien Island, a Russian Penal Colony Off the North Coast of Siberia.

HELL is described in the Holy Writ as the place of liquid fire and brimstone, the abode of the devil and his angels and the final scene of punishment of those who fail to gain admittance to the portals of the Heavenly City. Speculative theologians and Bible students have figured out the possible location of this region of torment and some have declared their belief that it is somewhere near the internal center of the earth. If such should be the case it is not hard to imagine that the places on the surface of the earth where sin and crime hold high carnival and every law of God and man is transgressed are the yawning gateways to hell, through which man is sucked to eternal doom. Chicago has, or did have up to a short time ago, a section called "Little Hell." New York has its Bowery, London its Chapel House district and every large city of the world has its slums where the slaves of human passion herd, and fester and rot. When we speak of "hell on earth" we may mean the worst place we can find in the city or town in which we dwell, or we may have in mind the depravity and crime which centers in a certain locality in some of the world's metropolises about which we have read, and we may in a relative degree be correct. But if by a system of forced selection and segregation we should bring together the worst of classes, we should be reasonably justified in classifying it as the most wicked place on earth—a veritable hell on earth.

The Russian secret penal settlement on Saghalien island, a bit of land off the far northeastern coast of Siberia, is such a spot, for its 8,000 murderers of all ages and both sexes give full rein to their evil propensities and nothing is done to restrain them. Saghalien provides the government a convenient

than increased the evil which was inherent in the transported classes and which would seemingly have been intensified by the placing together of so many of questionable moral character, and instead of these colonies turning out to be "hells on earth" they became in time measurably respectable communities.

But with Russia's criminal colony on Saghalien island the case is different, both because of the small size of the island and its poor natural advantages. The awful condition in this hell on earth have remained a sealed book to the outside world for the Russian government guards its secrets with the most jealous care, but an Englishman named Charles H. Hawes, at the risk of his life, and the enduring of extreme hardships, has penetrated the region where 8,000 murderers are turned loose upon each other. Practically all the inhabitants are murderers, the others consisting of a mere handful of officials and soldiers, and a few who have been banished to the place for lesser offenses. Whenever the officials feel it necessary for their own safety they do not hesitate to shoot down the convicts like dogs, but they do not interfere with the inhabitants when they are merely murdering one another. It is probable that a murder is committed somewhere on the island every day. While Mr. Hawes was at the little settlement of Alexandrovsk four murders were committed, one, that of a boy, in the house where he was stopping. He photographed one man who had a record of eight murders and he was considered a distinguished citizen. All the business and industries of the island are carried on by the murderers. The most atrocious murderer on the island, Sophie Bluffstein, who is so dangerous that she is always kept in chains, is the leading hotel keeper.



THE GREAT STOCKADE WHERE NEWLY ARRIVED CONVICTS ARE KEPT.

and effectual method of disposing of the worst criminal class, and once there, it is a bourne from which no doomed soul ever returns. And what the depravity and violence of man has not done for the place, nature has conspired to accomplish with her combination of cold and moisture, deadly winters and blizzards, with periods of excessive heat.

Russia is not the first and only nation to resort to transportation in disposing of its criminal classes. Ancient Greece gave to the world the first step in this method of dealing with the immoral, dissolute and dangerous, although it was not this class of offenders which was subjected to banishment, but rather some patriot of commanding talents and splendid achievements, such as Miltiades, Themistocles, Aristides, or some political minority, borne down in its death-struggle for ascendancy by the overwhelming force of an opposing faction. The Roman empire, however, speedily adopted the system to her own needs and transportation as a punishment for crime was inaugurated. And these practices of the ancient law seem to have been afterwards materialized and established in most of the states of modern Europe. The first of the European nations to do this was Portugal, and Spain adopted the system almost at the same time, the latter, however, did not act in so systematic a manner; having merely extended pardon to certain descriptions of criminals confined in the jails of the mother country, on condition of their enlisting as soldiers or sailors, or as menial servants generally to be employed exclusively in the colonies in the new world. The Portuguese, on the other hand, appear to have been long in the habit of sending regular draughts of convicts, to be employed at hard labor, to their colonial settlements on the coast of Africa and in the East Indies.

Under Queen Elizabeth banishment was decreed for the first time in England as the punishment of "dangerous rogues and vagabonds," and James I. in the exercise of his royal prerogative, virtually converted this statute into "an act for the transportation of criminals to America." After the latter country had won her independence England sent her criminal classes to Australia. But wherever these convict colonies were established there was a tendency on the part of the criminals to be assimilated by the new country and as they became established to forsake their evil ways and become useful citizens. Thus was lessened rather

No less than 3,000 criminals arrive every year, and practically none of them ever leave, and were it not that suicide, murder and disease are relentless in claiming victims the population would soon grow out of all bounds. Every man, woman and child, official or member of an official's family goes in momentary fear of death. In spite of the terrible punishments inflicted, officials and their families are constantly murdered.

The convicts arrive in batches of 600 or more, in steamers specially fitted with great iron cages, in which the criminals are herded indiscriminately. Like wild beasts they fight among themselves and fight through the bars at their keepers. At such times a hose is connected with the boilers and boiling water thrown in upon them until they subside or are dead.

In punishing the prisoners the "pelt" a whip of three heavy leather thongs weighted at the ends with leaden balls is used, and it is an easy matter to kill with this weapon. A birch rod soaked in salt is used as a milder punishment. Two women have recently been flogged upon their bare backs with these salted birches. In Alexandrovsk prison 600 convicts are packed in four rooms which could not hold more than 50 without danger to health. While Mr. Hawes was there 1,800 new prisoners were brought to be packed into this prison. In one prison 500 convicts are kept chained. Most of them go mad while the more fortunate die. The worst cell is kept for convicts who insult officials. A man can neither lie down nor stand up in it and its smell and filth are indescribable. Those for whom there is no room in the prison are kept in a great stockade built of pine saplings with sharpened tops. Sometimes prisoners escape from here. If observed they are shot down. Some succeed in getting away and the woods are full of escaped convicts who are living like wild beasts, and who rob and murder upon every opportunity.

If a convict is not sentenced for life the expiration of his term of imprisonment is followed by six years' enforced residence on the island as an "exiled settler," to be followed, if the unfortunate is still alive, by six years as a peasant in Siberia, after which he may return to Russia. Mr. Hawes declares that nine-tenths never leave the island.

Hell on earth! What more need be said to make it plain that the penal colony of Saghalien island is entitled to the distinction of being the worst place in the world. W. SCOTT.

The Mormon Settlements in Mexico

In Them Polygamy is Practiced Without Any Attempt at Concealment.

Polygamy among the Mormons of the United States is a thing of the past, in so far as the open practice of the creed is concerned. The passage of the anti-polygamy act, better known as the Edmunds act, accomplished this fact. But this does not mean that the practice has been abandoned in America.

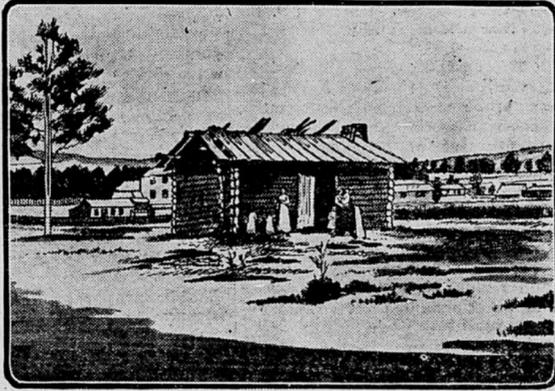
I believe it is safe to say that the followers of the Mormon religion are, as a whole, as sincere in the belief in their creed as the members of any other religious faith in the United States, and those who practiced polygamy did so only as a religious duty. When the Edmunds act became a law, there were three courses open to those Mormons who had been living polygamously; first, the man with two or more wives might cease marital relations with all except one, obeying the law in good faith; second, he might en-

deavor to continue those polygamous relations clandestinely, taking his chances of arrest and imprisonment, or, third, he might remove his several families to some locality where the Edmunds law did not apply.

Many Mormons naturally rebelled at the thought of abandoning any of their wives; they were also too honest to secretly disobey the law, so there was but one course left open to them, to leave the jurisdiction of the United States. Their eyes naturally turned to Mexico, and representatives of the church were dispatched to the City of Mexico to make investigations.

Assurances were received from the government there that if the polygamous Mormons colonized in that country, and lived peaceable, inoffensive lives, obeying all the other laws, their family relations would not be interfered with. Upon these assurances several large tracts of land in the western part of the state of Chihuahua were purchased, and a half-dozen colonies established there. Other colonies are scattered along the eastern slope of the Sierra Madre. The population of the several colonies varies from a few score to a few hundred people, the total population of the colonies being in the neighborhood of 3,000.

Here polygamy is practiced openly and without any effort at concealment, but in strict accordance with the teachings of the church. According to a correspondent who spent eight months among the people, investigating the people and conditions in the guise of a health-seeker, in no one of the colonies is there to be found a brothel, a gambling house or a saloon. Neither have they jails or policemen. Mormon mothers are also said to be very careful regarding the social rela-



A MEXICAN MORMON'S HOME.

tions of their daughters, and the communities pride themselves on the good order maintained at their social gatherings.

While the practice of polygamy is openly maintained in these colonies, and is as stoutly defended by the wives as by the husbands, there is no doubt but that it is gradually dying out. While the Mormon church teaches that polygamy is Divinely sanctioned, it also teaches that Mormons should obey the law of the land, be it good or bad; and the fear of stirring up the Mexican authorities probably operates as a restraint. The younger generation also realize that with the increasing pressure of the struggle for existence and the increasing density of population, the practice is unsuited to this age of the world, and the tendency will be to refrain from plural marriages, as is but natural under the circumstances.

JAMES BRISTOL GREENE.

An Attractive "Den"

SUITABLE haunt for the mere man, fitting resort for the superior animal, remnant, no doubt, of the old cave days. But now, as then, it is the woman who arranges the den and makes it comfortable. "She picked out a nice, dry cave, instead of a heap of wet leaves to lie down in; and she strewed clean sand on the floor; and she lit a nice fire of wood at the back of the cave; and she hung dried wild horse skin, tail down, across the opening of the cave; and she said: 'Wipe your feet, dear, when you come in, and now we'll keep house,'" according to Rudyard Kipling. Now the woman provides the man with a "den" all to himself, or, at least, should do so if she is an intelligent and sensible person; but the clean sand is no longer visible, and the

necessary, not so much because they are places to smoke in, as because they are places where the father, or at least the men of the family, can sometimes be alone. For it is usual now for smoking to be allowed in nearly every room in the house.

I think in my old-fashioned mind, that at least one room should be kept free from smoke, and that one should be the drawing-room or parlor, which—must be made as dainty and beautiful as possible so that people will naturally refrain from polluting it. The drawing-room, in consequence of its daintiness and beauty, is not to be avoided as a sitting room, it must be used as much as possible and made to exert a refining influence upon all who assemble there. In the absence of a possible smoking room, the hall, in the case when it is square and roomy,



A DESIGN FOR A DEN.

wild horse skin is not usual in the dens to which we are accustomed.

It is easy to provide a den or a smoking room, because so little furniture is required for it; there should be no useless ornaments, and curtains even are out of place. A built-in fireplace quickly gives a furnished look to a room, some comfortable chairs, a roomy writing table, shelves for books, and racks for papers are all the requirements of the den. Any boy who knows anything about carpentering could make the pigeon-hole and the settle shown in the illustration. There must, of course, be a smoker's cupboard in every smoking room, but nothing in the way of drapery, from which it is so difficult to shake the smell of tobacco.

may be used as such; comfortable chairs round a blazing fire will give the feeling of ease necessary to the enjoyment of a pipe or cigar, but solitude and the feeling of retirement, of course, are lost in so public a place as a hall. Mr. Jennings says in his book, "Our Homes and How to Beautify Them":—"As to the decoration of a smoking room, its keynote should be a rich shadowy comfort." This is so, but probably most people will prefer more definite suggestion. Wood is the best wall covering, as it does not retain the smoke, and as soon as we have dark paneled walls, we have "shadowy comfort." Oriental carpets, and their colors continued in the comfortable chairs which are necessary to the smoking room, will instantly give richness.

R. G. BARTLETT.

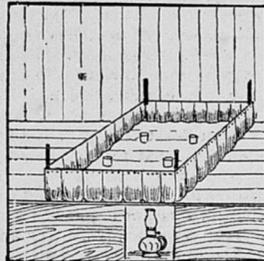
The den and smoking room are



HOMEMADE BROODER.

Raising Chicks Without a Hen Is Not Only a Pleasant But Profitable Occupation.

The beginner will be surprised to find how easy it is to make a brooder. By one of those little oil stoves at the store, and the whole job is done in a few hours. It is easy to operate, not nearly so much bother as so many hens. The chicks are by themselves in a roomy building. A sketch of the brooder is given herewith. The brooder platform occupies one side of the building. The brooder is about three feet square. The board top, which is supported by the wooden pins passing tightly through holes bored in the corners, is represented as transparent in order to show the four three-inch pieces of inch iron pipe beneath. These pipes pass just through the



PLAN OF THE BROODER.

floor of the platform to the under side, but project two inches above, as shown.

Under the platform is a three-foot square or iron, heated by the lamp placed directly under it. Thus the heated air which comes through the pipes and warms the chicks is not from the lamp direct, but from the warmed sheet iron. As the chicks grow larger, the pegs are driven further through the cover, making it higher. The warm air is kept in by the strips of cloth around the edge of the cover. While the chicks are young they should be kept from flying off the platform by a board barrier along the edge (not shown in the drawing). A regular brooder lamp is best. The smallest oil stove or any good lamp that will burn clearly without a top draft will answer.

The chicks will not do so well indoors after the first three weeks. No matter if the weather is damp and chilly. While it is cold or stormy keep them indoors nights, but make a good long outside run of fine netting, or laths with a board at the bottom. Old buildings become infested with mites of lice and the brooder heat brings them out in swarms along the cracks and corners in and near the brooder. Kerosene will soak them out. Clean the house and keep the brooder clean. Lice cannot live long in a clean, dry place.

Feed fine, mixed grain in gravel and let them scratch. Meat, green stuff and gravel are needed from the first. They will pick up the fine grit and struggle over a lettuce leaf or a bit of meat almost as soon as they can stand. Meat is half their food in a state of nature, and to grow fast they must have it unless there is plenty of milk. The experiment stations find that chicks and ducklings grow as fast again when fed with costs of animal food. The growth costs only half as much per pound as compared with all-grain diet. I picked up the following bill of fare for young chicks at the Rhode Island poultry school two years ago, and still use it, with some changes in the direction of greater variety: Four feeds a day of fine cracked corn, cracked wheat, hulled oats in equal parts, also a little millet seed. Soft feed, comprising corn meal, bran, ground oats, equal parts and one-sixteenth to one-twentieth part beef scrap, fed in troughs at noon. Green food at least once a day.—Orange Judd Farmer.

Try a Field of Alfalfa.

Alfalfa is not a difficult crop to raise, being sown in the spring. The preparation and seeding are done in the same manner as for wheat or oats. Only one crop can be secured the first year, and that is not always a good one, but once started there is no limit to the time it will thrive and produce. It sends its roots down to moisture, ten or more feet below the surface, and is little influenced by climatic conditions, which everywhere have a bearing on every other crop. The effect on the soil has been fully demonstrated by plowing up the alfalfa and sowing to other crops—corn, wheat, potatoes. The increased yield of these crops is phenomenal, showing that the alfalfa roots have nourished the soil.—Midland Farmer.

Underground Den for Pigs.

If you have not suitable buildings for pigs dig an underground den, cover with boards, stalks straw, sods, or other handy material. For winter, dig a deeper den is dug the better. Have the pigs tame by gentle and quiet treatment. If you have not conveniences for separating them and wish to separate one hog at a time take a light crate or box, and while the pig is eating place this crate or box over the pig; then with a man on the other side to hold the crate you can "march" the pig anywhere with perfect ease.—Farmers' Voice

FUNCTIONS OF HUMUS.

It Serves to Retain Moisture and Opens Up and Mellows Heavy Soils on the Farm.

When there is a restoration to the soil of the decaying plants there is accumulated a dark substance on the surface of the soil known as humus. When this humus is abundant the supply of nitrogen is large, and when the humus disappears the nitrogen goes with it. At the American and Canadian experiment farms this subject has been given much consideration, tests and experiments being made to determine the amount of inert plant food in the soil, and in regard to the agricultural importance of humus it is claimed that it is the natural storehouse and conservator of nitrogen, which element is the most expensive of all plant foods when purchased in fertilizers. Humus furnishes the food upon which the soil micro-organisms live, and by which their life functions convert its organic nitrogen into nitrates. It also possesses considerable amounts of the mineral food elements, which are (especially in summer) liberated in forms for growing crops, and it is believed that the mineral humates furnish a large proportion of the potash, lime, etc., required by crops. Humus serves to increase the absorption and retentive power for moisture, and it regulates and protects against extremes of soil temperature. It opens up and mellows heavy soils and serves to materially diminish the loss and serves to materially diminish the loss of fertilizing elements by drainage, thus permanently improving in the best way the light soils. Cultivation—that is, exposing the substance of the soil to the air, as by the ordinary farm methods with the plow, harrow, etc.—tends to dissipate the humus and decrease the nitrogen, it having been demonstrated that for every 25 pounds of nitrogen removed by wheat (grain crop after grain for several years), 146 pounds of nitrogen are liable to be lost, due to oxidation of organic matter.—Troy (N. Y.) Times.

WORKS ALL THE TIME.

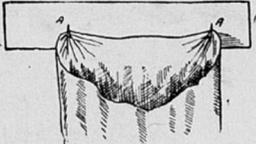
Western Editor Describes the Mortgage as an Inexorable Taskmaster That Knows No Sleep.

The mortgage is a self-supporting institution. It always holds its own. It calls for just as many dollars when grain is cheap as when grain is dear. It is not affected by the drought. It is not drowned out by the heavy rains. It never winter kills. Late springs and early frosts never trouble it. Potato bugs do not disturb it. Moth and rust do not destroy it. It grows nights, Sundays, rainy days and even holidays. It brings a sure crop every year, and sometimes twice a year. It produces cash every time. It does not have to wait for the market to advance. It is not subject to speculations of the bulls and bears on the board of trade. It is a load that galls and frets and chafes. It is a burden that the farmer cannot shake off. It is with him morning, noon and night. It eats with him at the table. It gets under his pillow when he sleeps. It rides upon his shoulders during the day. It consumes his grain crop. It devours his cattle. It selects the finest horses and the fattest steers. It lives upon the first fruit of the season. It stalks into the dairy where the busy housewife toils day after day and month after month and takes the nicest cheese and the choicest butter. It shares the children's bread and robs them of their clothes. It stoops the toiler's back with its remorseless burden of care. It hardens his hands, benumbs his intellect, prematurely whitens his locks and oftentimes sends him and his aged wife over the hills to the poorhouse. It is the inexorable and exacting taskmaster. Its whip is as merciless and cruel as the lash of the slave driver. It is a menace to liberty, a hindrance to progress, a curse to the world.—Ringwood (Okla.) Leader.

SIMPLE BAG HOLDER.

Quickly Made and Can Be Used Anywhere by Simply Driving Two Nails Through It.

I have a bag holder of which I inclose a drawing. Any man can make and put it up ready for use in about



A HANDY BAG HOLDER.

the same time it would take to get his wife out to hold the bags. It is made of a piece of inch board, two feet long and four inches wide. Two-thirds-inch wire nails are driven through from one side and crooked with a hammer to make a hook. The nails (a) are 12 inches apart. It can be fastened anywhere by simply driving two nails through it.—James Dunlap, in Farm and Home.

Front-Proof Swill Barrel.

People in northern climates who feed swill in winter often have serious trouble and inconvenience from its freezing up. This can be prevented with comparatively little trouble and practically no expense in the following manner: Procure a box large enough to hold the swill barrel and leave a space at least a foot and a half wide all around it. Put the barrel into the box and pack it all around with stable manure as firmly as you can stamp it down. Then make tight fitting covers for the barrel and box; and there will be no more trouble with frozen swill.—Prairie Farmer.