

**CURIOUS
PUNISHMENTS
OF BYGONE DAYS**

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Curious Punishments of Bygone Days by Alice Morse Earle

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ALICE MORSE EARLE

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OF BYGONE DAYS**



The Drunkards Cloak.

Curious Punishments
of
Bygone Days,

by
Alice Morse Earle.



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The Contents

I	THE BILBOES	I
II	THE DUCKING STOOL	11
III	THE STOCKS	29
IV	THE PILLORY	44
V	PUNISHMENTS OF AUTHORS AND BOOKS	57
VI	THE WHIPPING-POST	70
VII	THE SCARLET LETTER	86
VIII	BRANKS AND GAGS	96
IX	PUBLIC FENANCE	106
X	MILITARY PUNISHMENTS	119
XI	BRANDING AND MAIMING	138

FOREWORD.

In ransacking old court records, newspapers, diaries and letters for the historic foundation of the books which I have written on colonial history, I have found and noted much of interest that has not been used or referred to in any of those books. An accumulation of notes on old-time laws, punishments and penalties has evoked this volume. The subject is not a pleasant one, though it often has a humorous element; but a punishment that is obsolete gains an interest and dignity from antiquity and its history becomes endurable because it has a past only and no future. That men were pilloried and women ducked by our law-abiding forbears rouses a thrill of hot indignation which dies down into a dull ember of curiosity when we reflect that they will never be pilloried or ducked again.

An old-time writer dedicated his book to "All curious and ingenious gentlemen and gentlewomen

Foreword

who can gain from acts of the past a delight in the present days of virtue, wisdom and the humanities." It does not detract from the good intent and complacency of these old words that the writer lived in the days when the pillory, stocks and whipping-post stood brutally rampant in every English village.

Now, we also boast that, as Pope says:

*"Taught by time our hearts have learned to glow
For others' good, and melt for others' woe."*

And I too dedicate this book to all curious and ingenious gentlemen and gentlewomen of our own days of virtue, wisdom and the humanities; and I trust any chance reader a century hence — if such reader there be — may in turn be not too harsh in judgment on an age that had to form powerful societies and associations to prevent cruelty — not to hardened and vicious criminals — but to faithful animals and innocent children.

