

A Typical Day's Torture – verbatim report of the first day's torture of a woman accused of witchcraft at Prossneck, Germany, in 1629.

1. The hangman bound her hands, cut her hair, and placed her on the ladder. He threw alcohol over her head and set fire to it so as to burn her hair to the roots.

2. He placed strips of sulphur under her arms and around her back and set fire to them.

3. He tied her hands behind her back and pulled her up to the ceiling.

4. He left her hanging there from three to four hours, while the torturer went to breakfast.

5. On his return, he threw alcohol over her back and set fire to it.

6. He attached very heavy weights on her body and drew her up again to the ceiling. After that he put her back on the ladder and placed a very rough plank full of sharp points against her body. Having thus arranged her, he jerked her up again to the ceiling.

7. Then he squeezed her thumbs and big toes in the vise, and he trussed her arms with a stick, and in this position kept her hanging about a quarter of an hour, until she fainted away several times.

8. Then he squeezed the calves and the legs in the vise, always alternating the torture with questioning.

9. Then he whipped her with a rawhide whip to cause the blood to flow out over her shift.

10. Once again he placed her thumbs and big toes in the vise, and left her in this agony on the torture stool from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., while the hangman and the court official went out to get a bite to eat.

In the afternoon a functionary came who disapproved this pitiless procedure. But then they whipped her again in a frightful manner. This concluded the first day of torture.

The next day they started all over again, but without pushing things quite as far as the day before.