

CONEY ELEPHANT KILLED

Topsy Overcome with Cyanide of Potassium and Electricity.

She Was Adam Forepaugh's "Original Baby Elephant" Twenty-eight Years Ago—Her Keeper, "Whitey," Would Not See Her Die.

Topsy, the big, man-killing elephant at Luna Park, Coney Island, paid the death penalty at the park yesterday by the agency of a heavy electric current and 460 grains of cyanide of potassium. Topsy's ending was a rather inglorious affair, so far as she was concerned, for there was in it none of dazzle of the business with which the greater part of her life was spent, the scene being the dreary out-of-season pleasure park, the spectators only persons immediately concerned and reporters, and the executioners very matter-of-fact electricians of the Edison Company.

The latter life of Topsy had been turbulent indeed, and linked to some degree, after the manner of elephant folk, with that of her keeper, "Whitey" Alf, who was discharged by her owners, the park managers, after the final unofficial performance last Friday afternoon. "Whitey" Alf, it seems, had a habit of taking more stimulant than was good for him, and on these frequent occasions it was hard telling what he would do with Topsy. This fact, coupled with her past record of three men killed in the past three years, the last one at a show in Brooklyn on May 28 last, made it uncomfortable having her around.

The beginning of the end was on Oct. 30, when "Whitey" proceeded to conduct Topsy on a tour of Coney Island, and wound up in the police station, with Topsy trying to get her fat head in through the door with doubtful success. From that time until Friday of last week "Whitey" was kept in control, and consequently Topsy behaved herself, very dutifully pushing around big beams which were being used in construction at Luna Park, and hauling loads too heavy for ordinary beasts of burden.

But last Friday "Whitey" decided that such work was too degrading, and Topsy agreed with him. So he led her out of her stable on the grounds, and after the elephant language told her to "Sick 'em," the "em" being a force of Italian workmen, who promptly took to the tall timber being used in the construction of electric towers and other such things. It was some little time before "Whitey" was persuaded, partially by threats and partially by force, to call his elephant, and from that time Topsy's life was doomed.

The execution was set down for 1:30 o'clock yesterday, "Whitey" having refused in the meantime to have anything to do with it, and having been discharged in consequence, and it was not long afterward that Carl Goliath of Hagenbeck's, with "Skip" Dundy of the park and two employes, led her out of her house and to the scaffold. This scaffold, arranged originally for a hanging, which was abandoned on a protest from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, was constructed over the small lake in the middle of the park grounds. From the scaffold to one of the buildings there stretched two wires adapted for a powerful current, and at the ends of these two mammoth, or rather elephantine, electrodes, each attached to a plank bottom about the size of a small table-top.

All went well until the narrow approach to the scaffold was reached, and then Topsy, like Mulvaney's elephant, balked. First persuasion was tried, then as much force as was thought compatible with the safety of those exercising it, and finally word was sent out for "Whitey," with a message carrying forgiveness for all his past sins and a promise of \$25 if he would only come and budge the elephant. But "Whitey," unlike Mulvaney in the hospital, would not come. Not for twice the amount would he betray his old chum and friend to her awaiting death. So it was determined to have the execution in the open yard, and arrangements were made accordingly.

By this time it was 2:30 o'clock. Topsy was waiting patiently as possible, with her broad back turned to the impossible bridge over which she was wanted to pass. On either side were four husky attendants making believe that they could really hold her by the neck ropes if she should try to break away. Meanwhile the electricians arranged their wires and the execution was on. At 2:38 Dr. Brotheridge, the veterinary in charge, took two carrots into which had been stuffed cyanide—460 grain in all—and offered them to Topsy. She ate them greedily, and waited for more. Then it became a problem to get the electrodes on, and D. P. Sharkey of the Edison Company with J. H. Walsh and H. S. Thomas sidled up to her, while Goliath coaxed her to raise her feet. At last the electrodes were in position, one on the right fore foot and the other on the left hind foot, and Topsy stood down again, smashing the boards on which they were fastened, but with each plate in contact.

At 2:45 the current was given, and Sharkey turned on the current. There was a bit of smoke for an instant. Topsy raised her trunk as if to protest, then shook, bent to her knees, fell, and rolled over on her right side motionless. All this took a matter of ten seconds. There had been no sound and hardly a conscious movement of the body, outside the raising of the trunk when the current was first felt. In two minutes from the time of turning on the current Dr. Brotheridge pronounced Topsy dead.

As soon as the electrodes were removed Hubert H. Vogelsang of 311 East Fifty-ninth Street, who had bought the remains, started his force at work on the dissection, and before evening the whole was accomplished, the hide to be used for commercial purposes, except that of the head, which was reserved for mounting purposes; the organs to be sent to Prof. McClure of the Department of Biology in Princeton University, and the feet to be used in the making of umbrella stands. The flesh and skeleton remained in Mr. Vogelsang's possession for future disposition.

The elephant Topsy was brought to America twenty-eight years ago by Adam Forepaugh, and was then at the age of eight years. For some time she played juvenile parts, being exhibited as the "original baby elephant." In 1900 she killed a keeper in Waco, Texas, and another keeper in Paris, Texas, in the same year. On May 28 last she killed J. Fielding Blunt of Fort Wayne, Ind., in the show tent in Brooklyn, presumably because he had fed her a lighted cigarette. Since that time she has been at Coney Island.

As measured yesterday she stood 10 feet in height, was 19 feet 2 inches long from tail to tip of the trunk, had a girth of 14 feet 2 inches, and a leg circumference at the fetlock of 2 feet. She weighed six tons, and in her palmy days was valued at the rate of \$1,000 a ton.