

PRISON LIFE OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONISTS. I.



VERY American reader who takes an intelligent interest in the affairs of Russia, but who is compelled to depend for his information upon the meager and unsatisfactory accounts of Russian events which are telegraphed to this country, must have asked himself many times the question, "What is the specific nature of the wrongs which call forth, especially among the youth of Russia, such manifestations of fierce passionate hatred for the Tsar, and which inspire such persistent and desperate attempts to take his life?" In vain we seek, in the reports which come to us, for causes that seem adequate to explain the white-heat intensity of feeling which must lie back of such extraordinary social phenomena. We are told that Russia is badly governed; that the press is gagged; that the right of public assembly is denied; and that every free impulse is rigorously repressed by a corrupt and despotic bureaucracy. But these evils, even if fully admitted, do not furnish a perfectly satisfactory explanation of the fact that scores—perhaps hundreds—of young men and women in Russia are willing and ready to die a violent and shameful death on the scaffold if they can only kill, before they die, the man who sits on the throne. At the meeting of "terrorist" leaders held in the town of Lipetsk in June, 1879, when the assassination of Alexander II. was decided upon, forty-seven young men and women offered themselves as volunteers to carry the decision of the council into execution.* Bad government, in any sense which we ordinarily attach to the words, is not adequate to explain a fact so extraordinary and so abnormal as this. Men do not, as a rule, fight press censorship with murder, nor seek to enforce by assassination their demand for civil rights. A feeling of terrible personal outrage must be added to the sense of oppression before the average human being can be wrought up to a state of mind in which he will give his own life for an opportunity to kill another. Unless, therefore, there is something peculiarly ferocious and fanatical in the character of the "terrorist" assassins,—unless there is in the Russian blood a strain of homicidal insanity which ren-

ders it impossible to judge a man of that race by the same rules of conduct which govern other races,—there must be something more than ordinarily bad government behind the abnormal phenomena of contemporary Russian life.

I purpose to set forth, in this and subsequent papers, what seems to me one of the most important and efficient of the causes which led the Russian revolutionists to adopt in 1878 the unfortunate, mistaken, and criminal policy of "terror"; namely, the treatment of political offenders in the Russian prisons. Whatever view may be taken of the phases through which the Russian revolutionary movement has passed since 1870, there can, I think, be no question that its last phase—organized assassination—is largely the result of what the revolutionists regard as the cruel and inhuman treatment of "politicals" in the fortress of Petropavlovsk, the castle of Schlüsselburg, and the prisons of Moscow, Kiev, and Odessa. Before proceeding, therefore, to consider such crimes as the assassination of Alexander II., or to pass judgment upon such characters as those which came into prominence with the adoption of the terroristic policy, it is absolutely necessary to have a clear conception of the life of the Russian revolutionists in prison.

The material upon which these articles are based has been derived mainly from three sources: First, the personal examination of a large number of Russian prisons; second, the statements of three or four hundred men and women who have been shut up in those prisons for terms ranging from six months to seven years and at various times from 1874 to 1885; and, third, the statements of Russian officials who are now, or have been at some time, connected with the prison administration. To the collection and the verification of the facts herein set forth I have devoted many laborious days and nights, at the mines and in the penal settlements of Siberia, as well as in the cities of European Russia, and I have every reason to feel confident that my statements are worthy of trust.

There was some discussion in the English periodicals two or three years ago, between Prince Krapotkine and Mr. C. M. Wilson on one side, and the Rev. Henry Lansdell and an anonymous correspondent of the "Pall Mall Gazette" on the other, with regard to the conditions of life and the treatment of politicals in the fortress of Petropavlovsk. I was denied permission to visit that prison, and am not able, therefore, to describe it from personal in-

* Official Stenographic Report of the Trial of the Regicides in St. Petersburg, in 1881; Statement of Zheliaboff, p. 32.

spection; but my opportunities for obtaining information with regard to the conditions of life therein have been of an exceptional character. I made the acquaintance in Siberia of perhaps fifty exiles who had been shut up in the fortress, and whose overlapping terms of imprisonment covered the whole period between the years 1874 and 1884. These exiles were scattered all over Siberia; many of them had never seen one another, and there was no possibility of a preconcerted agreement among them as to the story which they should tell me. Most of them, moreover, were men of high intelligence and character, and as incapable, I believe, of wilful misrepresentation as any American gentleman of my acquaintance. They described to me, with the utmost possible minuteness, every detail of their prison experience; and I find, in looking over my note-books, that I have in some cases six or eight separate and independent accounts of the same event or state of facts, obtained from six or eight exiles who did not know one another, and who were living in penal settlements, hundreds—sometimes thousands—of miles apart. The statements of exiles, judicially considered, must, of course, be regarded as *ex-parte* evidence; but it is manifest, I think, that even *ex-parte* testimony, if concurrent, and if taken under the circumstances above described, is entitled to credence, unless it can be shown that there has been an opportunity for collusion. As far as it has been possible to do so, I have checked and verified the statements of these exiles by conversations with lawyers, judges, and prison officials. I cannot, for obvious reasons, give the names of the latter, but they are persons who had opportunities to know the facts. If the Government's side of the subjects discussed and the events described in these papers is not as fully set forth as would seem to be desirable, it is partly because I reserve the Government's case against the revolutionists for fuller and more careful treatment in a subsequent paper, and partly because General Orzhefski, the Russian Chief of Gendarmes, did not appear disposed, when I called upon him last summer, either to furnish me with facts, or to give me facilities for making a personal examination. For permission to visit the great St. Petersburg prisons known as "The House of Preliminary Detention" and "The Litofski Zamok," I am indebted to Mr. Galkine-Vraskoi, Chief of the Prison and Exile Department. He had, however, no control over the fortress of Petropavlovsk or the castle of Schlus-

selburg, and General Orzhefski, who might have allowed me to see those prisons, declined courteously but firmly to do so.

In order to understand much that I shall have to say, the reader must divest himself entirely of the idea that Russian prisons are managed upon any definite, well-ordered system, or that there is any consistent adherence to a predetermined policy in the treatment of prisoners. It would be hard, I think, to find in the civilized world another penal system in which personal whim and caprice play so important a part, and in which considerations of temporary convenience or expediency so often override law as they do in the Russian system. There are in the empire 884 prisons. They are all nominally under the same management, and are subject to the same laws and regulations, and yet it would be difficult to find a score that are governed exactly in the same way or precisely upon the same principles. It would be almost equally difficult to find a single prison which has been governed in the same way for three consecutive years. Privileges which are granted in one prison are denied in another; in one place severity is the rule, in another it is the exception; some prisoners are overfed, others are half starved; in one place a violation of the rules leads to nothing worse than a reprimand, while in another the same fault is punished with twenty lashes on the bare back. Everywhere there is irregularity, disorder, caprice, and more or less complete lack of method.

The reasons for this state of things are many, but among the most important of them are: First, the impracticability and self-contradictory character of much of the penal legislation; second, the distribution of responsibility for prison management among a large number of persons and administrative bureaus not properly subordinated to one another; third, the disposition of many Russian officials to decide and act, not in accordance with law, but in accordance with their own views of expediency, or in obedience to what they believe to be the wishes of their superior officers; and, fourth, the low grade of intelligence, executive ability, and morality which characterizes prison officials generally, and which is due to the fact that better men cannot be obtained for the compensation paid.*

I have a manuscript copy of a secret report made to the Tsar in 1881 by Governor-General Anutchin, in which that high officer, speaking of the "lamentable condition" of the

* The superintendent of The House of Preliminary Detention in St. Petersburg, one of the largest and most important prisons in the empire, receives only \$900 a year, exclusive of table and quarters. His senior assistant receives only \$400. In the St. Petersburg

Forwarding Prison the superintendent receives \$350, and his assistant \$200. In the provincial prisons the salaries paid are still smaller. — [Report of the Central Prison Administration for 1884, pp. 83-4. St. Petersburg: Office of the Minister of the Interior. 1886.]

prisons and the regulation of imprisonment and exile, says: "Although the laws have laid down innumerable rules for the regulation of the subject, such laws have become for the most part dead letters from the very day of their enactment, on account of their impracticability and the lack of proper supervision."*

I have also in my possession a copy of an official circular letter dated August 25th, 1885, from the governor of a Russian province to "Prison Committees, Municipal Police Administrations, Circuit Police Administrations, and Bureaus of Prison Control," in which the governor calls attention to the existence in the provincial prisons of "innumerable violations of law of all possible sorts, practiced so openly as to make it seem almost incredible that the persons who permit them are really conscious of the illegality of their acts." In the long list of abuses which the governor then enumerates are corrupt agreements between prison officials and contractors to substitute an inferior quality of food and clothing for that which the law requires, and to divide the proceeds of the fraud; unchecked drunkenness, gambling, and disorder among the prisoners; the drawing of rations and clothing for criminals who have died, escaped, or been released, and the sale of such articles by the prison officials for their own benefit; the practice of setting convicts at liberty in order that they may engage in private employment upon condition that they shall divide their earnings with the prison official who releases them; the failure of prison authorities to keep a record of punishments, and the flogging of prisoners by the overseers of prisons without the knowledge or sanction of the *Ispravniks*, or Chiefs of Police, in whose districts the prisons are situated.

It appears from a simple inspection of this letter, and without any further investigation, that there are no less than seven different persons and groups of persons who have something to say about the management of provincial prisons; namely, first, the prison officials themselves; second, the Prison Committees; third, the Municipal Police Administrations; fourth, the Circuit Police Administrations; fifth, the Bureaus of Prison Control; sixth, the *Ispravniks*; and, seventh, the Governor. To this list, however, must be added: eighth, the Procureur; ninth, the town council of the town in which the prison is situated; tenth, the Governor-General; eleventh, the Central Prison Administration in St. Petersburg; and, twelfth, the Minister of the Interior. It further appears, from the official statement above referred to, that notwithstanding all this regulative ma-

chinery,—in spite of this apparent superfluity of "control,"—there are in the provincial prisons "innumerable violations of law, practiced so openly as to make it seem almost incredible that the persons who permit them are really conscious of the illegality of their acts."

In the prisons devoted exclusively to political offenders, there is, of course, less disorder and dishonesty than in the lower-grade prisons of the provinces; but even in the former, circumstances and official caprice play a much more important part than law does. Law, in fact, is rarely permitted to stand in the way of what a high official regards as the paramount interests of the State. If a Procureur like Strelnikoff, or a Chief of Gendarmes like Mezzentseff, believes that by subjecting a political prisoner to a certain kind of treatment he can extort from such prisoner a confession which will lead to the arrest of his companions in crime, or furnish a clew to undiscovered conspiracy, he does not hesitate to overstep the limits of his legal authority. To attain such an end he will even resort to methods which are in the highest degree base and dishonorable—methods which are as exasperating to the prisoners as they are discreditible to the Government which permits them.

The treatment of political prisoners is largely dependent also upon the temper of the official mind at various times and under various circumstances. After every fresh attempt at violence on the part of the conspirators who are still at liberty, there is increased severity in the treatment of their comrades in prison. At one time the officials, irritated by the success of a conspiracy which they have failed to discover, avenge their incompetency upon the conspirators who are in their power; while at another time, placated by apparent submission, or gratified by what seems to be the reestablishment of social order, they modify the extreme rigor of their prison discipline. The natural result of this usurpation of the functions of law by official caprice or license is the complete overthrow of all systematic and consistent prison government. The treatment of prisoners becomes not what the law intended it to be, but what the Procureur or the Chief of Gendarmes thinks that it ought to be, in view of circumstances or events with which the prisoners themselves have perhaps nothing whatever to do.

Before proceeding to describe the daily life of the Russian revolutionists in prison, I desire to call attention to three classes of facts which are closely related to prison life, and which have an important bearing upon the state of mind and temper produced by it. The classes of facts to which I refer, and to which I shall devote the remainder of this article, are: First,

* Secret Report to the Tsar by Governor-General Anutchin, Chap. V., Section 3, entitled "Exile, Penal Servitude, and the Prison Department."

the custom of making indiscriminate arrests as a means of inspiring terror and with the hope of obtaining clues to secret revolutionary activity; second, the use of imprisonment as a species of torture to extort confession or compel the prisoner to betray friends; and, third, the illegal detention of political "suspects" in solitary confinement for months and years while the police scour the empire in search of criminating evidence upon which to base indictments. All of these methods have been practiced in Russia upon the most extensive scale, and perhaps nothing has done more to fan the smoldering fire of discontent into the fierce flame of terroristic activity.

In using the word "indiscriminate" to characterize political arrests, I do not mean, of course, to be understood as saying that the Russian police go through a city as a Malay runs amuck, laying hands upon everybody who happens to come in their way. Political arrests, no matter how sweeping and extensive they may be, are always confined to one class of the population—a class officially known in Russia as *neblagonadezhni*. This word has no equivalent in English, and the idea which it represents is so foreign to all our modes of thought that it can be expressed only by a circumlocution. *Blago* in Russian means "good"; *nadezhda* means "hope"; *blagonadezhnost* means the condition from which something good or gratifying is to be hoped or expected; *ne-blago-nadezhnost* is the negative form of the complex word, and as officially used may be approximately translated "a condition of political untrustworthiness." The term *neblagonadezhni* is applied by the Government to all persons whose political opinions are officially regarded as unsound, and whose behavior is therefore a proper subject for police supervision. Statistics of this "untrustworthy" class are, of course, not procurable; but in 1880, when the Liberal ministry of Loris Melikoff was in power, the number of persons who were under open police surveillance was officially stated as 2837, distributed throughout the provinces of the empire as follows: in St. Petersburg, 273; in Moscow, 101; in Kaluga, 315; in Riazan, 255; in Tver, 198; in Kostroma, 165; in Archangel, 96; and in other provinces, 1434.* The persons, however, who are under open police surveillance form a comparatively small part of the great *neblagonadezhni* or "untrustworthy" class. They are mostly persons who have been forcibly removed from their homes to other parts of the empire, in order to break up their local associations, and who are subjected at regular in-

tervals to domiciliary visits. Thousands of others who have not been thus removed are under secret surveillance, and the names of thousands more are registered in the books of the gendarmes and the detective police. Whenever an act of violence is committed or attempted by the extreme revolutionary party, the police make a sudden descent upon the whole "untrustworthy" class in the town or province where the disorder has occurred, and drag to prison by scores both the innocent and the guilty, to be afterwards sorted at their leisure. When General Strelnikoff was intrusted by the Tsar with almost dictatorial power in order that he might extirpate sedition in the provinces of southern Russia, he arrested and threw into prison in the single city of Odessa no less than 118 persons in three days. He then went to Kiev and arrested 89 persons almost simultaneously, and ordered the imprisonment of hundreds of others in Kharkoff, Nikolaief, Pultava, Kursk, and other South Russian cities. Most of these arrests were made entirely without what is known as "probable cause," and for the sole purpose of obtaining clues to plots which the police believed to exist, but which they had not been able to discover. Many of the persons arrested were mere children—immature school boys and girls from fifteen to seventeen years of age—who could not possibly be regarded as dangerous conspirators, but who might, it was thought, be terrified into a confession of all they knew with regard to the movements, conversations, and occupations of their older relatives and friends.

General Strelnikoff's plan was to arrest simultaneously a large number of persons belonging to the "untrustworthy" class; throw them into prison; keep them for ten days or two weeks in the strictest solitary confinement, and then subject them to a terrifying inquisitorial examination with the hope of extorting scraps of information, here a little and there a little, which might be pieced together, like the parts of a dissected map, so as to reveal the outlines of a revolutionary plot. If, for example, a young girl belonged to an "untrustworthy" family, and a "suspicious" letter to her had been intercepted by the authorities; or if she had been seen coming out of a "suspicious" house at a late hour in the evening, she was arrested in one of these police raids, generally at night; conveyed in a close carriage to the Odessa prison; put into a small solitary-confinement cell and left to her own agonizing thoughts. No explanation was given her of this summary proceeding, and if she appealed to the sentinel on duty in the corridor, the only reply she obtained was "*Prikazano ne gavarit*"—"Talking is forbidden."

* "Regulations for the Preservation of Social Order": Aksakoff's newspaper, "Russ," No. 46; September 26th, 1881.

The effect produced upon a young, inexperienced, impressible girl, by the overwhelming shock of such a transition from the repose, quiet, and security of her own bedroom, in her own home, to a narrow, gloomy cell in a common criminal prison at night, can readily be imagined. Even if she were a girl of courage and firmness of character, her self-control might give way under the strain of such an ordeal. The sounds which break the stillness of a Russian criminal prison at night — the stealthy tread of the guard; the faintly heard cries and struggles of a drunken and disorderly "casual" who is being strapped to his bed in another part of the prison, cries which suggest to an inexperienced girl some terrible scene of violence and outrage; the occasional clang of a heavy door; the moaning and hysterical weeping of other recently arrested prisoners in cells on the same corridor, and the sudden and noiseless appearance now and then of an unknown human face at the little square port-hole in the cell door through which the prisoners are watched — all combine to make the first night of a young girl in prison an experience never to be forgotten while she lives. This experience, however, is only the beginning of the trial which her courage and self-control are destined to undergo. One day passes — two days — three days — ten days — without bringing any news from the outside world, or any information concerning the nature of the charges made against her. Twice every twenty-four hours food is handed to her through the square port-hole by the taciturn guard, but nothing else breaks the monotony and the solitude of her life. She has no books, no writing materials, no means whatever of diverting her thoughts or relieving the mental strain which soon becomes almost unendurable. Tortured by apprehension and by uncertainty as to her own fate and the fate of those dear to her, she can only pace her cell from corner to corner until she is exhausted, and then throw herself on the narrow prison bed and in sleep try to lose consciousness of her misery.

At last, two weeks perhaps after her arrest, when her spirit is supposed to be sufficiently broken by solitary confinement and grief, she is summoned to the *dopros*, a preliminary examination, without witnesses or counsel, con-

ducted by General Strelnikoff in person. He begins by saying to her that she is

"charged with very serious crimes under such and such sections of the Penal Code, and that she stands in danger of exile to Siberia for a long term of years. In view, however, of her youth and inexperience, and of the probability that she has been misled by criminal associates, he feels authorized to say to her that if she will show repentance, and a sincere desire to reform, by making a 'chisto-serdechni.' — 'clean-hearted' confession, — and will answer truthfully all questions put to her, she will be immediately released. If, on the contrary, she manifests an obdurate disposition and thus proves herself to be unworthy of clemency, it will become his duty, as prosecuting officer of the Crown, to treat her with all the rigor of the law."

The poor girl is well aware that the reference to Siberian exile is not an empty threat. Belonging as she does to an "untrustworthy" family, she has often heard discussed the case of Marie Prisedski, who was exiled before she was sixteen years of age because she would not betray her older sister, and the case of the Ivitchevitch children, one seventeen and the other fourteen years of age, who were arrested in Kiev and sent to Siberia in 1879 for no particular reason except that their two older brothers were revolutionists and had been shot dead while resisting arrest.*

It is not a matter for surprise if a young girl who has thus been torn from her home, who is depressed and disheartened by solitary confinement, who is without counsel, without knowledge of the law, without the support of a single friend in this supreme crisis of her life, breaks down at last under the strain of deadly fear, and tells the inquisitor all she knows. She is at once released, but only to suffer agonies of self-reproach and remorse as she sees her relatives and dearest friends arrested, imprisoned, and exiled to Siberia, upon information and clews which she herself has furnished. It frequently happens, however, that a girl remains steadfast and refuses to answer questions even after months of solitary confinement. The authorities then resort to other and even more discreditable methods.

In 1884 Marie Kaluzhnaya, a girl eighteen years of age, daughter of a merchant in Odesa, was arrested upon a charge of disloyalty, thrown into prison, and subjected to precisely the treatment which I have described. She was, however, a girl of spirit and character, and withstood successfully, for many months, all

* Ivan Maximovitch Prisedski is a wealthy landed proprietor in the district of Zinkofski, province of Pultava. His own loyalty to the Tsar has never been questioned, but all of his children — three girls and a boy — have been exiled to Siberia upon various political charges. Two of them are in Semipalatinsk on the frontier of central Asia; a third is in prison at the mines of Kara, on the head-waters of the Amur, and the fourth was, until recently, in the village of Tunka, near the boundary line between eastern Siberia and Mon-

golia. I made the acquaintance of three of them in their places of exile during my recent journey to Siberia, and was very favorably impressed by them. A traveler could not hope nor expect to meet in any country more refined, cultivated, and attractive young people.

The Ivitchevitch children — Christina, a girl of seventeen, and her brother, who was only fourteen — were exiled to Kirinsk in the province of Irkutsk, more than four thousand miles east of St. Petersburg.

attempts to persuade or frighten her into a confession or a betrayal of others. At last Colonel Katanski, a gendarme officer in Odessa, brought to her a skillfully forged statement, which purported to be the confession of her imprisoned revolutionary associates.

It was, in fact, a document prepared by the gendarmes themselves from information obtained through spies, supplemented by shrewd guesses and conjectures, and was part of an adroitly contrived scheme to elicit from Miss Kaluzhnaya evidence which could be used against certain of her friends who were in prison awaiting trial upon serious charges. Colonel Katanski, with cruel duplicity, said to Miss Kaluzhnaya that

"he came to her not as an officer of the Crown, but as a friend, to show her this confession of her associates and to urge her to save herself while there was yet time. Persistence in her refusal to answer questions could no longer protect or benefit her friends, since they had admitted their guilt. The Procureur would not know that he [Colonel Katanski] had showed her this confession and would suppose, if she announced her readiness to answer questions, that she had become repentant. There was no serious charge against her personally, and nothing but long-continued obduracy stood in the way of her immediate release. All that she had to do was to show a tractable and penitent disposition. It would not be necessary for her to testify to any facts not already known to the police through this confession,—facts which her friends themselves had admitted. Why should she wreck her young life upon a mistaken and quixotic sentiment of honor which no longer had any practical bearing upon the fate of her associates? They had confessed; they could not possibly be harmed if she merely repeated what they themselves had admitted. The Procureur would not know that she had been made aware of their confession; he would suppose that her offer to appear and testify was prompted by sincere penitence, and there could be no doubt that he would at once order her release."

Miss Kaluzhnaya fell into the trap. She sent word to the Procureur that she was ready to testify, and, upon examination, admitted facts which she supposed the police already knew through the confession, but of which, in reality, they had no proof whatever. Having thus unconsciously served at last the purpose for which she had been arrested, Miss Kaluzhnaya was released from prison and put again under police surveillance. When the case of her friends came up for trial, she discovered, of course, that none of them had made confession, and that there was no evidence against them of any importance except that which she had furnished. The terrible agony of such a discovery to a generous, affectionate, high-minded girl can be imagined. She saw her friends sent into penal servitude upon her testimony, while she herself could neither share their fate nor explain to them the fraud of which she had been a victim. She was in the attitude of a coward who had betrayed her associates in order to secure her own safety. For a time

her remorse and despair seemed likely to result either in insanity or in suicide; but she finally recovered her self-control, and there gradually formed in her mind a determination to do something to avenge the intolerable wrong which she had suffered, and to show the world that if she had unwittingly betrayed her friends, she was not afraid to share their fate. She procured a revolver, and on the 21st of August, 1884, called upon Colonel Katanski, and fired at him as he entered the reception-room to meet her. The bullet grazed his head, slightly wounding one ear, and buried itself in the wall. Before she could fire again he sprang upon her and wrested the pistol from her hand. For this attempt at assassination Miss Kaluzhnaya was brought to trial before a court martial in Odessa on the 10th of September of the same year. As it was her only wish to be sent to Siberia with the friends whom she had betrayed, she refused the aid of counsel, and made no attempt at self-defense. The court found her guilty of premeditated assault with intent to kill, and sentenced her to twenty years' penal servitude.

I witnessed the beginning of the last act in this mournful tragedy. I happened to be present in the town of Chita, in eastern Siberia, on the 8th of December, 1885, when Marie Kaluzhnaya, in convict dress, left there on foot, with a gang of chained criminals, in a temperature of twenty degrees below zero, for the mines of Kara. It affords me a sort of melancholy satisfaction now to think that the unfortunate girl was at least aware, as she walked wearily away from the *étape* that bitterly cold December morning, that there was an American traveler there who knew her story, and who would some time explain to the world why she had attempted to commit murder.

It may be thought that cases of this kind are rare and exceptional, but I regret to say that I heard similar stories from exiles in all parts of Siberia and from some Russian officials. The deception which was practiced upon Marie Kaluzhnaya had been repeatedly tried before in the same city of Odessa. An attempt had been made, for example, only a year earlier to deceive, by means of a pretended confession, Miss Fanny Morenis, who is now in exile in the Trans-Baikal. The same plan was tried with Madame Kutitonskaya, who is now in the Irkoutsk prison. In these cases, however, the trap was set in vain.

When solitary confinement and deception fail to bring about the desired result, the gendarmes and the officers of the Department of Justice resort to other means, which are perhaps less dishonorable, but which are equally cruel. In March, 1882, General Strelnikoff, finding that solitary confinement in the gloomy

and badly ventilated prison of Kiev was not of itself sufficient to torture his prisoners into a confession of what he believed they knew with regard to the revolutionary movement, determined to make their life still more intolerable, and to break down, if possible, their obstinate resolution, by darkening their cells. Upon the pretext that he wished to make it impossible for them to talk with one another through their windows, he caused a sheet-iron hood to be put over the window of every cell in the prison occupied by a political offender. The hood was large enough to cover the entire window, and resembled in shape a shallow rectangular box with the cover and one end gone. It fitted the window closely on both sides and at the top, but was open at the bottom. The result of putting these shields over the windows was to deprive the prisoners almost entirely of light and air, and to turn every cell into a sort of cave or *oubliette*. The light which came in through the opening at the bottom of the hood was only sufficient to enable the prisoner to distinguish between night and day. The artisan who put up the hoods told General Strelnikoff that they would not answer the purpose for which they were designed,—that it would be as easy to talk from window to window as it had been before,—but he was sharply informed that that was none of his business. Of course the life of the prisoners under such conditions became almost intolerable. Young, nervous, and impressible girls walked their cells from corner to corner in the gloomy twilight until they became nearly insane. Even the prison officials expressed to the sufferers their sympathy and pity. At last the political prisoners addressed a petition to Governor-General Drenteln asking him to send an officer to see how they were situated, and, if possible, to intercede for them. In response to this petition the governor of the province of Kiev, acting under orders from General Drenteln, made a visit to the prison, entered the cell of a young student named X—, whom I afterward met in Siberia, and said to him, "What do you understand to be the object of these hoods?" Mr. X— replied that they had been put up by order of General Strelnikoff to prevent oral communication between the prisoners. "Do they have the desired effect?" inquired the governor. "No," replied the young student. "I can show you, if you wish, that it is as easy to talk from window to window now as it was before." "Show me, please," said the governor. Mr. X— went to the window and called to a prisoner in the cell below. His comrade answered, and they carried on a conversation until the governor expressed himself as satisfied. "I appreciate," he said to Mr. X—, "your situation,

but I cannot give you any reason to hope for a change at present. General Strelnikoff is acting under instructions and authority given him by the Tsar in person, and he is therefore independent, not only of Governor-General Drenteln, but of the Minister of the Interior himself. This being the case, the authorities of the province cannot and dare not interfere."

On the next day after the visit of the governor to the prison, General Strelnikoff was assassinated in Odessa. The hoods were immediately removed from the windows, amid great excitement and rejoicing on the part of the political prisoners, who were so much encouraged and emboldened, that they suggested to the governor the use of the sheet-iron hoods as material for a monument to their inventor.

I have space only for a brief reference to the many other methods of extorting testimony from arrested persons which are practiced by the gendarmes and the officers of the Department of Justice. One of the most cruel of them, it seems to me, is the custom of terrifying old and feeble parents into the belief that their sons or daughters will inevitably be hanged unless they confess, and then sending the poor old people, trembling with terror and blinded with tears, to make an agonized appeal to their imprisoned children in their cells. The officials know very well that the children will not be hanged—that it is extremely doubtful whether they will even be brought to trial. They are kept in prison simply because the Procureur hopes ultimately to obtain information from them. If the torture of solitary confinement can be intensified by adding to it the entreaties of half frantic parents, so much the better. A little fright will benefit the old people and teach them to look after their children more closely, and the children's obstinate determination not to betray their friends will perhaps be broken down by a sight of the grief and misery of their parents. It is a plan which, to the official mind, works beneficently both ways.

The mother of a young student named Zhebunoff in Kiev, a lady sixty-five years of age, was so terrified by a vivid description from General Strelnikoff of the way in which her son, if he did not confess, would "dangle and kick in the air, his neck in a noose," that she fainted on the floor of the Procureur's office. Yet Strelnikoff knew very well that there was not evidence enough in his possession even to bring Zhebunoff to trial—much less to hang him. As a matter of fact the young student never was tried, but was sent to Siberia by "administrative process."

The aged mother of an exile whom I met in the Trans-Baikal was made to believe that her son would certainly be hanged unless he told all that he knew, and then, upon condi-

tion that she should try to persuade him to confess, she was allowed to go to his cell. A terrible scene followed, in which the white-haired mother, frenzied with fear and choking with sobs, knelt to her son, clung about his legs, and tried to press her tear-wet face to his feet, as she implored him, by his love for her—by her gray hairs—to promise that he would answer the questions of the gendarmes. The strain of such a scene upon the emotions and the resolution of a prisoner who is weakened and depressed by months of solitary confinement, who loves and reverences his mother, and who sees her for the first time since his arrest, and perhaps for the last time before he goes to Siberia, is simply heart-breaking. The mother finally departs in despair, bidding her son good-bye as she would bid good-bye to the dying, while the son lays up the memories of this bitter hour—the cruel deception of his mother, the torture of himself, and the attempt to make the most sacred of human feelings serve the purposes of the police—as memories which will steady his nerves and steel his heart when the time comes for vengeance.

This playing upon the deepest and most intense of human emotions as a means of extorting information from unwilling witnesses is practiced more or less in all Russian prisons where political offenders are confined. The details are of course varied according to the circumstances of the case or the ingenuity of the inquisitor. One prisoner, for example, after months of solitary confinement, is promised an interview with his mother. Filled with glad anticipations, he follows the guard out through the long, gloomy corridor into the prison court-yard, where the mother is sitting on a rude prison bench forty or fifty feet from the door through which he emerges. At the sight of the well-remembered, loving face, changed and aged by grief since he saw it last, his heart overflows with pity and tenderness, and he rushes toward her with the intention of taking her in his arms. He is at once stopped by the guard, who tells him that the interview is not to take place here, but in the reception-room of the prison, to which he is thereupon conducted. He waits impatiently ten minutes—fifteen minutes—half an hour—and at last the door opens. As he springs toward it he is met, not by his mother, but by the Procureur, who asks him whether, after this further period of reflection, he has changed his mind with regard to answering questions. He replies that he was brought there, as he supposed, to see his mother, not for examination. The Procureur, however, informs him that interviews with relatives are privileges not granted to obstinate and refractory prisoners, and that if he has nothing to add to his previous statements he

will be taken to his cell. Disappointed and embittered, the young man goes back to solitary confinement with a new cause for hatred and an intensified thirst for vengeance, while the heart-broken mother, whose misery has only been increased by this brief glimpse of her son under guard and in prison dress, returns to her distant village home.

In another case which came to my knowledge in Siberia, the prisoner was a young married woman with a baby in her arms. She refused to answer questions intended to elicit criminating evidence against her friends, and the gendarme officer who was conducting the examination threatened, if she continued obstinate, to take her child from her. She made a pathetic appeal to the Procureur, and asked him whether there was any law under which the gendarme officer could deprive her of her child if she refused to testify. The Procureur, instead of giving her a direct answer, told her that “the prudent course for her to pursue would be not to raise a question as to the legal authority of the examining officer, but to tell him truthfully all she knew; then it was certain that he could not take her child from her.” In the face of a threat so terrifying to a young mother,—she was not more than twenty-two years of age when I made her acquaintance in Siberia,—she adhered to her determination not to betray her friends. Her babe was finally left in her possession, but she suffered weeks of torturing apprehension, the mere remembrance of which bathed her face with tears as she told me the story.

I have devoted much space to these illustrations of the use of prison confinement as a means of torturing political prisoners into making confession, partly because my notebooks are full of records of such cases which were everywhere forced upon my attention in Russia, and partly because it seems to me to explain, more clearly than any other fact or set of facts, the state of mind in which so-called “terroristic” activity originates. Whatever view one may take of the events in their moral aspect, one can see that such causes might be adequate to produce such results without the ascription to the Russian revolutionists either of homicidal insanity or inhuman ferocity.

It may be supposed that officials who are capable of treating prisoners in this way must be constitutionally cruel, cold-blooded, and heartless; but such a supposition would be, in many cases, perhaps in a majority of cases, an erroneous one. Many of the officials are naturally no worse than other men, but they have been trained under a system which is intolerant of opposition, and especially of that form of opposition which in Russia is called insubordination; they have been accustomed to

regard themselves rather as the rulers than as the servants of the people; they have not felt personally the full weight of the yoke of oppression; they have been irritated and embittered by a long contest with fearless and impetuous men whose motives and characters they misunderstand, and whom they regard as unreasonable fanatics and treacherous assassins; and, finally, their fortunes and prospects of advancement depend upon the success with which they carry on this contest.

I met in the town of Chita, in eastern Siberia, a Russian army officer — Colonel Novikoff — who had been the commander of the Cossack battalion which served as prison guard at the mines of Kara, and who in 1880 sat as one of the judges in the court martial which tried Madame Rossikova, Miss Anna Alexeieva, and other politicals at Odessa. He was a man about forty-five years of age; was devotedly attached to his family; seemed to have broad and humane views with regard to the treatment of common criminals, and did not appear to be naturally a cruel or vindictive man. Yet this personally amiable, courteous, intelligent army officer, speaking to me of the political offenders in whose trial he had participated as judge, said: "If I had my way, I would give them all the *shpitzruten*." The "*shpitzruten*," it must be explained, is a peculiarly cruel form of "running the gauntlet" which was formerly much used in Siberia as a disciplinary punishment for the worst class of convicts. The prisoner, stripped to the waist, was forced to walk slowly between two lines of soldiers armed with rods "not too large to go into a musket barrel," and, as he passed, received one blow on the bare back from every soldier. The number of blows inflicted was from two thousand to five thousand, two thousand being the lowest number mentioned in the law.* The sufferer, unless he was an exceptionally strong and vigorous man, usually fainted before he had received the prescribed number of blows, and was carried directly from the place of punishment to the hospital. This was the punishment which Colonel Novikoff said he would inflict upon political offenders, and which he had suggested and recommended

to the court of which he was a member. "If," he added, "you punish in that way, you will soon put a stop to political agitation." When one considers the fact that such a method as this of dealing with politicals was actually suggested and advocated by a judge in his official capacity, and that he seemed utterly unconscious of the cruelty and barbarity of the proposed measure, one has little difficulty in understanding how gendarme officers and procureurs regard such comparatively trifling things as the arrest of the innocent with the guilty, the frightening of parents, and the deception of obstinate and refractory prisoners who refuse to testify.

But these are by no means all of the factors which must be taken into consideration in an attempt to explain the so-called policy of "terror." Another cause for the white-heat intensity of feeling which prompts violent retaliation is the illegal detention of political suspects in solitary confinement for months and years while the police scour the empire in search of evidence upon which to base indictments. In the trial of the regicides at St. Petersburg in 1881, Mr. Gerard, one of the ablest advocates at the Russian bar, and one of the boldest of the counsel for the prisoners, attempted to bring this cause to the attention of the court by referring to the well-known fact that out of more than a thousand persons arrested for alleged participation in the so-called "revolutionary propaganda" of 1872-75—out of more than a thousand persons held in solitary confinement for periods ranging from one to four years—only one hundred and ninety-three had ever been brought to trial, and even of that number ninety had been acquitted by a court of judges of the Government's own selection.†

In other words, more than nine hundred persons whose innocence was finally admitted by the Department of Justice had been subjected to from one to four years of solitary confinement, in the course of which eighty of them, or nearly ten per cent., had died, committed suicide, or become insane.‡ Before Mr. Gerard had finished making this statement he was stopped by the Court, and directed to confine himself to the facts of the case on trial.§

* Exile Statutes; Laws of the Russian Empire, Vol. XIV., Part II., Section 799.

† Official certified copy of the sentence of the Court in the trial of the 193, signed by Chief Secretary Lutofski, and dated February 15th, 1878. It is in my possession, as is also the "Accusatory Act," or indictment, in the same case, a document of about 350 folio pages, authenticated by the signature of V. Zhelekhofski, "Associate Chief-Procurer of the Department of Criminal Appeals of the Governing Senate."

‡ The bold and impetuous revolutionist Muishkin, who was one of the accused in this case, made a determined attempt to state these facts to the Court in a speech which he made in his own defense. He was

promptly ordered to stop, and when he refused to do so, he was throttled by three or four gendarmes and dragged out of the court-room. For his obstinacy, and for insulting references to the Court, which were regarded as an aggravation of his original offense, his sentence was made ten years of penal servitude, with deprivation of all civil rights. [Sentence of the Court in the trial of the 193 above cited, p. 13.] In a subsequent paper I shall give an account of the life of Muishkin, who was one of the most remarkable characters that the Russian revolutionary movement has yet produced.

§ Official Stenographic Report of the Trial of the Regicides at St. Petersburg in 1881, pp. 213-219.

I could, if necessary,— and without going outside the limits of official documents in my possession,— fill many pages of THE CENTURY with the names of young men and women who were severally subjected to from one to four years of solitary confinement, and who were finally acquitted by a court, or discharged without trial, because the police, notwithstanding their unlimited power to arrest, imprison, and examine, had not been able to find so much evidence against them as would legally have justified their detention over night. I shall describe in another place the nature of the solitary confinement to which these innocent persons were subjected. I desire at present merely to call attention to the duration of their imprisonment, and to the fact that they were finally pronounced innocent by the Government itself. The above statements are made, it will be observed, not upon the *ex-parte* testimony of the sufferers, but upon the unimpeachable authority of official documents.

The question naturally arises, "What was the reason for the long delay in bringing these thousand or more prisoners to trial?" The reply of the Government is that the accused were engaged in a revolutionary conspiracy which had very extensive ramifications in all parts of the empire; that they were linked together in such a way as to render it practically impossible to try them separately, and that the prosecuting officers of the Crown could not do justice to the Government's case until all the proofs against all the prisoners had been collected, compared, and digested.* The persons accused in the case, however, deny the truth of these statements, severally and collectively. They say that they were not, as a body, engaged in a revolutionary conspiracy; that their actions at that time were not criminal; that more than three-fourths of them were unknown to one another, and had never had any relations with one another; that their cases, therefore, were easily separable, and that, as a matter of fact, the Government did separate into eighteen distinct groups the 193 who were finally tried.

Without expressing any opinion as to the merits of the prisoners' contention, it seems to me, and will doubtless seem to most unprejudiced persons, that the reply of the Government, regarded as a defense, is insufficient, even if it be true. The preface to the indictment in this case says: "By the autumn of 1874 most of the propagandists had been imprisoned, although a few succeeded in eluding arrest and continued their criminal activity until the beginning of 1875."† The trial did

not begin until the 18th of October, 1877,‡ so that "most of the propagandists," including ninety persons admitted by the Court to be innocent, were held in solitary confinement without trial from the autumn of 1874 to October 18th, 1877, a period of three years. A large number of the accused were imprisoned in the gloomy casemates of the Petropavlovski fortress, and, according to the indictment, forty of them were there when the trial began.§ To say, as the Government does, that it held ninety innocent persons in prison for three years, and more than eight hundred other innocent persons for shorter periods of one or two years, because it could not try them separately and was unable in a shorter time to review the evidence against the whole thousand, does not seem to be a sufficient answer to a charge of injustice and cruelty based on more than eight hundred wrecked lives and eighty cases of death, suicide, and insanity in prison.

The case of the "propagandists" was of course an exceptional one. I do not know any other instance in which so many prisoners were held so long without trial, and in which the number of persons accused was so overwhelmingly out of proportion to the number actually found to be guilty. Judicial procedure in Russia, however, is always and everywhere slow, and the long interval of solitary confinement between arrest and trial causes great suffering to the prisoners, and creates a feeling of intense exasperation in the hearts of those who are finally declared to be innocent. As one of the 193 who was acquitted by the Court said to me bitterly, "They punish us first with three years of solitary confinement, and then try us to see whether we ought to have been punished."

The course of procedure in the case of a person accused of a political offense is, under average and normal conditions, about as follows: He is arrested without the least warning, generally at night, and thrown into prison. After a week or two of solitary confinement, he is subjected to a preliminary examination before an officer of gendarmes. In order that he may not prepare himself for this examination, he is not, as a rule, informed of the nature of the charge made against him. The theory of the gendarmes is that if the prisoner knows specifically of what he is accused, he can form at least a conjecture as to the direction and scope of the impending inquiry, and can prepare himself to baffle it. If, however, he is ignorant of the charge upon which he is held,— if he does not even know whether he is undergoing examination as a principal or as a witness,— he is not so quick to see the drift of ques-

* Sentence of the 193, certified copy, p. 15.

† Indictment in the trial of the 193, p. 8.

‡ Sentence in the same trial, p. 1.

§ Appendix to the Indictment in the trial of the 193, pp. 1-3.

tions; he is not so likely to be ready with a prepared story, and he is more apt to be surprised into incautious admissions. The gendarmes justify this course by saying that "if the prisoner is innocent, it cannot injure him; and if he is guilty, he is not entitled to any information which would make it easier for him to mislead the investigators and defeat the ends of justice. The object of the inquiry is, for the present at least, none of his business. All that he has to do is to answer questions truthfully." Of course, a prisoner who is thus kept in the dark defends himself and his friends at a terrible disadvantage. If he answers the questions put to him, he does so without knowledge of their purpose or bearing; and if he refuses to answer, he prolongs his prison confinement, perhaps unnecessarily, and gives the gendarmes an excuse for putting into operation against him some of the methods of extorting testimony which I have described.

Most prisoners take a middle course by answering some questions and refusing to answer others. The examination ends when the gendarme officer is satisfied that he cannot elicit anything more. The prisoner is then remanded to his cell, and another week elapses, in the course of which the gendarmes take the testimony of his acquaintances and friends, of the police, who perhaps have had him under secret surveillance for weeks, and of all other persons who know anything about him. This mass of testimony is then submitted to the Procureur, with a report and such comments as the examining officer may think necessary. The Procureur makes a careful study of all the evidence, compares the testimony of the accused with the statements of the witnesses in the light of the comments and suggestions of the gendarmes, and frames a new series of questions to be put to the prisoner at the "dopros," a more formal examination intended to complete the case for submission to the Ministry of Justice.

Up to this time, it will be observed, the accused has not been informed of the nature of the charge made against him; he does not know certainly whether he is held as a criminal or as a witness; he has heard none of the testimony upon which the questions in the "dopros" are to be based; he is without counsel, and he is ignorant of all that has happened in the outside world since his arrest. It would be hard to imagine a more completely defenseless situation.

The Procureur begins the "dopros" by informing the prisoner that he is accused of the crimes set forth and described in such and such sections of the Penal Code. Most political prosecutions are based upon sections 245, 249, and 250, which are as follows:

"SECTION 245. All persons found guilty of composing and circulating written or printed documents, books, or representations, calculated to create disrespect for the Supreme Authority, or for the personal character of the GOSSUDAR [the Tsar], or for the Government of his Empire, shall be condemned, as insulters of MAJESTY, to deprivation of all civil rights and to from ten to twelve years of penal servitude. [This punishment carries with it exile in Siberia for what remains of life after the expiration of the hard labor sentence.]

"SECTION 249. All persons who shall engage in rebellion against the Supreme Authority, that is, who shall take part in collective and conspirative insurrection against the GOSSUDAR and the Empire; and also all persons who shall plan the overthrow of the Government in the Empire as a whole, or in any part thereof; or who shall intend to change the existing form of government, or the order of succession to the throne established by law; all persons who for the attainment of these ends shall organize or take part in a conspiracy, either actively and with knowledge of its object, or by participation in a conspirative meeting, or by storing or distributing weapons, or by other preparations for insurrection; all such persons, including not only those most guilty, but their associates, instigators, prompters, helpers, and concealers, shall be deprived of all civil rights, and be put to death. Those who have knowledge of such evil intentions and of preparations to carry them into execution, and who, having power to inform the Government thereof, do not fulfill that duty, shall be subjected to the same punishment.

"SECTION 250. If the guilty persons have not manifested an intention to resort to violence, but have organized a society or association, intended to attain, at a more or less remote time in the future, the objects set forth in section 249, or have joined such an association, they shall be sentenced, according to the degree of their criminality, either to from four to six years of penal servitude with deprivation of all civil rights [including exile to Siberia for life]. . . . or to colonization in Siberia [without penal servitude], or to imprisonment in a fortress from one year and four months to four years."

These sections, it will be observed, are tolerably comprehensive. They not only include all attempts to overthrow the government *vi et armis*; they not only cover all action "calculated to create disrespect for MAJESTY"; but they provide for the punishment of the mere intention to bring about a change of administration at a remote time in the future by means of peaceable discussion and the education of the people. Even this is not all. A man may be perfectly loyal; he may never have given expression to a single thought calculated to create disrespect for the Gossudar or the Gossudar's government, and yet, if he comes accidentally to know that his sister, or his brother, or his friend belongs to a society which contemplates a "change in the existing form of government," and if he does not go voluntarily to the Chief of Gendarmes and betray that brother, sister, or friend, the law is adequate to send him to Siberia for life.

When the prisoner, at the beginning of the "dopros," is informed that he is accused of "the crimes set forth and described in sections

* Russian Penal Code, Tagantseff's edition, pp. 172-174. St. Petersburg: 1886. The words in brackets are my own.—G. K.

245, 249, and 250 of the Penal Code," he is almost as much in the dark as ever with regard to the nature of his offense. He may be an "insulter of MAJESTY"; he may be held for an intention "to change the existing form of government". . . . "at some more or less remote time in the future"; or he may have rendered himself liable to penal servitude by his neglect to inform the Chief of Gendarmes that he thinks his sister belongs to a secret society. He can console himself, however, with the reflection that when he is finally sentenced, the nature of the punishment to which he is condemned will indicate approximately the offense for which he has been tried.

The "dopros" resembles in all respects the preliminary examination except that it is conducted by the Procureur in person, is based upon a much greater mass of data, and is consequently more severe and searching. At its conclusion the prisoner is required to sign his testimony, and is then remanded to his cell. The Procureur makes out, at his leisure, a statement of the case, showing what he thinks he can prove against the accused, and sends it with all the papers to the Ministry of Justice. After this time the prisoner, if he has not been obstinate and refractory, is granted certain privileges. He can have interviews with his relatives in the presence of an officer twice a week; he can write and receive open letters, and he is allowed books. Even these privileges, however, have their drawbacks. The relatives who come to see him may be arrested at the prison and exiled to Siberia by "administrative process";* half the contents of his letters may be "blacked out" or erased by the police through whose hands they pass; † and the only books given him may be the Bible and the Penal Code. ‡

The papers in the prisoner's case reach the Ministry of Justice in from one to three months. They may lie there awaiting examination three months, or even six months, more. When they are finally reached and the Minister proceeds to act upon them, he may do any one of four things: *First*, if the evidence submitted does not seem to him sufficient to justify even the detention of the accused, he may

order his release, as he did in the cases of nearly eight hundred of the "propagandists." *Second*, if the evidence, although insufficient, seems to indicate that a case can be made out, he may return the papers to the Procureur with instructions to continue the investigation. This results in a further delay of at least six months. *Third*, if the evidence is not sufficient to secure conviction in a court, if it probably cannot be supplemented, and if the Minister is nevertheless satisfied that the accused is a disloyal person, whom it would be dangerous to release, he may order his exile to Siberia by "administrative process" for a period not greater than five years. *Fourth*, if the evidence against the accused collected by the Procureur is probably adequate to secure conviction in a court, the prisoner is held for trial.

From the Ministry of Justice the papers go to the Ministry of the Interior, where they again await their turn for examination. The Minister of the Interior may approve the decision of the Minister of Justice, or he may disapprove it. In the former case the papers go to the Tsar for final action, and in the latter case they are "hung up" for further consideration, or sent back to the Procureur for amendment.

The result of this course of procedure, every step of which is marked by delay due to the overcrowded condition of the various departmental and ministerial files, is to prolong almost indefinitely the period of uncertainty which intervenes between the prisoner's arrest and his final release, trial, or exile. Most of the politicals whose cases I investigated spent from one year to two and a half years in prison before they were sent to Siberia. In exceptional instances the terms of imprisonment were much longer. Solomon Chudnofski, who is now in exile in Tomsk, awaited final action in his case from January 27th, 1874, to July 18th, 1878, a period of four years and six months. During nearly the whole of this time he was in solitary confinement, and for twenty months he was in one of the casemates of the Petropavlovski fortress.

Such delay is exasperating to the relatives and friends even of prisoners who are known to be guilty; it is maddening to persons who

* A young revolutionist by the name of Maidanski was hanged in Odessa in 1880. His mother, an aged peasant woman, when she heard that her son had been condemned to death, came to the prison to bid him good-bye. She was not allowed, however, to see him, but was herself arrested and exiled by "administrative process" to the province of Krasnoyarsk in eastern Siberia.

† I have such a letter now in my possession. It consisted originally of four closely written pages of commercial note paper. The police erased all except the following words:

"MEZEN, December 8th, 1880.

"MY DEAR IVAN IVANOVITCH: I send you eight

roubles. It is all I can do at present. . . . [four pages crossed out]. . . . I kiss you warmly.

[Signed]

"ALEXE."

‡ The Bible and the Penal Code were the only literature given, during the first part of his imprisonment, to a young exile from St. Petersburg whom I met in Siberia. The intention, doubtless, was to incite to virtue on the one hand and to warn against crime on the other. To most political prisoners, however, such a selection of books would have suggested an instructive — or, as the officials would probably say, seditious and incendiary — comparison between the laws of Russia and the laws of Christ, and would thus have defeated the object which the police had in view.

believe that their sons, daughters, sisters, or friends are innocent, and who lose them by death or suicide in prison before trial.

In 1886 there died in St. Petersburg a young girl not yet twenty years of age named Fedoteva, a student in one of the high schools for women in that city. She had been arrested nearly a year before upon some political charge and had been held in solitary confinement in the House of Preliminary Detention until her health had given way, and had then been removed, dangerously ill, to the hospital, where she died in the delirium of brain fever. Upon being apprised of the young girl's death, Mrs. Fedoteva went to the Chief of Police and asked at what time her daughter would be buried, as she desired to attend the funeral. She was told that the funeral would take place from the hospital at a stated hour on the following day.

The authorities do not allow the friends of a dead political prisoner to take charge of the body nor to conduct the funeral if there is any reason to apprehend what is known in the official world as a *demonstratsia* or public manifestation of sympathy. In this case it was feared that the school associates of the dead girl would follow her body to the grave in a procession, and that the more excitable of them would perhaps attempt to make speeches, or create in some way a scene which would call public attention to the fact that a young girl accused of a political offense had died in prison untried. If a public funeral were permitted, and if a *demonstratsia* should be attempted by the dead girl's friends, the police would be obliged to interfere, and such interference would not only "excite the public mind," but would necessarily result in the arrest of more young people. Furthermore, interference with a funeral would be disagreeable — it would look too much like striking the dead. Clearly, therefore, this was a case in which the maintenance of public order and tranquillity and the protection of hot-headed young people from the consequences of their possible rashness required, and would justify, the utmost secrecy.

Acting upon this reasoning, the Chief of Police directed that the young girl be buried quietly at night, without the knowledge of her relatives and friends; and she was so buried.

When, at the appointed hour on the following day, Mrs. Fedoteva came to the hospital to pay the last and only possible tribute of love to the lifeless body of her dead child by following it to the grave, she was informed that the funeral had already taken place. When she went to the Chief of Police and asked where her daughter had been buried, the only reply she

received was "Etta nasha diella" — "That is our business."

This mournful story was first told to me by the managing editor of a well-known St. Petersburg newspaper, who, of course, did not dare to print it. I heard it afterwards from others, and was finally able to verify it completely and circumstantially by conversation with an official in the hospital where the young girl died.

In order to make clear the bearing of such a fact as this on the so-called policy of "terror," I will ask the reader of these pages the question which was put to me: "Imagine that your only daughter, a school-girl, still in her teens, had been arrested upon a vague charge of disloyalty; that she had been thrown into prison and kept there a year in solitary confinement without a trial; that she had died at last of brain fever brought on by grief, anxiety, apprehension, and solitude; that you had not been permitted to stand by her death-bed; that you had been deceived as to the time of her funeral; and that finally, when you went humbly and respectfully to the Chief of Police and asked where your murdered child had been buried, that you might at least wet the fresh earth of her grave with your tears, you had received the contemptuous answer, 'That is our business,' what would you have done?"

The fierce impulse to avenge such wrongs as these is morally unjustifiable; it is unchristian; it is, if you please, criminal; but, after all, it is human. A man is not necessarily a ferocious, blood-thirsty fanatic if, under such provocation, and in the absence of all means of redress, he strikes back with such weapons as lie nearest his hand. It is not my purpose, in setting forth this and other similar facts, to justify the policy of the "terrorists" nor to approve even by implication the resort to murder as a means of tempering despotism; but it is my purpose to explain, so far as I can, certain morbid social phenomena; and in making such explanation, circumstances seem to lay upon me the duty of saying to the world for the Russian revolutionists all that they might fairly say for themselves, if the lips of the dead had not already moldered into dust, and if the voices of the living were not stifled by prison walls. The Russian Government has its own press, and its own representatives abroad; it can explain, if it chooses, its methods and measures; and it can defend itself against charges which are without foundation. The Russian revolutionists, buried alive in remote Siberian solitudes, can only tell their story to an occasional traveler from a freer country, and ask him to lay it before the world for judgment.

George Kennan.