

MY MEETING WITH THE POLITICAL EXILES.



OUR first meeting with political exiles in Siberia was brought about by a fortunate accident, and, strangely enough, through the instrumentality of the Government. Among the many officers whose acquaintance we made in Semipalatinsk was an educated and intelligent gentleman named Pavlovski,* who had long held an important position in the Russian service, and who was introduced to us as a man whose wide and accurate knowledge of Siberia, especially of the steppe provinces, might render him valuable to us, both as an adviser and as a source of trustworthy information. Although Mr. Pavlovski impressed me from the first as a cultivated, humane, and liberal man, I naturally hesitated to apply to him for information concerning the political exiles. The advice given me in St. Petersburg had led me to believe that the Government would regard with disapprobation any attempt on the part of a foreign traveler to investigate a certain class of political questions or to form the acquaintance of a certain class of political offenders; and I expected, therefore, to have to make all such investigations and acquaintances stealthily and by underground methods. I was not at that time aware of the fact that Russian officials and political exiles are often secretly in sympathy, and it would never have occurred to me to seek the aid of the one class in making the acquaintance of the other. In all of my early conversations with Mr. Pavlovski, therefore, I studiously avoided the subject of political exile, and gave him, I think, no reason whatever to suppose that I knew anything about the Russian revolutionary movement, or felt any particular interest in the exiled revolutionists.

In the course of a talk one afternoon about America, Mr. Pavlovski, turning the conversation abruptly, said to me, "Mr. Kennan, have you ever paid any attention to the movement of young people into Siberia?"

I did not at first see the drift nor catch the significance of this inquiry, and replied, in a qualified negative, that I had not, but that perhaps I did not fully understand the meaning of his question.

"I mean," he said, "that large numbers of educated young men and women are now coming into Siberia from European Russia;

* I am forced to conceal this gentleman's identity under a fictitious name.

I thought perhaps the movement might have attracted your attention."

The earnest, significant way in which he looked at me while making this remark, as if he were experimenting upon me or sounding me, led me to conjecture that the young people to whom he referred were the political exiles. I did not forget, however, that I was dealing with a Russian officer; and I replied guardedly that I had heard something about this movement, but knew nothing of it from personal observation.

"It seems to me," he said, looking at me with the same watchful intentness, "that it is a remarkable social phenomenon, and one that would naturally attract a foreign traveler's attention."

I replied that I was interested, of course, in all the social phenomena of Russia, and that I should undoubtedly feel a deep interest in the one to which he referred if I knew more about it.

"Some of the people who are now coming to Siberia," he continued, "are young men and women of high attainments—men with a university training and women of remarkable character."

"Yes," I replied, "so I have heard; and I should think that they might perhaps be interesting people to know."

"They are," he assented. "They are men and women who, under other circumstances, might render valuable services to their country; I am surprised that you have not become interested in them."

In this manner Mr. Pavlovski and I continued to fence cautiously for five minutes, each trying to ascertain the views of the other, without fully disclosing his own views, concerning the unnamed, but clearly understood, subject of political exile. Mr. Pavlovski's words and manner seemed to me to indicate that he himself regarded with great interest and respect the "young people now coming to Siberia"; but that he did not dare to make a frank avowal of such sentiments until he should feel assured of my discretion, trustworthiness, and sympathy. I, on my side, was equally cautious, fearing that the uncalled-for introduction of this topic by a Russian official might be intended to entrap me into an admission that the investigation of political exile was the real object of our Siberian journey. The adoption of a quasi-friendly attitude by an officer of the Government towards the

exiled enemies of that Government seemed to me an extraordinary and unprecedented phenomenon, and I naturally regarded it with some suspicion.

At last, tired of this conversational beating about the bush, I said frankly, "Mr. Pavlovski, are you talking about the political exiles? Are they the young people to whom you refer?"

"Yes," he replied; "I thought you understood. It seems to me that the banishment to Siberia of a large part of the youth of Russia is a phenomenon which deserves a traveler's attention."

"Of course," I said, "I am interested in it, but how am I to find out anything about it? I don't know where to look for political exiles, nor how to get acquainted with them; and I am told that the Government does not regard with favor intercourse between foreign travelers and political."

"Political are easy enough to find," rejoined Mr. Pavlovski. "The country is full of them, and [with a shrug of the shoulders] there is nothing, so far as I know, to prevent you from making their acquaintance if you feel so disposed. There are thirty or forty of them here in Semipalatinsk, and they walk about the streets like other people: why should n't you happen to meet them?"

Having once broken the ice of reserve and restraint, Mr. Pavlovski and I made rapid advances towards mutual confidence. I soon became convinced that he was not making a pretense of sympathy with the political in order to lead me into a trap; and he apparently became satisfied that I had judgment and tact enough not to get him into trouble by talking to other people about his opinions and actions. Then everything went smoothly. I told him frankly what my impressions were with regard to the character of "nihilists" generally, and asked him whether, as a matter of fact, they were not wrong-headed fanatics and wild social theorists, who would be likely to make trouble in any state.

"On the contrary," he replied, "I find them to be quiet, orderly, reasonable human beings. We certainly have no trouble with them here. Governor Tsekliniski treats them with great kindness and consideration; and, so far as I know, they are good citizens."

In the course of further conversation, Mr. Pavlovski said that there were in Semipalatinsk, he believed, about forty political exiles,* including four or five women. They had all been banished without judicial trial, upon mere executive orders, signed by the Minister of the Interior and approved by the Tsar. Their terms of exile varied from two to five years; and at the expiration of such terms, if

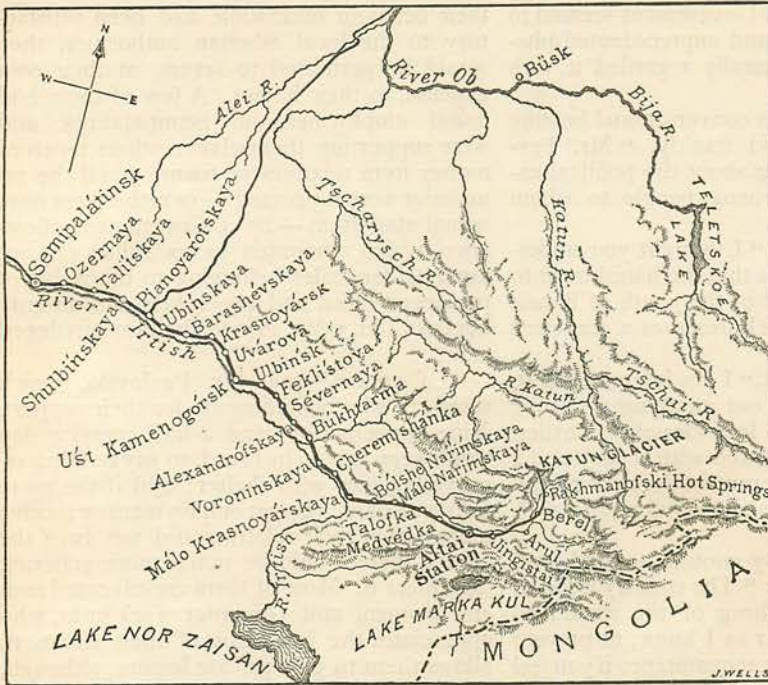
their behavior meanwhile had been satisfactory to the local Siberian authorities, they would be permitted to return, at their own expense, to their homes. A few of them had found employment in Semipalatinsk and were supporting themselves; others received money from relatives or friends; and the remainder were supported — or rather kept from actual starvation — by a Government allowance, which amounted to six rubles (\$3.00) a month for exiles belonging to the noble or privileged class, and two rubles and seventy kopecks (\$1.35) a month for non-privileged exiles.

"Of course," said Mr. Pavlovski, "such sums are wholly inadequate for their support. Nine kopecks [four and a half cents] a day won't keep a man in bread, to say nothing of providing him with shelter; and if the more fortunate ones, who get employment or receive money from their relatives, did not help the others, there would be much more suffering than there is. Most of them are educated men and women, and Governor Tsekliniski, who appreciates the hardships of their situation, allows them to give private lessons, although, according to the letter of the law, teaching is an occupation in which political exiles are forbidden to engage. Besides giving lessons, the women sew and embroider, and earn a little money in that way. They are allowed to write and receive letters, as well as to have unobjectionable books and periodicals; and although they are nominally under police surveillance, they enjoy a good deal of personal freedom."

"What is the nature of the crimes for which these young people were banished?" I inquired. "Were they conspirators? Did they take part in plots to assassinate the Tsar?"

"Oh, no!" said Mr. Pavlovski with a smile; "they were only neblagonadezhni [untrustworthy]. Some of them belonged to forbidden societies, some imported or were in possession of forbidden books, some had friendly relations with other more dangerous offenders, and some were connected with disorders in the higher schools and the universities. The greater part of them are administrative exiles — that is, persons whom the Government, for various reasons, has thought it expedient to remove from their homes and put under police surveillance in a part of the empire where they can do no harm. The real conspirators and revolutionists — the men and women who have actually been engaged in criminal activity — are sent to more remote parts of Siberia and into penal servitude. Banishment to the steppe provinces is regarded

* This estimate proved to be too large; the number was twenty-two.



MAP OF ROUTE TRAVELED IN THIS ARTICLE.

as a very light punishment; and, as a rule, only administrative exiles are sent here."

In reply to further questions with regard to the character of these political exiles, Mr. Pavlovski said, "I don't know anything to their discredit; they behave themselves well enough here. If you are really interested in them, I can, perhaps, help you to an acquaintance with some of them, and then you can draw your own conclusions as to their character."

Of course I assured Mr. Pavlovski that an introduction to the politicals would give me more pleasure than any other favor he could confer upon me. He thereupon suggested that we should go at once to see a young political exile named Lobonofski, who was engaged in painting a drop-curtain for the little town theater.

"He is something of an artist," said Mr. Pavlovski, "and has a few Siberian sketches. You are making and collecting such sketches: of course you want to see them."

"Certainly," I replied, with acquiescent diplomacy. "Sketches are my hobby, and I am a connoisseur in drop-curtains. Even although the artist be a nihilist and an exile, I must see his pictures."

Mr. Pavlovski's droshky was at the door, and we drove at once to the house where Mr. Lobonofski was at work.

I find it extremely difficult now, after a whole year of intimate association with political exiles, to recall the impressions that I had

of them before I made the acquaintance of the exile colony in Semipalatinsk. I know that I was prejudiced against them, and that I expected them to be wholly unlike the rational, cultivated men and women whom one meets in civilized society; but I cannot, by any exercise of will, bring back the unreal, fantastic conception of them which I had when I crossed the Siberian frontier. As nearly as I can now remember, I regarded the people whom I called "nihilists" as sullen, and more or

less incomprehensible "cranks," with some education, a great deal of fanatical courage, and a limitless capacity for self-sacrifice, but with the most visionary ideas of government and social organization, and with only the faintest trace of what an American would call "hard common-sense." I did not expect to have any more ideas in common with them than I should have in common with an anarchist like Louis Lingg; and although I intended to give their case against the Government a fair hearing, I believed that the result would be a confirmation of the judgment I had already formed. Even after all that Mr. Pavlovski had said to me, I think I more than half expected to find in the drop-curtain artist a long-haired, wild-eyed being, who would pour forth an incoherent recital of wrongs and outrages, denounce all governmental restraint as brutal tyranny, and expect me to approve of the assassination of Alexander II.

The log-house occupied by Mr. Lobonofski as a work-shop was not otherwise tenanted, and we entered it without announcement. As Mr. Pavlovski threw open the door, I saw, standing before a large square sheet of canvas which covered one whole side of the room, a blonde young man, apparently about thirty years of age, dressed from head to foot in a suit of cool brown linen, holding in one hand an artist's brush, and in the other a plate or palette covered with freshly mixed colors. His strongly built figure was erect

and well proportioned; his bearing was that of a cultivated gentleman; and he made upon me, from the first, a pleasant and favorable impression. He seemed, in fact, to be an excellent specimen of the blonde type of Russian young manhood. His eyes were clear and blue; his thick light brown hair was ill cut, and rumpled a little in a boyish way over the high forehead; the full blonde beard gave manliness and dignity to his well-shaped head; and his frank, open, good-tempered face, flushed a little with heat and wet with perspiration, seemed to me to be the face of a warm-hearted and impulsive, but, at the same time, strong and well-balanced man. It was, at any rate, a face strangely out of harmony with all my preconceived ideas of a nihilist.

Mr. Pavlovski introduced me to the young artist as an American traveler, who was interested in Siberian scenery, who had heard of his sketches, and who would like very much to see some of them. Mr. Lobonofski greeted me quietly but cordially, and at once brought out the sketches—apologizing, however, for their imperfections, and asking us to remember that they had been made in prison, on coarse writing-paper, and that the outdoor views were limited to landscapes which could be seen from prison and *étape* windows. The sketches were evidently the work of an untrained hand, and were mostly representations of prison and *étape* interiors, portraits of political exiles, and such bits of towns and villages as could be seen from the windows of the various cells that the artist had occupied in the course of his journey to Siberia. They all had, however, a certain rude force and fidelity, and one of them served as material for the sketch illustrating the Tiumen prison-yard in THE CENTURY MAGAZINE for June.

My conversation with Mr. Lobonofski at this interview did not touch political questions, and was confined, for the most part, to topics suggested by the sketches. He described his journey to Siberia just as he would have described it if he had made it voluntarily, and but for an occasional reference to a prison or an *étape*, there was nothing in the recital to remind one that he was a nihilist and an exile. His manner was quiet, modest, and frank; he followed any conversational lead with ready tact, and although I watched him closely, I could not detect the slightest indication of eccentricity or "crankiness." He must have felt conscious that I was secretly regarding him with critical curiosity,—looking at him, in fact, as one looks for the first time at an extraordinary type of criminal,—but

he did not manifest the least awkwardness, embarrassment, or self-consciousness. He was simply a quiet, well-bred, self-possessed gentleman.

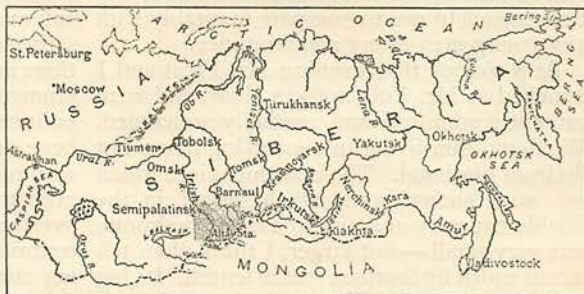
When we took our leave, after half an hour's conversation, Mr. Lobonofski cordially invited me to bring Mr. Frost to see him that evening at his house, and said that he would have a few of his friends there to meet us. I thanked him and promised that we would come.

"Well," said Mr. Pavlovski, as the door closed behind us, "what do you think of the political exile?"

"He makes a very favorable impression upon me," I replied. "Are they all like him?"

"No, not precisely like him; but they are not bad people. There is another interesting political in the city whom you ought to see—a young man named Leontief. He is employed in the office of Mr. Makovetski, a justice of the peace here, and is engaged with the latter in making anthropological researches among the Kirghis. I believe they are now collecting material for a monograph upon Kirghis customary law.* Why should n't you call upon Mr. Makovetski? I have no doubt that he would introduce Mr. Leontief to you, and I am sure that you would find them both to be intelligent and cultivated men."

This seemed to me a good suggestion; and as soon as Mr. Pavlovski had left me I paid a visit to Mr. Makovetski, ostensibly for the purpose of asking permission to sketch some of the Kirghis implements and utensils in the town library, of which he was one of the directors. Mr. Makovetski seemed pleased to learn that I was interested in their little library, granted me permission to sketch the specimens of Kirghis handiwork there exhibited, and finally introduced me to his writ-



MAP OF SIBERIA. SHADED PORTION SHOWS ROUTE TRAVELED IN THIS ARTICLE.

ing-clerk, Mr. Leontief, who, he said, had made a special study of the Kirghis, and

* This monograph has since been published in the "Proceedings of the West Siberian Branch of the Imperial Geographical Society."

could give me any desired information concerning the natives of that tribe.

Mr. Leontief was a good-looking young fellow, apparently about twenty-five years of age, rather below the medium height, with light brown hair and beard, intelligent gray eyes, a slightly aquiline nose, and a firm, well-rounded chin. His head and face were suggestive of studious and scientific tastes, and if I had met him in Washington and had been asked to guess his profession from his appearance, I should have said that he was probably a young scientist connected with the United States Geological Survey, the Smithsonian Institution, or the National Museum. He was, as I subsequently learned, the son of an army officer who at one time commanded the Cossack garrison in this same city of Semipalatinsk. As a boy he was enrolled in the corps of imperial pages, and began his education in the large school established by the Government for the training of such pages in the Russian capital. At the age of eighteen or nineteen he entered the St. Petersburg University, and in the fourth year of his student life was arrested and exiled by "administrative process" to western Siberia for five years, upon the charge of having had secret communication with political prisoners in the fortress of Petropavlovsk.

Although Mr. Leontief's bearing was somewhat more formal and reserved than that of Mr. Lobonofski, and his attitude toward me one of cool, observant criticism, rather than of friendly confidence, he impressed me very favorably; and when, after half an hour's conversation, I returned to my hotel, I was forced to admit to myself that if all nihilists were like the two whom I had met in Semipalatinsk, I should have to modify my opinions with regard to them. In point of intelligence and education Mr. Lobonofski and Mr. Leontief seemed to me to compare favorably with any young men of my acquaintance.

At 8 o'clock that evening Mr. Frost and I knocked at Mr. Lobonofski's door, and were promptly admitted and cordially welcomed. We found him living in a small log-house not far from our hotel. The apartment into which we were shown, and which served in the double capacity of sitting-room and bedroom, was very small—not larger, I think, than ten feet in width by fourteen feet in length. Its log walls and board ceiling were covered with dingy whitewash, and its floor of rough unmatched planks was bare. Against a rude unpainted partition to the right of the door stood a small single bedstead of stained wood, covered with neat but rather scanty bed-clothing, and in the corner beyond it was a triangular table, upon which were lying, among other

books, Herbert Spencer's "Essays: Moral, Political, and Æsthetic," and the same author's "Principles of Psychology." The opposite corner of the room was occupied by a what-not, or étagère, of domestic manufacture, upon the shelves of which were a few more books, a well-filled herbarium, of coarse brown wrapping-paper, an opera-glass, and an English New Testament. Between two small deeply set windows opening into the court-yard stood a large unpainted wooden table, without a cloth, upon which was lying, open, the book that Mr. Lobonofski had been reading when we entered—a French translation of Balfour Stewart's "Conservation of Energy." There was no other furniture in the apartment except three or four unpainted wooden chairs. Everything was scrupulously neat and clean; but the room looked like the home of a man too poor to afford anything more than the barest essentials of life.

After Mr. Lobonofski had made a few preliminary inquiries with regard to the object of our journey to Siberia, and had expressed the pleasure which he said it afforded him to meet and welcome Americans in his own house, he turned to me with a smile and said, "I suppose, Mr. Kennan, you have heard terrible stories in America about the Russian nihilists?"

"Yes," I replied; "we seldom hear of them except in connection with a plot to blow up something or to kill somebody, and I must confess that I have had a bad opinion of them. The very word 'nihilist' is understood in America to mean a person who does not believe in anything and who advocates the destruction of all existing institutions."

"'Nihilist' is an old name," he said; "and it is no longer applicable to the Russian revolutionary party, if, indeed, it was ever applicable. I don't think you will find among the political exiles in Siberia any 'nihilists,' in the sense in which you use the word. Of course there are, in what may be called the anti-Government class, people who hold all sorts of political opinions. There are a few who believe in the so-called policy of 'terror'—who regard themselves as justified in resorting even to political assassination as a means of overthrowing the Government; but even the terrorists do not propose to destroy all existing institutions. Every one of them would, I think, lay down his arms, if the Tsar would grant to Russia a constitutional form of government and guarantee free speech, a free press, and freedom from arbitrary arrest, imprisonment, and exile. Have you ever seen the letter sent by the Russian revolutionists to Alexander III. upon his accession to the throne?"



FIRST VIEW OF THE ALTAI MOUNTAINS.

"No," I replied; "I have heard of it, but have never seen it."

"It sets forth," he said, "the aims and objects of the revolutionary party, and contains a distinct promise that if the Tsar will grant freedom of speech and summon a national assembly the revolutionists will abstain from all further violence, and will agree not to oppose any form of government which such assembly may sanction.* You can hardly say that people who express a willingness to enter into such an agreement as this are in favor of the destruction of all existing institutions. I suppose you know," he continued, "that when your President Garfield was assassinated, the columns of 'The Messenger of the Will of the People' [the organ of the Russian revolutionists in Geneva] were bordered with black as a token of grief and sympathy, and that the paper contained an eloquent editorial condemning political assassination as wholly unjustifiable in a country where there are open courts and a free press, and where the officers of the Government are chosen by a free vote of the people?"

"No," I replied; "I was not aware of it."

"It is true," he rejoined. "Of course at that time Garfield's murder was regarded as a political crime, and as such it was condemned in Russia, even by the most extreme terrorists."

Our conversation was interrupted at this point by the entrance of three young men

* I now have in my possession a copy of this letter. A part of it may be found translated in Stepniak's "The Russian Storm Cloud," p. 6.

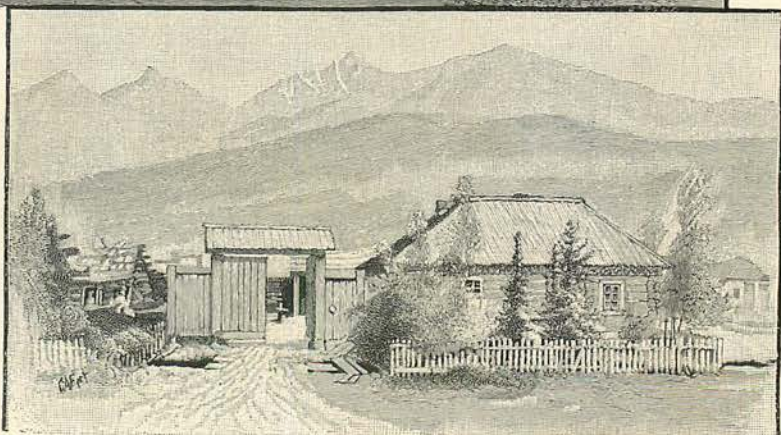
and a lady, who were introduced to us as Mr. Lobonofski's exile friends. In the appearance of the young men there was nothing particularly striking or noticeable. One of them seemed to be a bright university student, twenty-four or twenty-five years of age, and the other two looked like educated peasants or artisans, whose typically Russian faces were rather heavy, impassive, and gloomy, and whose manner was lacking in animation and responsiveness. Life and exile seemed to have gone hard with them, and to have left them depressed and embittered. The lady, whose name was Madame Dicheskula, represented apparently a different social class, and had a more buoyant and sunny disposition. She was about thirty years of age, tall and straight, with a well-proportioned but somewhat spare figure, thick, short brown hair falling in a soft mass about the nape of her neck, and a bright, intelligent, mobile face, which I thought must once have been extremely pretty. It had become, however, a little too thin and worn, and her complexion had been freckled and roughened by exposure to wind and weather and by the hardships of prison and *étape* life. She was neatly and becomingly dressed in a Scotch plaid gown of soft dark serge, with little ruffles of white lace at her throat and wrists; and when her face lighted up in animated conversation, she seemed to me to be a very attractive and interesting woman. In her demeanor there was not a suggestion of the boldness, hardness, and eccentricity which I had expected to find in women exiled to Siberia for

political crime. She talked rapidly and well; laughed merrily at times over reminiscences of her journey to Siberia; apologized for the unwomanly shortness of her hair, which, she said, had all been cut off in prison; and related with a keen sense of humor her adventures while crossing the Kirghis steppe from Akmola to Semipalatinsk. That her natural

About 9 o'clock Mr. Lobonofski brought in a steaming samovar, Madame Dicheskula made tea, and throughout the remainder of the evening we all sat around the big pine table as if we had been acquainted for months instead of hours, talking about the Russian revolutionary movement, the exile system, literature, art, science, and American politics.



buoyancy of disposition was tempered by deep feeling was evident from the way in which she described some of the incidents of her Siberian experience. She seemed greatly touched, for example, by the kindness shown to her party by the peasants of Kamishlova, a village through which they passed on their way from Ekaterineburg to Tiumen. They happened to arrive there on Trinity Sunday, and were surprised to find that the villagers, as a manifestation of sympathy with the political exiles, had thoroughly scoured out and freshened up the old village étape, and had decorated its gloomy cells with leafy branches and fresh wild-flowers. It seemed to me that tears came to her eyes as she expressed her deep and grateful appreciation of this act of thoughtfulness and good-will on the part of the Kamishlova peasants.



THE ALTAI STATION AND OUR HOUSE THERE.

The cool, reasonable way in which these exiles discussed public affairs, problems of government, and their personal experience impressed me very favorably. There was none of the bitterness of feeling and extravagance of statement which I had anticipated, and I did not notice in their conversation the least tendency to exaggerate or even to dwell upon their own sufferings as a means of exciting our sympathy. Madame Dicheskula, for instance, had been robbed of most of her clothing and personal effects by the police at the time of

her arrest; had spent more than a year in solitary confinement in the Moscow forwarding prison; had then been banished, without trial, to a dreary settlement in the Siberian province of Akmolinsk; and, finally, had been brought across the great Kirghis steppe in winter to the city of Semipalatinsk. In all this experience there must have been a great deal of intense personal suffering; but she did not lay half as much stress upon it in conversation as she did upon the decoration of the old étape with leafy branches and flowers by the people of Kamishlova, as an expression of sympathy with her and her exiled friends. About 11 o'clock, after a most pleasant and interesting evening, we bade them all good-night and returned to our hotel.

On the following morning Mr. Lobonofski, Madame Dicheskula, Mr. Frost, and I took droshkies and drove down the right bank of the Irtysh a mile or two, to a small grove of poplars and aspens near the water's edge, where six or eight political exiles were spending the summer in camp. A large Kirghis "yourt" of felt, and two or three smaller cotton tents, had been pitched on the grass under the trees, and in them were living two or three young women and four or five young men, who had taken this means of escaping from the heat, glare, and sand of the verdureless city. Two of the women were mere girls, seventeen or eighteen years of age, who looked as if they ought to be pursuing their education in a high school or a female seminary, and why they had been exiled to Siberia I could not imagine. It did not seem to me possible that they could be regarded in any country, or under any circumstances, as a dangerous menace to social order or to the stability of the government. As I shook hands with them and noticed their shy, embarrassed behavior, and the quick flushes of color which came to their cheeks when I spoke to them, I experienced for the first time something like a feeling of contempt for the Russian Government. "If I were the Tsar," I said to Mr. Frost, "and had an army of soldiers and police at my back, and if, nevertheless, I felt so afraid of timid, half-grown school-girls that I could not sleep in peaceful security until I had banished them to Siberia, I think I should abdicate in favor of some stronger and more courageous man." The idea that a powerful government like that of Russia could not protect itself against seminary girls and Sunday-school teachers without tearing them from their families, and isolating them in the middle of a great Asiatic desert, seemed to me not only ludicrous, but absolutely preposterous.

We spent in the pleasant shady camp of these political exiles nearly the whole of

the long, hot summer day. Mr. Frost made sketches of the picturesquely grouped tents, while I talked with the young men, read Irving aloud to one of them who was studying English, answered questions about America, and asked questions in turn about Siberia and Russia. Before the day ended we were upon as cordial and friendly a footing with the whole party as if we had known them for a month.

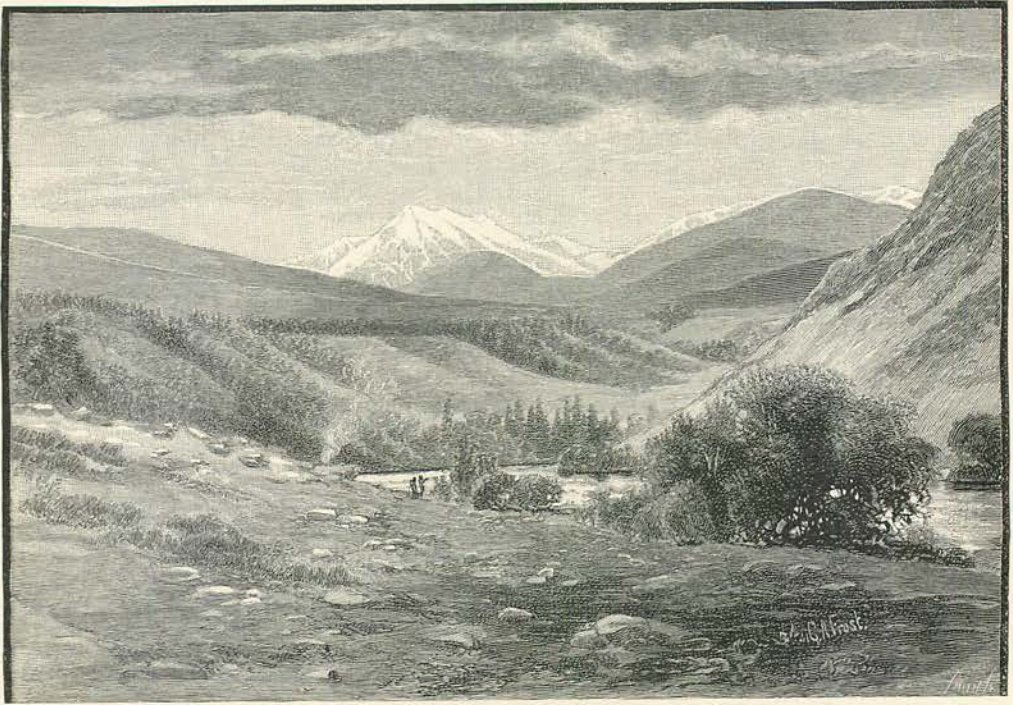
Late in the afternoon we returned to the city, and in the evening went to the house of Mr. Leontief, where most of the political exiles whom we had not yet seen had been invited to meet us. The room into which we were ushered was much larger and better furnished than that in which Mr. Lobonofski lived; but nothing in it particularly attracted my attention except a portrait of Herbert Spencer, which hung on the wall over Mr. Leontief's desk. There were twelve or fifteen exiles present, including Mr. Lobonofski, Madame Dicheskula, Dr. Bogomolets,—a young surgeon whose wife was in penal servitude at the mines of Kara,—and the two Prisedski sisters, to whom reference was made in my article upon the "Prison Life of the Russian Revolutionists," in *THE CENTURY MAGAZINE* for December. The general conversation which followed our introduction to the assembled company was bright, animated, and informal. Mr. Leontief, in reply to questions from me, related the history of the Semipalatinsk library, and said that it had not only been a great boon to the political exiles, but had noticeably stimulated the intellectual life of the city. "Even the Kirghis," he said, "occasionally avail themselves of its privileges. I know a learned old Kirghis here, named Ibrahim Konobai, who not only goes to the library, but reads such authors as Buckle, Mill, and Draper."

"You don't mean to say," exclaimed a young university student, "that there is any old Kirghis in Semipalatinsk who actually reads Mill and Draper!"

"Yes, I do," replied Mr. Leontief, coolly. "The very first time I met him he astonished me by asking me to explain to him the difference between induction and deduction. Some time afterward I found out that he was really making a study of English philosophy, and had read Russian translations of all the authors that I have named."

"Do you suppose that he understood what he read?" inquired the university student.

"I spent two whole evenings in examining him upon Draper's 'Intellectual Development of Europe,'" replied Mr. Leontief; "and I must say that he seemed to have a very fair comprehension of it."



PICNIC GROUND, VALLEY OF THE BUKHTARMA.

"I notice," I said, "that a large number of books in the library — particularly the works of the English scientists — have been withdrawn from public use, although all of them seem once to have passed the censor. How does it happen that books are at one time allowed and at another time prohibited?"

"Our censorship is very capricious," replied one of the exiles. "How would you explain the fact that such a book as Adam Smith's 'Wealth of Nations' is prohibited, while Darwin's 'Origin of Species' and 'Descent of Man' are allowed? The latter are certainly more dangerous than the former."

"It has been suggested," said another, "that the list of prohibited books was made up by putting together, without examination, the titles of all books found by the police in the quarters of persons arrested for political offenses. The 'Wealth of Nations' happened to be found in some unfortunate revolutionist's house, therefore the 'Wealth of Nations' must be a dangerous book."

"When I was arrested," said Mr. Lobonofski, "the police seized and took away even a French history which I had borrowed from the public library. In looking hastily through it they noticed here and there the word 'revolution,' and that was enough. I tried to make them understand that a French history must, of course, treat of the French Revolution, but it was of no use. They also carried off,

under the impression that it was an infernal machine, a rude imitation of a steam-engine which my little brother had made for amusement out of some bits of wood and metal and the tubes of an old opera-glass." Amidst general laughter, a number of the exiles related humorous anecdotes illustrating the methods of the Russian police, and then the conversation drifted into other channels.

As an evidence of the intelligence and culture of these political exiles, and of the wide range of their interests and sympathies, it seems to me worth while to say that their conversation showed more than a superficial acquaintance with the best English and American literature, as well as a fairly accurate knowledge of American institutions and history. Among the authors referred to, discussed, or quoted by them that evening were Shakspeare, Mill, Spencer, Buckle, Balfour Stewart, Heine, Hegel, Lange, Irving, Cooper, Longfellow, Bret Harte, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. They knew the name and something of the record of our newly elected President; discussed intelligently his civil-service reform policy and asked pertinent questions with regard to its working, and manifested generally an acquaintance with American affairs which one does not expect to find anywhere on the other side of the Atlantic, and least of all in Siberia.

After a plain but substantial supper, with

delicious overland tea, the exiles sang for us in chorus some of the plaintive popular melodies of Russia, and Mr. Frost and I tried, in turn, to give them an idea of our college songs, our war songs, and the music of the American negroes. It must have been nearly midnight when we reluctantly bade them all good-bye and returned to the Hotel Sibir.

It is impossible, of course, within the limits of a single magazine article, to give even the

men and women, with warm affections, quick sympathies, generous impulses, and high standards of honor and duty. They are, as Mr. Pavlovski said to me, "men and women who, under other circumstances, might render valuable services to their country." If, instead of thus serving their country, they are living in exile, it is not because they are lacking in the virtue and the patriotism which are essential to good citizenship, but because the Government,



COSSACK PICKET OF JINGISTAL.

substance of the long conversations concerning the Russian Government and the Russian revolutionary movement which I had with the political exiles in Semipalatinsk. All that I aim to do in the present paper is to describe, as fairly and accurately as possible, the impression which these exiles made upon me. If I may judge others by myself, American readers have had an idea that the people who are called nihilists stand apart from the rest of mankind in a class by themselves, and that there is in their character something fierce, gloomy, abnormal, and, to a sane mind, incomprehensible, which alienates from them, and which should alienate from them, the sympathies of the civilized world. If the political exiles in Semipalatinsk be taken as fair representatives of the class thus judged, the idea seems to me to be a wholly mistaken one. I found them to be bright, intelligent, well-informed

which assumes the right to think and act for the Russian people, is out of harmony with the spirit of the time.

On Saturday, July 18, after having inspected the city prison, obtained as much information as possible concerning the exile system, and made farewell calls upon our friends, we provided ourselves with a new padorozhnaya and left Semipalatinsk with three post-horses for the mountains of the Altai. The wild alpine region which we hoped to explore lies along the frontier of Mongolia, about 350 miles east of Semipalatinsk and nearly 600 miles due south from Tomsk. The German travelers Finsh and Brehm went to the edge of it in 1876, but the high snowy peaks of the Katunski and Chuiski Alps, east of the Altai Station, had never been seen by a foreigner, and had been visited by very few Russians.

For nearly two hundred versts, after leaving Semipalatinsk, we rode up the right bank of the Irtysh, through a great rolling steppe of dry yellowish grass. Here and there, where this steppe was irrigated by small streams running into the Irtysh, it supported a luxuriant vegetation, the little transverse valleys being filled with wild roses, hollyhocks, golden-rod, wild currant and gooseberry bushes, and splendid spikes, five feet in height, of dark blue aconite;

desert. The thermometer ranged day after day from 90 to 103° in the shade; the atmosphere was suffocating; every leaf and every blade of grass, as far as the eye could reach, had been absolutely burned dead by the fierce sunshine; great whirling columns of sand, 100 to 150 feet in height, swept slowly and majestically across the sun-scorched plain; and we could trace the progress of a single mounted Kirghis five miles away by the cloud of



VILLAGE OF ARUL.

but in most places the great plain was sun-scorched and bare. The Cossack villages through which we passed did not differ materially from those between Semipalatinsk and Omsk, except that their log-houses were newer and in better repair, and their inhabitants seemed to be wealthier and more prosperous. The Russian love of crude color became again apparent in the dresses of the women and girls; and on Sunday, when all of the Cossacks were in holiday attire, the streets of these villages were bright with the red, blue, and yellow costumes of the young men and women, who sat in rows upon benches in the shade of the houses, talking, flirting, and eating melon seeds, or, after the sun had gone down, danced in the streets to the music of fiddles and triangular guitars.

The farther we went up the Irtysh the hotter became the weather and the more barren the steppe, until it was easy to imagine that we were in an Arabian or a north African

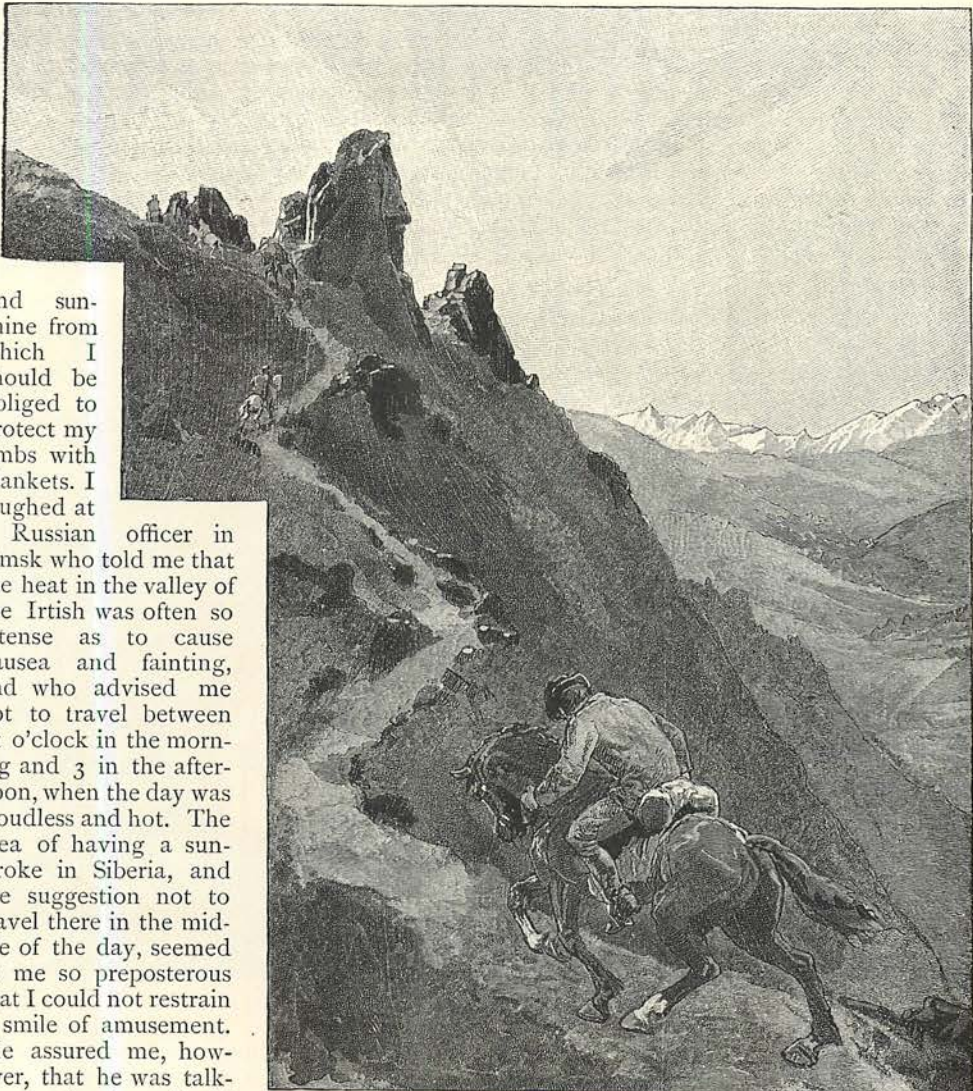
dust which his horse's hoofs raised from the steppe. I suffered intensely from heat and thirst, and had to protect myself from the fierce sunshine by swathing my body in four thicknesses of blanket and putting a big down pillow over my legs. I could not hold my hand in that sunshine five minutes without pain, and wrapping my body in four thicknesses of heavy woolen blanketing gave me at once a sensation of coolness. Mine was the southern or sunny side of the tarantas, and I finally became so exhausted with the fierce heat, and had such a strange feeling of faintness, nausea, and suffocation, that I asked Mr. Frost to change sides with me, and give me a brief respite. He wrapped himself up in a blanket, put a pillow over his legs, and managed to endure it until evening. Familiar as I supposed myself to be with Siberia, I little thought, when I crossed the frontier, that I should find in it a north African desert, with whirling sand-columns,

and sunshine from which I should be obliged to protect my limbs with blankets. I laughed at a Russian officer in Omsk who told me that the heat in the valley of the Irtysh was often so intense as to cause nausea and fainting, and who advised me not to travel between 11 o'clock in the morning and 3 in the afternoon, when the day was cloudless and hot. The idea of having a sunstroke in Siberia, and the suggestion not to travel there in the middle of the day, seemed to me so preposterous that I could not restrain a smile of amusement. He assured me, however, that he was talking seriously, and said that he had seen soldiers unconscious for hours after a fit of

nausea and fainting, brought on by marching in the sunshine. He did not know sunstroke by name, and seemed to think that the symptoms which he described were peculiar effects of the Irtysh valley heat, but it was evidently sunstroke that he had seen.

At the station of Voroninskaya, in the middle of this parched desert, we were overtaken by a furious hot sand-storm from the southwest, with a temperature of 103° in the shade. The sand and fine hot dust were carried to a height of a hundred feet, and drifted past us in dense, suffocating clouds, hiding everything from sight and making it almost impossible to breathe. Although we were riding with the storm, and not against it, I literally gasped

for breath for more than two hours; and when we arrived at the station of Chermshanka, it would have been hard to tell, from an inspection of our faces, whether we were Kirghis or Americans — black men or white. I drank nearly a quart of cold milk, and even that did not fully assuage my fierce thirst. Mr. Frost, after washing the dust out of his eyes and drinking seven tumblers of milk, revived sufficiently to say, "If anybody thinks that it does n't get hot in Siberia, just refer him to me!"



ASCENT OF MOUNTAIN-TRAIL FROM BEREL.



At the station of Malo Krasnoyarskaya we left the Irtysh to the right and saw it no more. Late that afternoon we reached the first foothills of the great mountain range of the Altai, and began the long, gradual climb to the Altai Station. Before dark on the following day we were riding through cool, elevated alpine meadows, where the fresh green grass was intermingled with bluebells, fragrant spirea, gentians, and delicate fringed pinks, and

9000 feet in height, crowned with 1000 feet of fresh, brilliantly white snow, and belted with a broad zone of evergreen forest; beneath lay a beautiful, park-like valley, through which ran the road, under the shade of scattered larches, across clear rushing mountain streams which came tumbling down in cascades from the melting snows above, and over grassy meadows sprinkled with wild pansies, gentians, fringed pinks, and ripening strawberries. After



KIRGHIS ENCAMPMENT ON THE SUMMIT.

where the mountain tops over our heads were white, a thousand feet down, with freshly fallen snow. The change from the torrid African desert of the Irtysh to this superb Siberian Switzerland was so sudden and so extraordinary as to be almost bewildering. I could not help asking myself every fifteen minutes, "Did I only dream of that dreary, sun-scorched steppe yesterday, with its sand spouts, its mountains of furnace slag, its fierce heat, and its whitening bones, or is it really possible that I can have come from that to this in twenty-four hours?" To my steppe-wearied eyes the scenery, as we approached the Altai Station, was indescribably beautiful. On our left was a range of low mountains, the smooth slopes of which were checkered with purple cloud shadows and tinted here and there by vast areas of flowers; on our right, rising almost from the road, was a splendid chain of bold, grandly sculptured peaks from 7000 to

three thousand miles of almost unbroken plain, or steppe, this scene made upon me a most profound impression. We reached the Altai Station — or, as the Kirghis call it, "Koton Karaghai" — about 6 o'clock in the cool of a beautiful, calm, midsummer afternoon. I shall never forget the enthusiastic delight which I felt as I rode up out of a wooded valley fragrant with wild-flowers, past a picturesque cluster of colored Kirghis tents, across two hundred yards of smooth elevated meadow, and then, stopping at the entrance to the village, turned back and looked at the mountains. Never, I thought, had I seen an alpine picture which could for a moment bear comparison with it. I have seen the most beautiful scenery in the mountains of the Sierra Nevada, of Nicaragua, of Kamtchatka, of the Caucasus, and of the Russian Altai, and it is my deliberate opinion that for varied beauty, picturesque-ness, and effectiveness that mountain



DISTANT VIEW OF THE KATUNSKI ALPS.

landscape is absolutely unsurpassed. If there exist a more superbly situated village than the Altai Station, I am ready to cross three oceans to see it.

The station itself is a mere Cossack outpost with seventy or eighty log-houses, with wide, clean streets between them and with a quaint wooden church at one end; but to a traveler just from the hot, arid plains of the Irtysh even this insignificant Cossack hamlet has its peculiar charm. In front of every house in the settlement is a little inclosure, or front yard, filled with young birches, silver-leaved aspens, and flowering shrubs; and through all of these yards, down each side of every street, runs a tinkling, gurgling stream of clear, cold water from the melting snows on the mountains. The whole village, therefore, go where you will, is filled with the murmur of falling water; and how pleasant that sound is, you must travel for a month in the parched, dust-smothered, sun-scorched valley of the Irtysh fully to understand. The little rushing streams seem to bring with them, as they tumble in rapids through the settlement, the fresh, cool atmosphere of the high peaks where they were born two hours before; and although your thermometer may say that the day is hot and the air sultry, its statements are so persistently, so confidently, so hilariously controverted by the joyous voice of the stream under your window with its half-expressed suggestions of

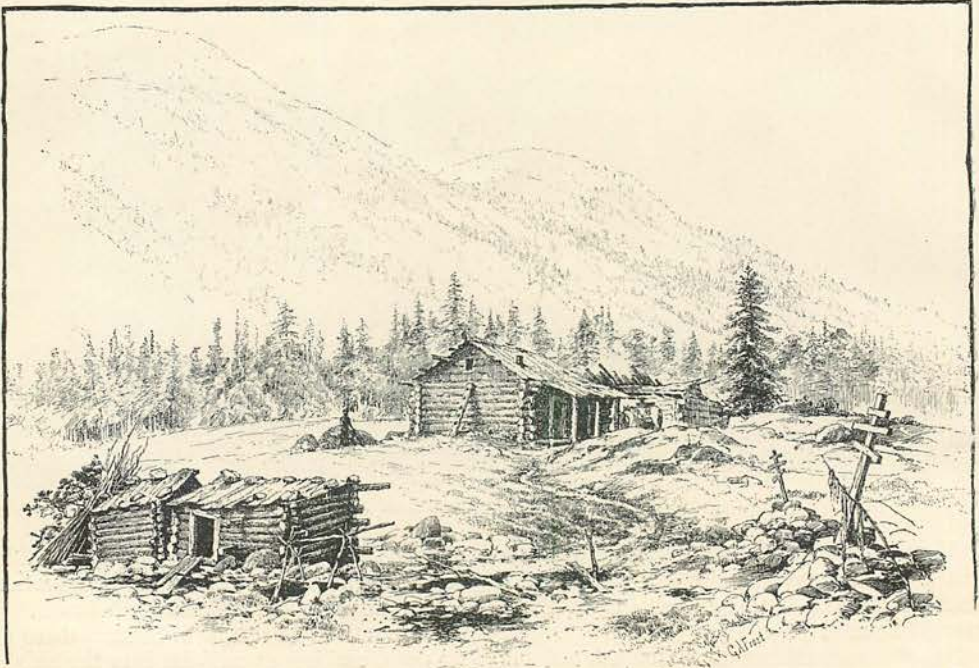
snow and glaciers and cooling spray, that your reason is silenced and your imagination accepts the story of the snow-born brook.

We remained at the Altai Station three or four days, making excursions into the neighboring mountains with the Russian commander of the post and his wife, visiting and photographing the Kirghis who were encamped near the village, and collecting information with regard to the region lying farther to the eastward which we purposed to explore.

On Monday, July 27, we started for a trip of about two hundred versts, on horseback, to the Katunski Alps, or "Beilki," which are said to be the highest and wildest peaks of the Russian Altai. The day of our departure happened to be the namesday of Captain Maiefski, the Russian commander of the post; and in order to celebrate that namesday, and at the same time give us a pleasant "send off," he invited a party of friends to go with us as far as the rapids of the Bukhtarma River, about fifteen versts from the station, and there have a picnic. When we started, therefore, we were accompanied by Captain Maiefski and his wife and daughter, the Cossack ataman and his wife, a political exile named Zavalishin and his wife, and three or four other officers and ladies. The party was escorted by ten or fifteen mounted Kirghis in bright-colored "beshmets," girt about the waist with silver-studded belts; and the cavalcade of uniformed officers,

gayly dressed ladies, and hooded Kirghis presented, at least to our eyes, a most novel and picturesque appearance, as it cantered away across the grassy plateau upon which the station is situated, and descended into the green, flowery valley of the Bukhtarma. Captain Maiefski had sent forward to the rapids

newly built log-houses situated in the shallow, flower-carpeted valley of the Bukhtarma; and on Tuesday we passed through the picturesque village of Arul and reached a Cossack station called Berel, where we expected to leave the Bukhtarma valley and plunge into the mountains.



THE RAKHMANOVSKI HOT SPRINGS.

early in the morning two Kirghis yourts, a quantity of rugs and pillows, and his whole housekeeping outfit; and when we arrived we found the tents pitched in a beautiful spot among the trees beside the Bukhtarma, where camp-fires were already burning, where rugs and pillows were spread for the ladies, and where delicious tea was all ready for our refreshment. After an excellently cooked and served dinner of soup, freshly caught fish, roast lamb, boiled mutton, cold chicken, pilau of rice with raisins, strawberries, and candies, we spent a long, delightful afternoon in botanizing, fishing, rifle-shooting, catching butterflies, telling riddles, and singing songs. It was, I think, the most pleasant and successful picnic that I ever had the good fortune to enjoy; and when, late in the afternoon, Mr. Frost and I bade the party good-bye, I am sure we both secretly wished we could stay there in camp for a week, instead of going to the Katuski Alps.

We spent that night at the little Cossack picket of Jingtai, which consisted of two

Wednesday morning, with two Cossack guides, five Kirghis horses, a tent, and a week's provisions, we forded the milky current of the Berel River, and climbed slowly for two hours in zigzags up a steep Kirghis trail which led to the crest of an enormous mound-shaped foot-hill behind the village. After stopping for a few moments at a Kirghis encampment on the summit, two or three thousand feet above the bottom of the Bukhtarma valley, we tightened our saddle-girths and plunged into the wilderness of mountains, precipices, and wild ravines which lay to the northward.

Late in the afternoon, after an extremely difficult and fatiguing journey of 25 or 30 versts, we rode 2000 or 3000 feet down a steep, slippery, break-neck descent, into the beautiful valley of the Rakhmanovski Hot Springs, where, shut in by high mountains, we found a clear little alpine lake, framed in greenery and flowers, and two untenanted log-houses, in one of which we took up our quarters for the night. When we awoke on the fol-

lowing morning rain was falling heavily, and horseback travel in such a country was evidently out of the question. The storm continued, with an occasional brief intermission, for two days; but on the morning of the third the weather finally cleared up, and without waiting for the mountain slopes to become dry, we saddled our horses and went on.

The last sixty versts of our journey were made with great difficulty and much peril, our route lying across tremendous mountain ridges and deep valleys with almost precipitous sides, into which we descended by following the course of foaming mountain torrents, or clambering down the moraines of extinct glaciers, over great heaped-up masses of loose, broken rocks, through swamps, tangled jungles of laurel bushes and fallen trees, and down slopes so steep that it was almost impossible to throw one's body far enough back to keep one's balance in the saddle. Half the time our horses were sliding on all four feet, and dislodging stones which rolled or bounded for half a mile downward, until they were dashed to pieces over tremendous precipices. I was not wholly inexperienced in mountain travel, having ridden on horseback the whole length of the mountainous peninsula of Kamtchatka and crossed three times the great range of the Caucasus, once at a height of twelve thousand feet; but I must confess that during our descents into the valleys of the Rakhmanofski, the Black Berel, the White Berel, and the Katun my heart was in my mouth for hours at a time. On any other horses than those of the Kirghis such descents would have been utterly impossible. My horse fell with me once, but I was not hurt. The region through which we passed is a primeval wilderness, traversed only by the "Diko-Kammenni Kirghis," or "Kirghis of the Wild Rocks," and abounding in game. We saw "marals," or Siberian elk, wolves, wild sheep, and many fresh trails made by bears in the long grass of the valley bottoms. On horseback we chased wild goats, and might have shot hundreds of partridges, grouse, ducks, geese, eagles, and cranes. The flora of the lower mountain valleys was extremely rich, varied, and luxuriant, comprising beautiful wild pansies of half a dozen varieties and colors, fringed pinks, spirea, two species of gentian, wild hollyhocks, daisies, forget-me-nots, alpine roses, trollius, wild poppies, and



THE DESCENT INTO THE VALLEY OF THE WHITE BEREL.

scores of other flowers that I had never before seen, many of them very large, brilliant, and showy. Among plants and fruits which with us are domesticated, but which in the Altai grow wild, I noticed rhubarb, celery, red currants, black currants, gooseberries, raspberries, strawberries, blackberries, wild cherries, crab-apples, and wild apricots. Most of the berries were ripe, or nearly ripe, and the wild currants were as large and abundant as in an American garden. The scenery was extremely wild and grand, surpassing, at times, anything that I had seen in the Caucasus.

On Saturday, August 1, we reached the foot of the last great ridge, or water-shed, which separated us from the main chain of the Katunski Alps, and camped for the night in a high mountain valley beside the White Berel, a milky stream which runs out from under a great glacier a few miles higher up. The air was clear and frosty, but we built a big campfire and managed to get through the night without much discomfort. Sunday morning we

climbed about two thousand feet to the summit of the last ridge, and looked over into the wild valley of the Katun, out of which rise the "Katunski Pillars," the highest peaks of the Russian Altai. I was prepared, to a certain extent, for grandeur of scenery, because I had already caught glimpses of these peaks two or three times, at distances varying from twenty-five to eighty miles; but the near view, from the heights above the Katun, so far surpassed all my anticipations that I was simply overawed. I hardly know how to describe it

mous glaciers, the largest of them descending from the saddle between the twin summits in a series of ice falls for at least 4000 feet. The glacier on the extreme right had an almost perpendicular ice fall of 1200 or 1500 feet, and the glacier on the extreme left gave birth to a torrent which tumbled about 800 feet, with a hoarse roar, into the deep narrow gorge. The latter glacier was longitudinally divided by three moraines, which looked from our point of view like long, narrow, A-shaped dumps of furnace slag or fine coal dust, but which were



THE "KATUNSKI PILLARS"—SOURCE OF THE KATUN RIVER.

without using language which will seem exaggerated. The word which oftenest rises to my lips when I think of it is "tremendous." It was not beautiful, it was not picturesque; it was tremendous and overwhelming. The narrow valley, or gorge, of the Katun, which lay almost under our feet, was between 2000 and 3000 feet deep. On the other side of it rose, far above our heads, the wild, mighty chain of the Katunski Alps, culminating just opposite us in two tremendous snowy peaks whose height I estimated at 15,000 feet.* They were white from base to summit, except where the snow was broken by great black precipices, or pierced by sharp, rocky spines, or aiguilles. Down the sides of these peaks, from vast fields of névé above, fell seven enor-

in reality composed of black rocks, from the size of one's head to the size of a freight car, and extended 4 or 5 miles, with a width of 300 feet and a height of from 50 to 75 feet above the general level of the glacier. The extreme summits of the two highest peaks were more than half of the time hidden in clouds; but this rather added to than detracted from the wild grandeur of the scene, by giving mystery to the origin of the enormous glaciers, which at such times seemed to the imagination to be tumbling down from unknown heights in the sky through masses of rolling vapor. All the time there came up to us from the depths of the gorge the hoarse roar of the waterfall, and with it blended, now and then, the deeper thunder of the great glaciers, as masses of ice gave way and settled into new positions in the ice falls. This thundering of the glaciers continued for nearly a minute at a time, varying in intensity, and resembling occasionally the sound of a distant but heavy

* Captain Maiefski's estimate of their height was 18,000 feet above the sea level. They have never been climbed nor measured, and I do not even know the height above the sea of the valley bottom from which they rise.

and rapid cannonade. No movement of the ice in the falls was perceptible to the eye from the point at which we stood, but the sullen, rumbling thunder was evidence enough of the mighty force of the agencies which were at work before us.

After looking at the mountains for half an hour, we turned our attention to the valley of the Katun beneath us, with the view to ascertaining whether it would be possible to get down into it and reach the foot of the main glacier, which gave birth to the Katun River. Mr. Frost declared the descent to be utterly impracticable, and almost lost patience with me because I insisted upon the guides trying it. "Anybody can see," he said, "that this slope ends in a big precipice; and even if we get our horses down there, we never can get them up again. It is foolish to think of such a thing." I had seen enough, however, of Kirghis horses to feel great confidence in their climbing abilities; and although the descent did look very dangerous, I was by no means satisfied that it was utterly impracticable. While we were discussing the question, our guide was making a bold and practical attempt to solve it. We could no longer see him from where we stood, but every now and then a stone or small boulder, dislodged by his horse's feet, would leap suddenly into sight 300 or 400 feet below us, and go crashing down the mountain side, clearing 200 feet at every bound, and finally dashing itself to pieces against the rocks at the bottom, with a noise like the distant rattling discharge of musketry. Our guide was evidently making progress. In a few moments he came into sight on a bold, rocky buttress about six hundred feet below us and shouted cheerfully, "Come on! This is nothing! You could get down here with a telega!" Inasmuch as one could hardly look down there without getting dizzy, this was rather a hyperbolic statement of the possibilities of the case; but it had the effect of silencing Mr. Frost, who took his horse by the bridle and followed me down the mountain in cautious zigzags, while I kept as nearly as I could in the track of our leader. At the buttress the guide tightened my forward and after saddle-girths until my horse groaned and grunted an inarticulate protest, and I climbed again into the saddle. It seemed to me safer, on the whole, to ride down than to



THE DESCENT INTO THE GORGE OF THE KATUN.

try to walk down leading my horse, since in the latter case he was constantly sliding upon me, or dislodging loose stones which threatened to knock my legs from under me and launch me into space like a projectile from a catapult. The first hundred feet of the descent were very bad. It was almost impossible to keep in the saddle on account of the steepness of the incline, and once I just escaped being pitched over my horse's head at the end of one of his short slides. We finally reached a very steep but grassy slope, like the side of a titanic embankment, down which we zigzagged, with much discomfort but without any danger, to the bottom of the Katun valley. As we rode towards the great peaks, and finally, leaving our horses, climbed up on the principal glacier, I saw how greatly we had underestimated distances, heights, and magnitudes from the elevated position which we had previously occupied. The Katun River, which from above had looked like a narrow, dirty white ribbon that a child could step across, proved to be a torrent, thirty or forty feet wide, with a current almost deep and strong enough to sweep away a horse and rider. The main glacier, which I had taken to be about 300 feet wide, proved

to have a width of more than half a mile; and its central moraine, which had looked to me like a strip of black sand piled up to the height

We spent all the remainder of the day in sketching, taking photographs, and climbing about the glacier and the valley, and late in



PART OF GREAT GLACIER FROM CENTRAL MORaine —
KATUNSKI WATERFALL.

of 6 or 7 feet like a long furnace dump, proved to be an enormous mass of gigantic rocks, 3 or 4 miles long and from 300 to 400 feet wide, piled up on the glacier in places to the height of 75 feet. Mr. Frost estimated the width of this glacier at two-thirds of a mile, and the extreme height of the moraine at a hundred feet.

I took the photographic apparatus, and in the course of an hour and a half succeeded in climbing up the central moraine about two miles towards the foot of the great ice fall; but by that time I was tired out and dripping with perspiration. I passed many wide crevasses into which were running streams of water from the surface of the glacier; and judging from the duration of the sound made by stones which I dropped into some of them, they must have had a depth of a hundred feet, perhaps much more. This was only one of eleven glaciers which I counted from the summit of the high ridge which divides the water-shed of the Irtish from that of the Ob. Seven glaciers descend from the two main peaks alone.

the afternoon returned to our camp in the valley of the White Berel. That night—the 2d of August—was even colder than the preceding one. Ice formed to the thickness of more than a quarter of an inch in our tea-kettle, and my blankets and pillow, when I got up in the morning, were covered with thick white frost.

Monday we made another excursion to the summit of the ridge which overlooks the valley of the Katun, and succeeded in getting a good photograph of the two big peaks, against a background of cloudless sky. Our little instrument, of course, could not take in a quarter of the mighty landscape, and what it did take in it reduced to so small a scale that all of the grandeur and majesty of the mountains was lost; but it was a satisfaction to feel that we could carry away something which would



GORGE OF THE KATUN FROM THE FOOT OF THE GLACIER.

suggest and recall to us in later years the sublimity of that wonderful alpine picture.

Monday noon we broke camp and started

for the Rakhmanofski Hot Springs; and on the 5th of August, after an absence of ten days, we returned to the Altai Station.

George Kennan.

DEATH.

I AM the key that parts the gates of Fame;
 I am the cloak that covers covering Shame;
 I am the final goal of every race;
 I am the storm-tossed spirit's resting-place:

The messenger of sure and swift relief,
 Welcomed with wailings and reproachful grief;
 The friend of those that have no friend but me,
 I break all chains, and set all captives free.

I am the cloud that, when Earth's day is done,
 An instant veils an unextinguished sun;
 I am the brooding hush that follows strife,
 The waking from a dream that Man calls — Life!

Florence Earle Coates.

