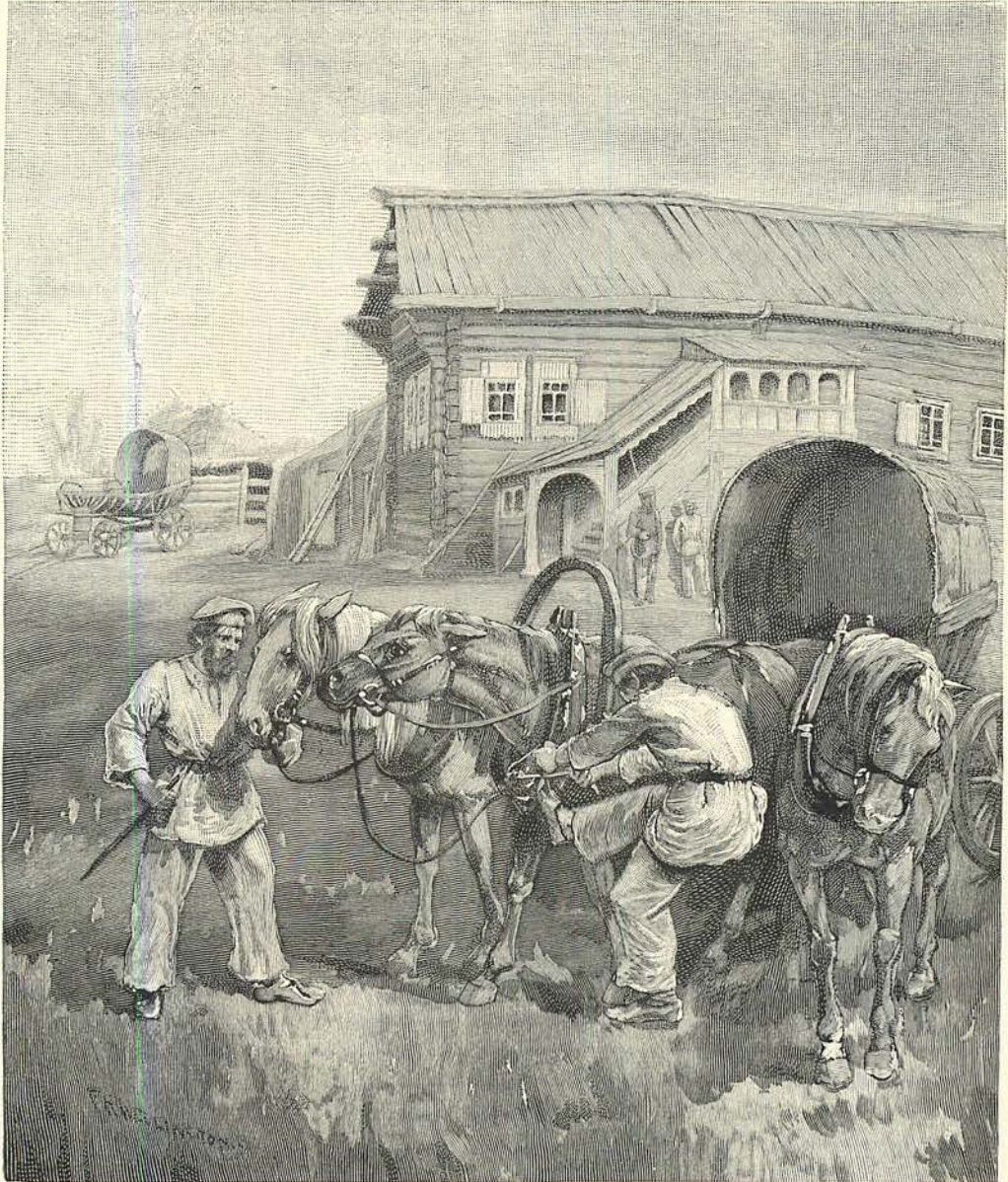


THE TOMSK FORWARDING PRISON.



HE rapidity with which the season of good weather and good roads was passing, and the length and arduous nature of the journey that still lay before us, compelled us to make our stay in the city of Ust Kamenogorsk very brief. The work that we accomplished there, however,

had an important bearing upon the prosecution of our researches in the field of political exile, and rendered our success in that field almost certain. I had always anticipated great difficulty in ascertaining where political exiles were to be found, and how they could be approached without the asking of too many dangerous questions. We could not expect in



A POST STATION ON THE BARNAUL ROAD.



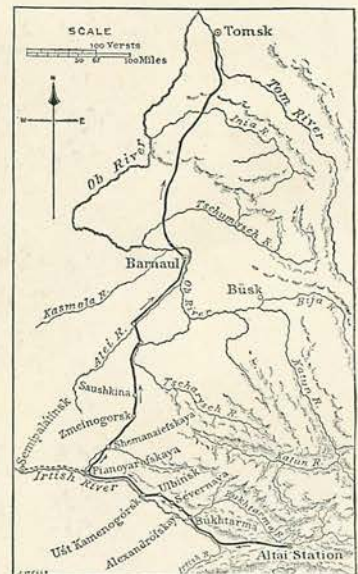
AN OLD SIBERIAN FERRY-BOAT.

every town to stumble, by good luck, upon a liberal and sympathetic official who would aid us in our search, and yet experience had shown us the absolute necessity of knowing definitely in advance where to go and whom to approach. We had already passed through half a dozen towns or villages where there were colonies of interesting political exiles, and where, if we had been aware of the presence of these, we should have stopped; but we had no clues whatever to them, and I feared that if, in searching for clues, we made a practice of asking questions at random, we should soon attract the attention of the police and be called upon to explain what business we had with political exiles, and why we were everywhere looking them up. At Ust Kamenogorsk this source of embarrassment was finally removed. We not only obtained there a mass of useful information and a great number of valuable hints and suggestions, but we carried away with us notes of recommendation to people who could aid us, letters of introduction to liberal officials in the towns through which we were yet to pass, and a manuscript list, or directory, in which were set forth the names, ages, professions, and places of banishment of nearly seven hundred political exiles in all parts of Siberia. After we had obtained these letters of introduction and this "underground" directory, the Government could have prevented us from inves-

tigating the exile system only by removing us forcibly from the country. We no longer had to grope our way by asking hazardous questions at random. We could take every step with a certainty of not making a mistake, and could go, in every village, directly to the persons whom we wished to see.

On Monday, August 10, we dined for the last time with the politicals in Ust Kamenogorsk, sang to them once more, by special request, "John Brown's Body" and "The Star-spangled Banner," and at 6 o'clock in the evening set out by post for Barnaul and Tomsk. The road, as far as the post station of Pianoyarofskaya, was the same that we had followed in going from Semipalatinsk to the Altai Station. The country that it intersected seemed to us more parched and barren than ever, but here and there, in the moister places, we passed large flocks of fat-tailed sheep, guarded and watched by Kirghis horsemen, whose hooded heads and black faces, with the immense goggles of horse-hair netting that they wore to protect their eyes from the glare of the sun, gave them an almost demoniacal appearance. Occasionally, in the outskirts of the villages, we saw fields of cultivated sunflowers, or of half-ripe watermelons and cantaloupes; but as a rule the steppe was uncultivated and could not be cultivated without artificial irrigation. The weather was still very warm, and in almost every village we noticed naked children playing in the streets.

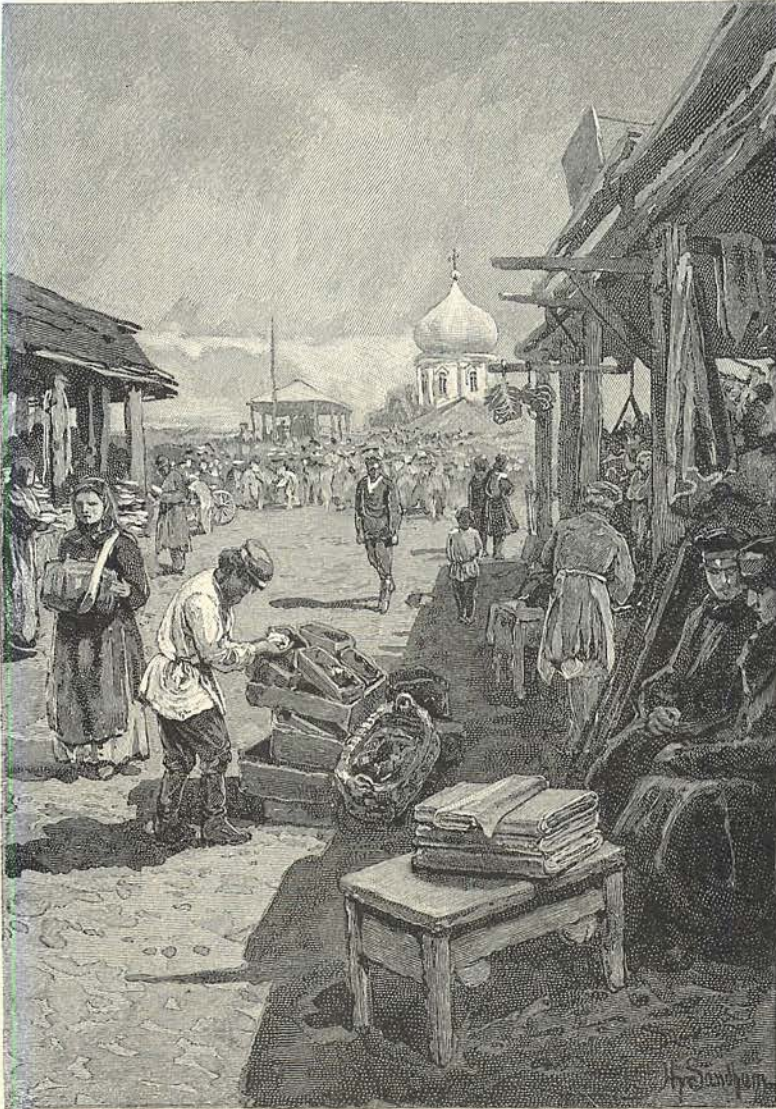
At Pianoyarofskaya we left the Semipalatinsk road and the valley of the Irtysh, and turning to the northward crossed the low divide which separates the water-shed of the Irtysh from that of the Ob, and entered the province of Tomsk. A large quantity of rain had fallen, followed by a comfortable temperature; but the muddy roads hindered us, and the post stations, where we got very little to eat, were filthy



MAP OF THE TRIP.

and swarming with bed-bugs. In the stations of Shemanaiefskaya and Saushkina, after vainly attempting to sleep, I sat up and wrote throughout the whole of two nights, killing fifteen or twenty bed-bugs each night on my writing-

an unusual number of pretentious dwelling-houses and residences with columns and imposing façades, but most of them have fallen into decay. They were erected many years ago, at a time when a mining officer of the



MARKET-PLACE IN BARNAUL.

table. The lack of proper food, the constant jolting, and the impossibility of getting any sleep, soon reduced us to an extremely jaded and exhausted condition, and when we reached the town of Barnaul, Friday afternoon, August 14, after an almost sleepless journey of ninety-six hours, I was hardly able to sit up.

Barnaul is a large town of 17,000 inhabitants, and is the center of the rich and important mining district of the Altai. It contains

Crown in Barnaul received 2000 or 3000 rubles a year as salary and stole 100,000 rubles a year by means of "cooked" accounts, and when, according to tradition, he paid twice the amount of his own salary to a French governess for his children, and as much more to a French culinary chef, and sent his soiled linen to Paris by mail to be washed and starched.

The mines of the Altai are, for the most



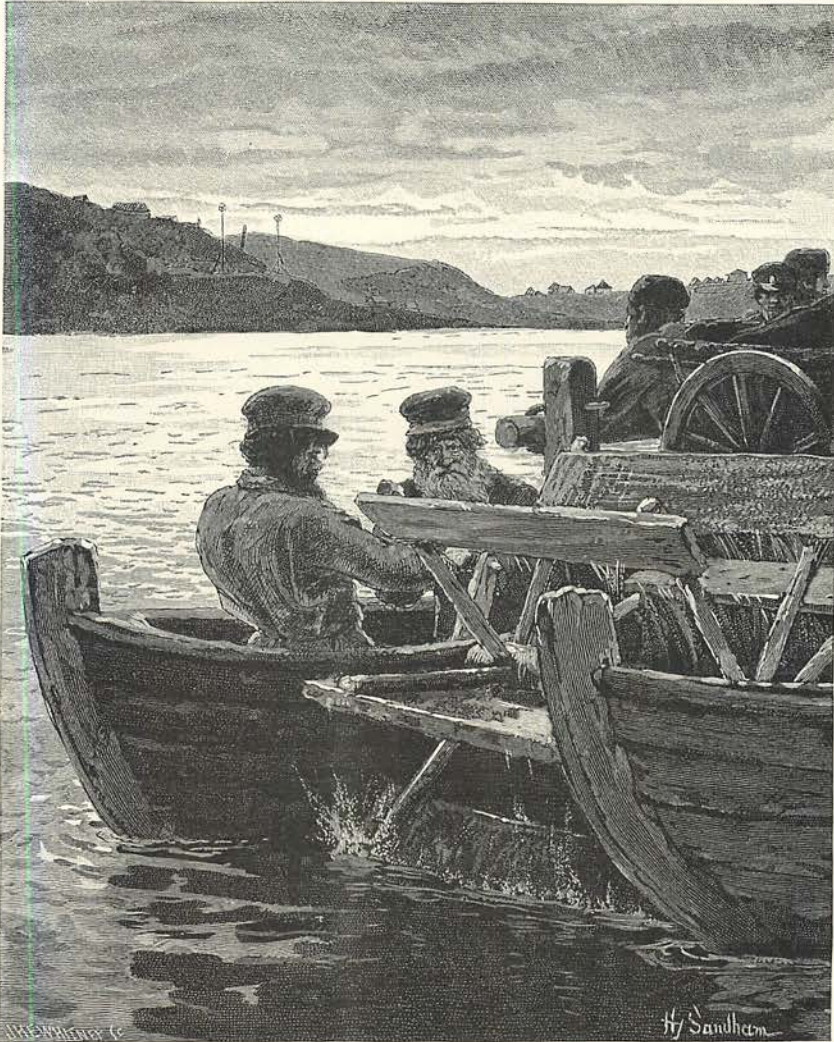
OLD PRISON OR GUARD-HOUSE IN BARNAUL.

part, the private property of the Tsar. In the nine years from 1870 to 1879 they produced 6984 pounds of gold, 206,964 pounds of silver, 9,639,620 pounds of copper, and 13,221,396 pounds of lead. A large part of the gold and silver ore is smelted in Barnaul.

Mr. Frost, with an amount of enterprise which was in the highest degree creditable to him, explored the city with sketch-book and camera, and took photographs of the bazar, of peasant women carrying stones on hand-barrows near the mining "works," and of a curious building, not far from our hotel, which seemed to have been intended for a Russo-Ionic temple but which afterward had apparently been transformed into a jail, in order to bring it more nearly into harmony with the needs of the place. I should have accompanied him upon some of these excursions, but I was nearly sick from sleeplessness. The dirty hotel in Barnaul was alive with bed-bugs, and I was compelled to sleep every night on a table, or rather stand, about four feet long by three wide, set out in the middle of the room. Owing to the fact that I generally rolled off or capsized the table as soon as I lost consciousness, my sleep was neither prolonged nor refreshing, and before we left Barnaul I was reduced to a state

bordering on frenzy. Almost the only pleasant recollection that I have of the city is the memory of receiving there eighteen letters from home—the first I had had since our departure from Tiumen.

Tuesday afternoon, August 18, we left Barnaul for Tomsk. The part of Western Siberia that lies between these two cities is a fertile rolling country, diversified by birch groves and widestretches of cultivated land, and suggestive a little of the southern part of New England. Mr. Frost, whose home is in Massachusetts, said he could easily imagine that he was "up Berkshire way." The scenery, although never wild, is everywhere pleasing and picturesque; the meadows, even in August, are carpeted with flowers; and the greenness and freshness of the vegetation, to a traveler who comes from the desert-like steppes of the upper Irtysh, are a source of surprise and gratification. Near the first station we passed the small lake of Kolivan, which is celebrated in all that part of Siberia for the picturesque beauty of its scenery, and Mr. Frost made a sketch of some fantastic rocks by the roadside. It is a favorite place of resort in summer for the wealthy citizens of Barnaul and Tomsk. It had been our intention to spend a day or two in exploring this picturesque sheet of water, but we



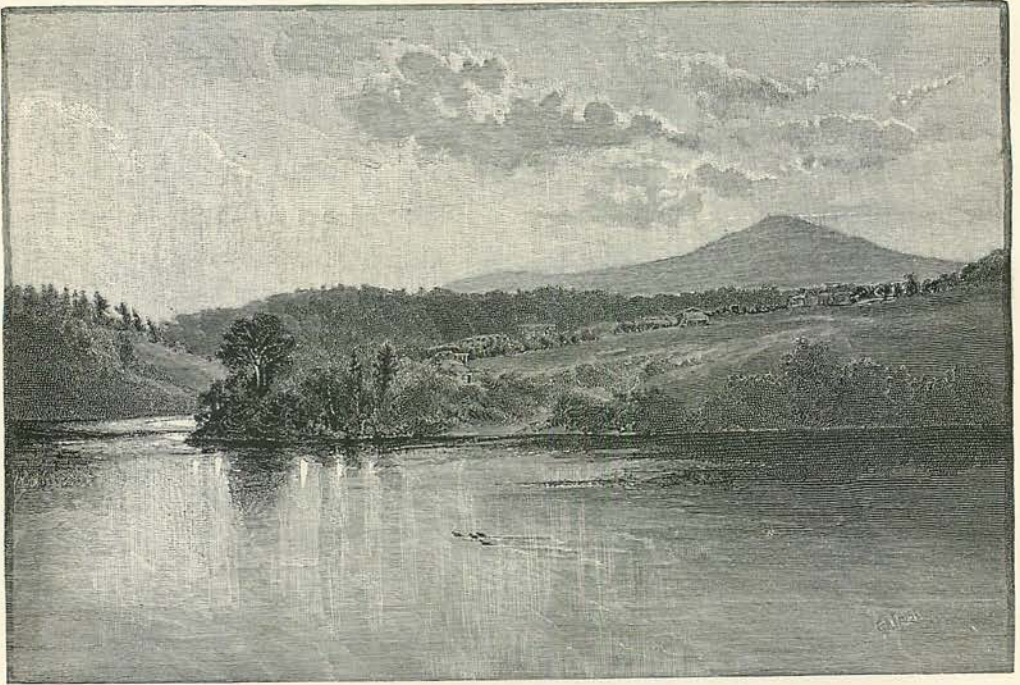
FERRY ON THE RIVER OB NEAR BARNAUL.

finally decided that we could not spare the time. We crossed the river Ob on a curious "parom," or ferry-boat, consisting of a large platform supported upon two open hulks and propelled by a paddle-wheel at one end, the crank of which was turned by two ragged-bearded old muzhiks. Most of the Siberian rivers are crossed by means of what are known as "pendulum ferries," in which the boat is anchored by a long cable made fast in the middle of the stream, and is swung from shore to shore pendulum-wise by the force of the current. The Ob ferry-boat, of which Mr. Frost made a sketch, was the first one we had seen propelled by a paddle-wheel.

So far as I can remember, there was little on the route between Barnaul and Tomsk to attract a traveler's attention. I was terribly jaded and exhausted from lack of sleep,

and spent a large part of the time in a state which was little more than one of semi-consciousness.

At 4 o'clock on the afternoon of Thursday, August 20, we rode at last into the city of Tomsk. We had made, with horses, in the 51 days which had elapsed since our departure from Tiumen, a journey of more than 1500 miles, in the course of which we had inspected two large prisons, made the acquaintance of three colonies of political exiles, and visited the wildest part of the Russian Altai. We drove at once to the European Hotel, which is the building shown at the extreme right of the illustration on page 865, secured a fairly comfortable room, and as soon as possible after dinner removed our clothing and stretched our weary bodies out in civilized beds for the first time in nearly two months.



KOLIVAN LAKE.

Tomsk, which is the capital of the province of the same name, is a city of 31,000 inhabitants, and is situated partly on a bluff, and partly on low land adjoining the river Tom, a short distance above its junction with the Ob. In point of size and importance it is the second city in Siberia, and in enterprise, intelligence, and prosperity it seemed to me to be the first. It contains about 8000 dwelling-houses and other buildings, 250 of which are brick; 33 churches, including a Roman Catholic church, a Mohammedan mosque, and 3 Jewish synagogues; 26 schools, attended by about 2500 scholars; a very good public library; 2 tri-weekly newspapers, which, however, the Minister of the Interior keeps closed a large part of the time on account of their "pernicious tendency"; and a splendid new university building, which has been completed three years, but which the Government will not allow to be opened for fear that it too will have a "pernicious tendency" and become a center of liberal thought. The streets of the city are not paved and are very imperfectly lighted, but at the time of our visit they seemed to be reasonably clean and well cared for, and the town, as a whole, impressed me much more favorably than many towns of its class in European Russia.

The province of which Tomsk is the capital has an area of 330,000 square miles, and is therefore about seven times as large as the State of Pennsylvania. It contains 8 towns, each

of which has on an average 14,000 inhabitants, and 2719 villages, each of which has on an average 366 inhabitants, so that its total population is about 1,100,000. Of this number 90,000 are aborigines, and 30,000 communal exiles, or common criminals banished from European Russia. The southern part of the province is very fertile, is well timbered and watered, and has a fairly good climate. The 3,600,000 acres of land which it has under cultivation yield annually about 30,000,000 bushels of grain and 4,500,000 bushels of potatoes, with smaller quantities of hemp, flax, and tobacco, while the pastures around the villages support about 2,500,000 head of live stock.

From these statistics it will be seen that in spite of bad government, restricted immigration, and the demoralizing influence of criminal exile, the province of Tomsk is not wholly barren or uncivilized. If it were in the hands of Americans, and if free immigration from European Russia to it were allowed, it might soon become as densely populated and as prosperous as any of our North-western states. Its resources are almost illimitable, and all that it needs is good government and freedom for the play of private enterprise. As long, however, as a despotic administration at St. Petersburg can gag its newspapers for months at a time, keep its university closed, choose the teachers and prescribe the courses of study for its schools, prohibit the reading of the

best books in its libraries, bind its population hand and foot by a rigid passport system, govern it through corrupt and wretchedly paid chinovniks, and pour into it every year a flood of common criminals from European Russia, just so long it will remain what it now is — a naturally enterprising and promising colony strangled by oppressive and unnecessary guardianship. The Government, just at the present time, proposes to develop the re-

to whom we had letters of introduction, and ascertain from them the facts that were necessary for our guidance. We found that the governor of the province, Mr. Krassofski, was absent from the city, and that his place was being temporarily filled by State Councilor Nathaniel Petukhof, the presiding officer of the provincial administration, who was represented to us as a man of intelligence, education, and some liberality. As soon as I



GROTESQUE ROCKS NEAR KOLIVAN LAKE.

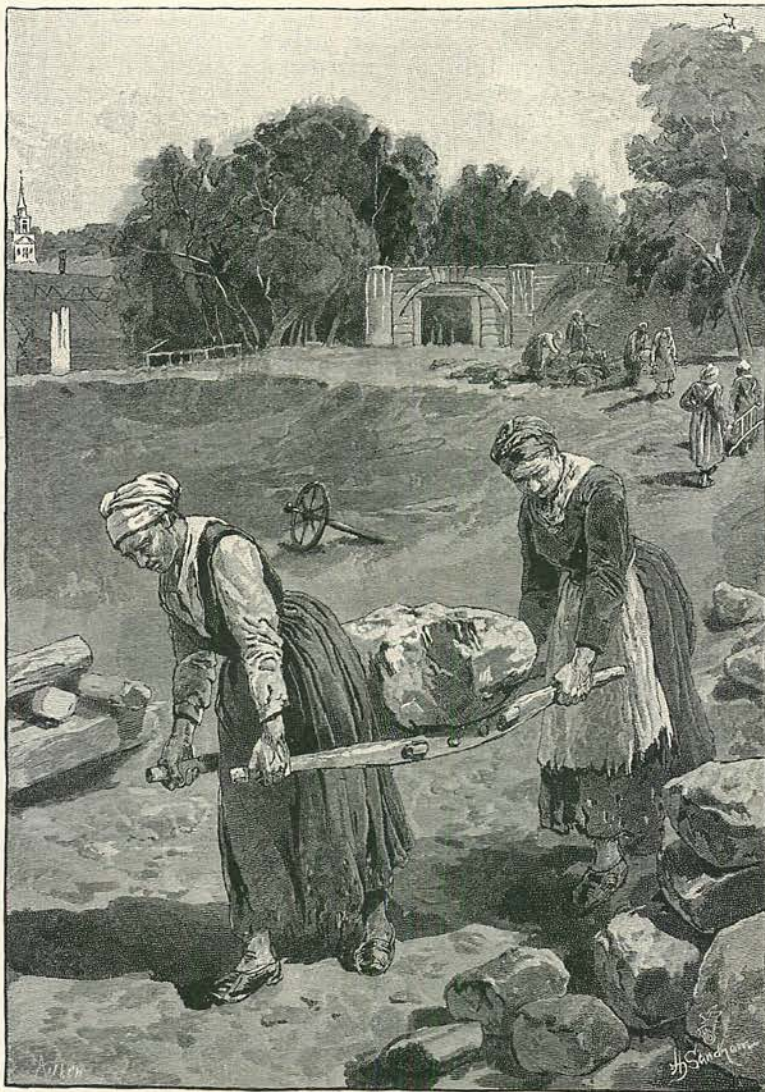
sources of the province by building through it a railroad. It might much better loosen the grasp in which it holds the people by the throat, permit them to exercise some judgment with regard to the management of their own affairs, allow them freely to discuss their needs and plans in their own newspapers, abolish restrictions upon personal liberty of movement, stop the sending there of criminal exiles, and then let the province develop itself. It does not need "development" half as much as it needs to be let alone.*

Our first step in Tomsk was to call upon the political exiles and upon several army officers

* The reader will understand, I trust, that considerations of space compel me to omit for the present the mass of facts upon which these conclusions rest. The particular object of our journey to Siberia was the investigation of the exile system; and in order to have space for the adequate treatment of that subject, I am forced to neglect, for a time, the government of Siberia and the economic condition of the Siberian provinces.

conveniently could, I called upon Mr. Petukhof, and was received by him with great cordiality. He had read, as I soon learned, my book upon North-eastern Siberia; and since it had made a favorable impression upon him, he was predisposed to treat me with consideration and with more than ordinary courtesy. I, in turn, had heard favorable reports with regard to his character; and under such circumstances, we naturally drifted into a frank and pleasant talk about Siberia and Siberian affairs. At the end of half an hour's conversation he asked me if there was any way in which he could be of assistance to me. I replied that I should like very much to have

That I have not exaggerated the evils which arise in Siberia from the corrupt and incapable control of a despotic bureaucracy, I shall hereafter show by quotations from the official reports of Siberian governors and governors-general and by the statements of hundreds of peasants, merchants, miners, army officers, newspaper men, and chinovniks in all parts of the country.



PEASANT WOMEN AT WORK.

permission to visit the exile forwarding prison. I fancied that his face showed, for an instant, a trace of embarrassment; but as I proceeded to describe my visits to prisons in two other provinces, he seemed to come to a decision, and, without asking me any questions as to my motives, said, "Yes, I will give you permission; and, if you like, I will go with you." Then, after a moment's hesitation, he determined, apparently, to be frank with me, and added gravely, "I think you will find it the worst prison in Siberia." I expressed a hope that such would not be the case, and said that it could hardly be worse than the forwarding

* According to the report of the Inspector of Exile Transportation for 1885, this prison would accommodate 1900 prisoners, with an allowance of eight-tenths

prison in Tiumen. He shrugged his shoulders slightly, as if to say, "You don't know yet what a Siberian prison may be," and asked me what could be expected when buildings were crowded with more than twice the number of persons for which they were intended. "The Tomsk forwarding prison," he continued, "was designed to hold 1400 prisoners.* It now contains more than 3000, and the convict barges, as they arrive from Tiumen, increase the number by from 500 to 800 every week, while we are able to forward eastward only 400 a week. The situation is, therefore, becoming worse and worse as the summer advances. The

of a cubic fathom of air space per capita. Page 27 of the manuscript report. Mr. Petukhof, in his estimate, did not perhaps allow for such close packing as this.



A PART OF THE MARKET SQUARE AT TOMSK.

prison kameras are terribly overcrowded: it is impossible to keep them clean; the vitiation of the air in them causes a great amount of disease, and the prison hospital is already full to overflowing with the dangerously sick."

"But," I said, "why do you not forward exiles eastward more rapidly and thus relieve the congestion in this prison? Why can you not increase the size of your marching parties, or send forward two parties a week instead of one?"

"It is impracticable," replied the acting governor. "The Exile Administration of Eastern Siberia says that it cannot receive and distribute prisoners faster than it does now. Its étapes are too small to accommodate larger parties, and the conveying force of soldiers is not adequate to take care of two parties a week. We tried one year the plan that you suggest, but it did not work well."

"Does the Government at St. Petersburg know," I inquired, "of this state of affairs?"

"Certainly," he replied. "It has been reported upon every year, and, besides writing, I have sent four urgent telegrams this summer asking if something cannot be done to relieve this prison."

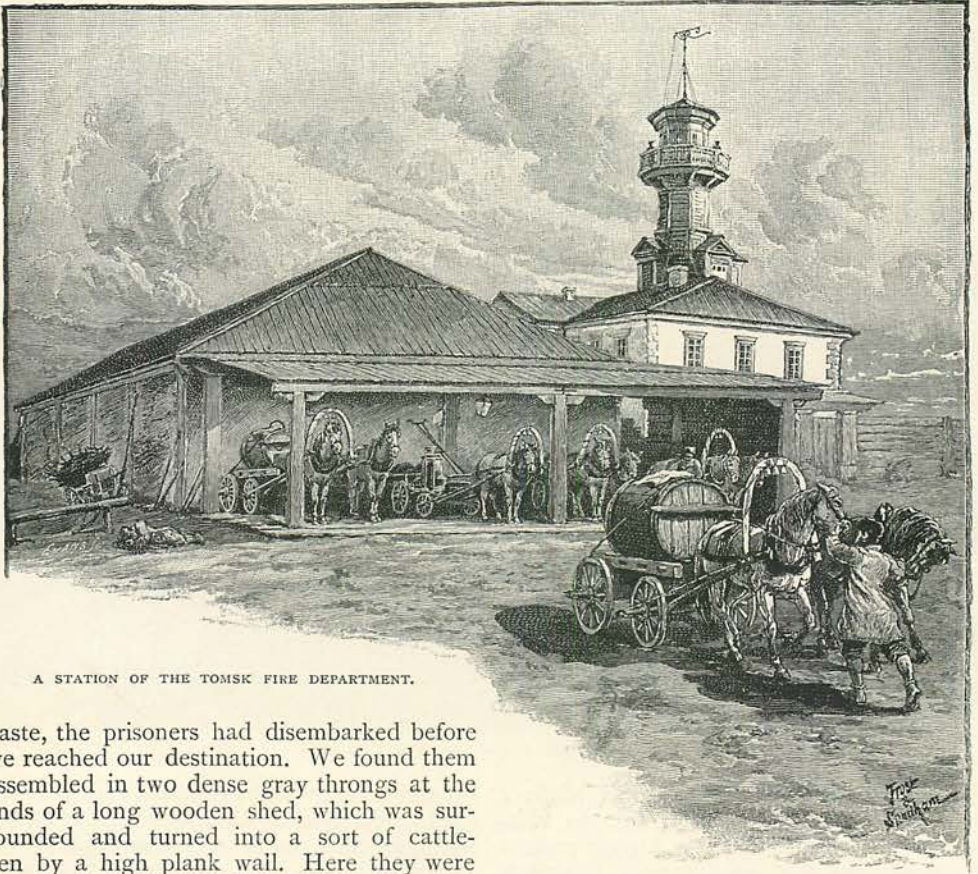
"And has nothing been done?"

"Nothing whatever. The number of prisoners here will continue to increase steadily up to the close of river navigation, when the

convict barges will stop running, and then we shall gradually clear out the prison during the winter months. In the mean time typhus fever will prevail there constantly, and great numbers of sick will lie uncared for in their cells because there is no room for them in the hospitals. If you visit the prison, my advice to you is to breakfast heartily before starting, and to keep out of the hospital wards."

I thanked him for his caution, said that I was not afraid of contagion, and asked when it would be convenient for him to go with me to the prison. A day was agreed upon, and I took my leave.

On my way home I accidentally met Colonel Yagodkin, the chief military officer of the district, who had welcomed us to Tomsk with great kindness and hospitality, and had taken a friendly interest in our researches. He said he had just called at our hotel to inform us that a convict barge from Tiumen had arrived that morning at the steamer-landing two or three miles from the city, and to say that if we would like to see the reception of a convict party, he would go to the landing with us and introduce us to the chief officer of the local exile bureau. I thanked him for his thoughtfulness, and in ten minutes Mr. Frost, Colonel Yagodkin, and I were driving furiously over a muddy road towards the prison, or landing-place. Although we made all possible



A STATION OF THE TOMSK FIRE DEPARTMENT.

haste, the prisoners had disembarked before we reached our destination. We found them assembled in two dense gray throngs at the ends of a long wooden shed, which was surrounded and turned into a sort of cattle-pen by a high plank wall. Here they were identified, counted, and turned over by the convoy officer to the warden of the Tomsk forwarding prison. The shed was divided transversely through the middle by a low wooden barricade, at one end of which was a fenced inclosure, about ten feet square, for the accommodation of the officers who had to take part in the reception of the party. About half the exiles had been formally "received" and were standing at the eastern end of the shed, while the other half were grouped in a dense throng at the western end, waiting for their names to be called. The women, who stood huddled together in a group by themselves, were mostly in peasant costumes, with bright-colored kerchiefs over their heads, and their faces, I thought, showed great anxiety and apprehension. The men all wore long gray overcoats over coarse linen shirts and trousers; most of them were in chains, and the bare heads of the convicts and the penal colonists had been half shaved longitudinally in such a way that one side of the scalp was smooth and blue, while the other side was hidden by long, neglected hair. Soldiers stood here and there around the shed, leaning upon their bayoneted rifles, and inside the little inclosure

were the convoy officer of the party, the warden and the surgeon of the Tomsk forwarding prison, the chief of the local bureau of exile administration, and two or three other officers, all in full uniform. Colonel Yagodkin introduced us as American travelers who desired to see the reception of an exile party, and we were invited to stand inside the inclosure.

The officer who was conducting the examination of the convicts drew a folded paper from a large bundle in his hand, opened and glanced at it, and then shouted, "Nikolai Koltsof!" A thin, pale man, with heavy, wearied eyes and a hopeless expression of face, who was standing in the front rank of the exile party, picked up the gray linen bag that lay beside him on the floor, and with a slow clink, clink, clink of chains walked to the inclosure. The examining officer compared his face carefully with a photograph attached to the "stateini speesok," or "identification paper," in order to make sure that the pale man had not "exchanged names" with some other exile, while a Cossack orderly examined him from head to foot and rummaged through his bag to see that he had

neither lost nor surreptitiously sold the articles of clothing that he had received in Moscow or Tiumen, and that his "stateini speesok" called for.

"Is everything there?" inquired the officer.

"Everything," replied the Cossack.

"Stoopai!" ["Pass on!"] said the lieutenant; and the pale-faced man shouldered his bag and joined the ranks of the "received" at the eastern end of the shed.

"The photographs are a new thing," whispered Colonel Yagodkin to me; "and only a part of the exiles have them. They are intended to break up the practice of exchanging names and identities."

"But why should they wish to exchange names?" I inquired.

"If a man is sentenced to hard labor at the mines," he replied, "and has a little money, he always tries to buy secretly the name and identity of some poor devil of a colonist who longs desperately for a drink of vodka, or who wants money with which to gamble. Of course the convoy officer has no means of preventing this sort of transaction, because he cannot possibly remember the names and faces of the four or five hundred men in his party. If the convict succeeds in finding a colonist who is willing to sell his name, he takes the colonist's place and is assigned a residence in some village, while the colonist takes the convict's place and goes to the mines. Hundreds of hard-labor convicts escape in this way."*

"Hassan Abdallimof!" called the examining officer. No one moved.

"Hassan Abdallimof!" shouted the Cossack orderly, more loudly.

"Go on, Stumpy; that's you!" said half a dozen exiles in an undertone as they pushed out of the throng a short, thickly set, bow-legged Tartar, upon whose flat, swarthy face there was an expression of uncertainty and bewilderment.

"He does n't know Russian, your High Nobility," said one of the exiles respectfully, "and he is gloopovati" [dull-witted].

"Bring him here," said the officer to the Cossack orderly.

When Hassan had been examined, he did not shoulder his bag and go to his place as he should have done, but began to bow and gesticulate, and to make supplications in the Tartar language, becoming more and more excited as he talked.

"What does he say?" inquired the officer. "Find some soldier who knows Tartar." An interpreter was soon found and Hassan repeated his story.

* I shall explain this practice of exchanging names more fully in a later article.

"He says, your High Nobility," translated the interpreter, "that when he was arrested they took eight rubles from him and told him the money would be given back to him in Siberia. He wants to know if he cannot have some of it now to buy tea."

"Nyettoo chai!" ["No tea!"] said the Tartar mournfully, with a gesture of utter desolation.

"To the devil with him!" cried the officer furiously. "What does the blank mean by delaying the reception of the party with such a trifle? This is no place to talk about tea! He'll receive his money when he gets to his destination. Away with him!" And the poor Tartar was hustled into the eastern end of the shed.

"Ivan Dontremember — the red-headed," shouted the examining officer.

"That's a brodyag" (a vagrant or tramp), whispered Colonel Yagodkin to me as a sun-burned, red-headed muzhik in chains and leg-fetters, and with a tea-kettle hanging from his belt, approached the inclosure. "He has been arrested while wandering around in Western Siberia, and as there is something in his past history that he does n't want brought to light, he refuses to disclose his identity, and answers all questions with 'I don't remember.' The tramps all call themselves 'Ivan Dontremember,' and they're generally a bad lot. The penalty for belonging to the 'Dontremember' family is five years at the mines." The examining officer had no photograph of "Ivan Dontremember, the red-headed," and the latter's identity was established by ascertaining the number of teeth that he had lost, and by examining a scar over his right ear.

One by one the exiles passed in this way before the examining officer until all had been identified, counted, and turned over, and then the warden of the Tomsk forwarding prison gave a receipt to the convoy officer of the barge for 551 prisoners, including 71 children under 15 years of age, who were accompanying their fathers or mothers into exile.

At the end of the verification and reception some of the officers returned to the city; but Colonel Yagodkin, Mr. Frost, and I remained to see the surgical examination of the sick and disabled, and to inspect the convict barge. Doctor Orzheshko, the surgeon of the Tomsk prison, then took the place that had been occupied by the examining officer, laid a stethoscope and two or three other instruments upon a small table beside him, and began a rapid examination of a long line of incapacitated men, some of whom were really sick and some of whom were merely shamming. The object of the examination was to ascertain how many of the prisoners were unable to walk, in order



A FAMILY "KAMERA" IN THE TOMSK FORWARDING PRISON.

that the requisite number of telegas might be provided for their transportation to the city. The first man who presented himself was thin, pale, and haggard, and in reply to a question from the surgeon said, with a sepulchral cough, that his breast hurt him and that he could not breathe easily. Dr. Orzheshko felt his pulse, put a stethoscope to his lungs, listened for a moment to the respiratory murmur, and then said briefly, "Pass on; you can walk." The next man had a badly swollen ankle, upon which his leg-fetter pressed heavily, evidently causing him great pain. He looked imploringly at the doctor while the latter examined the swollen limb, as if he would beseech him to have mercy; but he said not a word, and when his case was approved and a wagon was ordered for him, he crossed himself devoutly three times, and his lips moved noiselessly, as if he were saying softly under his breath, "I thank thee, O God!"

There were forty or fifty men in the line of prisoners awaiting examination, and the surgeon disposed of them at the rate of about one a minute. Some had fever, some were suffering from rheumatism; some were manifestly in an advanced stage of prison consumption, and all seemed to me sick, wretched, or weak enough to deserve wagons; but the experienced senses of the surgeon quickly detected the malingerers and the men who were only slightly indisposed, and quietly bade them "Pass on!" At the end of the examination Dr. Orzheshko reported to the prison warden that there were twenty-five persons in the party who were not able to walk to the city, and who, therefore, would have to be carried. The necessary wagons were ordered, the sick and the women with infants were placed in them, and at the order "Stroisa!" ["Form ranks!"] the convicts, with a confused clinking of chains, took positions outside the shed in a somewhat ragged column; the soldiers, with shouldered rifles, went to their stations in front, beside and behind the party; and Mr. Papelaief, the chief of the local exile bureau, stepping upon a chair, cried, "Noo rebatta" ["Well, boys"], "have you anything to say or any complaints to make?"

"No; nothing, your Nobility," replied seventy-five or a hundred voices.

"Well, then, S'Bogem" ["Go with God"].

The soldiers threw open the wooden gate of the yard or pen; the under officer shouted "Ready — March!" and with a renewed jingling of multitudinous chains, the gray column moved slowly out into the muddy road.

As soon as an opportunity presented itself, Colonel Yagodkin introduced us to Mr. Papelaief, the chief officer of the local exile bu-

reau, who supervised the reception and the forwarding of exile parties, the equipment of the convicts with clothing, and the examination and verification of their papers. Mr. Papelaief, a rather tall, thin man, with a hard, cold face, greeted us politely, but did not seem pleased to see us there, and was not disposed to permit an inspection of the convict barge.

"What do they want to go on board the barge for?" he inquired rather curtly of Colonel Yagodkin. "There is nothing to see there, and besides it is inconvenient; the women are now cleaning it."

Colonel Yagodkin, however, knew that I was particularly anxious to see in what condition the floating prison was when the convicts left it, and, a few moments later, he introduced us to the convoy officer, and again suggested a visit to the barge. This time he was successful. The convoy officer evidently did not see any reason why Colonel Yagodkin should not go on board the barge with his friends if he wished to do so, and he at once cheerfully offered to accompany us. The barge was, apparently, the same one that I had inspected in Tiumen two months before. Then it was scrupulously clean, and the air in its cabins was fresh and pure; but now it suggested a recently vacated wild-beast cage in a menagerie. It was no more dirty, perhaps, than might have been expected; but its atmosphere was heavy with a strong animal odor; its floors were covered with dried mud, into which had been trodden refuse scraps of food; its nares, or sleeping-benches, were black and greasy, and strewn with bits of dirty paper; and in the gray light of a cloudy day its dark kameras, with their small grated port-holes, muddy floors, and polluted ammoniacal atmosphere, chilled and depressed me with suggestions of human misery.

The Rev. Henry Lansdell, in a recently published magazine article,* says, "I have seen some strong statements, alleging the extreme unhealthiness of these barges, . . . and I do not suppose that they are as healthy as a first-class sanatorium."

If Mr. Lansdell made a careful examination of a convict barge immediately after the departure from it of a convict party, the idea of a "sanatorium" certainly could not have been suggested to him by anything that he saw, touched, or smelled. It suggested to me nothing so much as a recently vacated den in a zoölogical garden. It was, as I have said, no more dirty and foul than might have been expected after ten days of such tenancy; but it could have been connected in one's mind

* "Russian Convicts in the Salt Mines of Iletsks"; Harper's Magazine, May, 1888, pp. 894-910.

with a "sanatorium" only by a violent wrench of the imagination. As a proof, however, that a convict barge in point of healthfulness does not fall far short of "a first-class sanatorium," Mr. Lansdell quotes a statement made to him by "an officer who had charge of the prisoners between Tiumen and Tomsk," to the effect that "during the season of 1882, 8 barges carried 6000 prisoners a voyage of nearly 2000 miles, and yet only two [and one of them a child] died on the passage, while only 20 were delivered invalided at Tomsk."

Inasmuch as I once took the same view of the exile system that Mr. Lansdell now takes, and have been forced to confess myself in error, it may be proper for me to say, without reflecting in any way upon Mr. Lansdell's conscientiousness and sincerity, that the statement which he quotes has not the slightest foundation in fact, and was probably made to him by the convoy officer with a deliberate intention to deceive. According to the official report of the Inspector of Exile Transportation for 1882,—the year to which Mr. Lansdell's information relates,—the number of prisoners carried on convict barges was not 6000, but 10,245. Of this number 279 were taken sick on the barges, 22 died, and 80 were left dangerously sick at river ports, or were delivered in that condition at Tomsk.* These, it must be remembered, were the cases of sickness and the deaths that occurred in a voyage which averages only ten days in duration. If, in a population of 10,245 souls, 279 persons were taken sick and 22 died every 10 days, we should have an annual sick rate of nearly 99 per cent., and an annual death rate of nearly 8 per cent. It would not, I think, be a very popular "sanatorium" in which 99 per cent. of all the persons who entered it comparatively well became seriously sick in the course of the year, and eight per cent. of the whole number died. But sickness on the convict barges has been far more prevalent than this—and within recent years. In 1876, 724 prisoners were taken sick between Tiumen and Tomsk and 51 died; and in 1871, 1140 were taken sick out of a whole number of 9416 carried, and 111 died. Such a rate of mortality as that shown by the death of 111 persons out of 9416 in 10 days would entirely depopulate in a single year, not only "a first-class sanatorium," but a village of 4000 inhabitants.

In a foot-note below will be found a tabulated statement of the cases of sickness and death which occurred on the convict barges between Tiumen and Tomsk in the fifteen years beginning with 1870 and ending with 1884. I copied the figures myself from the manuscripts of the official reports, and so far

as transcription is concerned, I will guarantee their accuracy.†

It will be seen that during this period there has been, on the whole, a steady improvement in the hygienic condition of the barges, and a corresponding decrease in the sick and death rates. The mortality now is chiefly among children, who, of course, are less able than adults to endure the hardships, privations, and exposures of barge life. I am glad to be able to say that, in my judgment, the Inspector of Exile Transportation and the local Siberian authorities are now doing all that it lies in their power to do for the comfort and health of exiles on the voyage between Tiumen and Tomsk. The barges are thoroughly cleaned and fumigated after every trip, and the prisoners are as well fed and cared for as they can be with the limited sum of money that the Government appropriates for the purpose. The

* Annual Report of the Inspector of Exile Transportation for Western Siberia, p. 12 of the manuscript.

† SICKNESS AND MORTALITY ON CONVICT BARGES BETWEEN TIUMEN AND TOMSK—TEN DAYS.

YEAR.	NUMBER CARRIED.		TAKEN SICK.		DIED.		DELIVERED SICK.	
	Adults.	Children.	Adults.	Children.	Adults.	Children.	Adults.	Children.
1870	7444	1492	No information.	No information.	85	..	No information.	..
1871	8202	1214	1140	301	111	..	301	..
1872	7246	1098	486	..	30	..	70	..
1873	7923	1090	673	..	23	..	190	..
1874	8268	1269	574	..	21	..	196	..
1875	7771	1301	579	..	16	..	115	..
1876	8878	1455	492	121	2	19	119	24
1877	9065	1490	300	133	2	35	143	44
1878	8749	1688	103	151	2	27	216	38
1879	8077	1342	570	154	4	47	182	39
1880	8844	1425	391	438	2	23	85	21
1881	9011	1452	107	..	4	..	71	23
1882	8832	1413	202	77	4	13	62	18
1883	9366	1543	150	107	4	38	66	37
1884	9004	1688	163	113	67	55
Grand Totals.	127520	20969	2598	3452	25	286	1011	872
		148469		7066		569		2182

It must be borne in mind that these figures show only a small part of the sickness and mortality in convict parties from points of departure to points of destination. Before reaching Tiumen the convicts travel by barge from Nizhni Novgorod to Perm, a distance of nearly 1000 miles, and after leaving Tomsk many of them walk nearly 2000 miles into Eastern Siberia. In a subsequent paper I shall give statistics of sickness and mortality for the whole journey from Moscow to Irkutsk.

suffering and disease which still exist are attributable mainly to overcrowding, and overcrowding the Siberian officials cannot prevent. Ten or twelve thousand exiles are turned over to them every summer, and they must send them eastward as best they can while the season of navigation lasts. They have only three barges, and eighteen round trips are all that can be made during the time that the river remains open. They are therefore compelled to send from 600 to 800 exiles in a single barge at every trip.

The day set for our visit to the Tomsk forwarding prison was Wednesday, August 26. The acting-governor, Mr. Petukhof, sent word to me at the last moment that he would be unable to accompany us; but an inspecting party was made up of Colonel Yagodkin, Mr. Papelaief (the chief of the local exile bureau), the convoy officer of the barge, Mr. Frost, and myself. It was one of the cold, gray, gloomy days that often come to Western Siberia in the late summer, when the sky is a canopy of motionless leaden clouds, and the wind blows sharply down across the tundras from the Arctic Ocean. The air was raw, with a suggestion of dampness, and an overcoat was not uncomfortable as we rode out to the eastern end of the city.

The first glimpse that we caught of the Tomsk forwarding prison showed us that it differed widely in type from all the Siberian prisons that we had previously seen. Instead of the huge white, three-story, stuccoed building with narrow arched windows and red tin roof that we had expected to find, we saw before us something that looked like the permanent fortified camp of a regiment of soldiers, or like a small prairie village on the frontier, surrounded by a high stockade of sharpened logs to protect it from hostile Indians. With the exception of the zigzag-barred sentry boxes at the corners, and the soldiers who with shouldered rifles paced slowly back and forth along its sides, there was hardly a suggestion of a prison about it. It was simply a stockaded inclosure about three acres in extent, situated on an open prairie beyond the city limits, with a pyramidal church tower and the board roofs of 15 or 20 log buildings showing above the serrated edge of the palisade. If we had had any doubts, however, with regard to the nature of the place, the familiar jingling of chains, which came to our ears as we stopped in front of the wooden gate, would have set such doubts at rest.

In response to a summons sent by Mr. Papelaief through the officer of the day, the warden of the prison, a short, stout, chubby-faced young officer, named Ivanenko, soon made his appearance, and we were admitted to the prison yard. Within the spacious inclosure stood twelve or fifteen one-story log buildings, grouped without much apparent regularity about a square log church. At the doors of most of these buildings stood armed sentries, and in the unpaved streets or open spaces between them were walking or sitting on the bare ground hundreds of convicts and penal colonists who, in chains and leg-fetters, were taking their daily outing. The log buildings with their grated windows, the high stockade which surrounded them, the armed sentries here and there, and the throngs of convicts who in long, gray, semi-military overcoats roamed aimlessly about the yard would doubtless have reminded many a Union soldier of the famous prison pen at Andersonville. The prison buildings proper were long, one-story, barrack-like houses of squared logs, with board roofs, heavily grated windows, and massive wooden doors secured by iron padlocks. Each separate building constituted a "kazarm," or prison ward, and each ward was divided into two large kameras, or cells, by a short hall running transversely through the middle. There were eight of these kazarms, or log prisons, and each of them was designed to accommodate 190 men, with an allowance of eight-tenths of a cubic fathom of air space per capita.* They were all substantially alike, and seemed to me to be about 75 feet long by 40 feet wide, with a height of 12 feet between floors and ceilings. The first kamera that we examined was perhaps 40 feet square, and contained about 150 prisoners. It was fairly well lighted, but its atmosphere was polluted to the last degree by over-respiration, and its temperature, raised by the natural heat of the prisoners' bodies, was fifteen or twenty degrees above that of the air outside. Two double rows of sleeping-benches ran across the kamera, but there evidently was not room enough on them for half the inmates of the cell, and the remainder were forced to sleep under them, or on the floor in the gangways between them, without pillows, blankets, or bed clothing of any kind. The floor had been washed in anticipation of our visit, but the warden said that in rainy weather it was always covered with mud and filth brought in from the yard by the feet of the prisoners, and that in

* The report of the Inspector of Exile Transportation for 1884 says that the Tomsk prison contains ten of these kazarms. The warden told me that there were only eight. Accounts also differ as to the normal capacity of the prison. Acting-Governor Petukhof said

that it was originally intended to hold 1400 prisoners, while the Inspector of Exile Transportation reported in 1884 that its normal capacity was 1900. It contained, at the time of our visit, about 3500.

this mud and filth scores of men had to lie down at night to sleep. Many of the convicts, thinking that we were officers or inspectors from St. Petersburg, violated the first rule of prison discipline, despite the presence of the warden, by complaining to us of the heat, foulness, and oppressiveness of the prison air, and the terrible overcrowding, which made it difficult to move about the kamera in the daytime, and almost impossible to get any rest at night. I pitied the poor wretches, but could only tell them that we were not officials, and had no power to do anything for them.

For nearly an hour we went from kazarm to kazarm and from cell to cell, finding everywhere the same overcrowding, the same inconceivably foul air, the same sickening odors, and the same throngs of gray-coated convicts. At last Mr. Papelaief, who seemed disposed to hurry us through the prison, said that there was nothing more to see except the kitchen and the hospital, and that he presumed we would not care to inspect the hospital wards, inasmuch as they contained seventy or eighty patients sick with malignant typhus fever. The young convoy officer of the barge, who seconded all of Colonel Yagodkin's efforts to make us thoroughly acquainted with the prison, asked the warden if he was not going to show us the "family kameras" and the "bologans."

"Certainly," said the warden; "I will show them anything that they wish to see."

I had not before heard of the "bologans," and Mr. Papelaief, who had to some extent taken upon himself the guidance of the party, seemed as anxious to prevent us from seeing them as he had been to prevent us from seeing the convict barge.

The "bologans" we found to be long, low sheds, hastily built of rough pine boards, and inclosed with sides of thin, white cotton-sheeting. They were three in number, and were occupied exclusively by family parties, women, and children. The first one to which we came was surrounded by a foul ditch half full of filth, into which water or urine was dripping here and there from the floor under the cotton-sheeting wall. The bologan had no windows, and all the light that it received came through the thin cloth which formed the sides.

A scene of more pitiable human misery than that which was presented to us as we entered the low, wretched shed, can hardly be imagined. It was literally packed with hundreds of weary-eyed men, haggard women, and wailing children, sitting or lying in all conceivable attitudes upon two long lines of rough plank sleeping-benches, which ran through it from end to end, leaving gangways about four feet in width in the middle and at the sides. I

could see the sky through cracks in the roof; the floor of unmatched boards had given way here and there, and the inmates had used the holes as places into which to throw refuse and pour slops and excrement; the air was insufferably fetid on account of the presence of a great number of infants and the impossibility of giving them proper physical care; wet underclothing, which had been washed in camp-kettles, was hanging from all the cross-beams; the gangways were obstructed by piles of gray bags, bundles, bedding, and domestic utensils; and in this chaos of disorder and misery hundreds of human beings, packed together so closely that they could not move without touching one another, were trying to exist, and to perform the necessary duties of everyday life. It was enough to make one sick at heart to see, subjected to such treatment and undergoing such suffering, hundreds of women and children who had committed no crime, but had merely shown their love and devotion by going into Siberian exile with the husbands, the fathers, or the brothers who were dear to them.

As we walked through the narrow gangways from one end of the shed to the other, we were besieged by unhappy men and women who desired to make complaints or petitions.

"Your High Nobility," said a heavy-eyed, anxious-looking man to the warden, "it is impossible to sleep here nights on account of the cold, the crowding, and the crying of babies. Can't something be done?"

"No, brother," replied the warden kindly; "I can't do anything. You will go on the road pretty soon, and then it will be easier."

"Dai Bogh!" ["God grant it!"] said the heavy-eyed man as he turned with a mournful look to his wife and a little girl who sat near him on the sleeping-bench.

"Batiushka! My little father! My benefactor!" cried a pale-faced woman with an infant at her naked breast. "Won't you, for God's sake, let me sleep in the bath-house with my baby? It's so cold here nights; I can't keep him warm."

"No, matushka" ["my little mother"], said the warden; "I can't let you sleep in the bath-house. It is better for you here."

Several other women made in succession the same request, and were refused in the same way; and I finally asked the warden, who seemed to be a kind-hearted and sympathetic man, why he could not let a dozen or two of these unfortunate women, who had young babies, go to the bath-house to sleep. "It is cold here now," I said, "and it must be much worse at night. These thin walls of cotton-sheeting don't keep out at all the raw night air."

"It is impossible," replied the warden. "The atmosphere of the bath-house is too hot, close, and damp. I tried letting some of the nursing women sleep there, but one or two of their babies died every night, and I had to stop it."

I appreciated the hopelessness of the situation, and had nothing more to say. As we emerged from the bologan, we came upon Mr. Papelaief engaged in earnest conversation with one of the exiles, a good-looking, blonde-bearded man about thirty-five years of age, upon whose face there was an expression of agitation and excitement, mingled with a sort of defiant despair.

"I have had only one shirt in months," the exile said in a trembling voice, "and it is dirty, ragged, and full of vermin."

"Well!" said Mr. Papelaief with contemptuous indifference, "you'll get another when you go on the road."

"But when will I go on the road?" replied the exile with increasing excitement. "It may be three months hence."

"Very likely," said Mr. Papelaief coldly, but with rising temper as he saw us listening to the colloquy.

"Then do you expect a man to wear one shirt until it drops off from him?" inquired the exile with desperate indignation.

"Silence!" roared Mr. Papelaief, losing all control of himself. "How dare you talk to me in that way! I'll take the skin off from you! You'll get another shirt when you go on the road, and not before. Away!"

The exile's face flushed, and the lump in his throat rose and fell as he struggled to choke down his emotion. At last he succeeded, and, turning away silently, entered the bologan.

"How long will the women and children have to stay in these sheds?" I asked the warden.

"Until the 2d of October," he replied.

"And where will you put them then?"

He shrugged his shoulders, but said nothing.*

From the bologans we went to a "family kamera" in one of the log kazarms. Here there was the same scene of disorder and wretchedness that we had witnessed in the bologans, with the exception that the walls were of logs, and the air, although foul, was warm. Men, women, and children were sitting on the nares, lying under them, standing in throngs in the gangways, and occupying in

one way or another every available square foot of space in the kamera. I had seen enough of this sort of misery, and asked the warden to take us to the hospital, a two-story log building situated near the church. We were met at the door by Dr. Orzheshko, the prison surgeon, who was a large, heavily built man, with a strong, good face, and who was by birth a Pole.

The hospital did not differ materially from that in the prison at Tiumen, except that it occupied a building by itself, and seemed to be in better order. It was intended originally to hold 50 beds; but on account of the overcrowding of the prison it had been found necessary to increase the number of beds to 150, and still nearly 50 sick patients were unprovided for and had to lie on benches or on the floor. The number of sick in the hospital at the time of our visit was 193, including 71 cases of typhus fever. The wards, although unduly crowded, were clean and neat, and the bed clothing was plentiful and fresh, and the atmosphere did not seem to me so terribly heavy and polluted as that of the hospital in Tiumen. The blackboards at the heads of the narrow cots showed that the prevalent diseases among the prisoners were typhus fever, scurvy, dysentery, rheumatism, anæmia, and bronchitis. Many of the nurses, I noticed, were women from 25 to 35 years of age, who had strong, intelligent faces, belonged apparently to one of the upper classes, and were probably medical students.

Early in the afternoon, after having made as careful an examination of the whole prison as circumstances would permit, we thanked the warden, Mr. Ivanenko, for his courteous attention, and for his evident disposition to deal with us frankly and honestly, and drove back to our hotel. It was long that night before I could get to sleep, and when I finally succeeded, it was only to dream of crowded bologans, of dead babies in bath-houses, and of the ghastly faces that I had seen in the hospital of the Tomsk forwarding prison.

Inasmuch as we did not see this prison at its worst, and inasmuch as I wish to give the reader a vivid realization, if possible, of the awful amount of human agony that the exile system causes, it seems to me absolutely necessary to say something, in closing, with regard to the condition of the Tomsk forwarding prison two months after we made to it the visit that I have tried to describe.

On my return to Tomsk from Eastern

* I learned upon my return trip that late in October 200 women and children were transferred to an empty house hired for the purpose in the city of Tomsk, and that 1000 or 1500 other exiles were taken from the forwarding prison to the city prison and to the prison of

the convict companies [arrestantski rotii]. These measures were rendered imperative by the alarming prevalence of disease — particularly typhus fever — in the forwarding prison as a result of the terrible overcrowding.

Siberia, in February, I had a long interview with Dr. Orzheshko, the prison surgeon. He described to me the condition of the prison, as it gradually became more and more crowded in the late fall after our departure, and said to me: "You can hardly imagine the state of affairs that existed here in November. We had 2400 cases of sickness in the course of the year, and 450 patients in the hospital at one time, with beds for only 150. Three hundred men and women dangerously sick lay on the floor in rows, most of them without pillows or bed clothing; and in order to find even floor space for them we had to put them so close together that I could not walk between them, and a patient could not cough or vomit without coughing or vomiting into his own face or into the face of the man lying beside him. The atmosphere in the wards became so terribly polluted that I fainted repeatedly upon coming into the hospital in the morning, and my assistants had to revive me by dashing water into my face. In order to change and purify the air we were forced to keep the windows open; and, as winter had set in, this so chilled the rooms that we could not maintain, on the floor where the sick lay, a

temperature higher than 5 or 6 degrees Réaumur above the freezing point. More than 25 per cent. of the whole prison population were constantly sick, and more than 10 per cent. of the sick died."*

"How long," I inquired, "has this awful state of things existed?"

"I have been here fifteen years," replied Dr. Orzheshko, "and it has been so, more or less, ever since I came."†

"And is the Government at St. Petersburg aware of it?"

"It has been reported upon every year. I have recommended that the hospital of the Tomsk forwarding prison be burned to the ground. It is so saturated with contagious disease that it is unfit for use. We have been called upon by the prison department to forward plans for a new hospital, and we have forwarded them. They have been returned for modification, and we have modified them; but nothing has been done."

It is unnecessary to comment upon this frank statement of the Tomsk surgeon. Civilization and humanity can safely rest upon it, without argument, their case against the Tomsk forwarding prison.

* The report of the Inspector of Exile Transportation shows how rapidly the sick rate increased with the progressive overcrowding. The figures are as follows:

1885. Month.	Average daily number of sick.	Per cent. of whole prison population.
June	108	5.8
July	170	6.9
August	189	7.1
September	242	9.6
October	356	15.4
November	406	25.2

The sick rate increased steadily throughout the winter until March, when it reached high-water mark—40.7 per cent., or nearly one-half the whole prison population. [Report of Inspector of Exile Transportation for 1885, p. 30 of the manuscript.]

† For example, according to the report of the medical department of the Ministry of the Interior for 1882, 1268 prisoners were treated that year in the Tomsk forwarding prison for typhus fever, and 1311 for diphtheria, measles, and small-pox.

George Kennan.



APART.

OUT on a leafless prairie, where
 No song of bird makes glad the air,
 No hue of flower brings to her eyes
 Outward glimpse of Paradise,—
 A thousand miles and a half away,—
 My lady is in love to-day.

And all her heart is singing, singing,
 And every new south wind is winging
 Tidings glad from her true lover,
 And kisses bridge the distance over—
 Lips to lips and heart to heart,
 A thousand miles and a half apart.

Orelia Key Bell.