

THE HISTORY OF THE KARA POLITICAL PRISON.



When Colonel Kononovich (Kon-on-o'vitch) resigned his position as governor of the Kara (Kah-rah') penal establishment, in 1881, his place was taken by Major Potulof (Po'too-loff), who had previously been connected in some official capacity with the prison administration of the Nerchinsk (Ner'-chinsk) silver mines. Shortly after Potulof assumed command, all of the male political convicts, who then numbered about one hundred, were transferred to the new political prison erected by Colonel Kononovich at the Lower Diggings, where they were divided into gangs of twenty-five men each and shut up in four large *kameras* (kah'me-rah's). Their life, as described in letters surreptitiously written by some of them to their friends,¹ was hard and hopeless, but not absolutely intolerable. They were allowed to exercise every day in the court-yard, they were permitted to receive small sums of money from their friends, they had in the prison a fairly good library consisting of books purchased by them or sent to them from European Russia, and they could amuse themselves occasionally by working with carpenter's or blacksmith's tools in a small shop situated in one corner of the court-yard. On the other hand, they were living under very bad sanitary conditions; some of them were kept night and day in handcuffs and leg-fetters; two or three of them were chained to wheelbarrows; those who still had possession of their mental faculties were forced to listen constantly to the babbling or the raving of their insane comrades; they were no longer allowed to diversify their monotonous existence by work in the gold placers; they were deprived of the privilege of enrollment in the free command at the expiration of their terms of probation; they were forbidden to communicate with their relatives; and their whole world was bounded by the high serrated wall of the prison stockade. That their life was a terribly hard one seems to have been admitted, even by the most indifferent of Siberian officials. In March, 1882, Governor-General Anuchin (An-noo'-chin) made a "secret" report to the Tsar with

¹ I have in my possession a number of these letters, and many of the facts set forth in the following pages have been derived from them. Although the letters themselves must be regarded, of course, as *ex-parte* testimony, they were not intended to excite public sympathy, nor to affect public opinion, since it was not supposed by the writers that they would ever obtain publicity.

² It is a noteworthy fact, frankly admitted by the Governor-General, that out of 430 political offenders banished to Eastern Siberia, 217 — or more than half —

regard to the state of affairs in Eastern Siberia, in the course of which he referred to the political convicts at Kara as follows:

In concluding this part of my report [upon the prisons and the exile system], I must offer, for the consideration of your Imperial Majesty, a few words concerning the state criminals now living in Eastern Siberia. On the 1st of January, 1882, they numbered in all 430 persons, as follows:

a. Sent to Siberia by decree of a court and now	
1. In penal servitude	123
2. In forced colonization	49
3. In assigned residences [na zhitvo]	41
b. Sent to Siberia by administrative process and now	
1. In assigned residences [na zhitelstvo].	217
Total	430 ²

All of the state criminals belonging to the penal-servitude class are held at the Kara gold mines under guard of a foot company of the Trans-Baikal [By-kahl'] Cossacks consisting of two hundred men. The sending of these criminals to work with the common convicts in the gold placers is impossible.³ To employ them in such work in isolation from the others is very difficult, on account of the lack of suitable working-places, their unfitness for hard physical labor, and the want of an adequate convey. If to these considerations be added the fact that unproductive hard labor, such as that employed in other countries merely to subject the prisoner to severe physical exertion, is not practiced with us, it will become apparent that we have no hard labor for this class of criminals to perform; and the local authorities who are in charge of them, and who are held to strict accountability for escapes, are compelled, by force of circumstances, to limit themselves to keeping such state criminals in prison under strict guard, employing them, occasionally, in work within the prison court, or not far from it. Such labor has not the character of penal servitude, but may rather be regarded as hygienic. Immunity from hard labor, however, does not render the lot of state criminals an easy one. On the contrary, complete isolation and constant confinement to their own limited circle make their life unbearable. . . . There have been a number of suicides among them, and within a few days one of them, Pozen, has gone insane. A number of others are in a mental condition very near to insanity. In accordance with an understanding that I have with the had been sent there without trial, and without even a pretense of judicial investigation. I submit this officially stated fact for the attentive consideration of the advocates of a Russo-American extradition treaty.

³ The Governor-General does not say why this was "impossible," nor does he try to explain the fact that although the political were constantly sent to the gold placers under Colonel Kononovich's management, no evil results followed, and not a single attempt was made to escape.

Ministry of the Interior, all sufferers from mental disorder will be removed, if possible, to hired quarters in the town of Chita [Chee'tah],¹ since there are in Siberia no regular asylums for the insane, and all the existing institutions of that kind in European Russia are full.²

It is a fact perhaps worthy of remark that the life of the political convicts at Kara, which Governor-General Anuchin describes as "unbearable," was made unbearable by the direct and deliberate action of the Government itself. Anuchin caused to be erected in front of the prison windows the high stockade that hid from the prisoners the whole outside world and turned their place of confinement into a huge coverless box; while the Minister of the Interior, apparently without the least provocation, abolished the free command, and ordered the "complete isolation" which resulted in the suicide and insanity that the Governor-General seems to deplore. The condition of the state criminals was not "unbearable" under the administration of Colonel Kononovich. It became unbearable as a consequence of the orders that forced the latter's resignation.

It was hardly to be expected that young and energetic men would quietly submit to a state of things that was officially recognized as "unbearable," and that was gradually driving the weakest of them to suicide or insanity. In April, 1882, less than a year after Colonel Kononovich's resignation, and less than a month after the delivery of Governor-General Anuchin's report to the Tsar, a few of the boldest and bravest of the state criminals at Kara made an attempt to escape by digging a tunnel under the prison wall. The excavation, which was made under the floor in one of the *kameras*, was not discovered; but owing to the marshy nature of the ground upon which the building stood, the hole quickly filled with water, and work in it was abandoned. It then occurred to some of the prisoners that they might escape by concealing themselves during the day in the small shop in one corner of the court-yard where they were allowed to work, and then scaling the stockade from its

roof at night. The most serious difficulty in the way was the evening "verification." After supper every night the prisoners in all the cells were counted, and the men concealed in the workshop would be missed before it grew dark enough to render the scaling of the stockade reasonably safe. This difficulty the prisoners hoped to overcome by making dummies to take the places of the missing men in the *kameras*. It was not customary to waken prisoners who happened to be asleep at the time of the evening verification. The officer on duty merely included them in the count without disturbing them, and as he did not enter the dimly lighted cell, but made his count from the door, he was not likely to notice the difference between the figure of a dummy and the figure of a real man lying asleep on the platform with his face to the wall. If the proposed stratagem should succeed, the men who escaped were to make their way down the valley of the Amur (Am-moor') River to the Pacific Ocean, and there endeavor to get on board of some American whaling or trading vessel. In the mean time their comrades in the prison were to supply their places with dummies at every verification, in order to conceal their escape as long as possible and give them time enough to reach the coast before the inevitable hue and cry should be raised. Late one afternoon in April, when all necessary preparations had been made, two political convicts named Muishkin (Mwish'kin) and Khrushchef (Khroosh'cheff) concealed themselves in a large box in the prison workshop, and just before the time for the evening verification their places were taken by two skillfully constructed dummies in convict dress which were laid on the sleeping-platform in the cell that they had occupied. The substitution was not noticed by the officer who made the evening count, and at a late hour of the night Muishkin and Khrushchef crept out of the box in the workshop, climbed up on the roof, scaled the stockade without attracting the attention of the sentry, and stole away into the forest. A few days later two more men escaped in the

¹ Up to the time of our visit to the mines, three years and a half later, this promised removal had not been made. Insane politicals were still living in the same *kameras* with their sane comrades, and intensifying, by their presence, the misery of the latter's existence. In East Siberian prisons generally we found little attention paid to the seclusion or care of demented convicts. In more than one place in the Trans-Baikal we were startled, as we entered a crowded prison *kamera*, by some uncared-for lunatic, who sprang suddenly towards us with a wild cry or with a burst of hysterical laughter. The reasons for this state of affairs are given, in part, by the Governor-General. There is not an insane asylum in the whole country, and it is easier and cheaper to make the prison comrades of a lunatic take

care of him than to keep him in seclusion and provide him with an attendant. For educated political prisoners, who dread insanity more than anything else, it is, of course, terribly depressing to have constantly before them, in the form of a wrecked intelligence, an illustration of the possible end of their own existence.

² Report of Governor-General Anuchin to Alexander III., Chapter V., Section 3, under the heading of "Exile Penal Servitude and the Prison Department." A copy of this report is in my possession, and I intend, ultimately, to publish it in full. The original bears, as an indorsement, in the Tsar's handwriting, the significant words, "Grustnaya no ne novaya kartina" ["A melancholy but not a new picture"].

same way, and at the end of two weeks the prison authorities were counting every night and morning no less than six dummies, while the six prisoners represented by these lay figures were far on their way towards the coast of the Pacific. Sometime in the course of the third week after the departure of Muishkin and Khrushchef two more dummies were laid on the sleeping-platforms in the prison kameras, and a fourth couple escaped. In getting away from the stockade, however, one of them unfortunately fell into a ditch or a pool of water, and the splash attracted the attention of the nearest sentry, who promptly fired his rifle and raised an alarm. In ten minutes the whole prison was in commotion. A careful count was made of the prisoners in all the kameras, and it was found that eight men were missing. A few days before this time a visit of inspection had been made to the prison by Mr. Galkin Vraskoi (Gal'kin Vrass'koy), chief of the Russian prison administration, and General Ilyashevich (Il-yah-shay'vitch), governor of the Trans-Baikal, and when the escape was discovered these high officials were on their way from Kara to Chita. In response to a summons from Major Potulof they hurried back to the Lower Diggings and personally superintended the organization of a thorough and widely extended search for the missing men. Telegrams were dispatched to all the seaport towns along the coast of the Pacific, as well as to all points on the Amur that could be reached by telegraph; descriptions and photographs of the fugitives were mailed to police officials throughout Eastern Siberia; orders were issued to arrest all suspicious or unknown persons; and searching parties of natives, stimulated by the promise of reward, scoured the forests in all parts of the Trans-Baikal. It was impossible, of course, for men who were unfamiliar with the country, who had neither guides, maps, nor compasses, and who were enfeebled by long imprisonment, to elude, for any great length of time, so persistent and far-reaching a pursuit. Although two of them, Muishkin and Khrushchef, made a journey of more than a thousand miles, and actually reached the seaport town of Vla-

divostok, every one of the fugitives was ultimately recaptured and brought back to Kara in handcuffs and leg-fetters.¹

In the mean time the prison authorities at Kara were making preparations to "give the political convicts a lesson"² and "reduce the prison to order." This they purposed to do by depriving the prisoners of all the privileges that they had previously enjoyed; by taking away from them books, money, underclothing, bed-clothing, and every other thing not furnished by the Government to common criminals of the penal-servitude class; by distributing them in small parties among the common-convict prisons at Ust Kara, Middle Kara, and Upper Kara; and by subjecting them to what are known to Russian prisoners as "dungeon conditions" (*kartsernoi polozhenie*).³ Anticipating, or pretending to anticipate, insubordination or resistance to these measures on the part of the politicals, Ilyashevich and Galkin Vraskoi concentrated at the Lower Diggings six *sotnias* of Cossacks, and after ten days of inaction, intended, apparently, to throw the prisoners off their guard, ordered a sudden descent upon the prison in the night. This unprovoked attack of an armed force upon sleeping and defenseless prisoners is known in the history of the Kara political prison as "the pogróm of May 11."⁴ Three or four hundred Cossacks with bayoneted rifles marched noiselessly into the court-yard under direction of Lieutenant-Colonel Rudenko (Roo'den-ko), filled the prison corridor, and then, throwing open suddenly and simultaneously the doors of all the kameras, rushed in upon the bewildered politicals, dragged them from their sleeping-platforms, and proceeded with great roughness and brutality to search them, deprive them of their personal property, strip them of their clothing, and hale them out into the court-yard. All the remonstrances and protests of the sufferers were answered with insults; and when some of the more impetuous of them, indignant at the unprovoked brutality of the assault, armed themselves with boards torn up from the sleeping-platforms and made an attempt to defend themselves, they were knocked down and mercilessly beaten by the

¹ The politicals who took part in this unsuccessful attempt to escape were Muishkin, Khrushchéf, Bólo-mez, Levchéno, Yurkófski, Dikófski, Kryzhanófski, and Minakóf.

² This was the expression used by Major Potulof in speaking to me of the events that followed the escape. It is believed by many of the politicals at Kara that the prison authorities deliberately intended to provoke them to violence, in order, first, to have an excuse for administering corporal punishment, and, secondly, artificially to create a "boont," or prison insurrection, that would divert the attention of the Minister of the Interior from their (the officials') negligence in allowing eight dangerous criminals to escape.

³ A prisoner living under "dungeon conditions" is deprived of money, books, writing materials, underclothing, bed-clothing, tobacco, and all other luxuries; he is not allowed to walk for exercise in the court-yard nor to have any communication with the outside world; and he must live exclusively upon black rye-bread and water, with now and then a little of the soup or broth thickened with barley, which is known to the political convicts as "balánda."

⁴ The word "pogróm" has no precise equivalent in the English language. It means a sudden, violent, and destructive attack, like one of the raids made upon the Jews by infuriated peasants in Russian towns some years ago.

Cossacks with the butt-ends of their guns. Among the prisoners most cruelly maltreated were Voloshénko, Rodiónof, Kobylíanski, Bobókhof, and Orlóf. It is not necessary to go minutely into the details of this scene of cruelty and violence. I do not wish to make it out any worse than it really was, and for my purpose it is sufficient to say that before noon on the 11th of May, 1882, the bruised and bleeding political convicts, robbed of all their personal possessions and stripped of the boots and underclothing that they had bought with their own money and that they had previously been permitted to wear, set out in three parties, on foot and without breakfast, for the common-criminal prisons of Ust, Middle, and Upper Kara. They were guarded by convoys of from fifty to one hundred Cossacks, who had express instructions from Governor Ilyashevich not to spare the butt-ends of their guns. The party destined for Ust Kara, in which there was one man chained to a wheelbarrow, asked permission to stop and rest on the road, as they had had nothing to eat or drink that day and were marching a distance of fifteen versts (about ten miles). The soldiers of the convoy, however, refused to allow them to stop, and pricked them on with their bayonets. Thereupon the prisoners who were not handcuffed attacked the Cossacks with stones. An unequal contest followed, in the course of which the men who resisted were knocked down and beaten again with the butt-ends of guns, and all who were not already manacled had their hands tied securely behind their backs. Late in the afternoon, bruised, tired, hungry, and thirsty, they reached Ust Kara, and after being again carefully searched were shut up by twos in the dark and dirty "secret" cells¹ of the common-criminal prison, where they threw their weary bodies down on the cold, damp floors and congratulated themselves that the day was over. The parties sent respectively to the Amurski

(Am-moor'skee) prison and the prison in Middle Kara had an experience similar to that of the Ust Kara party, except that they were not beaten by their guards. Before dark the hundred or more state criminals who had occupied the kameras of the political prison were distributed in small parties among the common-criminal prisons of Ust Kara, the Lower Diggings, Middle Kara, and Upper Kara; the long-term (bez sróchni) convicts were in both handcuffs and leg-fetters, and all were living under "dungeon conditions." In this manner Governor Ilyashevich and Mr. Galkin Vraskoi put down the "insurrection" (boont) that a hundred or more sleeping prisoners presumably would have raised when they awoke, taught the "insurgents" a valuable and much needed "lesson," and showed the Minister of the Interior how vigorously and successfully his subordinates could deal with a sudden and threatening emergency—and with sleeping men! The political prison had been "reduced to order," but it was the order that once "reigned in Warsaw."

For two months the political convicts lived under "dungeon conditions" in the cells of the common-criminal prisons, seeing little of one another and knowing nothing of what was happening in the outside world. Bad air, bad and insufficient food, and the complete lack of exercise soon began injuriously to affect their health; scurvy broke out among them, and in less than a month several of them, including Tikhonof (Tee'khon-off) and Zhukofski (Zhoo-koff'skee), were at the point of death,² and many more were so weak that they could not rise to their feet when ordered to stand up for verification. During all of this time the prison authorities had in their possession money belonging to these wretched convicts; but they would not allow the latter to use it, nor to direct its expenditure for the underclothing, bedding, and nourishing food of which the sick especially

¹ "Secret" cells in Siberian prisons are those intended for the solitary confinement of persons accused of murder or other capital crimes. They were not generally shown us in our visits to prisons, but I was permitted by Colonel Makofski to inspect the "secret" cells in the prison at Irkutsk (Eer-kootsk'). These had neither beds nor sleeping-platforms, and contained no furniture of any kind except a "parásha," or excrement bucket. The prisoners confined in them were forced to sleep without pillows or bed-clothing on the cold cement or stone floor, and during the day had either to sit on this floor or to stand. I saw men who had not yet been tried occupying such cells as these in the Irkutsk prison. If I had power to summon as witnesses the subordinate officials of the House of Preliminary Detention in St. Petersburg, I could prove, in a Russian court, that even in that show prison of the Empire there were "kartsers," or disciplinary cells, where there was not so much as a "parásha," and where the floors were covered with excrement. Of course Mr. Galkin Vraskoi and Mr. Kokovtsef (Ko-kov'tsef),

the heads of the Russian prison administration, were not aware of this fact; but, nevertheless, it is a fact, unless both political prisoners and the prison officials themselves severally and independently lied to me. The political offender Dicheskulo (Dee-chess-kool'o) was put into such a cell as this after the riot in the house of Preliminary Detention that followed the flogging of Bogoliubof (Bo-go-lioo-boff). I did not see the "secret" cells in the Kara prisons, but there is no reason to suppose that they were in any better condition than the kameras that I did see and that I have described. I do not mean to have the reader draw the sweeping and mistaken conclusion that all cells, or even all "secret" cells, in Russian prisons are of this kind, nor that the higher prison officials are in all cases responsible for such a state of affairs. All that I aim to do is to make plain the conditions under which educated and delicately nurtured political offenders in Russian prisons are *sometimes* compelled to live.

² Tikhonof died shortly afterwards.

were in such urgent need. It was not until scurvy threatened to become epidemic that Major Khalturin (Khal-too'rin), a cruel gendarme officer from Irkutsk who had succeeded Major Potulof in the command of the political prison, consented to allow the prisoners to have bedding.

In the women's prison at Ust Kara the state of affairs was little better. The women, of course, had had nothing whatever to do with the escape, nor with the artificially created "insurrection," but they had, nevertheless, to take their share of the consequences. The new commandant, Major Khalturin, believed in strict discipline with no favors; and he regarded the permission that had been tacitly given the women to wear their own dress instead of the prison costume as an unnecessary concession to a foolish and sentimental weakness. He therefore ordered that their own clothing be taken away from them, and that they be required to put on the convict garb. Some of the women were sick and unable to change their dress, others did not believe that the order would really be enforced, and they refused to obey it, and finally the overseer of the prison resorted to violence. The scene that ensued produced such an effect upon Madame Leschern that she attempted to commit suicide.

Outside the political prison at the Lower Diggings were living a number of women who had voluntarily come to the mines in order to be near their husbands. Previous to the escape and the "pogrom" these women had been allowed to have interviews with their imprisoned husbands once or twice a week, and had received from the latter small sums of money, with the help of which they contrived to exist. After the prison had been "reduced to order" and the political convicts had been subjected to "dungeon conditions," interviews between husbands and wives were no longer permitted; and as the prisoners' money was all held in the possession of the authorities, the unfortunate women and children were soon reduced almost to starvation. Vera Rogatchëf, wife of Lieutenant Dmitri Rogatchëf, a young artillery officer then in penal servitude, was brought to such a state of destitution and despair that she finally shot herself.

On the 6th of July, 1882, eight of the political convicts, who were regarded by the Government for some reason as particularly dangerous, were sent back in chains from Kara to St. Petersburg to be immured for life in the "stone bags" of the castle of Schlüsselburg.¹

¹ These "dangerous" prisoners were Messrs. Gëllis, Voloshénko, Butsinski, Paul Orlof, Malávski, Popof, Shchedrin, and Kobylánski. Nothing is known with regard to their fate. Madame Gëllis, the wife of one of them, whose acquaintance I made in the Trans-

A few days later — about the middle of July — all the rest of the state criminals were brought back to the political prison at the Lower Diggings, where they were put into new and much smaller cells that had been made by erecting partitions in the original kameras in such a manner as to divide each of them into thirds. The effect of this change was to crowd every group of seven or eight men into a cell that was so nearly filled by the sleeping-platform as to leave no room for locomotion. Two men could not stand side by side in the narrow space between the edge of the platform and the wall, and the occupants of the cell were therefore compelled to sit or lie all day on the plank naves without occupation for either minds or bodies. To add to their misery, paráshas were set in their small cells, and the air at times became so offensive and polluted that, to use the expression of one of them in a letter to me, "it was simply maddening." No other reply was made to their petitions and remonstrances than a threat from Khalturin that if they did not keep quiet they would be flogged. With a view to intimidating them Khalturin even sent a surgeon to make a physical examination of one political, for the avowed purpose of ascertaining whether his state of health was such that he could be flogged without endangering his life. This was the last straw. The wretched state criminals, deprived of exercise, living under "dungeon conditions," poisoned by air laden with the stench of excrement-buckets, and finally threatened with the whip when they complained, could endure no more. They resolved to make that last desperate protest against cruelty which is known in Russian prisons as a "golodófka," or "hunger-strike." They sent a notification to Major Khalturin that their life had finally become unendurable, that they preferred death to such an existence, and that they should refuse to take food until they either perished or forced the Government to treat them with more humanity. No attention was paid to their notification, but from that moment not a mouthful of the food that was set into their cells was touched. As day after day passed the stillness of death gradually settled down upon the prison. The starving convicts, too weak and apathetic even to talk to one another, lay in rows, like dead men, upon the plank sleeping-platforms, and the only sounds to be heard in the building were the footsteps of the sentries, and now and then the incoherent mutterings of the insane. On the fifth day of the "golodófka" Major Khalturin, convinced

Baikal, told me that she was denied a last interview with her husband when he was taken away from Kara, that she never afterwards heard from him, and that she did not know whether he was among the living or the dead.

that the hunger-strike was serious, came to the prison and asked the convicts to state definitely upon what terms they would discontinue their protest. They replied that the conditions of their life were unbearable, and that they should continue their self-starvation until the excrement-buckets were taken out of their cells, until they were permitted to have books and to exercise daily in the open air, until they were allowed to direct the expenditure of their money for better food and better clothing than were furnished by the Government, and until he (Khalturin) gave them a solemn assurance that none of them should be flogged. The commandant told them that the talk about flogging was nonsense; that there had never been any serious intention of resorting to the whip, and that, if they would end their strike, he would see what could be done to improve the material conditions of their life. Not being able to get any positive assurances that their demands would be complied with, the prisoners continued the "golodófka." On the tenth day the state of affairs had become alarming. All of the starving men were in the last stages of physical prostration, and some of them seemed to be near death. Count Dmitri Tolstoï, the Minister of the Interior, who had been apprised of the situation, telegraphed the commandant to keep a "skórbnoi leest," or "hospital sheet," setting forth the symptoms and condition of the strikers, and to inform him promptly of any marked change.¹ Every day thereafter a feldsher, or hospital steward, went through the cells taking the pulse and the temperature of the starving men. On the thirteenth day of the "golodófka" Major Khalturin sent word to the wives of all political convicts living at the Lower Diggings that they might have an interview with their husbands—the first in more than two months—if they would try to persuade them to begin taking food. They gladly assented, of course, to this condition, and were admitted to the prison. At the same time Khalturin went himself to the starving men and assured them, on his honor, that if they would end the hunger-strike he would do everything in his power to satisfy their demands.

¹ I have never been able to understand why a government that is capable, when irritated, of treating prisoners in this way should hesitate a moment about letting them die and thus getting rid of them. However, I believe it is a fact that in every case where political hunger-strikers have had courage and nerve enough to starve themselves to the point of death the authorities have manifested anxiety and have ultimately yielded. It is one of many similar inconsistencies in Russian penal administration. The Government seems to be sensitive to some things and brutally insensible to others. It prides itself upon its humanity in expunging the death penalty from its civil code, and yet it inflicts death constantly by sentences of courts-martial in civil cases. It has abolished the knout, but it flogs

The entreaties of the wretched, heart-broken women and the promises of the commandant finally broke down the resolution of the politicals, and on the thirteenth day the first and most obstinate hunger-strike in the history of the Kara political prison came to an end.

While these events were taking place, a young married woman about twenty-four years of age, named Maria Kutitonskaya (Koo-teeton'ska-ya), who had been condemned to penal servitude on account of her revolutionary activity in Odessa, finished her prison term in Kara and was sent as a forced colonist to a small village called Aksha (Ak-shah'), situated in the southern part of the Trans-Baikal on the frontier of Mongolia. She had been an eyewitness of the brutalities that attended the "reduction of the political prison to order" by Rudenko and Potulof; she had seen the "lesson" given to the political convicts with the butt-ends of guns; she had herself felt the shame and misery that impelled Madame Leschern and Mrs. Rogatchëf to attempt self-destruction; she was acquainted with the causes and history of the long and desperate hunger-strike that had just ended; and, stirred to the very depths of her soul by a feeling of intense indignation, she determined, as a last resort and at the cost of her own life, to assassinate General Ilyashevich, the governor of the Trans-Baikal, and thus call the attention of the world to the cruelties practiced by his authority, and in part under his direction, at the mines of Kara. She was at this time pregnant, and was aware of her condition; she knew that it would be impossible to escape after committing the crime that she contemplated; she knew that she was about to sacrifice her own life, and probably the life also of her unborn child; but so intense were the emotions aroused by all she had seen and known at Kara, that she was ready to commit murder, and to die for it, upon the chance that the deed and its investigation would give publicity to the wrongs and outrages that she and her companions had suffered. As soon as she could get together money enough for her traveling expenses after her arrival at Aksha, she

with the plet, which, according to the testimony of Russian officers, can be made to cause death in a hundred blows. It shrinks from allowing political convicts to die of self-starvation, and yet it puts them to a slow death in the "stone bags" of the castle of Schlüsselburg. To the practical American intelligence it would seem to be safer, as well as more humane, to order political convicts out into the prison court-yard and have them shot, than to kill them slowly under "dungeon conditions." Society would not be half so much shocked and exasperated by summary executions as it now is by suicides, hunger-strikes, and similar evidences of intolerable misery among the political convicts in prison and at the mines.

bought a small, cheap revolver from a common-criminal colonist, ran away from her place of banishment, and, hiring horses from the peasants in the villages through which she passed, made her way towards Chita, which was the governor's place of residence. As it was not customary for young and attractive women to travel entirely alone in that part of the world, she was regarded with a good deal of interest and curiosity by the peasants, and just before she reached her destination she was arrested by a village official upon suspicion. She persuaded this man to take her to Chita and turn her over to the *ispravnik*, with whom she was personally acquainted. To the *ispravnik* she admitted frankly that she had run away from her place of exile, but said that in so doing she had not intended to escape, but merely to get an interview with the governor. After some conversation the *ispravnik* went with her to the governor's house, and leaving her in a reception room went to apprise Ilyashevich of her presence and her desire for an interview.

"Have you searched her?" inquired the governor suspiciously.

"No," replied the *ispravnik*; "I did n't think of it."

"Never mind," said Ilyashevich. "What can a woman do?" And with these words he entered the reception room where Madame Kutitonskaya, with a cocked revolver hidden under a handkerchief in her right hand, was awaiting him. As he advanced to greet her she raised the revolver, and saying, "This is for the 11th of May,"¹ shot him through the lungs. The wound was not mortal, but he fell to the floor and was carried to a couch by some of the servants, while the *ispravnik* seized and disarmed Madame Kutitonskaya, caused her to be bound, and sent her under strong guard to the Chita prison. Her life there was a life of terrible loneliness and misery. She was put into a cold, dirty, "secret" cell, which the district architect of the Trans-Baikal described to me as "hardly long enough to lie down in or high enough to stand up in." Her own dress and underclothing were taken away from her, and in place of them she was given an old prison suit that had already been worn by a common convict and was full of vermin. She lived under strict "dungeon conditions," and for three months lay without bed-clothing on the bare floor. When, as a result of such hardships and privations, she became sick, and asked for straw to lay down on the planks

where she slept, she was told by the chief of police, Mélnikof, that there was no straw for her. But for the food smuggled into her cell and the aid surreptitiously given to her by sympathetic common-criminal convicts in the same prison, she would undoubtedly have died before the meeting of the court appointed to investigate the case. After three months of this wretched existence she was tried by court-martial and sentenced to be hanged. Then, for another whole month, she lay under sentence of death, arguing with herself, through many long, sleepless nights, the question whether or not she should make known to the authorities her pregnant condition, which had not yet become apparent. She knew that an announcement of the fact that she was with child would, in accordance with the custom in such cases, secure a long reprieve if not a commutation of her sentence; but, on the other hand, life held no hope for her, and she believed that if she allowed herself to be hanged under such circumstances, the fact of her pregnancy, which would inevitably be discovered after her death, would intensify the feeling of horror that she hoped would be excited by the series of events which had led up to the catastrophe—would give to such events even greater publicity, and would inspire all lovers of humanity and justice with a deeper and bitterer hatred of the Government. The questions that tormented her most were, first, whether, if she allowed herself to be hanged without revealing her condition, she would not be the murderer of her unborn child, and, secondly, whether that child would die when she died, or would live for a time in her dead body. This last ghastly doubt seems to have been particularly harrowing to her in her morbid mental condition, but even in the face of such reflections she finally decided to allow herself to be hanged. Early in January, 1883, the Government, without reference to her condition, of which it was still ignorant, commuted her sentence to penal servitude for life² and sent her with a returning party of common-criminal exiles to the city of Irkutsk. Although it was midwinter, she was not provided with a sheepskin overcoat nor with felt boots, and she might have perished from cold on the road if the common criminals in the party had not taken pity upon her and furnished her with warm clothing at the expense of their own comfort. When she reached Irkutsk she was in such a condition that she had to be lifted

¹ The date of the "pogrom" in the Kara political prison.

² I was credibly informed, and in justice the fact should be stated, that this commutation of sentence was asked for by Governor Ilyashevich, whose life Madame Kutitonskaya had attempted. Whether he

felt, upon reflection, some stirrings of pity and remorse, or whether he merely wished to make a showing of magnanimity in order to throw doubt upon the reports of his cruelty at the mines and break their effect, I do not know.

out of her sleigh. As a result of this prolonged agony of mind and body, her child, a short time afterwards, was born dead in the Irkutsk prison. When we left Siberia in 1886 she was still living. All that I know of her life since that time is that it has ended.

When one of my informants first knew Madame Kutitonskaya she was a happy, careless school-girl in Odessa, and no one would have ventured to predict that in less than ten years she would develop into a woman of such extraordinary energy, courage, self-control, and firmness of purpose. There are few things more remarkable in the records of heroism than the determination of Madame Kutitonskaya to allow herself to be hanged, with a child in her womb, in order that the horror of such an execution might stir the emotions of every man and woman who heard of it, and give wider publicity to the series of events of which it was the final outcome. Such, however, is the type of character that is forged in the furnace of oppression and tempered in the cold bath of solitary confinement.

The statements that I have made with regard to the events that led to the shooting of Governor Ilyashevich are based upon conversations with the political convicts who were actors in them, and upon three independently prepared accounts in manuscript of the escape, the "pogrom," and the hunger-strike. The story of the attempted assassination, and of Madame Kutitonskaya's life in prison, is from one of her letters, written after her arrival in Irkutsk. The brief transcript of her intentions, thoughts, and reflections while lying under sentence of death in Chita was obtained from an exiled lady who had many long talks with her in the Irkutsk prison, and whose acquaintance I subsequently made. The whole story, in its main outlines, is known to political exiles throughout Siberia, and I heard it in half a dozen different places. All the efforts that I dared make to get at the Government's side of the case were unsuccessful. The officials to whom I applied for information—with a few exceptions—either manifested such a disinclination to talk that I could not pursue the subject, or else made preposterous attempts to deceive me. A young surgeon in the Irkutsk prison whom I questioned about Madame Kutitonskaya was so frightened that he got rid of me as soon as possible and never dared return my call. The *ispravnik* of Nerchinski Zavod (Ner'chin-skee Zah-vod'), who went to Kara with some of the recaptured fugitives after the escape, described the political convicts to me as "lofki moshenniki" (clever rogues) who were not deserving of either sympathy or respect. Most of them, he said, were "priests' sons, or seminarists who had been ex-

pelled from school." Lieutenant-Colonel Novikov (No'vee-koff), who was for three years or more commander of the Cossack battalion at the mines of Kara, assured me that the political convicts were mere "malchishki" (miserable insignificant boys), without any definite aims or convictions; that out of one hundred and fifty of them that he had known at Kara only three or four had any education, and that Madame Kutitonskaya's attempt to assassinate Governor Ilyashevich was "a mere crazy freak"—that "she did n't know herself what she did it for." The attentive reader will see that I have had no difficulty in making my choice between such preposterous statements as these and the clear, coherent, and detailed narratives of the political convicts themselves. If my history of the Kara political prison is one-sided, it is simply because the other side either refused to give me information, or was too ignorant to state its own case with any show of plausibility.

How far from the real truth were the statements made to me by officials with regard to the character of the political convicts at Kara I purpose to show by giving brief biographies of three or four of the men and women who took an active part in the series of events that I have tried to describe, or who were identified with the later history of the political prison. One of the ablest and most distinguished of them was Anna Pavlovna Korba (Kor-bah'), whose portrait, made from a photograph taken before her exile, will be found on page 741. She was the daughter of a Russian nobleman named Paul Mengart, and was born in the province of Tver, near Moscow, in 1849. She was carefully educated under the direction of her mother, a cultured and deeply religious woman, and at the early age of eighteen or nineteen she was married to a Swiss gentleman residing in Russia named Victor Korba. Her beauty and accomplishments made her greatly sought after in society, her husband was wealthy and was proud of her social success, and for a time she lived the life of a woman of the great world. This life, however, could not long satisfy a young girl of bright mind and serious character, and in 1869, when she was only twenty years of age, she made an attempt to fit herself for something better. A school for the higher education of the daughters of the nobility was opened about that time in connection with a boys' college in St. Petersburg, and Madame Korba at once enrolled herself as a student, with the intention of finally completing her education in one of the institutions for women at Zurich or in Paris. In 1870 her husband failed in business; she was forced to abandon the hope of finishing her collegiate training abroad, and a short time

afterwards went with her husband to reside in the small provincial town of Minsk, where he had obtained employment. Here she began her career of public activity by organizing a society and raising a fund for the purpose of promoting popular education and aiding poor students in the universities. Of this society she was the president. In 1877 the Russo-Turkish war broke out and opened to her ardent and generous nature a new field of benevolent activity. As soon as wounded Russian soldiers began to come back from Bulgaria, she went into the hospitals of Minsk as a Sister of Mercy, and a short time afterwards put on the uniform of the International Association of the Red Cross, and went to the front and took a position as a Red Cross nurse in a Russian field hospital beyond the Danube. She was then hardly twenty-seven years of age. What she saw and what she suffered in the course of that terrible Russo-Turkish campaign can be imagined by those who have seen the paintings of the Russian artist Verestchagin. Her experience had a marked and permanent effect upon her character. She became an enthusiastic lover and admirer of the common Russian peasant, who bears upon his weary shoulders the whole burden of the Russian state, but who is cheated, robbed, and oppressed, even while fighting the battles of his country. She determined to devote the remainder of her life to the education and the emancipation of this oppressed class of the Russian people. At the close of the war she returned to Russia, but was almost immediately prostrated by typhus fever contracted in an overcrowded hospital. After a long and dangerous illness she finally recovered and began the task that she had set herself; but she was opposed and thwarted at every step by the police and the bureaucratic officials who were interested in maintaining the existing state of things, and she gradually became convinced that before much could be done to improve the condition of the common people the Government must be overthrown. She soon afterwards became a revolutionist, joined the party of "The Will of the People," and participated actively in all the attempts that were made between 1879 and 1882 to overthrow the autocracy and establish a constitutional form of government. On the 5th of June, 1882, she was arrested and thrown into the fortress of Petropavlovsk, and some months later was tried before the Governing Senate upon the charge of being a terrorist. At the end of the trial she was asked if she had any last words to say in her own defense, and she replied as follows:

"I do not admit my guilt. I will, however, admit that I belong to the revolutionary party, — the party of the Will of the People, — and that

I believe in its principles and share its views. As for an organization that chooses and prefers a path of bloodshed, I do not know any such organization, and I doubt whether any such organization exists. Such a party may arise in time, if the revolutionary movement extends, but if I be living when the time comes, I will not belong to it. If the party of the Will of the People adopts the policy of terror, it is not because it prefers terrorism, but because terrorism is the only possible method of attaining the objects set before it by the historical conditions of Russian life." These are sad and fateful words, and they bear a prophecy of terrible calamity: "Gentlemen—Senators! You are well acquainted with the fundamental laws of the Russian Empire. You are aware that no one has a right to advocate any change in the existing Imperial form of Government, or even to think of such a thing. Merely to present to the Crown a collective petition is forbidden—and yet the country is growing and developing, the conditions of social life are becoming day by day more and more complicated, and the moment approaches when the Russian people will burst through the barriers from which there is no exit."

The presiding judge, interrupting: "That is your personal opinion."

Madame Korba, continuing: "The historical task set before the party of the Will of the People is to widen these barriers and to obtain for Russia independence and freedom. The means for the attainment of these objects depend directly upon the Government. We do not adhere obstinately to terrorism. The hand that is raised to strike will instantly fall if the Government will change the political conditions of life. Our party has patriotic self-control enough not to take revenge for its bleeding wounds; but, unless it prove false to the Russian people, it cannot lay down its arms until it has conquered for that people freedom and well-being. As a proof that the aims of our party are wholly peaceful, I beg you to read the letter written to Alexander III. soon after the 1st of March.¹ You will see from it that we desire only reforms, but reforms that shall be sincere, complete, and vital."

MADAME KORBA'S last words did not soften towards her the hearts of her judges, and of course she did not expect that they would. She was found guilty, and was sentenced to twenty years of penal servitude with deprivation of all civil rights, and forced colonization in Siberia for life at the expiration of her penal term. At the date of my last advices from the mines of Kara she was still living, but she was greatly broken, and there was little probability

¹ The date of the assassination of Alexander II.

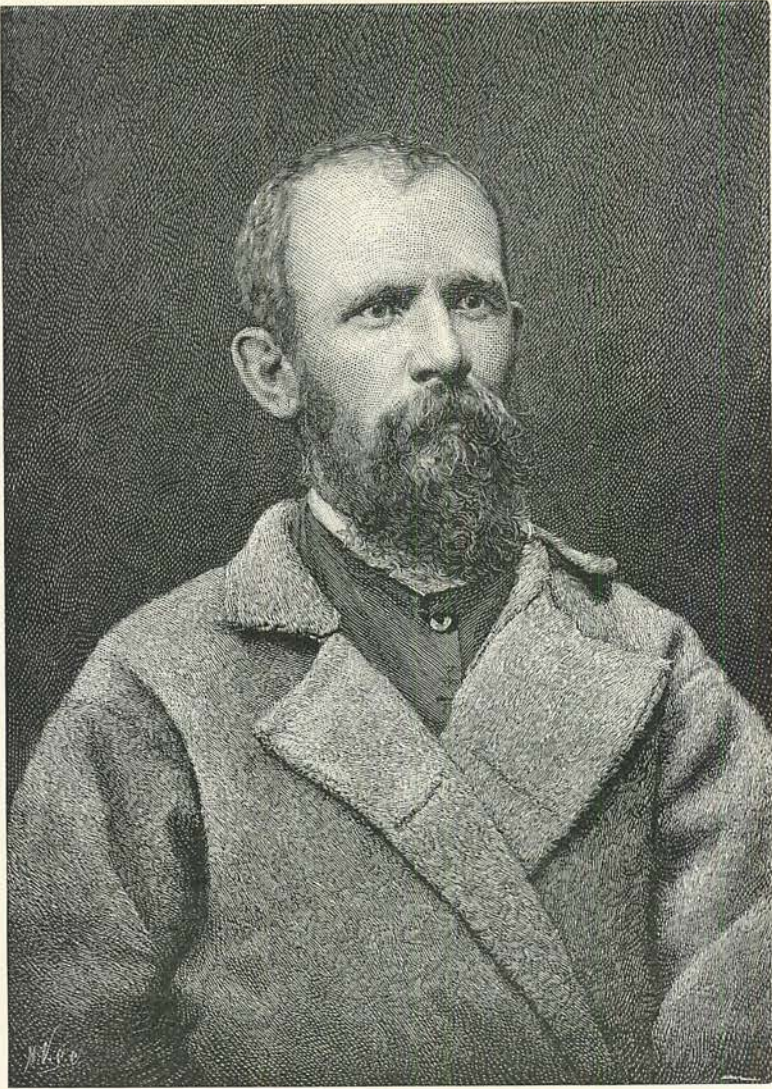


ANNA PAVLOVNA KORRA.

that she would long endure the hardships and privations of penal servitude.

Among the male political convicts at the mines of Kara whose careers most interested me was Hypolyte Muishkin, whose portrait was engraved from a police photograph taken while he was in the fortress of Petropavlovsk. In the year 1864 a well-known author and political economist named Chernishefski (Chernee-shef'skee), whose famous novel "What is to be Done?" has recently been translated into English, was tried in St. Petersburg as a revolutionist and banished to Siberia. He was at first sent to the Alexandrofski central prison, near Irkutsk, but ultimately he was transferred to the small town of Villuisik (Viloo'isk), in the sub-arctic province of Yakutsk (Yah-kootsk'), where he lived many years under the strictest police surveillance. When the modern revolutionary movement began, in 1870, it was the dream of all the ardent young Russian revolutionists to rescue Cher-

nishefski from Siberian exile and enable him to escape from the Empire to some place where he could continue his work unmolested. Several attempts were made to liberate him, but they all failed, and the project was finally abandoned as impracticable. In 1875 a young student in the Technological Institute at St. Petersburg named Hypolyte Muishkin conceived the idea of going to Siberia in the disguise of a captain of gendarmes and presenting himself boldly to the ispravnik in Villuisik with forged orders from the gendarmerie directing him (Muishkin) to take charge of the exile Chernishefski and carry him to St. Petersburg for incarceration in the castle of Schlüsselburg. Such transfers of dangerous political exiles from Siberia to the Russian fortresses were not at that time uncommon, and Muishkin felt confident that he should accomplish his purpose. He went as a private traveler to Irkutsk, resided there several months, succeeded in getting into the corps of gendarmes as a sub-



HYPOLYTE MUISHKIN.

ordinate officer, and in a short time made himself so useful that he was generally trusted and was given the freedom of the office. He provided himself with the necessary blanks, filled them up with an order accrediting him as a gendarme officer intrusted with the duty of taking the exile Chernishefski to St. Petersburg, forged the signatures, affixed the proper seals, provided himself with the uniform of a captain of gendarmes, and then resigned his position in the gendarmerie upon the pretext that he had received news that made it necessary for him to return at once to European Russia. He disappeared from Irkutsk, and as soon as he deemed it prudent to do so he set out for Villuisk with the uniform of a gendarme officer in his satchel, and a forged order in his

pocket directing the ispravnik of Villuisk to turn over the exile Chernishefski to him for conveyance to St. Petersburg. Muishkin was an accomplished conspirator, an eloquent talker, and a man of fine personal presence, and when he presented himself in the uniform of a gendarme officer to the ispravnik at Villuisk he was received at first with unquestioning deference and respect. He stated his business, said that it had been decided to imprison Chernishefski in the castle of Schlüsselburg, and produced the order directing the ispravnik to turn over the distinguished exile to him for conveyance to St. Petersburg. The plot came very near succeeding, and probably would have succeeded if Muishkin had had money enough to bring with him two or three confederates in

the disguise of soldiers or gendarmes and in the capacity of escort. It is very unusual for a commissioned officer to travel in Siberia without at least one soldier or Cossack to look after his baggage, to see about getting post-horses promptly, and to act generally in the capacity of body-servant. The absence of such a man or men was especially noticeable and unusual in this case, for the reason that Muishkin was to take charge of an important and dangerous political offender. This absence of an escort was the first thing that excited the *ispravnik's* suspicion. It seemed to him very strange that a gendarme officer should be sent there after Chernishefski without a guard of two or three soldiers to help him take care of the dangerous prisoner, and the more he thought about it the more suspicious the whole affair appeared to him. After a night's reflection he decided not to turn over Chernishefski to this gendarme officer without the sanction of the governor of the province, who resided in Yakutsk, and at breakfast the next morning he told Muishkin that Governor Chernaiyef (*Cher-ny'yef*) was his—the *ispravnik's*—immediate superior, and that without an order from the governor he did not feel justified in surrendering an exile of so much importance as the political economist Chernishefski. He proposed, therefore, to send a courier to Yakutsk with Muishkin's papers, and to await the return of this courier before taking any action.

"Very well," replied Muishkin coolly. "I did not suppose that it would be necessary to obtain the consent of the governor before complying with the orders of the imperial police; but if such consent is indispensable, I will go to Governor Chernaiyef myself and get it."

When Muishkin set out for Yakutsk, the *ispravnik*, whose suspicions had meanwhile grown stronger, said to him, "It is not proper for an officer of your rank to travel about without any escort, and if you will permit me to do so I will send with you a couple of Cossacks." Muishkin could not object, and the Cossacks were sent—the *ispravnik* instructing them that they were on no account to lose sight of this gendarme officer, because there was something suspicious about him, and it was not certain that he really was what he pretended to be. As soon as Muishkin had gone the *ispravnik* wrote a letter to the governor, apprising him of his suspicions, and sent it by another Cossack, with directions to get ahead of Muishkin, if possible and deliver it before the latter reached his destination. The Cossack overtook Muishkin on the road, and in the course of conversation among the soldiers the fact transpired that the third Cossack had a letter from the *ispravnik* to the

governor. Muishkin knew then that the game was lost, and at the first favorable opportunity he attempted to escape by dashing suddenly into the woods. The Cossacks, in pursuance of their instructions, endeavored to keep him in sight; but he drew his revolver, fired at them, wounded one of them, and finally made his escape. For nearly a week he wandered around in the great primeval forests that border the river Lena; but at last, half dead from cold, hunger, and exhaustion, he was captured. After some months of imprisonment in Irkutsk he was sent under strong guard to St. Petersburg and was there thrown into the fortress of Petropavlovsk. For nearly three years he lay in a bomb-proof casemate of the Trubetskoi (*Troo-bet-skoy'*) bastion awaiting trial, and all that I know of this part of his life I learned from an exile in Siberia who occupied a cell in the fortress near him. This gentleman said that Muishkin was often delirious from fever, excitement, or the maddening effect of long solitary confinement, and that he frequently heard his cries when he was put into a strait-jacket or strapped to his bed by the fortress guard.

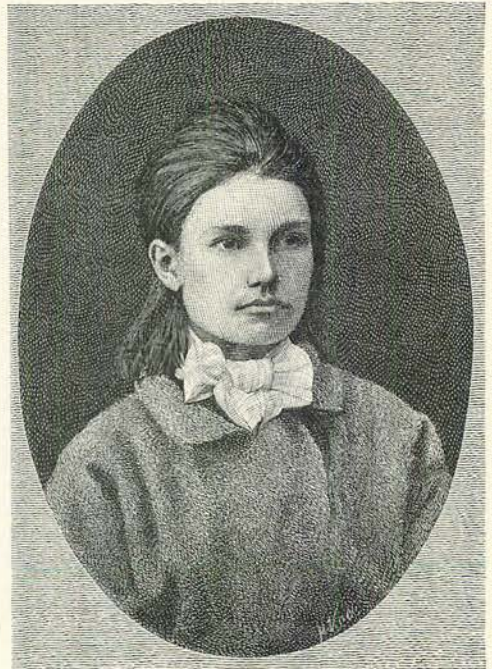
In October, 1878, Muishkin was finally tried with "the 193" before a special session of the Governing Senate. All of the political prisoners brought to the bar on the occasion of this famous trial insisted that the public should be admitted to hear the proceedings, and that they—the prisoners—should be allowed to have their own stenographer. The Government refused to accede to either of these demands, and, as a consequence, most of the politicals refused to make any defense or to take any part in the proceedings. At the end of the trial Muishkin, when asked if he had any last words to say, made a fiery speech denouncing the secrecy of the trial and declaring that they did not desire nor expect to escape punishment, but thought they had a right to ask that they be tried in open court and that their case be laid before the people through the press. As soon as Muishkin began to attack the Government he was ordered by the presiding judge to be silent, and when he refused, and insisted upon his right to be heard, the gendarmes were directed to remove him from the courtroom. The last words he uttered before he was choked into silence and dragged out were: "This court is worse than a house of ill-fame; there they sell only bodies, but here you prostitute honor, and justice, and law!" For his original offense, aggravated by this outrageous insult to the court, Muishkin was sentenced to ten years of penal servitude with deprivation of all civil rights, and was shortly afterwards incarcerated in the central convict prison at Kharkoff (*Khar-koff'*). I have not space for



MADAME KAVALSKAYA.

even the briefest description of the sufferings of the political convicts in that prison. The story has been written by one of them and published surreptitiously in Russia under the significant title, "Last Words over the Coffin of Alexander II." I hope sometime to translate and republish this document, and I need only say now that I have the names of six politicals who went insane in that prison during the short time that it was used as a place of confinement for such offenders. Muishkin was put into a small cell in the lower story that had formerly been occupied by the distinguished political Prince Tsitsianof (Tsit-see-an'off). His courage and energy soon led him to meditate plans of escape, and before the end of the first year he had made a dummy to lie in his place on the sleeping-platform, and with only his hands and a small piece of board had dug a tunnel out under the prison wall, disposing of the earth that he removed by packing it into a space between the floor of his cell and the ground. He had also made himself a suit of clothing to put on in place of the prison costume after he should make his escape. Prince Tsitsianof, who had occupied the cell before him, was a scientist, and during his term of imprisonment had been allowed to have some large maps. These maps had been left as old rubbish on the oven, and Muishkin had soaked the paper off from the muslin on which they were mounted and had made out of the cloth a shirt and a pair of trousers. His preparations for escape were virtually complete, and he

was only waiting for a favorable opportunity, when one of the prison officials came to his cell at an unusual hour to speak to him. Muishkin happened to be down in his tunnel, while the dummy was lying in his place on the bed as if he were asleep. The official soon discovered that the lay figure was not the prisoner, an alarm was raised, the mouth of the tunnel was found, and Muishkin was dragged out like a rat from its hole. He was then put into another cell, from which escape was impossible. At the expiration of two or three months, fearing that he was about to become insane, he determined to do something for which he would be shot. He asked and obtained permission to attend service in the prison church one Sunday, and while there contrived to get near the governor of the prison; and as the latter turned around, after kissing the cross in the hands of the priest, Muishkin struck him in the face. For this offense he would, under ordinary circumstances, have been shot; but just at that time the attention of the Minister of the Interior was attracted to the Kharkoff central prison by the large number of deaths and cases of insanity among the politicals, and Professor Dobroslavin (Do-bro-slah'vin), a sanitary expert from St. Petersburg, was sent to the prison to make an investigation. He reported that it was not fit for human habitation, said that the cases of death and insanity among the political convicts were not surprising, and recommended that all the prisoners of that class



MADAME BOGOMOLETS.

be removed. In the face of this report it was presumed that Muishkin was insane, or at least in an abnormal mental condition, at the time when he struck the governor of the prison, and he was not even tried for the offense. Shortly afterwards he was sent, with all his fellow-prisoners, to the mines of Kara. While they were in the city of Irkutsk on their way to the mines, one of the party, a man named Leo Dmokhofski (Dmo-khoff'skee), died. All the convicts in the party were permitted to attend the funeral in the prison church, and at the conclusion of the brief services Muishkin felt impelled to say a few words over the body of his comrade. He referred to the high moral character of the dead man and his lovable personality, quoted a verse from the Russian liberal poet Nekrassof (Ne-krass'off), and said, "Out of the ashes of this heroic man, and of other men like him, will grow the tree of liberty for Russia." At this point he was stopped by the chief of police and at once taken back to his cell. For making what was regarded as a revolutionary speech within the sacred precincts of a church and in the presence of the "images of the Holy Saints of the Lord" he was condemned to fifteen years more of penal servitude. In talking to me about Muishkin, some of his comrades described him as "a born orator who never made but two speeches in his life; one of them cost him ten years of penal servitude, and the other fifteen." Muishkin himself said, after reaching the mines of Kara, that there was only one thing in his life which he regretted, and that was his speech over the dead body of his comrade Dmokhofski in Irkutsk. The world could not hear it, it did no good, it was merely the gratification of a personal impulse, and it added so many years to his term of penal servitude that, even if he should live out that term, he would be too old, when finally released, to work any more for the cause of Russian freedom.

Muishkin was one of the first of the eight prisoners who escaped from the Kara political prison in April, 1882, and he was recaptured, as I have said, in the seaport town of Vladivostok, to which American vessels come every summer. In 1883 he was sent back to St. Petersburg with a party of other "dangerous" politicals and incarcerated in the castle of Schlüsselburg. He was shot there in 1885 for striking the prison surgeon.

In January, 1882, about three months before the escape of the eight convicts from the political prison at Kara, two married women, Madame Kavalskaya (Kah-vahl'ska-ya) and Madame Bogomolets (Bo-go-mo'lets), escaped from prison while passing through Irkutsk on their way to the mines. They were recaptured before they could get out of the city, and

when they were brought back to their cells they were subjected to the customary personal search. These searches are always made by men, even when the prisoners are women, but in most cases they are conducted with decency and with the forms of respect. On this occasion, however, Colonel Soliviof (Sol-o-vee-off'),



SHCHEDRIN.

an adjutant of the Governor-General, and a man of disreputable personal character, who happened to be in the prison when Madame Kavalskaya and Madame Bogomolets were brought back, conducted the search himself, and in the course of it not only insulted the women but caused them to be stripped naked in his presence. He then had the audacity to go to a kamera in which were confined a number of male political convicts and boast of his exploit, remarking contemptuously, "Your political women are not much to look at." Among the convicts in the cell was a school-teacher named Shchedrin (Shched-rin') who, exasperated beyond endurance by the recital and the insulting taunt, sprung towards Soliviof, and, calling him a "despicable coward and liar," struck him in the face. For this insult to an officer, and for an attempt that he had made to escape, Shchedrin, upon his arrival at Kara, was chained to a wheelbarrow. In July, 1882, he, with the other "dangerous" political convicts named on page 736, was sent to St. Petersburg to be incarcerated in the castle of Schlüsselburg. He was not released from the wheelbarrow, even when put into a vehicle; but as the roads were rough, and as he was



A RELIGIOUS SERVICE AT AN OROZHÁNNI ENCAMPMENT.

constantly being bruised by the jolting of the barrow against him, it was finally found necessary to unchain him and lash the wheelbarrow on behind. Lieutenant-Colonel Vinokurof (Vin-o-koor'off), inspector of exile transportation for Western Siberia, told me that he saw Shchedrin, with the wheelbarrow still lashed to his vehicle, passing through the province of Tobolsk.

After the hunger-strike in the Kara political prison in the summer of 1882 the life of the

¹ I have not been able to obtain a complete list of the prisoners who died, committed suicide, or went insane in the Kara political prison between 1879 and 1886, but I know of the following cases:

Deaths (all except one from prison consumption): Ishutinof, Krivoshein, Zhukof, Popeko, Madame Lissofskaya, Tikhonof, Rogatchéf, Dr. Veimar, Miss Arm-

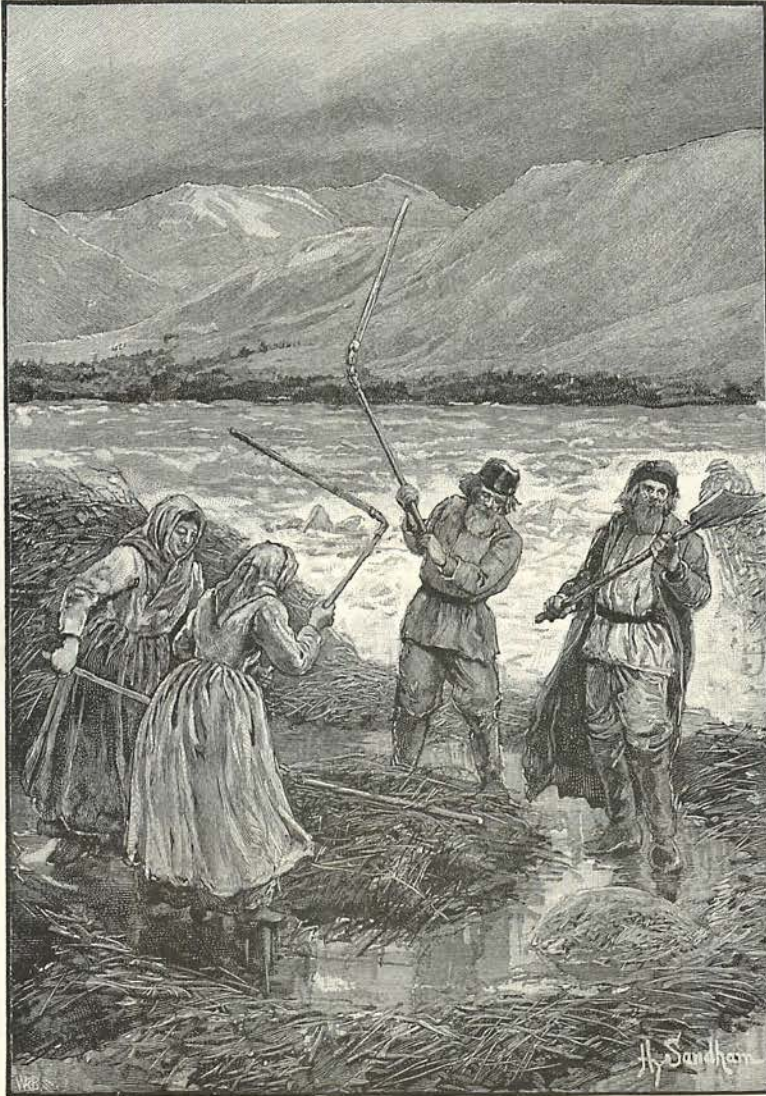
prisoners became a little more tolerable. They were again allowed to have books, money, and some warm clothing of their own, and they were permitted to walk two hours a day in the court-yard. The sanitary conditions of their life, however, continued to be very bad, little attention was paid to the sick, and the death rate was abnormally high.¹

Between the resignation of Colonel Kononovich in 1881 and the appointment of Captain Nikolin in 1885 there were seven changes

feldt, and Madame Kutitonskaya. *Suicides*: Semyonofski (shot himself), Rodin (poisoned himself), Uspenski (hanged himself). *Insane*: Matveivich, Zubkofski, Pozen, and Madame Kavalskaya (the last named recovered). At the time of our visit to the mines eight out of the eleven women in the women's political prison were sick.

of commandment¹ and the prison was managed in a hit-or-miss sort of way, according to the caprice of the man who was at the head of it. At one time the prisoners were allowed books, daily walks, money, and communication with their relatives, while at another time

occupied only by law. The best of the commandants, according to the testimony of the prisoners, was Burlei. Khalturin was brutally cruel, Shubin was a man of little character, and Manaiyef was not only a drunkard, but a thief who destroyed hundreds of the prisoners' let-



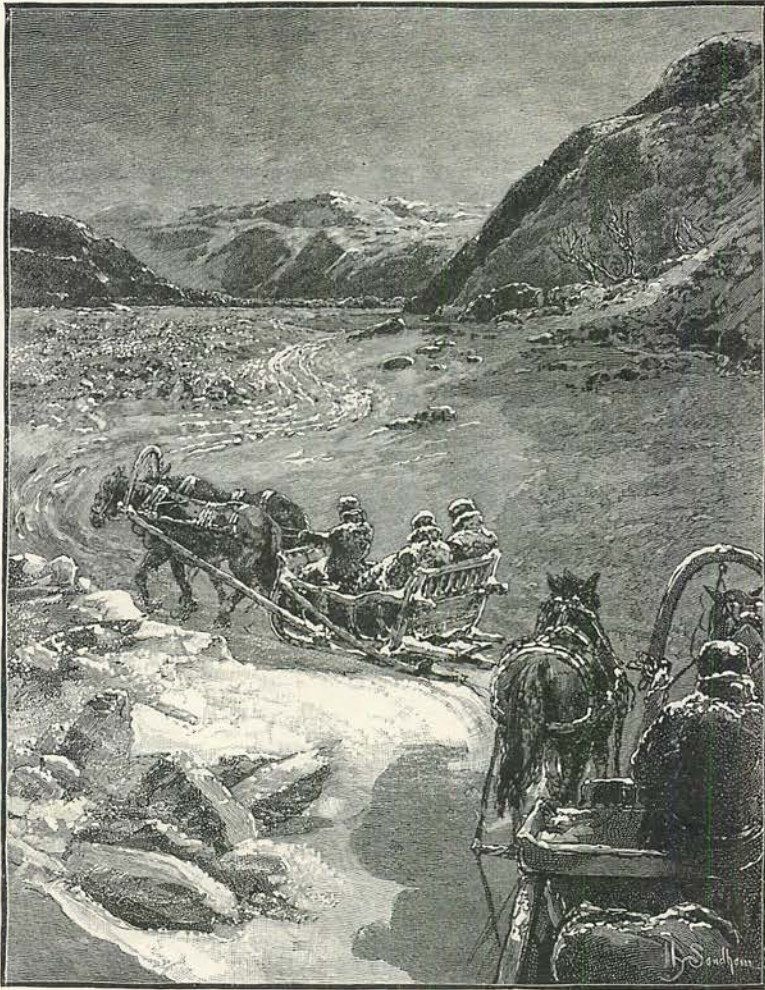
PEASANTS THRESHING OUT GRAIN ON THE ICE.

all these privileges were taken away from them. The partitions that were erected in the kameras to reduce the size of the cells in 1882 were removed in 1884. The free command, which was abolished in 1881, was reestablished in 1885. With every new officer there was a change in the regulations, and official whim or impulse took the place that should be oc-

¹ Kononovich, Potulof, Khalturin, Burlei, Shubin, Manaiyef, Burlei (a second time), and Nikolin.

ters and embezzled nineteen hundred rubles of money sent to them by their relatives and friends in European Russia. All of these officers were from the gendarmerie in Irkutsk. On the 16th of January, 1884, the political prison was put under the exclusive control of the imperial police, and early in 1885 Captain Nikolin was sent from St. Petersburg to take command of it.

Every word that Colonel Kononovich said to Assistant Minister of the Interior Durnova



RETURNING FROM KARA ON THE ICE OF THE SHILKA RIVER.

in 1881 with regard to the management of the political prison was shown by the subsequent course of events to be true. The Government forced an honest and humane man to resign and sent, one after another, half a dozen cruel or incapable men to take his place, and it reaped, in tragedies and scandals, the harvest that might have been expected. It is still pursuing, as I shall show in a subsequent paper, the same course, and it may look for the same results. It is sowing the wind, and sometime, in the not distant future, it will reap the whirlwind.

On the 12th of November, Mr. Frost and I, with glad hearts, turned our faces at last homeward. As we drove, with Major Potulof, out of the dreary settlement known as the Lower Diggings, two political convicts in long gray overcoats, who were walking towards the prison at a distance of one hundred and fifty or two hundred yards from the road, saw and

recognized us, and as we passed they stopped, removed their caps, and made towards us what the Russians call a "waist bow"—a bow so low that the body is bent at right angles from the waist. It was their last mute farewell to the travelers who had shown them sympathy and pity, and it is the last remembrance I have of the mines of Kara.

We spent that night in the house of the overseer of the Ust Kara prison at the mouth of the river, and on the following morning remounted our horses for another ride across the mountains to Stretinsk (Stray'tinsk). Major Potulof opened a bottle of white Crimean wine after we had climbed into our saddles, and, pouring out a glassful for each of us and for himself, said, "Here 's to the beginning of a journey to America!" We drank the stirrup-cup with bright anticipations of a return to home and friends, thanked Major Potulof for his kindness and hospitality, promised to

apprise him by telegraph of our safe arrival at Stretinsk, and rode away into the mountains.

The country lying along the Shilka in the vicinity of Kara is inhabited, away from the river, only by a tribe of half-wild nomads, known to the Russians as "Orozhánni." They acknowledge allegiance to the Russian Government, pay taxes, and are nominally Christians; but they rarely come into the Russian settlements, unless brought there by a desire to exchange their furs or reindeer for knives, kettles, or tobacco. The Russian priest at Kara visits them from time to time to conduct religious services, and the picture of an Orozhánni encampment during one of these services, on page 746, is from a photograph made and given to me by a political exile in Nerchinsk.

For two days after leaving Kara we rode on horseback across the rugged, forest-clad mountains that skirt the river Shilka, suffering constantly from cold, hunger, and fatigue. On the third day we reached Boti (Bo-tee'), the village

from which we had taken our horses, and found most of the population engaged in threshing out grain with flails on the ice. The peasants manifested great pleasure at seeing us, and said we had been gone so long that they had almost given us up for lost. The excitement and anxiety of our life at Kara and the hardships of our ride across the mountains in a temperature below zero had so exhausted my strength that when we reached Boti my pulse was running at 120 and I could hardly sit in the saddle. I should not have been able to ride on horseback another day. Fortunately we found the river at Boti solidly frozen and were able to continue our journey in sledges on the ice. Late on the night of November 16, tired, half-starved, and deadly cold, we reached the town of Stretinsk and found food, shelter, and rest in the little cabin of the young peasant Zablikof (Zah'blee-koff), where we had left most of our baggage when we set out on horseback for the mines of Kara.

George Kennan.

ATTALIE BROUILLARD.

BY GEORGE W. CABLE,

Author of "The Grandissimes," "Bonaventure," etc.

IN EIGHTEEN FIFTY-FIVE.



THE strange true stories we have thus far told have all been matter of public or of private record. Pages of history and travel, law reports, documents of court, the testimony of eye-witnesses, old manuscripts and letters, have insured to them the full force and charm of their reality. But now we must have it clearly and mutually understood that here is one the verity of which is vouched for stoutly, but only by tradition. It is very much as if we had nearly finished a strong, solid stone house and would now ask permission of our underwriters to add to it at the rear a small frame lean-to.

It is a mere bit of lawyers' table-talk, a piece of after-dinner property. It originally belonged, they say, to Judge Collins of New Orleans, as I believe we have already mentioned; his by right of personal knowledge. I might have got it straight from him had I heard of it but a few years sooner. His small, iron-gray head, dark, keen eyes, and nervous face and form are in my mind's eye now, as I saw him one day on the bench interrupting a lawyer at the bar and telling him in ten words what the lawyer was trying to tell in two hundred and fifty.

That the judge's right to this story was that

of discovery, not of invention, is well attested; and if he or any one else allowed fictitious embellishments to gather upon it by oft telling of it in merry hours, the story had certainly lost all such superfluities the day it came to me as completely as if some one had stolen its clothes while it was in swimming. The best I can say is that it came un mutilated, and that I have done only what any humane person would have done—given it drapery enough to cover its nakedness.

To speak yet plainer, I do not, even now, put aside, abridge, or alter a single *fact*; only, at most, restore one or two to spaces that indicate just what has dropped out. If a dentist may lawfully supply the place of a lost tooth, or an old beau comb his hair skillfully over a bald spot, then am I guiltless. I make the tale not less, and only just a trifle more, true; not more, but only a trifle less, strange. And this is it:

In 1855 this Attalie Brouillard—so called, mark you, for present convenience only—lived in the French quarter of New Orleans; I think they say in Bienville street, but that is no matter; somewhere in the *vieux carré* of Bienville's original town. She was a worthy woman; youngish, honest, rather handsome, with a little money—just a little; of attractive dress, with good manners, too; alone in the world, and—a quadron. She kept furnished rooms to