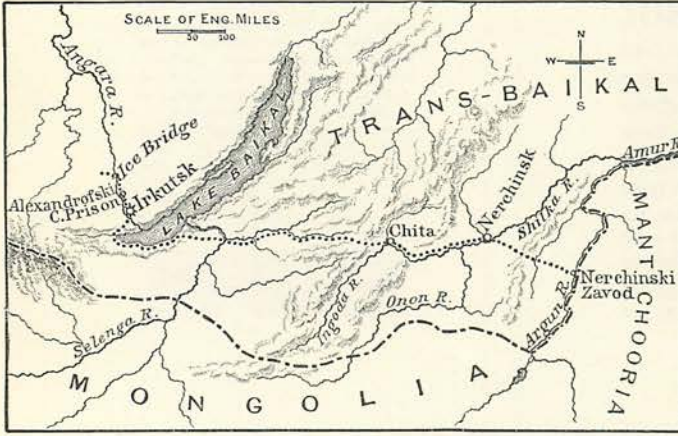


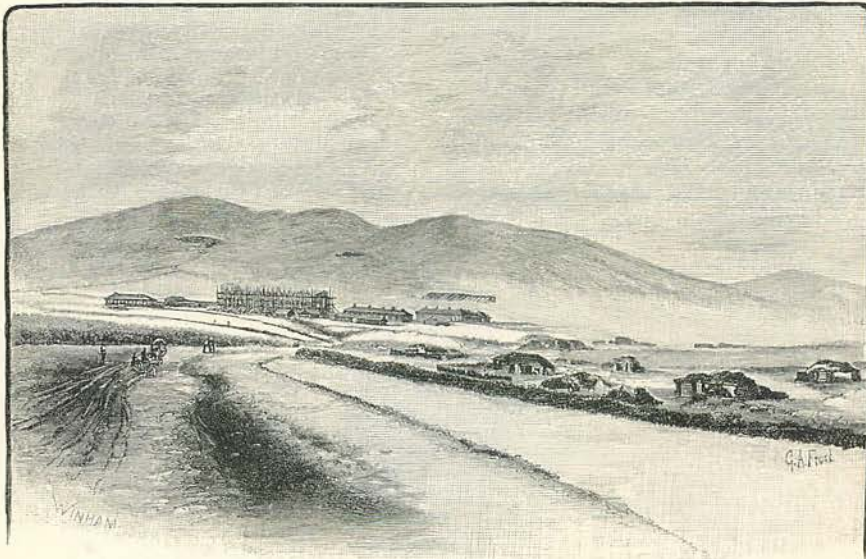
ADVENTURES IN EASTERN SIBERIA.



awakened the inmates of the zemski kvartir (zem'skee kvar-teer'), or official lodging-house, warmed and refreshed ourselves with tea, and lay down to sleep, as usual, on the hard, vermin-infested plank floor of the travelers' room. Monday morning we called upon Captain Demidof (Demec'e'doff), the commanding officer of the post, and, at our request, were conducted at once to the prison. It consisted of two old, weather-beaten log buildings of the common

AFTER having visited and inspected the gloomy mine and the wretched, dilapidated log prison of Kadaiya (Kah-dy'yah), Mr. Frost and I proceeded across an apparently interminable series of bare, snowy mountain ridges to the mining settlement of Gorni Zeren-tui (Gor'nee Zer-en-too'ee), which is situated in a wide, treeless valley about forty miles north of the Kadainski (Kah-dy-in'skee) mine, and thirty miles from the boundary line between Eastern Siberia and Mongolia. We reached our destination at a late hour in the night,

East-Siberian type, and presented nothing that was either new or interesting. One hundred and eighty convicts were confined in the two buildings, and about as many more, who had finished their terms of probation, were living outside in the free command. A new three-story brick prison was in process of erection a short distance away, but work upon it had apparently been suspended or abandoned. It was already ten years old, and in view of the corrupt, shiftless, and inefficient management of prison affairs throughout Eastern Siberia, it



THE HUTS OF THE FREE COMMAND AND THE PRISONS AT GORNI ZERENTUI.

seemed to me altogether likely that work upon it would drag along for five or six years more. At the time of our visit the structure had neither floors nor roof and was still surrounded with scaffolding. Meanwhile 180 idle convicts were being slowly poisoned to death by bad air in the overcrowded *kameras* of the log prison that the brick building was intended to replace.¹

It is hard for an American to understand or make allowances for the shiftlessness, indifference, and inefficiency that are everywhere manifested throughout the Nerchinsk silver-mining district. The mines themselves are not half worked; hundreds of hard-labor convicts lie idle, month after month, in dirty, overcrowded cells; plans and estimates for new buildings go back and forth, year after year, between the mines and St. Petersburg; and when, at last, a prison like that at

Gorni Zerentui is authorized, work upon it drags along, in a lazy, shiftless fashion, for a whole decade, without the least apparent reason. I said one day to the resident mining engineer at the Kutomarski Zavod (Koo-to-mar'skee Zahvod'): "Why don't you provide yourself with suitable iron machinery, furnish your laborers



THE SAVENSKI MINE.

with improved modern tools, set up steam pumping, hoisting, and ventilating apparatus,

¹ Upon my return to St. Petersburg in the spring of the following year, I had an interview with Mr. Galkin Vraskoi (Gal'kin Vrass'koy), the chief of the Russian Prison Administration, in the course of which I ventured to call his attention to the condition of the prisons in the Nerchinsk (Ner'chinsk) silver-mining district, and to the unfinished prison at Gorni Zerentui in particular. He admitted that the necessity for new places of confinement at the Nerchinsk mines was evident as early as 1872, and said that in 1874 a special construction committee was appointed to investigate, report, and submit plans. When he (Galkin Vraskoi) made a tour of inspection through Siberia in 1881—seven years later—he found that this specially appointed committee had spent 74,318 rubles in the erection of two or three small log buildings and in temporary repairs to a few others, had pocketed 61,090 rubles for salaries and expenses, and had not furnished to the Prison Administration a single plan or estimate. (These facts were set forth in the annual report of the Prison Administration for 1882, pp. 72, 73.)

"Well," I said, "what was done in view of this state of affairs?"

"I recommended," he replied, "that the construction committee be abolished."

"And was it abolished?"

"It was."

"I did not see anything at the Nerchinsk mines," I said, "to show for the 74,000 rubles that the committee is supposed to have expended, except one small log prison that appeared to be new at the mine of Pokrofski (Po-kroff'skee) and the unfinished brick building at Gorni Zerentui. Why has the latter been so long—ten years—in process of erection?"

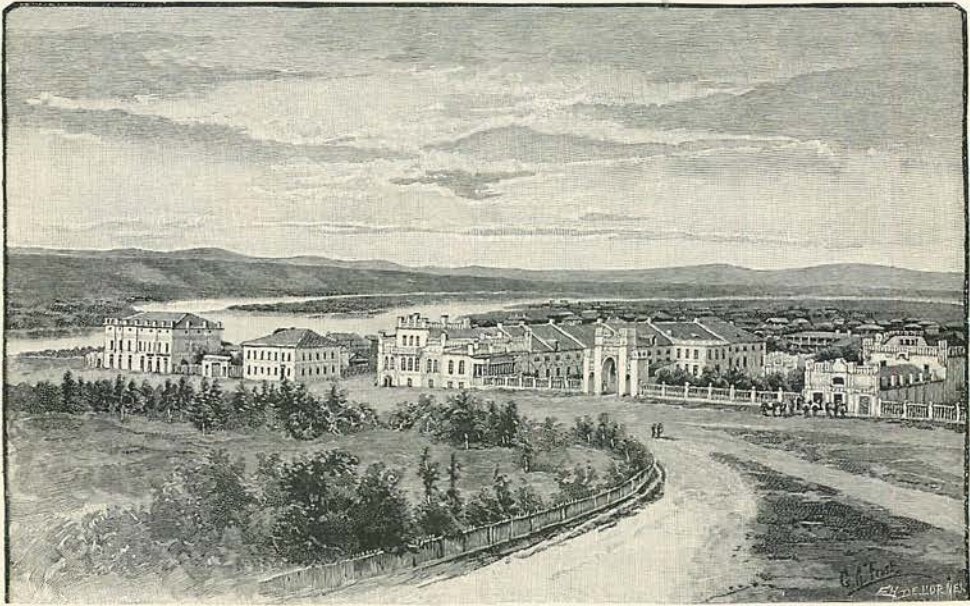
"The delay has been due in part," he replied, "to repeated changes of plan. The building ought not to have been made of brick, in the first place. Careful estimates show that a brick prison for 300 convicts will cost at the mines about 160,000 rubles, while a good log prison, to accommodate the same number of men, can be built for 52,000 rubles. A brick prison has no advantage over a wooden one in point of permanency, because when the mine near which it stands has been worked out, the building must, of necessity, be abandoned; and it is less wasteful, of course, to abandon a log prison than one made of brick. The prison at Gorni Zerentui, however, was so far advanced when I assumed the direction of the prison department that it hardly seemed worth while to suspend work upon it and begin another."

Neither Mr. Galkin Vraskoi nor his assistant, Mr. Kokovtsef (Ko-kov'tsef), gave me any satisfactory explanation of the delays, mistakes, and bad management generally that seemed to me to characterize the administration of prison affairs in the mining district of the Trans-Baikal. They were doing, they said, all that they could do to improve the situation; but they had inherited most of the existing evils from their official predecessors, and time enough had not elapsed for complete and sweeping reforms. It is possible that I did not fully appreciate the difficulties and embarrassments with which they had to contend; but it seemed to me that many, if not most, of the evils of the exile system in general, and of the prison administration in particular, were the result of indifference, inefficiency, and a complicated bureaucratic method of transacting public business.

and work your mines as they ought to be worked? What is the use of pottering along in the way you do?"

"My dear sir," he replied, "do you know what iron costs here? We have to bring it with horses from Petrofski Zavod (Pe-troff-skee Zah-vod'), a distance of more than 600 versts, and it costs, delivered here, $5\frac{1}{2}$ rubles a pood [about $7\frac{2}{3}$ cents a pound]. We can't afford to put in iron machinery."

miles from the village. The buildings at the mouth of the shaft were cheap and insignificant, as usual, but one of them contained a small steam engine—the first and only machine of the kind that I saw in the Trans-Baikal. While Mr. Frost was making a sketch of the buildings and of the dreary arctic landscape, I went through the mine, but found little to reward me for the labor of climbing up and down the icy ladders. The shaft was less than a hundred



BUTIN'S HOUSE AT NERCHINSK.

"But," I said, "is n't there iron ore in this vicinity?"

"Yes," he replied; "but it has never been gotten out."

"Why don't you get it out, set up smelting furnaces, and make your iron here on the ground where you need it? More than half of your convicts lie constantly idle in their cells—why don't you utilize their labor?"

"We can't open an iron mine," he replied, "without a *razreshenia* [a permit or an authorization] from St. Petersburg."

"Then why don't the proper authorities give you a '*razreshenia*'? What is the reason that a useful and necessary work of this kind cannot be accomplished? I don't see how the present state of affairs can be profitable to anybody."

His only reply was a shrug of the shoulders, which I interpreted to mean either that he did not know or that it was not his business.

From the prisons of Gorni Zerentui we drove in Captain Demidof's droszky to the Savenski (Sah'ven-skee) mine, which we found on a snowy, desolate mountain slope about two

feet in depth; the galleries were so low that I could not anywhere stand upright; the atmosphere was damp and chilly; and the roofs and walls were thickly incrusting with frost or ice. Only thirty-five convicts were at work in the mine, and most of them seemed to be engaged in carrying ore in small wicker baskets to the hoisting shaft, emptying it into square wooden buckets holding about a bushel each, and then raising it to the surface, a bucketful at a time, by means of a clumsy old wooden windlass. I doubted whether methods more primitive were employed even by the aborigines who worked these silver veins three centuries earlier. Certainly none more primitive had ever come under my observation. I said to the *ustavshchik* (oo-stav'shchik), or overseer, who conducted me through the mine, "Why don't you set more men at work here? I have just come from the prison, where I found at least 150 convicts idle."

"We have n't room for more than thirty-five or forty men in the galleries," he replied soberly.

"But you can extend the mine, can you not?"

I inquired. "Fifty or a hundred more laborers could soon make room for themselves by digging and blasting. If the ore is there, why not extend your operations and get it out as rapidly as possible? You ought to widen and heighten your galleries, lay down tramways in them, improve your hoisting apparatus, employ horse power, and work on a larger scale."

The *ustavshchik* made no reply, but looked at me in a surprised way, as if he regarded my ideas as utterly wild and impracticable.

The number of hard-labor convicts in the Nerchinsk silver-mining district at the time of our visit was approximately 952, distributed as follows: at the Alexandrofski Zavod, 188; at the mine of Algachi, 150; at the Pokrofski mine, 70; at the Kadainski and Smirnovo mines, 184; and at the Savenski and Gorni Zerentuefski mines, 360. Probably not more than one-third of these men, and certainly not more than half of them, were actually engaged in hard labor. The rest lived, month after month, in enforced idleness, notwithstanding the amount of work that there was everywhere to be done. The only reasons I could get for this state of affairs were, first, that room could not be found for the idle men in the mines; secondly, that the convoys of soldiers were not strong enough to guard large parties of convicts on the roads or in the forests; thirdly, that it would cost more to erect new prisons with convict labor and under official supervision than to have them built by contract;¹ and fourthly, that the convicts could not be set at work in any of the ways that I suggested without a *razreshenia*, or authorization, from St. Petersburg. None of these reasons had, to my mind, the least force or validity. The idleness of the convicts, and the failure of the authorities to do any one of the scores of things that needed doing, were the direct result, it seemed to me, of official indifference, incapacity, or lack of enterprise. An energetic American with plenary powers and a capital of \$10,000 or \$15,000 would take the 950 convicts imprisoned in the Nerchinsk silver-mining district, and in less than two years would have a new prison built at every mine in the whole region, and in less than five years would double, if not quadruple, the productive capacity of the mines themselves, without calling upon the imperial treasury for a single dollar in the shape of extraordinary expenditure. Such, at least, was the opinion that I formed on the ground, after as careful

an examination as I could make of the working methods of the local officials.

The Savenski mine was the last one that we visited in Eastern Siberia. Monday afternoon, November 23, we drove to the Nerchinski Zavod, or Nerchinsk Works, a large village about ten miles from Gorni Zerentui, and Tuesday morning we set out on our return journey to the Shilka River and the town of Nerchinsk, distant about two hundred miles. It is not necessary to describe in detail our long, tedious, and exhausting ride. The country through which we passed was a dreary desert of low, rolling mountains, thinly covered with snow; the thermometer ranged constantly from zero to twenty-seven degrees below; the roads were generally rough, hard-frozen, and bare; the telegas and tarantases furnished us were the worst, most uncomfortable vehicles of their kind in all Eastern Siberia; and we suffered from cold, hunger, jolting, and sleeplessness until we were reduced to a state of silent, moody, half-savage exasperation, in which life—or at least *such* a life—seemed no longer worth living, and we were ready to barter all our earthly rights and possessions for a hot bath, a good dinner, and twelve hours of unbroken sleep in a warm, clean bed.

At four o'clock Thursday morning, a little more than forty hours after leaving the Nerchinski Zavod, we reached the post station of Biankinskaya (Byan-kin'skah-yah), on the bank of the Shilka River, and, transferring our baggage for the first time from a wheeled vehicle to a sledge, we continued our journey to Nerchinsk over the ice in a temperature of twenty degrees below zero. We had had for several days very little to eat, and in the absence of nourishing food the intense cold forced me to put on, one over another, no less than three heavy sheepskin shubas, which extended from my neck to my heels and transformed me into a huge perambulating cotton bale surmounted by a fur cap and a dirty, unshaven, frost-bitten face. Even under all my furs I was cold to the very marrow of my bones; and Mr. Frost, who had only two warm coats and wore only one, suffered much more than I did. When we reached Nerchinsk, late that forenoon, we found that there was no snow in the streets, and as our underfed and feeble horses could not drag us over bare ground, we alighted from our sledge and waddled ingloriously behind it into the city,

¹ This reason was based on the admitted incompetence and dishonesty of the local officials under whose supervision the work would have to be done. There are cases on record in which the local Siberian authorities embezzled the whole of the sum appropriated for the erection of a government building and reported such building as completed and occupied when even its foundations had not been laid. Such a case—that of the Ukirski étape—is cited in the Verkhni Udinsk corre-

spondence of the St. Petersburg "Eastern Review," No. 2, January 12, 1884, p. 8. A well-known photographer in Siberia showed me a photograph of a new government building which he had just taken, he said, upon an order from St. Petersburg, and which he was about to send to the higher authorities in that city as a proof that the structure, which had been ordered and paid for, was really in existence and had been built in accordance with the plans.

like stiff-jointed arctic mummies marching after the hearse in a funeral procession.

At Nerchinsk, for the first time in a month, we stopped in a hotel; but in point of cleanliness and comfort it was far inferior to the zemski kvartirs in which we had slept at the mines. It was, in fact, the very worst hotel that we had seen in Siberia. The main hall, which divided the one-story log building into halves, was dark and dirty, and had been fitted up with shelves in order that it might serve also as a butler's pantry; the room to which we were shown was chilly and bare, and its stale, heavy atmosphere was pervaded by a faint odor of "ugar" (oo-gar'), or charcoal gas; half of the paper had fallen or been torn from the walls and was hanging here and there in ragged strips; yellow, dirt-incrusted paint was peeling in flakes from window sashes and casings that apparently had never been dusted or washed; the rough, uncovered plank floor was not only dirty, but had sunk unevenly in places and was full of rat-holes; cockroaches were running briskly over the tea-stained, crumb-besprinkled cotton cloth that covered the only table in the room; there was no bed upon which the tired wayfarer might repose, nor mirror in which he might have the melancholy satisfaction of surveying his frost-bitten countenance. The only servant in the establishment was a half-grown boy in top-boots and a red flannel shirt; and the greenish-yellow brass pan that he brought us to wash our hands and faces over had evidently been used habitually for another and a much more ignoble purpose, and had never been rinsed or cleaned. Tired, cold, and hungry as we were, and accustomed as we were to dirt, disorder, and discomfort, we regarded this cheerless, neglected hotel with dismay; but it was the only one that the place afforded, and we were compelled to make the best of it. The proprietor was an exiled Pole named Klementovich (Klem-en-to' vitch), and I could not help thinking that if he kept in Poland such a hotel as he maintained in Nerchinsk, there were reasons enough, based upon sound public policy and a due regard for the general welfare, to justify his banishment by administrative process to the most remote part of Siberia, regardless of his political opinions. After a breakfast of tea, sour rye bread, and greasy pancakes, we set our dress to rights as well as we could before a diminutive mirror that the proprietor finally brought us, and walked out to take a look at the town and deliver one or two letters of introduction.

¹ This huge pier-glass was bought by Mr. Butin at the Paris Exposition in 1878, and was then said to be the largest mirror in existence. It was taken half around the world by sea to the East-Siberian port of Nikolaievsk (Nik-o-ly'evsk) and was thence trans-

The town of Nerchinsk, which has about 4000 inhabitants, is situated on the left bank of the Nercha (Ner'chah) River, two or three miles above the junction of the latter with the Shilka, and about 4600 miles east of St. Petersburg. In point of culture and material prosperity it seemed to me to compare favorably with most East-Siberian towns of its class. It has a bank, two or three schools, a hospital with twenty beds, a library, a museum, a public garden with a fountain, and fifty or sixty shops, and its trade in furs and manufactured goods from European Russia amounts to about \$1,000,000 per annum. The most striking feature of the town to a new-comer is the almost palatial residence of the wealthy mining proprietor Butin (Boo'tin), which is shown in the illustration on page 100, and which would compare favorably not only with any house in Siberia, but with most houses in the capital of the Empire. The Butin brothers were in financial difficulties at the time of our visit to Nerchinsk, and all of their property was in the hands of a receiver; but we had a note of introduction to the latter from the younger member of the firm, and upon presentation of it we were allowed to inspect the deserted but still beautiful mansion. Going into it from Klementovich's hotel was like going into Aladdin's palace from an East-Siberian *étape*; and as I entered the splendid ball-room and caught the full-length reflection of my figure in the largest mirror in the world,¹ I felt like rubbing my eyes to make sure that I was awake. One does not expect to find in the wilds of Eastern Siberia, nearly 5000 miles from St. Petersburg, a superb private residence with hard-wood marquetry floors, silken curtains, hangings of delicate tapestry, stained-glass windows, splendid chandeliers, soft oriental rugs, white-and-gold furniture upholstered with satin, old Flemish paintings, marble statues, family portraits from the skillful brush of Makofski (Mahkof'skee), and an extensive conservatory filled with palms, lemon trees, and rare orchids from the tropics. Such luxury would excite no remark in a wealthy and populous European city; but in the snowy wilderness of the Trans-Baikal, 3000 miles from the boundary line of Europe, it comes to the unprepared traveler with the shock of a complete surprise. The house had not been occupied for several months, and of course did not appear at its best; but it seemed to me that I had rarely seen more evidences of wealth, refinement, and cultivated taste than were to be found within

ported up the rivers Amur (Am-moor') and Shilka to Nerchinsk in a barge made expressly for the purpose. It is now in the ball-room of Mr. Butin's house, and does not look at all out of place or out of harmony with its surroundings.

its walls. The ball-room, which was the largest room in the house, was about sixty-five feet in length by forty-five in width, and over it, in a large semicircular gallery reached by a grand stairway, there was an orchestion, as big as a church organ, which played sixty or seventy airs and furnished music for the entertainments that the Butins, in the days of their prosperity, were accustomed to give to the people of the town. The library, which was another spacious apartment, was filled with well-selected books, newspapers, and magazines, in three or four languages, and contained also a large collection of Siberian minerals and ores. Adjoining the house were the offices and shops where the Butins carried on the various branches of their extensive and diversified business, and where they had accumulated the wealth that the house partly represented or embodied. In addition to gold mining, they were engaged in trading, distilling, iron manufacturing, and the construction of steamers, and their business operations extended to all parts of Eastern Siberia, and gave employment to many hundreds of men.

After thanking the receiver, Mr. Pomazkin (Po-maz'kin), for his courtesy in going through the house with us, we returned to the hotel, and later in the afternoon called upon Messrs. Charushin (Chah-roo'shin) and Kuznetsof (Kooz-net-soff'), two political exiles who had served out terms of hard labor at the mines, and had then been sent as forced colonists to Nerchinsk, where they were living with their families in comparative comfort. We found them both to be intelligent, cultivated, and very companionable men, and during our three-days' stay in the town we passed with them many pleasant hours. They had had a very hard experience at the mines of Kara, but after their arrival at Nerchinsk they had been treated with reasonable courtesy and consideration, and had even been permitted to engage in branches of business, such as teaching and photography, that by law are closed to political offenders. All of their correspondence was still "under control,"—that is, subject to official supervision and censorship,—but they were not constantly watched, regulated, and harassed by the police, as political exiles are in so many other parts of Siberia, and it seemed to me that their life, although hard and lonely, was perfectly tolerable. Mr. Charushin, before his banishment, spent four years and a half in solitary confinement, and for two years and a half lay in one of the bomb-proof casemates of the Petropavlovski (Pet-ro-pav'lov-skee) fortress. His offense was carrying on a revolutionary propaganda among the factory operatives in one of the suburbs of St. Petersburg. When he was

finally sent to Siberia, in 1878, his wife voluntarily accompanied him, and at the mines of Kara she lived alone in a wretched little cabin at the Lower Diggings until, upon the expiration of his term of probation, Mr. Charushin was permitted to join her. He was one of the nine political convicts of the free command sent back to prison by order of Loris Melikof (Mell'ee-koff) on the 1st of January, 1881, and it was in his house that poor Eugene Semyonofski (Sem-yon'of-skee) committed suicide on the eve of that day.

Sunday morning, November 29, after bidding good-bye with sincere regret to Mr. and Mrs. Charushin, whose warm hearts and lovable characters had won our affection and esteem, we left Nerchinsk in a sleigh for Chita (Chee'tah), the capital of the Trans-Baikal.

The icicles that hung from the nostrils of our frost-whitened horses, the sharp metallic creaking of the crisp snow under our sledge-runners, the bluish, opalescent tints of the distant mountains, and the high, slender columns of smoke that stood, without waver or tremble, over the chimneys of the houses, were all evidences of a very low, if not an arctic, temperature; and I was not surprised, when I looked at our thermometer, to find the mercury stationary at twenty-seven degrees below zero. As night came on, the intensity of the cold increased until it was all that we could do to endure it from one post station to another. We drank three or four tumblers of hot tea every time we stopped to change horses; but in the long, lonely hours between midnight and morning, when we could get no warm food and when all our vital powers were usually at their lowest ebb, we suffered very severely. We had no difficulty in getting post horses until just before dark Monday evening, when we reached the station of Turinopovorotnaya (Too-rin-o-po-vo-rote'nah-yah), about fifty miles from Chita, and found the whole village in a state of hilarious intoxication. Sleighs filled with young men and boys were careering hither and thither with wild whoops and halloos; long lines of peasant girls in bright-colored calico dresses were unsteadily promenading back and forth in the streets with their arms around one another and singing *khorovod* songs; the station-house was filled with flushed and excited people from neighboring settlements, who had evidently been participating in a celebration of some kind and were about starting for their homes; the station-master, who perhaps had not finished his celebration, was nowhere to be found; there was not a driver about the stables; and the "starosta" (stah'ro-stah),¹ a

¹ A "starosta," or elder, is the head of a Siberian village.

short, fat old man, who looked like a burgher from Amsterdam, was so drunk that even with the aid of a cane he could hardly stand on his feet. In vain we tried to ascertain the reasons for this surprising epidemic of inebriation. Nobody was sober enough to explain to us what had happened. From the excited and more or less incoherent conversation of the intoxicated travelers in the station-house, I learned that even the village priest was so drunk that he had to be taken home in a sleigh by the soberest of his parishioners. If the station-master, the starosta, the village priest, the drivers, and all of the inhabitants were drunk, there was evidently no prospect of our being able to get horses. In fact we could not find anybody who seemed sober enough to know the difference between a horse and his harness. We therefore brought our baggage into the crowded station-house and sat down in an unoccupied corner to study intoxicated humanity and await further developments. Every person in the house was drunk, except ourselves and one small baby in arms. The father of this baby, a good-looking young Russian officer in full uniform, wandered unsteadily about the room, animated apparently by a hazy idea that he ought to be collecting his scattered baggage so as to be in readiness for a start; but the things that he picked up in one place he dropped feebly in another, and every minute or two he would suspend operations to exchange with his intoxicated companions fragmentary reminiscences of the day's festivity. Finally he seemed to be struck by a happy thought, and making his way in a devious course to one corner of the room he took up his saber, which was leaning against the wall, and carrying it to his intoxicated wife committed it solemnly to her care with directions to take it out to the sleigh. She was sober enough to remark, with some asperity, that as she had a young baby in her arms, and as the temperature out-of-doors was twenty degrees below zero, he had better take the saber to the sleigh himself. At this he clasped the sheathed weapon dramatically to his breast, rolled his eyes in a fine frenzy upward, and declared with emotion that the saber was his first bride, that he never would forsake it, and that, in view of all the circumstances, he *would* take it out to the sleigh himself. A moment later, however, he dropped it, and but for the supervision of his second bride would have forgotten it altogether.

About eight o'clock, after watching for an hour or two such performances as these, I succeeded in capturing the starosta, and addressing to him some very energetic remarks I sobered him sufficiently to make him understand that we must have horses at once or

there would be trouble. While I stood over him with a verbal club, he entered us in the station-house book as "Mr. Kennan and companion, citizens of Neighboring States";¹ and then going out on the front steps he shouted, as every sleigh-load of drunken men went past, "Andre! Nikolai! Loshedei sei chas!" ["Horses, this moment!"] The only replies that he received were wild howls of derision. At every such outburst of hilarious contempt for authority, he would raise his shaking hands as high as his head with a feeble and comical gesture of helplessness and despair, and exclaim in maudlin tones: "Fsei pyanni! Shto prikázhtie dyélet? Chisto nakázánia!" ["They're all drunk! What do you order done? It's a regular punishment!"]

About nine o'clock the noise, tumult, and shouting in the village streets began to subside; the station-master, whose intoxication had taken the form of severe official dignity, suddenly appeared, and in a tone of stern menace wanted to know where the post drivers were and what all this disorder meant; the young Russian officer, who by this time had reached the affectionate stage of inebriation, kissed all the women in the room, crossed himself devoutly, and meandered out to the sleigh, followed by his wife with the baby and the saber; two intoxicated priests in long gowns, and high, cylindrical, brimless hats draped with black crape, alighted from a droshky in front of the door, allowed their hands to be reverently kissed by the inebriated young officer and his friends, and then rode off in a post sleigh driven by a peasant who could hardly keep his seat on the box; and finally, when we had almost abandoned the hope of ever getting away, a really sober man in a ragged sheepskin coat emerged from the darkness and reported in a business-like manner to the station-master that the horses were ready for us. The drunken and irate official, who seemed desirous of vindicating his dignity and authority in some way, overwhelmed the unfortunate driver with abuse, and ended by fining him fifty kopecks—whether for being sober or for having the horses ready, I do not know. We piled our baggage into the sleigh, climbed in upon it, and rode out of the intoxicated settlement with thankful hearts. As the last faint sounds of revelry died away in the distance behind us, I said to the driver: "What's the matter with everybody in this village? The whole population seems to be drunk."

"They've been consecrating a new church," said the driver, soberly.

¹ The Russian words for "neighboring" and "united" bear a superficial resemblance to each other, and the poor intoxicated starosta had never heard, evidently, of such a country as the United States.

"Consecrating a church!" I exclaimed in amazement. "Is that the way you consecrate churches?"

"I don't know," he replied. "Sometimes they drink. After the services they had a *gulainia* [a sort of holiday promenade with music and spirituous refreshments], and some of them crooked their elbows too often."

"Some of them!" I repeated. "All of them, you mean. You're the only sober man I've seen in the place. How does it happen that you're not drunk?"

"I'm not a Christian," he replied, with quiet simplicity. "I'm a Buriat."¹

As a Christian — if not a member of the Holy Orthodox Church — I was silenced by the unconscious irony of the reply. The only sober man in a village of three or four hundred inhabitants proved to be a pagan, and he had just been fined fifty kopecks by a Christian official for not getting drunk with other good citizens and thus showing his respect for the newly consecrated edifice and his appreciation of the benign influence of the Holy Orthodox Faith!

About ten o'clock on the morning of Tuesday, December 1, we drove into the town of Chita and took up our quarters in a small, one-story log-hotel kept by a man named Biachinski (Byah'chin-skee) and known as the "Hotel Vládívostók." There was in Chita, as I have said in a previous article, a tolerably large and very interesting colony of political exiles. We had made their acquaintance and had had some conversation with them on our outward journey; but as we were then making every effort to reach the mines of Kara before the setting in of winter, we could not spend as much time with them as we wished to spend, and we therefore decided to stop for ten days or two weeks in Chita on our return. Most of these exiles were forced colonists who had already served out terms of hard labor at the mines and who belonged to the class that the Government regarded as particularly dangerous. In view of this fact, and of the official attention that our investigations had already attracted at Kara, it seemed to me necessary to proceed with more than ordinary caution and to cultivate the most friendly possible relations with the authorities. It was more than likely that Captain Nikolin (Nee-ko'lin), the gendarme commandant at the mines of Kara, had informed the acting-governor at Chita of our surreptitious visits to the politicals of the free command, and, if so, it was quite probable that our later movements would be watched. What would be the result of a discovery that we were visiting the politicals in Chita every

¹ The natives in Siberia known as Buriats are nearly all Lamaists.

day, I did not know; but as we were still apprehensive of a police search, it seemed prudent to take every possible precaution. I called at once upon Colonel Svechin (Svay-chin'), who was then acting as governor in the absence of General Barabásh (Bar-a-bash'), gave him a tolerably full account of our experience at the mines, — omitting, of course, the episode with the political convicts, — and outlined to him our plans for the future. He was very pleasant and courteous, asked no inconvenient questions, and when I bade him good-day and bowed myself out of his reception-room I felt quite reassured. Either he was not aware of the extent of our intercourse with the political exiles in his province, or he regarded such intercourse with indifference as a matter of little consequence.

Two or three days after our arrival, a wealthy merchant of the town named Nemerof (Nem'er-off), whose acquaintance I had made through a casual call at his place of business, invited us to go with him to an amateur theatrical entertainment to be given for some benevolent object in the small theater connected with the official club. Hoping to make a few useful acquaintances, and desirous, at the same time, of showing ourselves in public as much as possible with "trustworthy" people, we accepted the invitation. Between the acts of the rather clever and creditable performance we promenaded in one of the lobbies, made the acquaintance of a number of civil and military officials, received a pleasant greeting from the acting-governor, and attracted general attention as "distinguished Americans," well known to the higher authorities of the place and upon friendly terms even with the acting-governor and chief of staff. No one, we hoped, would suspect that these distinguished foreigners had stopped in Chita for the express purpose of extending their acquaintance with political convicts, nihilists, and terrorists.

Among the army officers to whom I was introduced between the acts was a certain Colonel Novikov (No'vee-koff), who, accompanied by several other officers in full uniform, was walking back and forth in the lobby. As soon as he caught my name he looked at me curiously, and, without any preliminary leading up to the subject, said, "I hear that you have been at the mines of Kara."

"Yes," I replied, with some surprise and uneasiness; "I have just come from there."

"What did you find good there?" he inquired, looking sharply into my face.

I hardly knew what reply to make to such a question as this; but I thought that it would be safe at least to speak well of the officials, so far as I could conscientiously do so, and I

therefore replied promptly that I found a good man, namely, Major Potulof (Po'too-loff).

"Humph!" grunted the colonel, contemptuously. "I suppose he showed you everything in the most favorable light?"

"There are some things that cannot be shown in a very favorable light," I replied, feeling more and more uneasiness, but determined to take the bull by the horns.

"Did you go through the prisons?" he demanded.

"Yes," I said; "we saw most of them."

"Did they show you the 'naked command'?"

"No; I don't even know what you mean by the 'naked command.'"

"I mean a cell full of prisoners without clothing. When I first went to Kara and made a visit of inspection to the prisons, I found a kamera in which there were twenty-five convicts stark naked. This body of men was then known as the 'naked command.'"

"What was the explanation of it?" I inquired.

"I don't know," replied the officer, with a shrug. "They simply had n't any clothes to wear.¹ Did your *good man* [a contemptuous reference to Major Potulof] show you the solitary-confinement cells in the Middle Kara prison?"

"He did not," I replied. "What is there remarkable about them?"

"Oh, nothing," said the colonel, with assumed indifference, "except that they are not high enough to stand up in nor long enough to lie down in. You evidently did n't see anything except what they wanted you to see. I wish that I had been there; I would have shown you things as they are, not as your *liubeznoi khozain* [amiable host] showed them to you."

By this time I was in a state of some bewilderment and perplexity. Could Colonel Novikof be sincere? Or was he merely laying a trap for me in order to ascertain what I really thought of the Kara prisons and the prison administration? I hardly dared say anything, for fear of making a mistake. Without waiting, however, for any remarks from me, Colonel Novikof said, "I lived at Kara as commander of the Cossack battalion for three years and a

¹ I subsequently learned that the "naked command" was composed of convicts who made a regular practice of selling the clothing furnished them by the Government, in order to get money with which to gamble and buy liquor. As a punishment for this offense they had been shut up together in a large cell and deprived of clothing altogether. Of course the prisoners could not have disposed of their garments and bought liquor with the proceeds unless they had been aided in so doing by the prison officials. The existence of a naked command, therefore, showed the corruptibility, rather than the cruelty, of the prison administration. Colonel Novikof seemed desirous of giving me a contrary impression.

² I think I quote Colonel Novikof's words with almost perfect accuracy. They made upon me, of course, a very deep impression, and I wrote them down in my

half; and when I was finally relieved from duty there, a few months ago, I was so glad that I had a special thanksgiving service read in the church.

"Do you see my beard?" he demanded abruptly after a moment's pause. "It is all sprinkled with gray, is n't it? That 's the result of the human misery that I was compelled to witness at the mines. When I went there, there was n't a white hair in it. How old do you think I am?"

I replied that I should take him to be about fifty-five.

"I am only forty-five," he said bitterly; "and when I went to Kara I was as young-looking a man as you are."

He paused for a moment, as if in gloomy retrospection, and I ventured to ask him what was the nature of the misery to which he referred.

"Misery of all kinds," he replied. "The wretched convicts are cruelly treated, flogged with rods and the *plet* [a sort of heavy cat], and worked for the benefit of their overseers, who enrich themselves at the convicts' expense. As for the suffering and injustice, I will give you an instance of it. While I was there the wife of the warden of one of the prisons accidentally discovered that her lover—a convict of the free command—was carrying on an intrigue with one of her servants, a good-looking girl belonging also to the criminal class. Enraged by jealousy, she made such representations to her husband the warden as to induce him to have the servant girl flogged. The girl received 150 blows with the stick on her bare body, and then when she went to the *zaveduyushchi* [the governor of the penal establishment] and complained of the cruel treatment to which she had been subjected, she got 90 blows more with the plet,—240 blows in all,—and I stood by and saw those executions carried out. Do you think that 's a pleasant thing? I have n't much hair left [stroking the top of his head], but all that I have has stood on end at the sights I have been forced to witness at those accursed mines. To see what one must see there one ought to have nerves of iron wire."²

The reader must not suppose that these extraordinary statements were made to me note-book as soon as I returned from the theater. Some allowance must be made, however, for personal animus on the part of the speaker. His relations with other officers at the mines, and particularly with Major Potulof, had evidently been unpleasant, if not hostile, and he may have exaggerated, or thrown into undue prominence, evils for which they were responsible. The remarks that I have quoted are, nevertheless, interesting and significant as coming from an officer of high rank who had the best possible means of knowing the truth, and I give them for what they may be worth. Colonel Novikof is the same officer who told me that he would punish political offenders with the *shpitsruten*—a barbarous running of the gauntlet in the course of which the sufferer receives from two thousand to seven thousand blows from light rods.

quietly and confidentially in a corner. We were walking back and forth in the crowded lobby of a theater with three or four other officers, and Colonel Novikof talked excitedly and loudly enough to be heard not only by them, but by any one who cared to listen. It may seem strange that a Cossack officer of Colonel Novikof's prominence should make, voluntarily, to a stranger and foreigner, such damaging admissions with regard to the working of the Russian penal system; but this was not the only time that I was surprised and puzzled by such frankness. At a later hour that same evening another officer came to me between the acts, introduced himself, and began to question me about our experience at the mines of Kara. In less than five minutes he made the same inquiry that Colonel Novikof had made, viz., whether we had seen the solitary-confinement cells in the Middle Kara prison. I replied as before in the negative, whereupon he gave me the same information with regard to their dimensions that I had already received, and added that these horrible cells had been used as places of confinement for political offenders, and even for cultivated women. Madame Rossikova (Ross'ee-ko-vah), he said, had languished in one of those dungeons until the prison surgeon had pronounced her dying. He invited me to call upon him, and said that if I was interested in prisons and the exile system he thought he could furnish me with some material. I am not at liberty to name this officer, nor to indicate the position that he held; but I can say, without breach of confidence, that I did call upon him, and that I am indebted to him for many of the facts set forth in the four preceding articles. He confirmed most of the statements made to me by the political convicts at Kara, gave me an account of the shooting of Governor Ilyashevich (Ilyah-shay'vitch) that did not differ in any essential respect from the narrative of Madame Kutitonskaya (Koo-tee-ton'ska-ya) herself, and permitted me to see official documents of the utmost interest and value. If he had in view any other object than the establishment of the truth, I do not know what it was.

During our stay of nearly two weeks in Chita I spent a large part of every day with "trust-worthy" citizens and officials, in order to avert suspicion, and then devoted the greater part of every night to the political convicts. We met the latter, as a rule, in a carpenter-shop maintained by some of them as a means of self-support in a large two-story log-house once occupied by the famous Decembrist exiles of 1825. About nine o'clock every evening, ten or fifteen politicals would assemble in a spacious upper room over this carpenter-shop, and there, at a somewhat later hour, Mr. Frost and I

would join them. Fanny Morenis (Mo-ray'niss), a bright and very pretty girl about twenty years of age, generally acted as hostess; Madame Gélis presided over the samovar; and by half-past ten o'clock every evening we were all grouped about a big table on one side of the room, smoking, drinking tea, relating our adventures, and discussing all sorts of social and political questions. Among the exiles in Chita were some of the brightest, most cultivated, most sympathetic men and women that we had met in Eastern Siberia; and I still remember, with mingled feelings of pleasure and sadness, the hours that we spent with them. We were not always depressed and gloomy, nor did we always look on the dark penal side of Russian life. Sometimes Mr. Lazaref, or Mr. Valuief (Val-loo'yef), would take up an old battered guitar, and sing, to its accompaniment, a melodious Russian romance; sometimes Mr. Frost and I gave the exiles a spirited if not a finished rendering of "Bingo," "The Bull-dog," "Solomon Levi," or some other rollicking college melody; and sometimes we all sang in chorus the stirring words and music of the "Little Russian Marseillaise," the quasi-revolutionary and prohibited song "On the Volga there is a Cliff," or the martial strains of "John Brown."

Sooner or later, however, we invariably reverted to the topics that most interested us all — the condition of Russia, the Russian revolutionary movement, and the life of political exiles in prison, on the road, or at the mines. Here I obtained many of the facts that I have set forth in previous articles, and here I heard, for the first time, the terrible history of the Kharkoff Central Prison, and the narrative of the desperate hunger-strike of the four women in the prison at Irkutsk.¹ Stories more ghastly and pathetic I had never read nor imagined; and night after night I went back to the hotel in a state of emotional excitement that made it impossible for me to sleep, and equally impossible to turn my thoughts into any other channel. All that I could do was to lie for hours on the floor, picturing to myself in imagination the scenes and events that had been described or related to me with such torturing vividness. It is one thing to read in cold, expressionless type such narratives of suffering, injustice, and bereavement as those that I have tried to reproduce in the present series of articles. It is another and quite a different thing to hear them from the trembling lips of the men and women who have been actors in the tragedies described, and who have themselves gone down into the valley of the shadow of death. If, while listening to such stories, my eyes

¹ Mesdames Kavalskaya, Rossikova, Bogomolets, and Kutitonskaya.

filled with tears and my hands were clenched in fierce though silent and helpless indignation, I am not ashamed of it—it would have been a relief to me sometimes if I could have cried.

The emotional strain of our East-Siberian experience was perhaps harder to bear than the mere physical suffering. One can endure cold, hunger, jolting, and fatigue with a certain philosophic cheerfulness; but emotional excitement—the constant appeal made by suffering to sympathy—exhausts nervous strength with great rapidity and eventually depresses all the vital powers. In our case there was not only the emotional strain, but the strain of constant anxiety and apprehension. We were liable, at almost any moment, to be arrested and searched; and what the consequences of such a misfortune would be we could only conjecture. No attempt had yet been made to watch or follow us, so far as we were aware; but the room adjoining ours in the hotel was occupied by four officers, including a captain or colonel of gendarmes, and Mr. Frost thought that he had more than once heard, through the thin intervening partition, a conversation among these men with regard to the real object of our Siberian journey, and a discussion of methods by which our papers might be secured, or at least subjected to police inspection. One night, during our second week's stay in Chita, I came back to the hotel about two o'clock in the morning from a visit to the political exiles' carpenter-shop. There was not a sound nor a suggestion of life in the deserted streets of the little provincial town, the windows of the hotel were all dark, the servant who admitted me was only half awake, Mr. Frost was slumbering peacefully on a wooden bench in our room, and perfect stillness prevailed throughout the building. Everybody had apparently been asleep for hours. The room occupied by the four officers was separated from ours by a thin paper-and-lath wall only, through which there happened to be an intercommunicating door. Under this door was a vacant space of three or four inches, which, with the flimsiness of the partition, permitted sounds to pass from room to room with almost perfect freedom. Excited by the ghastly story of the murder of the political offender Somof (So'moff) in the Odessa prison, which I had just heard from one of the exiles, I could not sleep, and lighting a candle, I lay down on the floor with my head to the partition wall and tried to divert my thoughts by reading. For at least half an hour the only sound that came to my ears was Mr. Frost's soft, regular breathing. Suddenly the stillness, which was so profound as to be almost oppressive, was broken by the loud "Bang!" of a revolver al-

most opposite my head, on the other side of the partition. Surprised and startled, I raised myself on one elbow and listened. Nothing could be heard except a faint rustle, made apparently by plaster-dust falling from the partition wall where the bullet had pierced it. Mr. Frost, roused from sound sleep, sat up and inquired, "What was that?"

"Somebody has just fired a revolver at our partition," I replied in a low tone.

"What time is it?"

"About half-past two. Keep quiet and listen."

With strained attention we waited fully two minutes without hearing the faintest sound. The hotel had become as still as before, and yet I knew that there were four men in the room from which the pistol shot had come. If one of them had committed suicide—which was the first thought that flashed through my mind—why did not the others get up and strike a light? The report of the revolver was loud enough to rouse the whole hotel, and the perfect stillness that followed it was even more extraordinary and mysterious than the shot itself.

"Let 's call to them and find out what the matter is," whispered Mr. Frost.

"No," I replied in an undertone; "let somebody else find out. We 're not hurt."

I had great fear of becoming involved in some mystery or tragedy that would give the police an excuse for taking us into custody and overhauling our baggage or summoning us as witnesses, and it seemed to me best to "lie stiller than water and lower than grass," as the Russian peasants say, and await developments. Whatever might be the significance of the pistol shot, it was none of our business unless the weapon had been aimed at us—and that seemed extremely improbable.

After the lapse of perhaps three minutes, I heard in the officers' room the clicking made by the cocking and uncocking of a revolver, followed in a few seconds by low whispering. Then one man in an undertone asked another how many more cartridges he had. Some inaudible reply was made, after which there was whispering again for a moment or two, and finally silence. We did not hear another sound from the officers' room that night. Why that revolver shot was fired through our partition from a perfectly dark and still room at half-past two o'clock in the morning, we never ascertained. My own impression is that somebody desired to experiment upon us for fun; and if any one had questioned me about the incident on the following day, I should have said that pistol shots in the night were so common in American hotels as to excite little or no remark, and that the only thing



EAST-SIBERIAN FREIGHT SLEDGES.

which surprised us was the absence of a dead body in the morning.

Whether or not the police discovered, during our stay in Chita, that we were visiting the political convicts every day, I have no means of knowing. That they became aware of it afterward, I infer, from the fact that the only letter I subsequently received from there, a perfectly innocent communication from the merchant Nemerof, was delivered to me open—the end of the envelope having been cut off with a pair of scissors.

Up to the time of our arrival in Chita I had carried the most important and compromising of my papers and documents in a leathern belt around my body; but they finally became so bulky and burdensome that it seemed necessary to make some other disposition of them, and in view of the possibility, if not the probability, of a police search, I determined to conceal them. The greater part of them I put into the hollow sides of a wooden box that I made for the purpose, and that was ostensibly intended to keep our dishes and tea-things in. Such a box I could carry from our sleigh to the house at every post station without appearing to set any particular value upon it, and I could thus keep it constantly under my eye without exciting either the suspicion of the police or the cupidity of thieves. All travelers carried such boxes, and it was highly improbable that anybody would ever wonder what was in it. It explained itself. The remainder of my documents, and a few letters from political exiles to their relatives in European Russia, I bound into the covers of books. As we were traveling with very little baggage, I had no books of my own; but the exiles in Chita furnished me with an English copy of "David Copperfield," a bound volume of a Russian magazine which contained an article upon the exile system, and an old

book of logarithms. We felt sure that "David Copperfield" and the logarithms would excite no suspicion, even if our baggage were overhauled, and we hoped that the article upon the exile system would carry the Russian magazine. Finally, I put one very important letter into a small square piece of board, upon which was mounted an oil portrait of one of the Decembrist exiles of 1825. This portrait had been found in one of the houses of the Decembrists at Chita, and as I was a collector of curious and interesting relics, it was natural enough that I should be in possession of it. Altogether it seemed to me that my papers were very skillfully and successfully hidden. The police certainly could not find them without breaking or tearing to pieces nearly everything that I had.

Wednesday night, December 9, we sang with the political exiles in Chita for the last time the plaintive but beautiful song of the Russian revolutionists, "On the Volga there is a Cliff," distributed among them as mementos all the trinkets and small articles of value that we had, and then, with deep and sincere regret, bade them good-bye forever. Twelve hours later we were posting furiously towards Irkutsk, the capital of Eastern Siberia. For five days and nights we traveled westward at the rate of eight miles an hour, stopping only to change horses, and suffering from cold, hunger, and sleeplessness until it seemed to me that I could endure no more. We found Lake Baikal still open, but the last steamer for the season had gone, and we were forced to take the high, picturesque cornice road around the lake at its southern end. Monday evening, December 14, we were stopped only fifty or sixty miles from Irkutsk by the absence of post horses. For almost three months we had been cut off



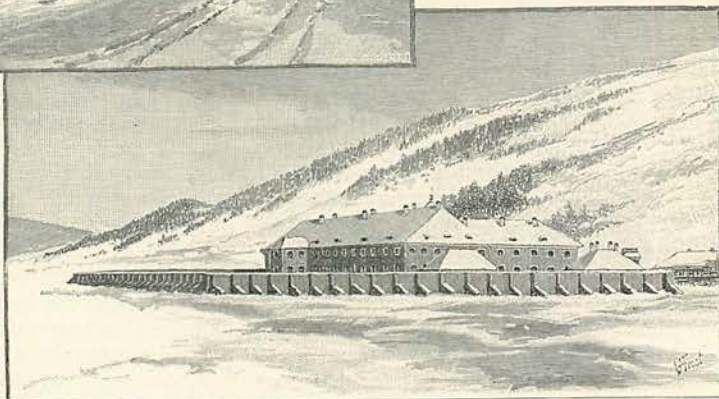
SIBERIAN POST SLEIGHS.

from all communication with the civilized world, for ten weeks we had not received a letter nor read a newspaper, and furious with impatience at finding ourselves stopped so near the capital, we hired a peasant to carry us and our baggage on a low sledge to the next station. We little knew what a night of misery we were preparing for ourselves. The cold was intense;

stream to close; but as it then showed no disposition to do so, we resolved to descend its right, or eastern, bank to a point about a hundred miles nearer the Arctic Ocean, where, according to the reports of the peasants, a gorge had occurred and an ice bridge had formed. On Friday, January 8, having sold our old tarantas (tar-an-tass') and purchased with the

proceeds a comfortable pavoska (pah-voss'kah), or winter traveling sleigh, like that shown in the illustration on page 109, we sent to the post station for a troika of horses and set out by way of the Alexandrofski (Al-ex-an-drof'skee) Central Prison for the ice bridge across the Angara.

The Alexandrofski Central Prison, which at the time



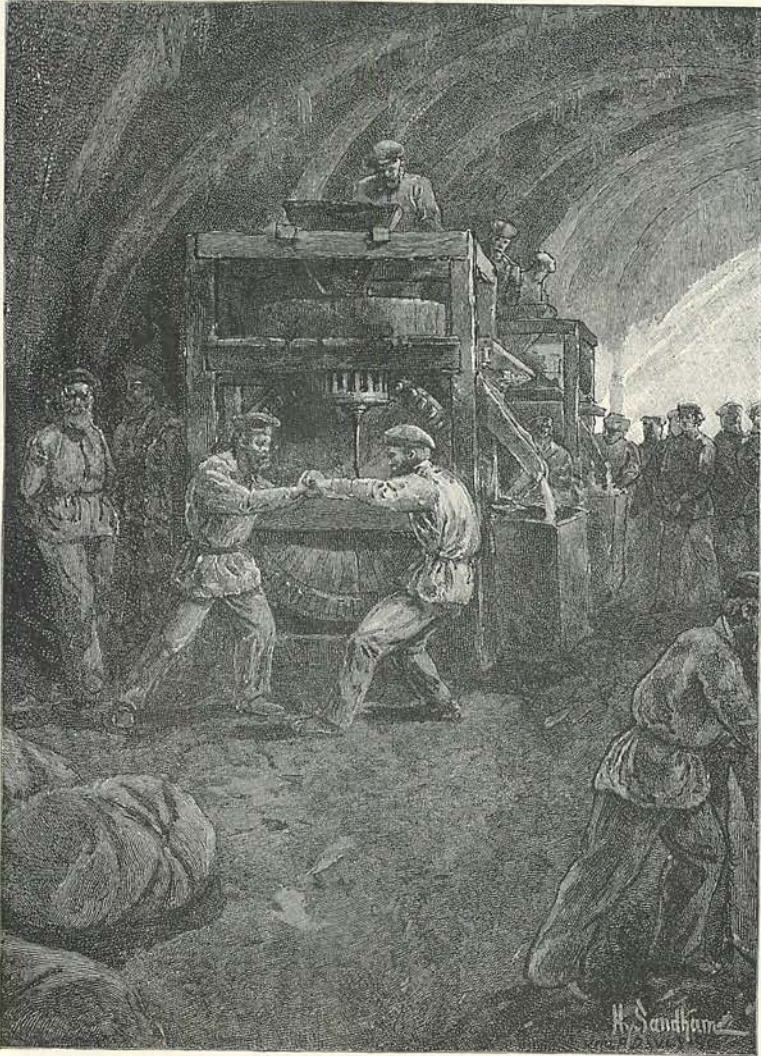
THE ALEXANDROFSKI CENTRAL PRISON.

1. Front of the building and house of the warden. 2. Side and rear view.

the road ran across a series of high, massive, and densely wooded mountain ridges; the peasant's horses proved to be half dead from starvation, and after the first three miles absolutely refused to draw us up hill; we walked almost the whole distance, in a temperature of twenty degrees below zero, and finally reached the next station, more dead than alive, at two o'clock in the morning. If I fell down once I fell down twenty times from weakness and exhaustion on the slippery slopes of the last hills. Tuesday, December 15, we reëntered the city of Irkutsk, drove to the post-office and then to the Moscow Hotel, and without waiting to wash our hands, change our dress, or refresh ourselves with food, sat down to read forty or fifty letters from home. The most recent of them were two and a half months old, and the earliest in date nearly six.

It was late in the Siberian winter when we reached Irkutsk, and the thermometer had indicated temperatures as low as thirty and thirty-five degrees below zero; but the Angara River was still open in the middle, and as there was no bridge, and the ferry-boats had ceased running, we could not get across. For more than three weeks we waited impatiently for the rapid

of our visit had the reputation of being one of the best as well as one of the largest institutions of its kind in Eastern Siberia, is situated on the right bank of the Angara River about forty miles below Irkutsk, and was built and occupied for a time as a distillery. It was remodeled and turned into a prison in 1874, and since then has been used as a place of confinement and of nominal hard labor for about a thousand convicts. I was particularly anxious to see it, because acting-governor Petrof (Pe-troff') in Irkutsk had described it to me as "almost a model prison," and I had not thus far seen any prisons in Siberia to which such a description would apply. After a pleasant and comfortable ride of eight hours from Irkutsk we reached the prison settlement about half-past nine o'clock Friday night, drove at once to the post station, and, after having warmed ourselves with three or four tumblers of hot tea, went to bed on the floor, as usual.

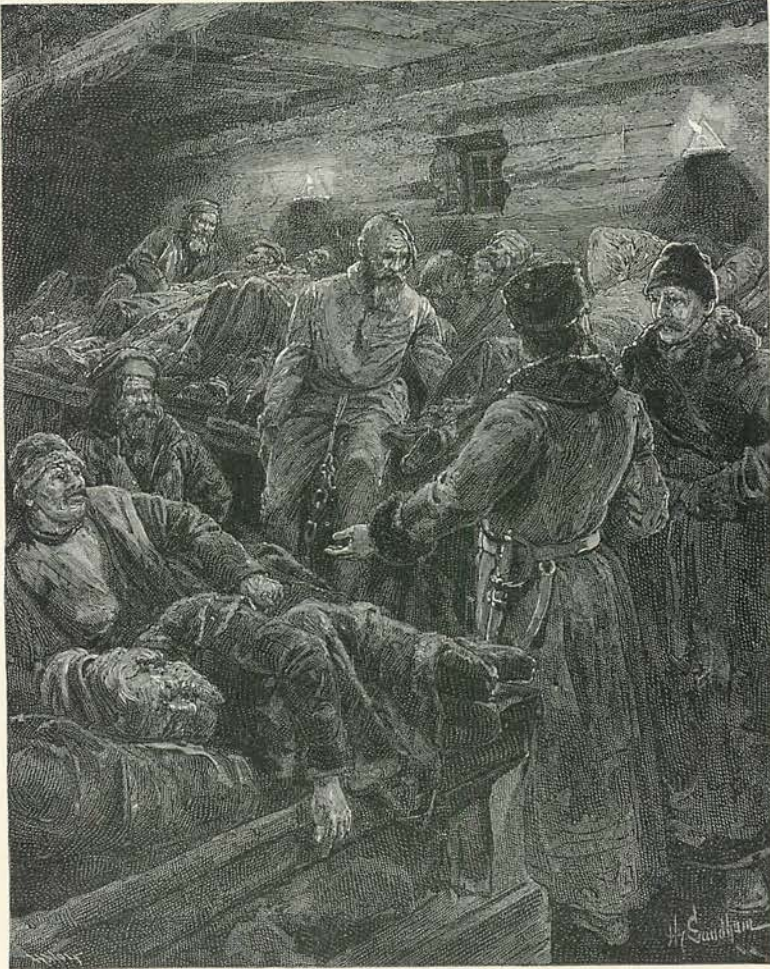


CONVICTS GRINDING RYE IN THE ALEXANDROFSKI CENTRAL PRISON.

Saturday morning we called upon the prison warden, Mr. Sipiagin (See-pyag'in), who had already received notice of our coming from the authorities in Irkutsk, and asked permission to go through the institution of which he was in command. Mr. Sipiagin, a pleasant, intelligent, cultivated officer, thirty-five or forty years of age, received us with the most cordial hospitality, insisted upon our taking a late breakfast with him, and after we had refreshed ourselves with tea, bread and butter, and delicious cutlets served with gravy and delicately browned potatoes, he went with us to the prison.

The Alexandrofski Central Prison is a large, two-story brick building with a tin roof, standing in a spacious inclosure formed by a high, buttressed brick wall. It is somewhat irregular in form, but its greatest length is about 300 feet

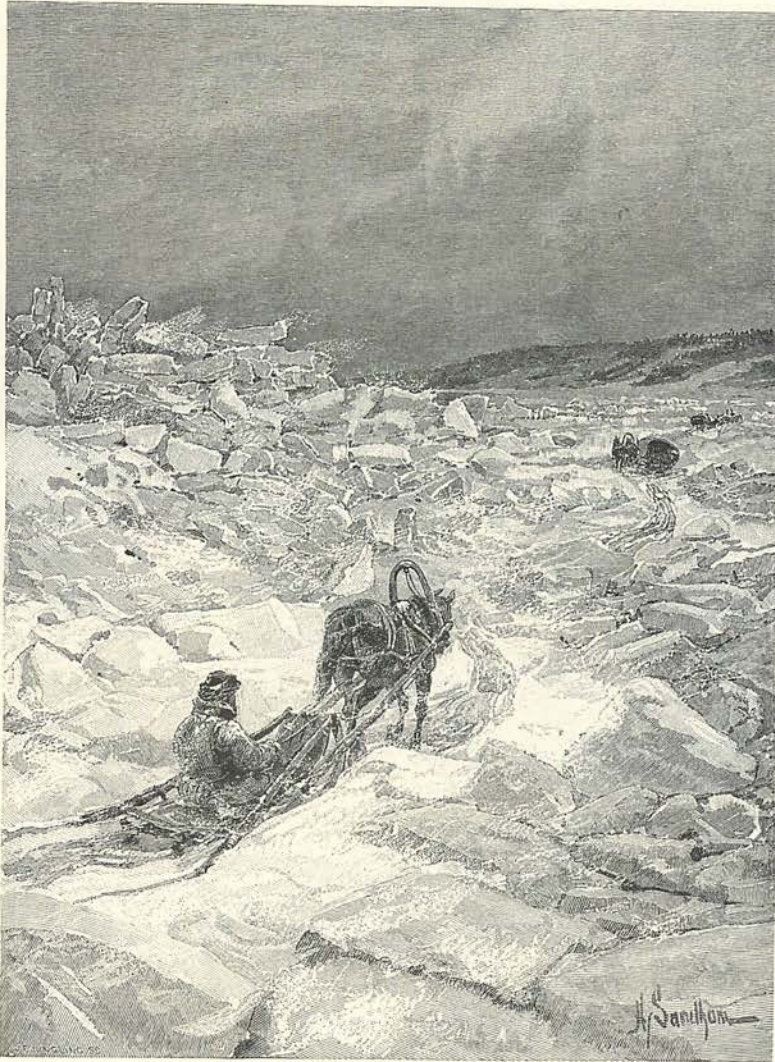
and its greatest width about 100, with a rather spacious court-yard in the middle. It contains fifty-seven general *kameras*, or cells, in which a number of prisoners are shut up together, ten solitary-confinement cells, and five *secretni*, or "secret" cells, intended for the isolation of particularly important or dangerous criminals. It contained at the time of our visit 992 convicts, while about 900 more, who had finished their terms of probation, were living outside the prison walls in the free command. We were taken first to the mills, which were large vaulted apartments in the first story, where 75 or 100 convicts were grinding rye into meal for their own use. The air here was fresh and good; the labor, although hard, was not excessive; and the men who turned the cranks of the clumsy machines were relieved by others as fast as



A VISIT TO THE ALEXANDROFSKI CENTRAL PRISON AT NIGHT.

they became tired. This, the warden informed me, was the only hard labor that the inmates of the prison were required to perform, and it occupied only three or four hours a day. From the mills we went to the *kameras*, which filled the greater part of the large building, and which were occupied by from 15 to 75 men each. They varied greatly in size and form, but all were large enough for the number of convicts that they contained; the ceilings in them were high; the air everywhere was good; the floors and sleeping-benches were scrupulously clean; and nothing seemed to call for unfavorable criticism except perhaps the lack of bedding. In all the cells I noticed ventilators, but some of them had been stopped up with rags or articles of clothing by the prisoners themselves. The corridors into which the *kameras* opened were high, spacious, and fairly well lighted, and the air in them seemed to be almost as pure as that out-of-doors. From the

kameras we went to the kitchens, where food was prepared every day for more than a thousand men, and where I could discover nothing that was out of harmony with the neatness and good order that prevailed in other parts of the building. I tasted some of the bread and soup furnished to the prisoners and found both palatable and good. The convict ration, Mr. Sipiagin informed me, consisted of three pounds of rye bread, about seven ounces of meat, and three ounces of barley per day, with potatoes or other vegetables occasionally. Tea and sugar were not supplied by the Government, but might be purchased by the prisoners with their own money. When we came out of the kitchens the warden asked us if we would not like to see the school-room. I replied that we certainly should, inasmuch as we had never seen such a thing as a school-room in a Russian prison, and did not suppose that such a thing existed. Mr. Sipiagin laughed, and conducted us to a clean,



CROSSING THE ICE BRIDGE.

well-lighted apartment in the second story, which had been fitted up by the convicts themselves with rude desks of domestic manufacture, and had been furnished by the prison authorities with a black-board, a large globe, a wall map of Siberia and another of the Holy Land, and a few cheap lithographs. There were no scholars in the room at the time of our visit to it, but the warden said that the convicts frequently came there to read, sing, or listen to instructive talks from the priest. They were greatly in need of books. They had a few tracts and testaments, left there some years before by the Rev. Mr. Lansdell,¹ but they wanted school-books and a library. From

¹ This was the only place in Siberia where I found any trace of the books and tracts that Mr. Lansdell distributed.

the school-room we went to the shops, where 25 or 30 tailors, shoemakers, and carpenters were hard at work, and where the air was filled with the pleasant odors of fresh pine shavings and Russia leather. The convicts were at liberty, the warden said, to do any work that they were capable of doing, and they received two-thirds of all the money that they earned. One-third was turned over to them, or held by the warden subject to their order, at the time payment was received for the products of their industry; one-third was withheld, to be given to them at the expiration of their terms of probation; and one-third was retained by the Government. After paying a visit to the hospital, which contained only forty-two patients and which was clean, well ventilated, and in perfect order, we expressed ourselves as sat-

ified with our inspection of the prison, and returned to Mr. Sipiagin's house. The warden seemed to be very much gratified when I said to him frankly and honestly that I had inspected fifteen prisons in Eastern Siberia, that the one under his command was by far the best of them all, and that I did not see how anything more could be done by local and personal effort to make it better. It was not a "model prison," but it would at least serve as a model for the rest of Siberia.

prove in Siberian prisons generally, and I am glad to have an opportunity to praise where praise is deserved.

Monday morning, after having thanked Mr. Sipiagin and his bright, intelligent wife for their courtesy and hospitality, we bade them good-bye and resumed our journey. The road, which lay along the edge of the river, under the high, abrupt hills that bound the Angara on the east, had been overflowed by the backing up of the water due to the formation of the ice

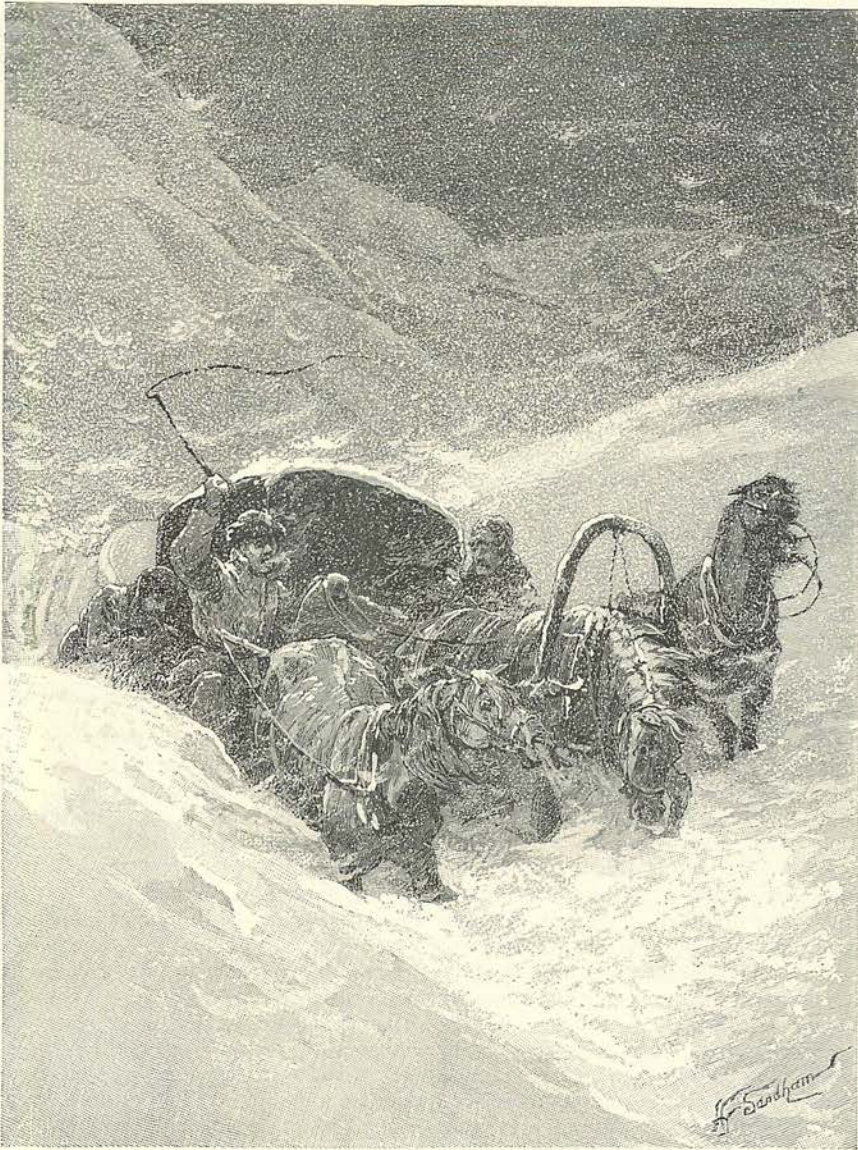


THROUGH THE ICE ON THE ANGARA RIVER.

At a late hour Sunday night Mr. Sipiagin, Captain Makofski, the prison surgeon, Mr. Frost, and I went through the prison again to see what was the state of things after the prisoners had retired. The convicts were lying asleep in rows on the plank nares without pillows or bed-clothing, and as we entered their dimly lighted cells many of them started up in surprise and alarm, as if afraid that we were about to drag somebody out to execution; but none of them spoke, and we went through six or seven *kameras* in silence. There were *paráshas*, or excrement-buckets, in all the cells, and the air seemed more contaminated than it had been in the daytime; but even at its worst it was better than in any other prison we had visited. Taken altogether, the Alexandrofski prison seemed to me to be in the highest degree creditable to its warden, Mr. Sipiagin, and not discreditable to the Russian Prison Administration. It gives me great pleasure to say this, because I did not find much to ap-

prove in Siberian prisons generally, and I am glad to have an opportunity to praise where praise is deserved. Monday morning, after having thanked Mr. Sipiagin and his bright, intelligent wife for their courtesy and hospitality, we bade them good-bye and resumed our journey. The road, which lay along the edge of the river, under the high, abrupt hills that bound the Angara on the east, had been overflowed by the backing up of the water due to the formation of the ice

gorge, and it was with the greatest difficulty that we could make our way at all over the huge cakes of ice with which it was bestrewn, or along the steep hillside above it. The slope of the bank finally became so steep that our horses could no longer stand upon it, and we were forced to drive out upon the thin, treacherous ice of the half-frozen river. While we were going at a brisk trot just beyond the village of Olon, the ice suddenly gave way under us, and with a great crash horses, sleigh, and all went through into the deep, swift current of the river. Fortunately, the widely extended outriggers of our sleigh prevented it from sinking at once, and by the exercise of agility and good judgment we all succeeded in getting out of it and securing a foothold on the solid ice. We cut our horses free from their harnesses, dragged them out one by one, hauled out our sledge with fresh horses, and returned to Olon to repair damages. After consultation with the villagers we decided that



A STORM AT NIGHT IN THE MOUNTAINS OF THE ANGARA.

it would not be prudent to continue our journey down the river in that way. Night was coming on, the river road was impassable, and if we should break through the ice again, in the darkness and away from help, the consequences might be more serious. Late in the evening a good-looking young peasant, tempted by an offer of fifteen rubles, which was about five times the usual rate, agreed to take us to the next village below by a circuitous and difficult route over the mountains. There was no road; but as the snow was not very deep, he thought he could make his way through, and at half-past ten o'clock we started. In all our East-Siberian experience I remember no night more

full of hardship, anxiety, and suffering than the one that followed. About midnight a storm came on with high wind, flying snow, and a temperature of fifteen or twenty degrees below zero; we lost our way in the darkness, capsized into ravines, floundered for hours in deep snow-drifts, and lifted and tugged at our heavy, unwieldy sleigh until we were utterly exhausted and half frozen. About four o'clock in the morning I began to feel, at every respiration, a sharp, cutting pain in my right lung, and in less than half an hour I found myself completely disabled. Leaving Mr. Frost and the driver to struggle with the snow-drifts and the exhausted, dispirited horses, I crawled back

into the half-capsized sleigh, pulled the sheepskin robe over my shivering body, and gave myself up to gloomy forebodings of pneumonia. What happened between that time and morning, I do not remember. Just before daybreak I was aroused by the barking of dogs, and, looking out, was gladdened by the sight of fire-lighted smoke and sparks from the chimneys

of three or four log-houses. It was the small peasant village of Pashka. After warming and refreshing ourselves with tea, we pushed on to the settlement of Kamenka, and late in the afternoon crossed the ice bridge over the Angara, and stopped for the night in the comfortable post-station house on the great Siberian road.

George Kennan.

THE CASE OF JOHN VAN ARSDALE.



SEVERAL years have passed since the newspapers were full of the D—— murder case. It was particularly remarkable on account of the social prominence and previous high reputation of the accused and the strange circumstances which followed his trial. The story offers promising material for a penny dreadful, but I do not recall it to the attention of the public on that account. I had peculiar opportunities for knowing the alleged criminal, and he had exhibited to me, more perhaps than to any one else, the state of his mind. I then believed that I owed it to psychological science to give some report of the case, and with that intention I made some memoranda at the time. On looking over these notes I am still of the opinion that they should be published. My readers may think that I have thrown a little too much of myself into the tale, but they must recognize the fact that to understand testimony we must understand the witness. As we see through his eyes, we must know his point of view. I will make no attempt to draw my subject's character, but merely recount his conversation and actions as accurately as I can. I have disguised the names of persons and places in order that I may give as little offense as possible to the friends of the *dramatis personæ*.

1.

I HAD not seen John Van Arsdale for twelve years. We had been playfellows in petticoats, and afterwards we went daily together to the military school which is one of the chief prizes of Albansborough. We coasted together down the slippery streets at the risk of our lives. It would have been better if one of us had been taken off then. I remember him in his gray school uniform — a well-made, strong, normal boy; intelligent, ready to study, but fonder of sport. His disposition was cheerful, yet at times there was a wistful look in his eyes which was hard to explain. I was of another tempera-

ment; my health was good, but I was somewhat lacking in muscular development. While I was no coward, I did not love fighting for fighting's sake, and was more of an adept at my books. His social position too was different from mine. His ancestors on both sides, Van Arsdales and Hasbroucks, boasted the bluest blood which could be derived from the cabbage-gardens and brew-houses of two centuries ago, but his father found it somewhat difficult to keep out of debt and yet continue to live in an "ancient" family mansion which had been built at least sixty years before. John's cousin, Henry Hasbrouck, who was several years our senior, kept up the family traditions and already promised to become a leader in society. He was handsome and affable and sometimes condescended to join us in our sports, but I do not think that we altogether liked him. My father, unlike John's, was a rich manufacturer, of humble origin, who lived in a brand-new house, and I have been told that he constituted one of the main topics of conversation among the good matrons of Albansborough. They never saw him or his house or his family without referring to the fact that his father used to sell thread and needles over the counter to their mothers; "but," Mrs. Van Arsdale would add frigidly, "I have no doubt he is an excellent man," condemning him by tone and expression to that limbo of vulgarity which a Hasbrouck could not contemplate with equanimity. To do these dames justice, I must admit that they cared as little for money as they did for brains. I felt my position keenly at times, and those early impressions may have had a tendency to make me misanthropic and morbid. My social status, however, changed completely. My friendship with John Van Arsdale opened the most reluctant doors, and I even drew my sisters after me into a position at least of tolerance. When John and I were both nineteen he entered Harvard, and I went abroad with my family. I little thought then that I should stay away for twelve years. I had a tutor in

with the aid of the geologist, can take up the snarled skein with any hope of unraveling the great mystery of man's origin?

What light is thrown back over one brief period of the past by this study of the Serpent Mound and its surroundings, this singular structure in the midst of many other strange earthworks in the Ohio Valley! If history can now lend its aid and bring out some points with clearness, much will be gained. But it must be critical and trustworthy history, and not the simple patchwork of vague generalities.

Here, on this commanding point of land, in many ways adapted to what we know of the ancient faiths of man, is an imposing structure in the form of a huge serpent guarding an oval inclosure within which is a mound of burnt stones; all essential points in the fulfilment of special religious rites connected with the older faiths, which, so far as we know, had their greatest development in Asia, which is the land, more than any other, that we have reason to consider as the original home of the brachycephali, one of the early peoples of America. Exploration has shown us that this serpent was made many centuries ago, and it is evident that a structure of such magnitude, so carefully planned and executed, was intended for some great purpose deeply affecting the people who made it. Again let me ask, what other than a religious motive could have

been sufficient? Assuming this to be the case, we naturally give it the meaning of a religious shrine to which the people came at specified times to worship their gods. It is evident that there was never a very large community living on the plateau near the shrine, and the probability is that it was more a place of habitation in after than in early times. Here, near this sacred shrine, ceremonies of great import have taken place; individuals of importance have been buried in connection with ceremonies of fire, and in two instances, at least, accompanied by the burning of human bodies—possibly human sacrifice, that constant accessory of many ancient faiths. In later times the shrine was still a place of resort, possibly as one held sacred in myths and legends; and finally a few of the scattered bands of the last century made their habitation on the spot, probably without any legendary knowledge or thought of the earlier worshipers at the shrine, overgrown and half hidden by a forest which seventy years ago was of the same character as that on all the hills about.

Now another race has come, and the old shrine, cleared of rubbish, is again held sacred; not for ancient and awful rites, but for the study of future generations, when a wider knowledge of the past in other countries shall lead to a better knowledge of that of our own.

F. W. Putnam.



ORNAMENT CUT FROM CRYSTAL OF GALENA FOUND IN GRAVE.
(NOW IN THE PEABODY MUSEUM.)

THE LATEST SIBERIAN TRAGEDY.

THE "New York Tribune" of Sunday, January 19, contains the following letter from "An Occasional Correspondent" in St. Petersburg, in regard to the recent massacre of Russian political exiles in the East Siberian town of Yakutsk:

ST. PETERSBURG, January 1.

The account contained in the London "Times" of a massacre of political exiles which is alleged to have taken place last autumn at Yakutsk, in Eastern Siberia, has created a considerable sensation here. Under ordinary circumstances the Imperial Government disdains to take any notice of the British "Thunderer," being aware of the position which the slayer of the Chief of Police, General Mezentseff, and nihilist leader, Katschefskey, better known by his pen-name of "Stepniak," has for several years past held on the editorial staff of the "Times." In the present case, however, the latter's story of

the alleged Yakutsk massacre has received such wide publicity, and has excited such a hurricane of indignation throughout the continental press, that the Tsar's government has considered it advisable to abandon its customary policy of contemptuous silence, and to vouchsafe an official explanation of the incident. It denies the massacre, but admits that two sanguinary affrays took place at Yakutsk under the following circumstances:

"About a year ago the secret police department here received information to the effect that most of the nihilistic pamphlets, proclamations, and other revolutionary publications were not only written but also printed in Siberia. At first sight this appeared almost incredible, in view of the close supervision to which both prisoners and exiles are subjected in the Tsar's great penal colony. However, it was deemed prudent to make inquiries into the matter, and accordingly Captain Russanow, one of the cleverest members of the Third Section of the Impe-

rial Chancellerie, was despatched to Siberia for the purpose. After much careful and patient investigation, he succeeded in discovering the existence of a most elaborately equipped secret printing establishment at Yakutsk. The latter is about the last place on earth where one would have imagined the nihilists have established their presses, for only the most dangerous and desperate prisoners and exiles are interned at Yakutsk. Their names are not even known to the local authorities, since from the moment that they leave Tomsk they are deprived for the remainder of their days of their patronymics, and are designated by numerals only. By reason of their dangerous character they are supposed to be under specially strict surveillance.

"Captain Russanow, however, found that by means of heavy bribes they had succeeded in corrupting the Baikal Cossacks appointed to guard them, and that the latter actually helped them to forward their missives to Russia. Having made his preparations, he caused the building in which the nihilist presses were located to be surrounded one night by a detachment of police and soldiers, and after a sanguinary affray, during which several of the police as well as the conspirators were severely wounded by revolver-bullets and saber-cuts, the occupants of the premises were seized and thrown into prison. A few weeks later they were brought up for trial, and, with a moderation unusual under the circumstances, the judges contented themselves with sentencing them to deportation to various still more distant and severe penal settlements. The object of the court was to disperse the band and to scatter them to great distances from one another, so as to put at an end all communication between them. The official statement adds that when leaving the court-room, after the delivery of their sentence, they suddenly attacked their escort, and several of them having revolvers concealed about their persons began to use them against the police officers who were present. Troops hurried to the rescue of the latter, and before the revolt of the prisoners could be quelled it was necessary to shoot down and to bayonet several of their number. Three of the survivors were subsequently hanged, and the others were condemned to penal servitude in the mines instead of to mere deportation."

The explanation thus vouchsafed by the Government obtains universal credence here.

It is gratifying to see even such evidence as this that the Tsar's ministers are not wholly indifferent to the opinion of the civilized world, and that they can be forced into an explanation—even although it be a shamelessly false explanation—of some of their extraordinary acts. Looking at the question, however, from the point of view of expediency, it would have been better, I think, for the Russian Government to have ignored altogether the charges of cruelty and barbarity made against it by the London "Times" than to have met them with a series of statements that are not only false, but absurdly and grotesquely false.

The massacre of the political exiles in Yakutsk occurred last March—twelve months ago. Even in a country where cruelty and

violence are common, such an event as the Yakutsk affair—the shooting of fifteen or twenty almost defenseless political prisoners, the bayoneting to death of an unarmed woman, the hanging of three of the survivors, and the condemnation of all the others to penal servitude—is an event that would attract the attention of the most careless and indifferent press. It is an event of capital importance, no matter what view be taken of the circumstances. The most careful reader of Russian periodical literature, however, would have searched the pages of Russian newspapers and magazines in vain for even the briefest reference or allusion to this wholesale slaughter of educated men and women in Eastern Siberia. For ten months the whole Russian press has been profoundly silent in regard to it; not because the Russian editors were ignorant of it, not because they regarded the shooting of defenseless men and the bayoneting of innocent women with indifference, but because their mouths were stopped by the gag of the press censor. I myself take and read constantly four or five Russian periodicals, including the daily "Russian Gazette" of Moscow, the "Viestnik Europa," and the "Oriental Review" of Irkutsk, which is published in the capital of Eastern Siberia, only a short distance, as Siberian distances go, from the scene of the Yakutsk tragedy. Not one word has appeared in any of the above-named periodicals in regard to this most aggravated case of cruel and unprovoked murder. The Government apparently dared not submit to its people even its own version of the facts. If it had a good case or a valid defense, why did it not say simply in the beginning that the political exiles in Yakutsk were arrested and tried upon the charge of maintaining a secret revolutionary printing establishment; that, while leaving the court-room, they made an armed assault upon their guards; and that it became necessary to put down the revolt, even at the cost of serious bloodshed and loss of life? The only reason why it did not take this course was that it dared not provoke inquiry and comment. It hoped to keep the whole Russian people in ignorance not only of the circumstances of the massacre, but even of the bare fact that a massacre had occurred.

My first information in regard to the Yakutsk tragedy came to me in a private letter from Siberia last summer. Since that time I have received *eight* separate and independent accounts in manuscript of the whole series of events, with copies of the official documents relating to the case; plans of the house and courtyard where the massacre occurred; the names of all the officials and exiles concerned; the full text of the sentence of the court martial

that tried the survivors; the last letters of the three men who were hanged; and all the minute details that are essential to a complete understanding of the situation and the circumstances. These accounts, if translated and published, would fill two whole numbers of THE CENTURY MAGAZINE, and they have come to me from eight different individuals—not all of them exiles—and from half a dozen different parts of the Russian Empire. With some of the writers I am personally acquainted, and I know them to be men of the highest integrity and honor—men who are absolutely incapable of willful misrepresentation, even for the attainment of the best of ends. Besides this, they are separated one from another by thousands of miles of Siberian steppe and forest; they could not possibly fix up a collusive story to deceive me, even if they wished to do so; and not one of them knows that any of the others have written to me. It is hardly necessary to say that evidence obtained in this way, from eight independent sources, and duly authenticated by names, dates, diagrams, and copies of official documents, is worthy of full credence. It is evidence that would carry conviction to the minds of any unprejudiced jury; and I am confident that, when published in full, it will convince the American people not only of the cruelty, but of the shameless mendacity of a government that is capable of such acts and such explanations.

The officials quoted by the "Tribune's" correspondent attempt to discredit the account of the massacre printed in the London "Times," first by attributing it to the well-known Russian author Stepniak, and then by blackening the latter's personal character. This is a characteristic Russian method of dealing with damaging facts. To attribute arbitrarily an unpleasant disclosure to an enemy, and then to call that enemy an assassin, is the Russian bureaucrat's highest idea of strategy. I do not think it necessary to defend Stepniak, since he is quite able to defend himself. I do not even know whether he is the London "Times's" correspondent; but I do know that the account of the Yakutsk massacre that the "Times" has published is, in every essential detail, absolutely true; and that, although expressed in different words, it is in complete harmony with the eight independent manuscript accounts that I have received from Russia and Siberia. The narratives sent to me are longer and contain more details, but they confirm every material circumstance set forth in the "Times" story.

The Russian officials in St. Petersburg, as quoted by the "New York Tribune's" correspondent, say that the Siberian tragedy was indirectly the result of the discovery in Ya-

kutsk, by Captain Rusinof, of a complete "nihilistic" printing establishment. This is false in every particular. General—not Captain—Rusinof went to Siberia, ostensibly to investigate the life and circumstances of the political exiles, nearly two years ago; but he did not visit Yakutsk, and he long since returned, I believe, to St. Petersburg. His most noteworthy exploits were, first, the suppression of the Tomsk liberal newspaper, the "Siberian Gazette," for giving employment to political offenders and for publishing an obituary notice of one of them; and, secondly, the erasure of all inscriptions from the tombstones of dead political exiles in the Tomsk burying-ground. Among the inscriptions thus erased under his personal supervision were: "A—B—, died in solitary confinement in the Tomsk prison, — —th, 188—," and "B—C—, died in Tomsk, — —th, 188—, in the —th year of his age." To the latter record were appended the words of Christ, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." These words were expunged.

I presume that an officer who is capable of pursuing political offenders into their graves and erasing the words of Christ from their tombstones is capable also of discovering a "nihilistic" printing office in a city that he never visited; but, if so, why did he not seize and break up that printing office while he was in Siberia? It is now almost two years since I read in my Siberian newspapers notices of his movements in the places that he visited.

To a person who knows the town of Yakutsk as I know it, the story of the discovery there of a secret "nihilistic" printing establishment is incredible on its face. Printing presses do not grow in Russia on every bush. They are regarded by the Government as more dangerous than dynamite, and they are surreptitiously procured, even in the great cities of St. Petersburg and Moscow, with the utmost difficulty and at a terrible risk. How could a handful of political exiles, living under the strictest police supervision and almost destitute of money, obtain a printing press in the far-away town of Yakutsk? There is no newspaper in the place, and, so far as I know, there is not a printing press within a thousand miles of it. But, waiving that consideration, what effective use could the political exiles hope to make of a printing press *there*, even if they miraculously could obtain possession of one? Yakutsk is only an overgrown log village of six thousand inhabitants; every one of its citizens is known both to the post-office authorities and to the police; and the correspondence of the political exiles is under the strictest "control." How could they forward

"nihilistic" literature in any considerable quantity to European Russia, four thousand miles distant, even if they had the means of printing it?

The St. Petersburg officials, as quoted by the "Tribune" correspondent, say, furthermore, that "only the most dangerous and desperate prisoners and exiles are interned at Yakutsk. Their names are not even known to the local authorities, since from the moment that they leave Tomsk they are deprived for the remainder of their days of their patronymics, and are designated by numerals only." Both of these statements are false, and the latter is absurd. Fully half of the political exiles in Yakutsk were sent to Siberia by administrative process without trial. There was not proof enough against them to secure their conviction even in a Russian court, and they were banished by virtue of a simple order from the Minister of the Interior. If they were "dangerous and desperate," why did not the Government prove their criminal character in a court of justice?

The assertion that political exiles or convicts are deprived of their names when they pass Tomsk, and are known thereafter by numbers, is so far from the truth as even to throw doubt upon the origin of the "Tribune" correspondent's story. Both common criminals and political offenders are known by their names in all parts of Siberia—even at the mines. The names are sometimes assumed, but the use of numbers to designate convicts in Siberia is practically unknown. Only one instance of the kind ever came to my knowledge, and in that case the convict succeeded in concealing his name and personal identity, and was sent to the mines as "Number Two" simply because the Government did not know who he was.

The St. Petersburg officials, as quoted by the "Tribune's" correspondent, say, furthermore, in explanation of the Yakutsk massacre, that when the "dangerous and desperate" political exiles were leaving the court-room, after they had been tried upon the charge of maintaining a secret "nihilistic" printing office, they suddenly attacked their guards with loaded revolvers, and it became necessary to shoot and bayonet them in order to quell the revolt.

The exiles seem to have obtained their loaded revolvers in the same miraculous way that they obtained their printing press. Every one who is at all acquainted with Russian prisons and courts must be aware that a criminal is always searched before being committed to a cell, and that he is still more carefully and thoroughly searched before being conducted into a court-room. It is utterly impossible and incredible that "dangerous and desperate"

political offenders should have been allowed to take loaded revolvers into their cells when they were arrested and imprisoned, and still more incredible that they should have been permitted to carry such deadly weapons in their pockets to the very court-room where they were to be tried. Russian police officers may be stupid, but they are not stupid enough to bring "dangerous and desperate" prisoners before a court with their pockets full of loaded revolvers.

The whole story bears every mark of a clumsy invention, intended to break the force of the real facts and to deceive readers who are not acquainted with the conditions of exile life. The affray in Yakutsk was not the result of the discovery of a secret "nihilistic" printing office, nor of an attack made by "desperate and dangerous" men upon their guards. It was the direct result of official stupidity and brutality, and the indirect result of a cruel and unnecessary order issued by the acting governor of the province of Yakutsk, General Ostashkin (Os-tash/kin). That officer proposed to send twenty or thirty *administrative* exiles into the arctic regions, without proper equipment, and in parties so large that they would almost inevitably starve to death on the road, owing to the impossibility of procuring food. I know that region thoroughly. I traversed a part of it on dog-sledges in the winter of 1867-68, and I remember that, for a whole week, my thermometer indicated temperatures ranging from forty to fifty degrees below zero, Fahrenheit. I nearly lost one of my men who came into camp at night insensible from cold; and well fed and perfectly equipped as I was, I suffered intensely from incessant hardship and exposure. Into this polar wilderness, which I traversed with the utmost difficulty on dog-sledges in 1867, Governor Ostashkin proposed to send twenty or thirty political exiles—two or three of them young girls—without an adequate supply of food, without proper equipment, and in parties so large that, in all probability, the half-wild Yakut drivers at the widely separated stations could neither feed them nor furnish them with transportation. When the exiles sent respectful petitions to Governor Ostashkin, asking merely that they be forwarded to their destinations, as they had previously been forwarded, in parties of two, a week apart, and with proper food and equipment, the governor sent a company of Cossacks, with loaded rifles, to the house where the petitioners had assembled to await his answer, and directed the officers in command to take them to the police station. The Cossacks attempted to drive the bewildered exiles out of the house by pricking them with their bayonets and striking them with the butt-ends of their guns. Resistance

was offered by a few, who did not understand the meaning of this unexpected reply to their petition, and then followed the butchery that the London "Times" correspondent has described. Six of the politicals were killed outright, including one young woman bayoneted to death, nine were severely wounded, and all of the others were brutally beaten and maltreated.

The London "Times," in a leading editorial upon this terrible tragedy, asks the pertinent questions, "Is it possible that these things can be done with the knowledge of the Tsar, who passes for a humane man? Is he so blinded by absolutist theories as to harden his heart against all these tales of suffering, of stupid repression, and of the cruelty which infuriates the class against which it is directed? If not, he has a magnificent opportunity of, once for all, putting a stop to scenes and systems which disgrace his government and his religion."

Such outrages do not repress, they merely exasperate; and thus increase the evil that they are intended to remedy.

The survivors of the Yakutsk massacre were tried by court martial, without benefit of counsel, upon the charge of armed resistance to the authorities, and all were found guilty. Three of them were hanged; fourteen, including four women, were condemned to penal servitude for life; five, including two women, were

sent to the mines for fifteen years; four boys and girls less than twenty-one years of age were condemned to penal servitude for ten years, and two others were sent as forced colonists to the arctic villages of Verkhoyansk and Sredni Kolynsk, in "the remotest part of the province of Yakutsk." And this sentence, the St. Petersburg officials say, is an evidence of the "unusual moderation" of the judges who composed the court martial! A further proof of this "unusual moderation" is furnished by the fact that the political exile Kohan-Bernstein, after receiving four severe bullet-wounds at the time of the massacre, and after lying nearly five months in a prison hospital, was carried to the scaffold on a cot bed and hanged by putting the noose around his neck and dragging the bed out from under him. If this is Russian "moderation," one might well pray to be delivered from Russian severity.

One of the executed men, two hours before the rope was put about his neck, scribbled a hasty farewell note to his comrades, in which he said, "We are not afraid to die, but try—you—to make our deaths count for something—write all this to Kennan."

The appeal to me shall not be in vain. If I live, the whole English-speaking world, at least, shall know all the details of this most atrocious crime.

George Kennan.



DAFFODILS.

FATHERED by March, the daffodils are here.
 First, all the air grew keen with yesterday,
 And once a thrush from out some hollow gray
 On a field's edge, where whitening stalks made cheer,
 Fluted the last unto the budding year;
 Now, that the wind lets loose from orchard spray
 Plum bloom and peach bloom down the dripping way,
 Their punctual gold through the wet blades they rear.
 Oh, fleet and sweet! A light to all that pass
 Below, in the cramped yard, close to the street,
 Long-stemmed one flames behind the palings bare,
 The whole of April in a tuft of grass.
 Scarce here, soon will it be—oh, sweet and fleet!—
 Gone like a snatch of song upon the stair.

Lizette Woodworth Reese.