

ing them. Though the secretary is the first officer in a company, he is not always the best paid. In some instances a manager draws a larger salary. We know a company paying its secretary £500 and its general manager £700 per annum. Another pays its secretary £800 and the general manager £600. The managers follow the secretaries in rank, and are subdivided into two branches, traffic managers and goods managers. The former take precedence of the latter, and throughout Great Britain and Ireland draw salaries varying from £500 to £1,200 per annum; the goods managers being in the receipt of salaries

ranging from £300 to £800, and sometimes more. Accountants draw from £300 to £900; district managers, from £300 upwards. Chiefs of audits are not so well paid for their work as they might be. Their salaries commence at £250 and rarely exceed £500. As to the more immediate results, we believe a youth of fifteen or sixteen will attain £120 or £130 per annum by the time he has reached twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age, and provided he has attended to his business carefully during the ten or eleven years he may have spent in a company's service.



### “SENT TO SIBERIA.”



**F**OR a century and a half no tidings which come from the North have been more familiar to the world than this. Since the days of Peter the Great it has been the doom of thousands—gentle and simple—high and low—criminals, the vilest—patriots, the loftiest—dreamers most imprudent. Every year it has been calculated that, on an average, over 10,000 Russian subjects cross the Oural Mountains on their way to this Asiatic land of bondage. In 1874, nearly 15,000 wended their way thither; and this year the number cannot be less, and may be more. The words convey to the mind of Southern Europe all that is most repulsive in penal banishment. Instinctively the imagination of the newspaper reader, whose eye catches the words in a Reuter's telegram, recalls the “Exiles of Siberia.” He pictures to himself long, dreary troops of “unfortunates” trudging through the snows, or perishing of hunger and cold and misery long before they reach the mines of the Oural or the Jasper quarries of Yekaterinburg. He hears the clank

of the chains and the moans of the exiles, and the crack of the Bashkir Cossack's whip, as he drives along the victims of the “Third Section of the Imperial Chancellery” to lead a cheerless existence and die a felon's death amid the desolation of Siberia.

Even in Russia there is a dread of the name which is not altogether inspired by its penal terrors, with which the refractory subjects of the Czar are only too familiar. In reality, our ideas of Siberia are like the majority of popular impressions transmitted by tradition, altogether beside the truth. With the winter's snows we should contrast the flower-covered plains of summer, the luxuriant corn-fields and purple vineyards of autumn. Mines there are, and very rich mines too, but there are also noble cities, splendid mansions, and society as polished as any in Europe.

Siberia may be described as one immense plain, bounded on the south by mountains, but gradually getting lower and lower as it approaches the north, until, along the shores of the Frozen Ocean, it is one dreary flat, little raised above the level of the sea. The region to the west of the Yenisei presents one monotonous level, unbroken by hills of any sort, covered in its north-western part by forests, though for the greater extent this province is steppe or upland plain. Much of this consists of dry sand, salt-

marshes, and bogs; but the Barabinskara Steppe, between the rivers Irtysh and Obi, has large birch-groves and is well suited for agriculture, while the soil of the Abakan Steppes, which lie along the river Abakan, a tributary of the Yenisei, is so rich that it requires no manure. But even where the soil is unsuited for crops, its fine pastures afford abundance of food to the countless herds of reindeer and cattle possessed by the natives. Eastern Siberia is more diversified, for in this part of the country the plains are intersected by offshoots of the Altai, Sagan, and Stanovoy ranges of mountains. Much of it is suited for agriculture, and the south is covered for the greater portion of its extent with magnificent forests. The northern portion, extending to the Arctic Ocean, is a dreary moss-covered "tundra," or flat, on which, however, can be pastured at certain seasons of the year herds of reindeer, though the swarms of mosquitoes which during the warm weather infest it render life almost intolerable to men; and the *ostrus*, which attacks the deer, combined with the recent disease which has broken out amongst them, is rapidly reducing the Samoyedes, Ostiaks, and other tribes from affluence to poverty.

The country, from the time it was first made known to Ivan the Terrible by Vasseli Yermak, an absconded Cossack criminal, has always had a smack of the hulks about it; and, indeed, it was selected as a penal settlement soon after the Russians had thoroughly succeeded in wresting it from the Tartar princes, mainly in order that its richness might be developed; for a country so far from their home could have but little voluntary attractions for the unenterprising serf, even supposing his lord cared to send him so far afield.\* With the exception of the mines, its trades and manufactures are few and unimportant. Spirits and leather are, however, produced extensively; soap-boiling, tallow-melting, and the making of stearine candles find employment for a good deal of capital; while cotton and wool are woven into coarse fabrics in some of the cities, which, like Irkutsk, Tobolsk, Tjumen, Omsk, and Tomsk, have from 17,000 to 27,000 inhabitants.

The fisheries on the great rivers and lakes also afford occupation for many of the native Siberians, and at the fairs which are periodically held business is done with the most distant parts of Europe and Asia. Kiakhta is the meeting-place of the Chinese and Siberian traders, and here is a school for teaching the young merchants the Chinese language. Large sums are often made by mere peasants in the gold-mines, and indeed the greatest Russian fortunes have been accumulated by this means. Silver, lead, platinum, copper (especially that form called malachite), iron, coal, tin, coinnibar, zinc, bismuth, arsenic, sulphur, alum, sal-ammoniac, nitre, natron, and naphtha are also found in these rich regions. The topaz, hyacinth, Siberian emerald, beryl, onyx, red and green jasper, chrysolite, red garnets, lapis lazuli, bakalite,

and opals exist in greater or less abundance in different parts of this region. Most of these gems are polished and cut in the country. The Russian peasant has a wonderful faculty for imitating any one. He has only, it is said, to be taken into a factory, and told to go to work—to be a blacksmith, a wood-carver, a copyist of paintings, engineer, or lapidary—and he will try his hand at the occupation selected for him. He will watch the next workman to him using his saw, chisel, or file; he will cautiously imitate him, doing little by little, nothing rashly. Next day he will show more skill, until in a few weeks he becomes a first-class workman. Hence it is that in the Granilöi Fabric the visitor is astonished to find men in no way above the rank of peasant, and who indeed may be convicts under police surveillance, executing the most beautiful carvings on jasper and porphyry vases, or engraving beryl, amethysts, topaz, and emeralds, with a skill which could not be exceeded, if equalled, in Amsterdam, Paris, or London.

The traveller's astonishment is still further increased when he learns that these fine-art workmen are not paid more than 3s. 8d. per month, with rations of a few pounds of black bread. Even the master workmen are not paid more than £11 per annum. Yet they are perfectly content, and labour on to make fortunes for the mine-owners, who inhabit magnificent mansions, living in great state. No Government officer is allowed to own mines; but it is very generally believed that only a mere moiety of the gems discovered and cut find their way to the imperial exchequer or into the hands of the owners. Everybody dabbles in the business. The visitors—more frequent than formerly, but still rare—are, early after their arrival, tempted with bargains in precious stones, cut and polished. Men, women, and children "dodge" the new arrival at every step with these staples, either on account of the merchants who own the mines, or of lapidaries who purchase the stones at a very low price. These stones are set in gold and silver obtained from the mines in the vicinity, though generally with less taste than is displayed in the cutting of the gems.

But though there are many free settlers in Siberia,† both in town and country, as well as the native Siberian tribes, the "exiles" form the most marked portion of the population; and if we take into account them and their descendants—as well as convicts whose sentences have expired, and who have remained in the country—they form the most numerous portion of the population. No traveller can have journeyed along the post-route leading from Nijnei Novgorod over the Ourals, across Siberia by way of Tjumen, Tobolsk, Tomsk, or Yeniseisk, without meeting long strings of exiles, some of whom have been on the road six, eight, or ten months, and sometimes—as in the case of those destined for the settlements on the Amoor River and Kamschatka—even two years. The worst are chained, but except in the vicinity of the towns through which they may pass, great leniency is usually shown to the "unfortunates," as with kindly tolerance the exiles are

\* Mr. Mackenzie Wallace states that a proprietor was formerly empowered by law to despatch to Siberia any unruly serfs on his estate, and could transport them without trial (*vide* "Russia," p. 246, *note*).

† The population was stated in 1873 at 3,440,362.

styled by the country people. The women and children—especially when they are the families of the convicts, permitted to accompany them—are usually conveyed in wagons, or, farther north, in reindeer or dog-sledges; while political prisoners of rank, once they are clear of the large cities, may be seen consorting with the officers of the guard, and even sharing their meals in the block-houses along the route. Sometimes in passing through a fanatical village the actual sharers in a conspiracy will be spat upon, and even stoned, by the loyally ignorant peasants; but more frequently the simple-minded people will bring them presents of food and other necessaries, and ask Heaven to forgive and shelter them. At each station on the road there are barracks for the accommodation of the prisoners. These barracks are usually outside the villages, and are surrounded by high stockades of pointed trunks of trees over which it is impossible to climb, though the precaution is always taken of having the exiles well guarded by mounted Cossacks. The daily march is not toilsome, and varies according to the nature of the road or the accommodation for man and beast: it is usually about fourteen or fifteen miles. Nevertheless, on the long journeys many die by the way—indeed, I have heard it affirmed by Russians well acquainted with the system that not over four-fifths of those sent to the far North or to Eastern Siberia ever reach their destination.

As soon as they arrive in Siberia the convicts are divided into three classes. First come those condemned for the foulest crimes known to the Russian law, such as would in England entail on the criminal penal servitude for life or for a long term of years. These culprits are doomed to work in the mines, and usually have a hard lot. Such exiles are called in Siberia *Katorshuiki*, a term no doubt derived from *κατ'ερον*, the name given to a galley by the Byzantine historians, as well as by the Greeks on the Black Sea at the present day. Next come the *Loslannyje na roboto*, or exiles condemned for shorter periods, and for minor offences. Vagrants at large, rogues worthy of a longer term of punishment than imprisonment, prisoners sentenced by the communal courts, and, in former days, serfs condemned, as refractory labourers, by the Government, on application by the proprietors of estates on which they lived, as well as minor political offenders, who are well out of harm's way, comprise the bulk of these "unfortunates." The place they are sent to is proportioned to their turpitude—the worst offenders being despatched farthest from the boundaries of Russia in Europe—for instance, to the shores of the Arctic Sea,\* and the Eastern provinces, while the lighter culprits are per-

mitted to settle down in Western Siberia, immediately to the west of the Oural. This class of convicts are usually condemned only for short terms, and are designed for colonists on the expiration of their term of forced labour. Even before that date they are often employed in the Government service, more like ordinary labourers than as legal slaves. The third and highest class of exiles are the *Loslannyje na poseselenye*, who are condemned for mild crimes. In fact, they are considered to have expiated their offences as soon as they arrive in the country, and are at once established as proper colonists, sometimes in villages already existing, at another time in new ones laid out for them.

Siberian society, constituted to a great extent of such elements as these described, is very genial, and frequently refined, but not moral. Many of the convicts are political offenders, some of the highest education and nobility of character; but a vast number who have gained a certain amount of freedom, or, whose sentences being expired, have settled down in the country, are of quite another class. Actual criminals have no place left them for repentance; they are always under the gaol ban. But offenders of the higher class, and especially political exiles, are rarely scowled on. Russian society is the most tolerant in the world, and since political exiles have increased, the front of their offending has ceased to be visible. They are after a year or two received into the best company, and in every way receive the treatment their rank and education would have entitled them to at home. It is only the worst offenders who are not allowed to be accompanied by their wives and families; and as many of them are people of rank, the balls, clubs, and card-parties of Tobolsk or Tomsk are very different from what a similar social gathering chosen from the *détenus* of Port Arthur would have been.

There is, I am convinced, a great future for Siberia. The mighty rivers permeating the country on to the very confines of China will, when the new Arctic route which I described in a former article† is thoroughly opened up, form great highways down which the wool, beef, timber, wheat, wine, and ores of Siberia, as well as the fossil ivory found on its shores, will find their way to Europe. The discipline, which is as a rule firm without harshness, has had a good effect, for in no part of his dominions is the Czar more adored; and it is noted that the most turbulent characters become, after a few years of "Sibir," docile citizens and industrious farmers. By-and-by a railway will penetrate the country, and with a cheaper mode of transit for its goods than sledges or pack-horses, Siberia will be properly appreciated in the world.

\* There is also a penal settlement in the Department of Archangel, in Europe.

† CASSELL'S FAMILY MAGAZINE, March, 1879.

