for, and obtained a return showing the proportionate contributions to the revenue from all sources—from excises, customs, and general taxation—made by England, Scotland, and Ireland respectively. According to their return it appears that England and Wales contribute 72 per cent. of the total taxation, that Scotland contributes 11 per cent., and Ireland 10 per cent. This would entitle England and Wales to 515 representations, Scotland to 72, and Ireland to 66. But here again, as in the case of population, we must have regard to the exceptional position of London, in which, not to mention other considerations, the rating of houses is adventurously high and the rating of lands is exceptionally limited. If this be taken into account, it will be found on a fair estimate that England is entitled to 507 seats in the House of Commons, Scotland to 78, and Ireland to 67. It was probably by giving effect to this consideration that Mr. Gladstone fixed the proportionate number of seats to which Scotland was entitled at 78—the same number as has just been specified.

This conjecture is warranted by other considerations. For example, if we compare the annual value of house property in Scotland with that in England as a whole, the result gives to Scotland only 11.6 per cent.; but if we compare Scotland with England, excluding London, the result gives to Scotland 16.1 per cent. If we compare the returns for Income Tax (for the year 1880–81) with the whole of England, we find that Scotland contributes only 11.6 per cent.; but if we exclude London, Scotland’s proportion is again 16.1 per cent., which would entitle her to 74 seats in the House of Commons.

Perhaps the fairest way to arrive at a definite conclusion is to combine the results produced by the application of these various tests and to strike an average. By this method Scotland is fairly entitled to 78.5 members, so that Mr. Shaw-Lefevre’s estimate of 72 members—70 for boroughs and counties, and 2 for the universities—is the lowest number with which the people of Scotland ought to be satisfied. This claim becomes the stronger and the more irresistible when it is remembered that it rests, not merely on statistical grounds, but also and quite as much on the position of Scotland as an integral factor in the composition of the United Kingdom, possessing a history of its own, and a nationality that is worthy of being respected and preserved, and that cannot be ignored without loss to the imperial copartnership.

W. SCOTT DALGLEISH.

RUSSIAN PRISONS.

It is pretty generally recognised in Europe, that altogether our penal institutions are very far from being what they ought to be, and no better indeed than so many contradictions in action of the modern theory of the treatment of criminals. The principle of the lex talionis—or the right of the community to avenge itself on the criminal—is no longer admissible. We have come to an understanding that society at large is responsible for the vices that grow in it, even as it has its share in the glory of its heroes; and we generally admit, at least in theory, that when we deprive a criminal of his liberty, it is to purify and improve him. But we know how hideously at variance with the ideal the reality is. The murderer is simply handed over to the hangman; and the men who is shut up in a prison is so far from being bettered by the change, that he comes out more resolutely the foe of society than he was when he went in. Subjection, on disgraceful terms, to a humiliating work gives him an antipathy to all kinds of labour. After suffering every sort of humiliation at the instance of those whose lives are lived in immunity from the peculiar conditions which bring man to crime—or to such sorts of it as are punishable by the operations of the law—he learns to hate the section of society to which his humiliation belongs, and proves his hatred by new offences against it. And if the penal institutions of Western Europe have failed thus completely to realise the ambition on which they justify their existence, what shall we say of the penal institutions of Russia? The incredible duration of preliminary detention; the horrible circumstances of prison life; the congregation of hundreds of prisoners into dirty and small chambers; the flagrant immorality of a corps of gaolers who are practically omnipotent, whose whole function is to terrify and oppress, and who rob their charges of the few coppers doled out to them by the State; the want of labour and the total absence of all that contributes to the moral welfare of man; the cynical contempt of human dignity, and the physical degradation of prisoners; these are the elements of prison life in Russia. Not that the principles of Russian penal institutions were worse than those applied to the same institutions in Western Europe. I am rather inclined to hold the contrary. Surely, it is
less degrading for the convict to be employed in useful work in Siberia,
than to spend his life in picking oakum, or in climbing the steps of
a wheel; and—to compare two evils—it is more humane to employ
the assassin as a labourer in a gold mine and, after a few years, make
a free settler of him, than peaceably to turn him over to a hangman.
In Russia, however, principles are always ruined in application.
And if we consider the Russian prisons and penal settlements, not as
they ought to be according to the law, but as they are in reality, we
can do no less than recognise, with all the best Russian explorers of
our prisons, that they are an outrage on humanity.

In England and in the United States several attempts have
recently been made to represent the Russian prisons under the most
smiling aspect. The best known of them are those made by the
Reverend Mr. Lansdell in England, and by Mr. Kennan in the United
States. Mr. Kennan came to the conclusion that his sojourn as an
officer of the Overland Telegraph Company on the shores of the Sea
of Okhotsk—a few thousand miles, more or less, from the penal
quarters of Siberia—entitles him to speak authoritatively about
Siberian prisons and prisoners. Is it surprising that his experience
should be flatly contradicted by those Russians who have seriously
studied the life of prisoners in Siberia? Of Mr. Lansdell there is
something more to say. He has seen Siberian gaols. Outstripping
the post in his career, he has crossed a country which has no railways,
at a speed of 6,300 miles in 75 days; and in the space of fourteen
hours, indeed, he breakfasted, he dined, he travelled over 40 miles,
and he visited the three chief gaols of Siberia—at Tobolsk, at Alex-
androvskiy Zavod, and at Kara. Amply furnished with official re-
commendations, he saw, during this short time, as much as the
officials chose to show; and for a country like Siberia that is surely
a great deal. Had he anything of the critical faculty which is the
first virtue of a traveller, it would have enabled him to appreciate
the relative value of the information he obtained in the course of
his official scamper through the Siberian prisons; and his book—
especially if he had taken note of existing Russian literature on the
subject—might have been a useful one. Unhappily, he neither saw
nor read, and his book—in so far, at least, as it is concerned with gaols
and convicts—can only convey false ideas. This being the case, I
think the present paper may prove of interest. Such information as
it contains is, at least, antecedent, inasmuch as it is derived, not only
from books, but from the personal experience of prison life of myself
and certain of my friends.

One of the greatest results of the Liberal movement of 1857–1862
was the judicial reform. The old law-courts, in which the procedure
was all in writing, were done away with, and trial by jury, which had
disappeared under the despotism of the Tsars of Moscow, was re-
introduced. The new law of judicial procedure, promulgated in 1864,
was considered as decidedly the most liberal and humane in Europe.
About the same time punishment by the knout and the branding-
iron was abolished. It was high time. Public opinion was revolted
by the existence of these shameful implements, and it was so powerful
at that time that governors of provinces refused to confirm the
sentences that enjoined their use; others—as I have known in
Siberia—would give the executioner to understand that, unless he
merely played at doing his abominable office (a well-known and
highly profitable art), ‘his own skin should be torn to pieces.’ But,
like all other reforms of the last reign, the benefits of the new
judicial reform were paralysed by subsequent modifications. The
reform was not made universal, and in thirty-nine provinces out of
seventy-two, the old courts are still maintained. They are in
operation over the whole of Siberia, for instance; and each of them
is a perfect sink of corruption. Again, the old penal code, with a
scale of punishments in flagrant disagreement with the present state
of our prisons, was maintained; while subsequent regulations have
completely altered the sense of the Judiciary Law of 1864. I shall
only set down what is continually repeated in the Russian press, if I
write that the examining magistrates (judges d’instruction) have
never enjoyed the independence bestowed on them by the new law;
that the judges have been made more and more dependent upon the
Minister of Justice, whose nominees they are, and who has the right
of transferring them from one province to another; that the institu-
tion of sworn advocates, uncontrolled by criticism, has degenerated
absolutely; and that the peasant whose case is not likely to become
a cause célèbre does not receive the benefit of counsel, and is com-
pletely in the hands of a creature like the procureur-impérial in
Zola’s novel. Independent jurors are, of course, impossible in a
country where the peasant-juror knows that he may be beaten by
anything in uniform at the very doors of the court. As for the
verdicts of the juries, they are in poor repute indeed; they are not
respected at all if they are in contradiction with the judgment of the
governor of the province, and the acquitted may be seized as they
leave the dock and imprisoned anew on the simple order of the
Administrative. Such, for instance, was the case of the peasant
Buroumoff. He came to St. Petersburg on behalf of his fellow-
villagers to bring a complaint to the Tsar against the authorities,
and he was tried as a ‘rebelle.’ He was acquitted by the court; but
he was rearrested on the very flight of steps outside, and sent in
exile to the peninsula of Kola. Such, too, were the cases of Vera
Zasoullitch, of the raskolnik (nonconformist) Tetenooff, and many
more. The Third Section and the governors of provinces look
on the new courts as mere nuisances, and act accordingly. Finally,
a great many cases are disposed of by the Executive à huis clos—
away from judges and juries alike. The preliminary inquiry in all
cases in which a 'political meaning' is discovered is simply made by gendarmerie officers, sometimes in the presence of a procuror, who accompanies them in their raids—an official in civil dress attached to the corps of gendarmerie, who is a black sheep to his fellows, and whose function is to assist, or appear to assist, at the examination of those arrested by the Third Section. Sentence and punishment (which may be exile for life within the Arctic circle in Siberia) are the wish of the Third Section, or of the Executive. In this category are included, not only the cases of political offenders belonging to secret societies, but also those of religious dissenters; almost all cases of disobedience to authority, both individual and collective; the strikes; the 'offences against His Majesty the Emperor'—under which 2,500 people were recently arrested in the course of six months; in short, all those cases which might compromise the authorities, or tend—to use the official language—to the production of excitement in the public mind. As to political trials, only the early societies were tried under the law of 1864. Afterwards, the government having perceived that the judges are rather well disposed than otherwise towards political offenders, they were tried before packed courts; that is, by judges nominated especially for the purpose. To this rule the case of Vera Zasenilitch was a memorable exception. She was tried by a jury, and acquitted. But—to quote Professor Gradovskiy's words in a journal suppressed since—it is an open secret in St. Petersburg that the case would never have been brought before a jury but for certain 'quarrels' between the Prefect of Police on the one side, and the Third Section and the Ministers of Justice and the Interior on the other—but for certain of those jalousies de métier, without which, in our disordered state of existence, it would often be impossible for us to so much as breathe.'

It need hardly be noted that true reports of political trials in the press were never permitted. Formerly the journals were bound to reproduce the 'cooked' report published by the Official Messenger; but now the Government has perceived that even such reports produce a profound impression on the public mind, which is always favourable to the accused; and now its work is done in complete darkness. By the law of September 1881 the governor-general and the governors of provinces are enabled to request that all those cases be heard in camera which might produce a disturbance of minds (sine) or disturb the public peace.' For preventing the divulgence of the speeches of the accused, or of such facts as might compromise the Government, nobody is admitted to the court, not even members of the Ministry of Justice—only the wife or the husband of the accused (always in custody also), or the father, mother, or one of the children; but no more than one relative for each person accused.' At the last trial of Terrorists, when ten people were condemned to death, the mother of Sukhanoff was the one person who enjoyed this privilege.

Many cases are despatched in such a way that nobody knows when the trials take place. Thus, for instance, we remained in ignorance of the fate of an officer of the army, son of the governor of the garrison of the St. Petersburg fortress, who had been condemned to hard labour for connection with revolutionists, until we learned it incidentally from an agent of prosecution at a trial a long while posterior to his own. The public learns from the Official Messenger that the Tsar has commuted to hard labour for life a sentence of death pronounced on revolutionists; but nothing transpires either of the trial, or of the crimes imputed to the condemned. Nay, even the last consolation of those condemned to death, the consolation of dying publicly, was taken away. Hanging will now be done secretly within the walls of the fortress, in the presence of none from the world without. The reason is, that when Ryssakoff was brought out to the gallows he showed the crowd his mutilated hands, and shouted, louder than the drums, that he had been tortured after trial. His words were heard by a group of 'Liberals,' who, repudiating any sympathy with the Terrorists, yet held it their duty to publish the facts of the case in a clandestine proclamation, and to call attention to this flagrant offence against the laws of humanity. Now nothing will be known of what happens in the casemates of the fortress of Paul and Peter after the trial and before the execution. At least, the Government think so, after having sent to hard labour the son of a gadero and a dozen soldiers accused of letter-carrying between prisoners and their friends in the town. But we know—and I have not the slightest hesitation in asserting the fact—that at least two revolutionists, Adrian Mikhailow and Ryssakoff, were submitted to torture by electricity.

In 1861, our governors of provinces were ordered to institute a general inquiry into the state of the prisons. The Government—of the early years of Alexander II.—was Liberal at that time, and on the whole the inquiry was fairly made. Its results determined what was generally known; namely, that the prisons in Russia and Siberia were in the worst state imaginable. The number of prisoners in each was commonly twice and thrice in excess of the maximum allowed by law. The buildings were so old and dilapidated, and in such a shocking state of filth, as to be for the most part not only uninhabitable, but beyond the scope of any theory of reform that stopped short of reconstruction.

Within affairs were even worse than without. The system was found corrupt to the core, and the officials were even yet more in need of improvement than the gaols. In the Transbaikal province, where, at that time, almost all hard-labour convicts were kept, the committee of inquiry reported (I was secretary to it, and entrusted with the drawing up of its report) that the prison buildings were mostly in ruins, and that the whole of the penal system had followed suit. Throughout the Empire it was recognised that theory and
practice stood equally in need of light and air; that everything must be changed, alike in matter and in spirit; and that we must not only rebuild our prisons, but completely reform our prison system, and reconstitute the prison staff from the first man to the last. The Government, however, elected to do nothing. It built a few new prisons which proved insufficient to accommodate the new prisoners (the population having since increased by more than 10,000,000); convicts were farmed out to proprietors of private gold mines; a new penal colony was settled on Sakhalin, to colonise an island where nobody was willing to settle freely; and that was all. The old order remained unchanged, the old mischiefs unremedied. Year after year the prisons fall further into decay, and year after year the prison staff grows more dishonest and more shameless. Year after year the Ministry of Justice applies for money to spend in repairs, and year after year the Government is content to put it off with the half, or less than the half, of what it asks; and when—as in 1879 to 1881—it calls for over three million roubles, can spare it no more than a paltry twelve hundred thousand. The consequence is that the gaols are becoming permanent centres of infection, and that, according to the report of a recent committee, at least two-thirds of them are urgently in need of being rebuilt from top to bottom. Rightly to accommodate her prisoners, Russia would have to build half as many prisons again as she has. Indeed, in 1879, there were 70,488 cases for trial, and the aggregate maximum capacity of the Russian prisons is only for 54,253 souls. In single gaols, built for the detention of 200 to 250 persons, the number of prisoners is commonly 700 and 800 at a time. In the prisons on the route to Siberia, when convict parties are stopped by floods, the overcrowding is still more monstrous.1

1 The Russian prison system is thus constituted: First of all, we have 624 prisons or lock-ups, for cases awaiting trial, for a maximum of 56,283 inmates, together with four houses of detention for 1,184 inmates. The political prisons at the Third Section and in the fortresses are not included in this category. Of convict prisons—for prisoners waiting transfer to their final stations—there are 30, with accommodation for 7,191; with two for political convicts (at Minks and Vysmeni-Yakovle), with accommodation for 140. Then come the avostotshievey, or convict companies, which are military organisations for the performance of compulsory labour, and which are worse than the hard-labour prisons in Siberia, though they are nominally a lighter punishment. Of these there are 38, with accommodation for 7,186 (3,629 in 1879). In this category must be included also the 12 houses of correction: two large ones with accommodation for 1,120 (969 in 1879), and 11 smaller ones for 456. The hard-labour cases are provided for in 13 central prisons. Of these, there are seven in Russia, with accommodation for 2,745; three in Western Siberia, with accommodation for 1,150; two in Eastern Siberia, with accommodation for 1,650; and one on Sakhalin Island, with accommodation for 600 (1,108 in 1879). Other hard-labour convicts—10,431 in number—are distributed among the Government gold-mines, coal-mines, and factories in Siberia; namely, at the Kama gold-mines, where there are 3,600; at the Tovials, Ust-Kas, and Irkutsk salt-works, and at the Nikolaevsk and Petrovsk iron-works, and at a prison at the former silver-works of Akadui. Finally, hard-labour convicts are farmed out to private owners of gold-washings in Siberia. The severity of the punishment can thus be varied ad infinitum, according to the wish of the authorities and to that degree of revenge which is deemed appropriate.

Vol. XIII.—No. 71.
share it with them. When I awoke next morning, I was still suffering from the scenes of yesterday; but the female prisoners—assassins and thieves—were so kind to me that by-and-by I grew calmer. Next night we were ‘turned out’ from the prison and quartered in the yard for the rest, under a heavy rain. I do not know how I happened to escape the flogging of the guards, as the prisoners did not understand the evolutions and performed them under a storm of blows and curses; those who protested—saying that they ought not to be beaten—were put in frons and sent to the train, in the teeth of the law which says that in the cellular-waggons no prisoner shall be chained.

Arrived at Kovno, we spent the whole day in going from one police station to another. In the evening we were taken to the prison for women, where the lady-in-charge was railing against the head gaoler and swearing that she would give him bloody teeth. The prisoners told me that she often kept her promises of this sort... Here I spent a week among murderers, thieves, and women arrested by mistake. Misfortune united the unfortunate, and everybody tried to make life more tolerable for the rest; all were very kind to me and did their best to console me. On the previous day I had eaten nothing, for the day the prisoners are brought to the prison they receive no food; so I fainted from hunger, and the prisoners gave me of their bread and were as kind as they could be; the female Inspector, however, was on duty; she was shooting out such shameless oaths as few drunken men would use... After a week’s stay in Kovno, I was sent on foot to the next town. After three days’ march we came to Mariampol; my feet were wounded, and my stockings full of blood. The soldiers advised me to ask for a car, but I preferred physical suffering to the continuous cursing and foul language of the churls. All the same, they took me before their commander, and he remarked that I had walked three days and so could walk a fourth. We came next day to Walkowysk, from whence we were to be sent on to Prussia. I and five others were put provisionally in the depth. The women’s department was in ruins, so we were taken to the men’s. I did not know what to do, as there was no place to sit down, except on the dreadfully filthy floor; there was no straw, and the stench on the floor set me vomiting instantly. The water-closet was a large pond; it had to be crossed on a broken ladder which gave way under one of us and plunged him in the filth below. I could now understand the smell; the pond was under the building, the floor of which was impregnated with sewage.

Here I spent two days and two nights, passing the whole time at the window... In the night the doors were opened, and, with dreadful cries, drunken prostitutes were thrown into our room. They also brought us a maniac; he was quite naked. The miserable prisoners were happy on such occasions; they tormented the maniac and reduced him to despair, until at last he fell on the floor in a fit and lay there foaming at the mouth. On the third day, a soldier of the depth, a Jew, took me into his room, a tiny cell, where I stayed with his wife... The prisoners told me that many of them were detained by mistake for seven and eight months awaiting their passports before being sent across the frontier. It is easy to imagine their condition after a seven months’ stay in this sewer without a change of linen. They advised me to give the gaoler money, as he would then send me on to Prussia immediately. But I had been six weeks on the way already, and my letters had not reached my people. At last, the soldier allowed me to go to the post-office with his wife, and I sent a registered letter to St. Petersburg.

\[Madame G.—last influential his folks in the capital, and in a few days the governor-general telegraphed for her to be sent on instantly to Prussia.\] My papers (she says) were discarded immediately, and I was sent to Rydikum and set at liberty.

It must be owned that the picture is horrible. But it is not a whit overcharged. To such as us Russians as have had to do with prisoners, every word rings true and every scene looks normal. Oaths, filth, brutality, bribery, blows, hunger—these are the essentials of every prison and of every depth from Kovno to Kamchatka, and from Arkhangels to Erzerum. Did my space permit, I might prove it with a hundred stories more.

Such are the prisons of Western Russia. They are no better in the East and in the South. A person who was confined at Perm (it is a pity that Mr. Lansell, when arrested in August last under suspicion of Nihilism, in the neighbourhood of Perm, did not make acquaintance with this prison!) wrote to the Poradok:—The gaoler is one Gavriloff;... beating “in the jaws” (v mordu), flogging, confinement in frozen black-holes, and starvation—such are the characteristics of the gaol... For every complaint the prisoners are sent “to the bath” (that is, are flogged), or have a taste of the black-hole... The mortality is dreadful.” At Vladimir, there were so many attempts at escape that it was made the subject of a special inquiry. ‘The prisoners declared that on the allowance they received it was utterly impossible to keep body and soul together. Many complaints were addressed to headquarters, but they all remained unanswered.’ At last the prisoners complained to the Moscow Superior Court; but the gaoler got to hear of the matter, instituted a search, and took possession of the document.” It is easy to imagine that the mortality must be immense in such prisons; but, surely, the reality surpasses all that might be imagined. Thus, the priest of the Kharkoff prison said in 1878 from the pulpit, and in the Zarechnaia Gazeta of 1869 reproduced the fact, that in the course of four months, of the 500 inmates of the prison two hundred died from fever. No Arctic expedition, recent or remote, was so mortal as the detention in a Russian prison. At Kief, the gaol was a sike of typhus fever. In one month the deaths were counted by hundreds, and fresh batches were brought in to fill the room of those removed by death. This was in all the newspapers. Only a year afterwards (June 12, 1882) a circular from the Chief Board of Prisons explained the epidemics as follows:—1. The prison was dreadfully overcrowded, although it was very easy to transfer many of the prisoners to other prisons. 2. The rooms were very damp; the walls were covered with mildew, and the floor was rotten in many places; 3. The cesspools were in such a state that the ground about them was impregnated with sewage; and so on, and so on. The Board added that owing to the same foulness other prisons were also exposed to experience the same epidemics.

The chief prison in St. Petersburg, the so-called ‘Litskiotzky Zankov,’ is cleaner; but this old-fashioned, damp, and dark building should simply be levelled to the ground. The common prisoners have a certain amount of work to do. But the political ones are kept in their cells in absolute idleness; and some friends of mine—the heroes
of the trial of 193 who had two years and more of this prison—
describe it as one of the worst they know. The cells are very small,
very dark, and very damp; and the gaoler Makaroff was a wild beast
pure and simple. The consequences of solitary confinement in this
prison I have described in a former paper. It is worthy of notice
that the common allowance for food is seven kopeks per day, and 10
kopeks for prisoners of privileged classes, the price of black rye bread
being three and four kopeks a pound.

But the pride of our authorities—the show-place for the foreign
visitors—is the new 'House of Detention' at St. Petersburg. It is
a 'model prison,'—the only one of its kind in Russia,—built on the
plan of the Belgian gaols. I know it from personal experience, as I
was detained there for three months, before my transfer to the lock-up
at the Military Hospital. It is the only clean gaol for common
prisoners in Russia. Clean it certainly is. The scrubbing-brush is
never idle there, and the activity of broom and pail is almost demoniac.
It is an exhibition, and the prisoners have to keep it shining. All
morning long do they sweep, and scrub, and polish the asphalt floor;
and dearly have they to pay for its brightness. The atmosphere
is charged with asphaltic particles (I made a paper shade for my gas,
and in a few hours I could draw patterns with my finger in the dust
with which it was coated); and this you have to breathe. The three
upper stories receive all the exhalations of the floors below, and the
ventilation is so bad that in the evenings, when all doors are shut, the
place is literally suffocating. Two or three special committees were
appointed one after the other to find out the means of improving the
ventilation; and the last one, under the presidency of M. Groth,
Secretary of State, reported in June last that to be made habitable,
the whole building (which has cost twice as much as similar prisons
in Belgium and Germany) must be completely rebuilt as no repairs,
however thorough, could make the ventilation tolerable. The cells
are ten feet long and seven feet wide; and at one time the prison rules
obliged us to keep open the traps in our doors to the end that we
might not be asphyxiated where we sat. Afterwards the rule was
cancelled, and the traps were shut, and we were compelled to face as
best we could the effects of a temperature that was sometimes stiflingly
hot and sometimes freezing. But for the greater activity and life of
the place, I should have regretted, all dark and dripping as it was,
my assemle in the fortress of Peter and Paul—a true grave where
the prisoner for two, three, five, ten years hears no human voice and
sees no human being, excepting two or three gaolers, dead and mute
when addressed by the prisoners. I shall never forget the children I
met one day in the corridor of the House of Detention. They also,
like us, were awaiting trial months and years along. Their greyish-
yellow emaciated faces, their frightened and bewildered looks, were
worth whole volumes of essays and reports on the benefits of cellular

confinement in a model prison.' As for the administration of the
House of Detention, sufficient to say that even the Russian papers
talked openly of the way in which the prisoners' allowances were
sequestrated; so last year, a committee of inquiry was appointed,
when it was found that the facts were even darker than had been reported.
But all this is trifling, indeed, in comparison with the treat-
ment of prisoners. Here it was that General Tropp of the Bogus-
luboff to be flogged, had the prisoners who protested in their cells
knocked down and beaten, and afterwards confined several of them—
for five days—in cells by the washing-rooms, among excremental, and
in a temperature of forty-five degrees. In the face of these facts,
what a pitiful irony is in the words of Mr. Lansdell's admiring
remark:—'Those who wish to know what Russia can do ought to
visit this House of Detention.'

The great variety of punishments inflicted under our penal code
may be divided broadly into four categories. The first is that of
hard labour, with the loss of all civil rights. The convict's property
passes to his heirs; he is dead in law, and his wife can marry another;
he may be flogged with rods, or with the pèche (cat-o'-nine-tails) ad
libitum by each drunken gaoler. After having been kept to hard
labour in the Siberian mines, or factories, he is settled for life some-
where in the country. The second category is that of compulsory
colonization, accompanied by a complete or partial loss of civil rights,
and is equivalent to Siberia for life. Under the third category are
dealt with all convicts condemned to compulsory labour in the ars-
stanticiores rotas, without loss of civil rights. The fourth—omitting
much of less importance—is of banishment to Siberia, without trial,
and by order of the Executive, for an undetermined period; that is,
mostly for life.

The subject of Siberian exile is so vast and tragical in itself, and
has given rise to such an amount of error and misrepresentation, that
it would be idle to approach it in this place. On a future occasion
I hope to discuss it at length. In the present paper, however, I shall
confine myself to an account of such convicts as are detained in Russia
itself, in the so-called Provisory Central Prisons.

These are but recently introduced. Formerly, the hard labour
convicts were sent straight off to Siberia: to the mines belonging 'to
the Cabinet of the Emperor'—that are, in other words, the private
property of the Crown. Some of these, however, got worked out;
others were found (or represented) so unremunerative in the hands of
the Crown administration that they were sold to private persons who
made fortunes with them; and Russia in Europe was compelled to
take charge of her hard labour cases herself. A few central prisons
were therefore built in Russia, where convicts are kept for a time (one
third to one fourth of their sentence) before being sent to Siberia or
Sakhalin. Society at large is of course inclined to regard hard labour
convicts as the worst of criminals. But in Russia this is very far from being the case. Murder, robbery, burglary, forgery, will all bring a man to hard labour; but so, too, with an attempt at suicide; so with 'sacrilege and blasphemy,' which usually means no more than dissent; so with 'rebellion'—or rather what is called rebellion in Russia—which is mostly no more than common disobedience to authorities; so with any and every sort of political offence; and so with 'vagrancy,' that mostly means escape from Siberia. Among the murderers, too, you will find not only the professional shedder of blood—a very rare type with us—but men who have taken life under such circumstances as, before a jury, or in the hands of a honest advocate, would have ensured their acquittal. In any case, only 30 per cent. or so of the 2,000 to 2,500 men and women yearly sent down to hard labour are condemned as assassins. The rest—in nearly equal proportions—are either vagrants or men and women charged with one of the minor offences recapitulated above.

The Central Prisons were instituted with the idea of inflicting a punishment of the severest type. The idea was—there can, I am afraid, be no doubt about it—that you could not take too little trouble with convicts, nor get rid of them too soon. To this end these prisons were provided with such gaolers and keepers—mostly military officers—as were renowned for cruelty with men; and these ruffians were gifted with full power over their charges and with full liberty of action, and had orders to be as harsh as possible. The end to which they were appointed has been magnificently attained: the Central Prisons are so many practical hells; the horrors of hard labour in Siberia have faded before them, and all those who have the experience of them are unanimous in declaring that the day a prisoner starts for Siberia is the happiest of his life.

Exploring these prisons as a distinguished visitor, you will, if you are in search of emotions, be egregiously disappointed. You will see no more than a dirty building, crammed with idle inmates lounging and sprawling on the sloping, inclined platforms which run round the walls, and are covered with nothing but a sheet of filth. You may be permitted to visit a number of cells for 'secret' or political cases; and if you question the inmates, you will certainly be told by them that they are 'quite satisfied with everything.' To know the reality one must oneself have been a prisoner. Records of actual experience are few; but they exist, and to one of the most striking I propose to refer.

It was written by an officer who was condemned to hard labour for an assault committed in a moment of excitement, and who was pardoned by the Tsar after a few years' detention. His story was published in a Conservative review (the Russkaya Rzeda, for January 1882) at a time, under Loris-Melikoff's administration, when there was much talk of prison reform and some liberty in the press; and there was not a journal that did not recognise the unimpeachable veracity of this tale. The experience of our friends wholly confirms it.

1883.

RUSSIAN PRISONS.

There is nothing uncommon in the account of the material circumstances of life in this Central Prison. They are in some sort invariable all over Russia. If we know that the gaol was built for 250 inmates, and actually contained 400, we do not need to inquire more about sanitary conditions. In like manner, the food was neither better nor worse than elsewhere. Seven kopeks (1½p) a day is a very poor allowance per prisoner, and the gaoler and economical being family men, of course they save as much as they can. A quarter of a pound of black rye bread for breakfast; a soup made of bull's heart and liver or of seven pounds of meat; twenty pounds of waste oats, twenty pounds of sour cabbage, and plenty of water—many Russian prisoners would consider it as an enviable food. The moral conditions of life are not so satisfying. All day long there is nothing to do—for weeks, and months, and years on end. There are workshops, it is true; but to these only skilled craftsmen (whose achievement is the prison-keeper's perquisite) are admitted. For the others there is neither work, nor hope of work—unless it is in stormy weather, when the governor may set one half of them to shovel the snow into heaps, and the other half to shovel it flat again. The bleak monotony of their lives is only varied by chastisement. In the particular prison of which I am writing, the punishments were varied and ingenious. For smoking, and minor offences of that sort, a prisoner could get a two hours' kneeling on the bare flags, in a spot—the thoroughfare of icy winter winds—selected diligently ad hoc. The next punishment for the same minor offence was the black-holes—the warm one, and the cold one, underground, with a temperature at freezing point. In both, prisoners slept on the stones, and the term of durance depended on the will of the governor.

'Several of us,' says our author, 'were kept there for a fortnight; after which they were literally dragged out into daylight and then dismissed to the land where pain and suffering are not.' Is it any wonder that during the four years over which the writer's experience extends, the average mortality in the prison should have been thirty per cent. per annum? 'It must not be thought,' the writer goes on to say, 'that those on whom penalties of this sort were inflicted were hardened desperadoes; we incurred them if we saved a morsel of bread from dinner for the supper, or if a match was found on a prisoner.'

The 'desperadoes' were treated after another fashion. One, for instance, was kept for nine months in solitary confinement in a dark cell—originally intended for cases of ophthalmia—and came out all but blind and mad. There is worse behind.

In the evening (he continues) the governor went his rounds and usually began his favourite occupation—flagging. A very narrow bench was brought out, and soon the place resounded with shrieks, while the governor, smoking a cigar, looked on and counted the lashes. The birch-cods were of exceptional size, and when not in use were kept immersed in water to make them morepliant. After the
you experience from witnessing day by day the growing madness of your neighbour, when you perceive in each of his messages the dreadful images that beset and overrun his tormented brain. That is the kind of confinement to which political prisoners are submitted when awaiting trial for three or four years. But it is still worse after the condemnation when they are brought to the Kharkoff Central Prison. Not only the cells are darker and damper than elsewhere, and the food is worse than common (the allowance being five farthings a day); but, in addition, the prisoners are carefully maintained in absolute idleness. No books are allowed, and, of course, no writing materials, and no implements for manual labour. No means of easing the tortured mind, nor anything on which to concentrate the morbid activity of the brain; and, in proportion as the body droops and sickens, the spirit becomes wilder and more desperate. Physical suffering is seldom or never insupportable; the annals of war, of martyrdom, of sickness, abound in instances in proof. But moral torment—after years of infliction—is utterly intolerable. This our friends have found to their cost. Shut up in the fortresses and houses of detention first of all, and afterwards in the Central Prisons, they go rapidly to decay, and, either go calmly to the grave, or become lunatics. They do not go mad as, after being outraged by gendarmes, Miss M—— the promising young painter, went mad. She was bereft of reason instantly; her madness was simultaneous with her shame. Upon them insanity steals gradually and slowly: the mind rots in the body 'from hour to hour.'

In July 1878 the life of the prisoners at the Kharkoff prison had become so insupportable, that six of them resolved to starve themselves to death. For a whole week they refused to eat; and when the governor-general ordered them to be fed by injection, such scenes ensued as obliged the prison authorities to abandon the idea. To reduce them back to life, officialism made them certain promises: as, for instance, to allow them walking exercise, and to take the sick out of iron. None of these promises were kept; and for five long years the survivors were left to the mercy of such a gaoler as I have described. A few months ago a first party of our friends detained in Central Prisons were sent to the Kara mines (to make a total of 164 political prisoners, men and women, at these mines); they knew very well the fate that was reserved to them in Siberia, and still the day they left this hell was considered by all them as a happy day of deliverance. After the Central Prison, hard labour in Siberia looks as a paradise.

It may seem that the harshness of solitary confinement in such conditions cannot be surpassed. But there is a harder fate in store for political prisoners in Russia. After the 'Trial of the Sixteen' (November 1880), Europe learned with satisfaction that out of five condemned to death, three had had their sentences commuted by the
We now know what commutation means. Instead of being sent to Siberia, or to a Central Prison, according to law, they were immured in the fortress of Peter and Paul at St. Petersburg, in cells contrived in what has been the ravelin. These are so dark that candles are burnt in them for twenty-four hours out of the twenty-four. The walls are literally dripping with damp, and 'there are pools of water on the floor.' Not only books are disallowed, but everything that might help to occupy the attention. Zoubkovsky made geometrical figures with his bread, to practise geometry; they were immediately taken away, the gaoler saying that hard-labour convicts were not permitted to amuse themselves. To render solitary confinement still more insupportable, a gendarmerie and a soldier are stationed within the cells. The gendarmerie is continually on the watch, and if the prisoner looks at anything or at any point, he goes to see what has attracted his attention. The horrors of solitary confinement are thus aggravated tenfold. The quietest prisoner soon begins to hate the spies set over him, and is moved to frenzy by the mere fact of their presence. It is superfluous to add that the slightest disobedience is punished by blows and black-holes. All who were subjected to this régime fell ill in no time. After less than one year of it, Shiryaeff had taken consumption; Oktalyan—a robust and vigorous working man, whose remarkable speech to the Court was reproduced by the London papers—had gone mad; Tikhonoff, a strong man likewise, was down with scurvy, and could not sit up in his bed. By a mere 'commutation of sentences' the three were brought to death's door in a single year. Of the other five condemned to hard labour, and immured in the same fortress, two—Martynovsky and Tsukerman—went mad, and in that state were constantly black-holed, so that Martynovsky at last attempted suicide.

I cannot enter here into more details and give more facts to illustrate the fate of political and common law convicts in Russia. The foregoing give, however, some idea of it. The whole is summed up in a sentence of that record of prison life on which I have already drawn so largely and to such terrible purpose.

In conclusion (writes the author) I must add that the prison now rejoices in another governor. The old one quarrelled with the treasurer on the subject of peculation from the prisoners' allowance, and in the end they were both dismissed. The new governor is not such a ruffian as his predecessor; I understand, however, that with him the prisoners are starving far more than formerly, and that he is in the habit of giving his fates full play on the countenances of his charges.

This remark sums up the whole 'Reform of Prisons' in Russia. One tyrant may be dismissed, but he will be succeeded by some one

* The authentic record of their imprisonment was published in the last number of the "Wall of the People," and reprinted in the publication "As Usual (As at Home").
not the men our Government is in need of. He was dismissed his place, and the institution he ruled so wisely has become a genuine Russian prison, complete to the rod and the black-hole.

These examples are typical both of what we have to suffer and of what we have to expect. It is a fancy to imagine that anything could be reformed in our prisons. Our prisons are the reflection of the whole of our life under the present régime; and they will remain what they are now until the whole of our system of government and the whole of our life have undergone a thorough change. Then, but only then, 'Russia may show what it can realise;' but this, with regard to crime, would be—I hope—quite different from what is now understood under the name of 'a good prison.'

P. KRATOPKIN.

ON TASTE IN DRESS.

It will readily be agreed that fashion in female dress should be in good taste, but to say dogmatically what constitutes good taste in costume or lay down precise rules to govern it would not be easy. Opinions on such a subject may be but opinions, more or less coloured by individual idiosyncrasies, education, and habit, and it is desirable that a wide margin should be left for the play of fancy in combinations that are almost infinite. Mountains are made up of molecules; the atmosphere in which we move has much to do with the life we live; no one floats independently on the current that carries all along, and it is impossible to suppose that habits of mind will not be influenced by the impressions surroundings make upon us. We become habituated to bad or good language, coarse or refined manners, and acquire more or less the one or the other. Fashion, as long as it deals only with outward effects, if not persistently bad enough to destroy natural taste, is not a matter to be treated with overmuch solemnity. Proportion is to be observed even in our sincerest convictions, and we may smile or sigh lightly over aberrations which have no more importance than can belong to things put on one moment and thrown off the next. But if such things become indications of the presence or absence of what is much to be regretted or much to be valued, they reasonably give rise to reflections deeper and more serious than their essences seems at first to warrant. In complicated machinery all things may be said to depend upon all other things; and what so complex as our social machine? The waywardness of feminine fashions is not a subject for puritanic objection; the changefulness affords occupation for many, and variety is a better thing than monotony. But while these considerations should check dogmatic utterances, it will not do to ignore conclusions based upon acknowledged principles. What we may certainly lament is the apparent want of any principle in the fluctuations of fashion, excess in one direction being invariably followed by excess in the opposite direction. Crinoline is dropped, but everything seems to be dropped with it. The fashionable lady's gown fits so closely to her person that freedom of movement becomes impossible. One thing only appears to be a permanent idea—that a very small waist is a beautiful thing, a thing to be attained at the expense of health and comfort and good sense,