# *OUTCAST RUSSIA.*

## I. The Journey to Siberia.

Siberia—the land of exile—has always appeared in the conceptions of the Europeans as a land of horrors, as a land of the chains and *knoot*, where convicts are flogged to death by cruel officials, or killed by overwork in mines; as a land of unutterable sufferings of the masses and of horrible prosecutions of the foes of the Russian Government. Surely nobody, Russian or foreigner, has crossed the Ural Mountains and stopped on their water-divide, at the border-pillar that bears the inscription 'Europe' on one side, and 'Asia' on the other, without shuddering at the idea that he is entering the land of woes. Many a traveller has certainly said to himself that the inscription of Dante's *Inferno* would be more appropriate to the boundary-pillar of Siberia than these two words which pretend to delineate two continents.

As the traveller descends, however, towards the rich prairies of Western Siberia; as he notices there the relative welfare and the spirit of independence of the Siberian peasant, and compares them with the wretchedness and subjection of the Russian peasant; as he makes acquaintance with the hospitality of the supposed ex-convicts—the 'Siberyaks'—and with the intelligent society of the Siberian towns, and perceives nothing of the exiles, and hears nothing of them in conversations going on about everything but this subject; as he hears the boasting reply of the Eastern Yankee who drily says to the stranger that in Siberia the exiles are far better off than peasants in Russia—he feels inclined to admit that his former conceptions about the great penal colony of the North were rather exaggerated, and that, on the whole, the exiles may be not so unfortunate in Siberia, as they were represented to be by sentimental writers.

Very many visitors to Siberia, and not foreigners alone, have made this mistake. Some occasional circumstance—something like a convoy of exiles met with on the muddy road during an autumn storm, or a Polish insurrection on the shores of Lake Baikal, or, at least, such a rencontre with an exile in the forests of Yakutsk, as

Adolf Erman made and so warmly described in his *Travels*—some occasional striking fact, in short, must fall under the notice of the traveller, to give him the necessary impulse for discovering the truth amidst the official misrepresentation and the non-official indifference: to open his eyes and to display before them the abyss of sufferings that are concealed behind those three words: Exile to Siberia. Then he perceives that besides the official story of Siberia there is another sad story, through which the shrieks of the exiles have been going on as a black thread from the remotest times of the conquest until now. Then he learns that, however dark, the plain popular conception of Siberia is still brighter than the horrible naked truth; and that the horrible tales he has heard long ago, in his childhood, and has supposed since to be tales of a remote past, in reality are tales of what is going on now, in our century which writes so much, and cares so little, about humanitarian principles.

This story already lasts for three centuries. As soon as the Tsars of Moscow learned that their rebel Cossacks had conquered a new country 'beyond the Stone' (the Ural), they sent there batches of exiles, ordering them to settle along the rivers and footpaths that connected together the blockhouses erected, in the space of seventy years, from the sources of the Kama to the Sea of Okhotsk. Where no free settlers would settle, the chained colonisers had to undertake a desperate struggle against the wilderness. As to those individuals whom the rising powers of the Tsars considered most dangerous, we find them with the most advanced parties of Cossacks who were sent 'across the mountains, in search for new lands.' No distance, however immense, no wilderness, however unpracticable, seemed sufficient to the suspicious rule of the *boyars* to be put between such exiles and the capital of the Tsardom. And, as soon as a blockhouse was built, or a convent erected, at the very confines of the Tsar's dominions—beyond the Arctic circle, in the *toundras* of the Obi, or beyond the mountains of Daouria—the exiles were there, building themselves the cells that had to be their graves.

Even now, Siberia is, on account of its steep mountains, its thick forests, wild streams, and rough climate, one of the most difficult countries to explore. It is easy to conceive what it was 300 years ago. Even now it is that part of the Russian Empire where the arbitrariness and brutality of officers are the most unlimited. What was it, then, during the seventeenth century? 'The river is shallow; the rafts are heavy; the chiefs are wicked, and their sticks are big; their whips cut through the skin, and their tortures are cruel; fire and strappado; but the men are hungry, and they die, poor creatures, at once after the torture,'—wrote the *protopope* Avvakum, the fanatic priest of the 'old religion' whom we met with the first parties going to take possession of the Amor.—'How long, my master, will these tortures last?' asks his wife as she falls attenuated on the ice of the

river, after a journey that already has lasted for five years.—'Until our death, my dear; until our death,' replies this precursor of the steel-characters of our own times; and both, man and wife, continue their march towards the place where the *protopope* will be chained to the walls of an icy cellar digged out by his own hands.

Since the beginning of the seventeenth century, the flow of exiles poured into Siberia has never ceased. During the first years of the century, we see the inhabitants of Uglitch exiled to Pelym, together with their bell which rang the alarm when it became known that the young Demetrius has been assassinated by order of the regent Boris Godunoff. Men and bell alike have tongues and ears torn away, and are confined in a hamlet on the borders of the *toundra.* Later on they are followed by the *raskolniks* (nonconformists) who revolt against the aristocratic innovations of Nikon in Church matters. Those who escape the massacres, like that 'of the Three Thousand,' go to people the Siberian wildernesses. They are soon followed by the serfs who make desperate attempts of overthrowing the yoke freshly imposed on them; by the leaders of the Moscow mob revolted against the rule of the *boyars*; by the militia of the *streltsy* who revolt against the all-crushing despotism of Peter I.; by the Little Russians who fight for their autonomy and old institutions; by all those populations who will not submit to the yoke of the rising empire; by the Poles—by three great and several smaller batches of Poles—who are despatched to Siberia by thousands at once, after each attempt at recovering their independence. . . . Later on, all those whom Russia fears to keep in her towns and villages—murderers and simple vagrants, nonconformists and rebels; thieves and paupers who are unable to pay for a passport; serfs who have incurred the displeasure of their proprietors; and still later on, 'free peasants' who have incurred the disgrace of an *ispravnik,* or are unable to pay the ever-increasing taxes—all these are going to die in the marshy lowlands, in the thick forests, in the dark mines. This current flows until our own days, steadily increasing in an alarming proportion. Seven to eight thousand were exiled every year at the beginning of this century; 18,000 to 19,000 are exiled now—not to speak of the years when this figure was doubled, as was the case after the last Polish insurrection—making thus a total of more than 600,000 people who have crossed the Ural Mountains since 1823, when the first records of exile were taken.

Few of those who have endured the horrors of hard labour and exile in Siberia have committed to paper their sad experience. The *protopope* Avvakum did, and his letters still feed the fanaticism of the *raskolniks.* The melancholy stories of the Menshikoff, the Dolgorouky, the Biron, and other exiles of high rank have been transmitted to posterity by their sympathisers. Our young republican poet Ryléeff, before being hung in 1827, told in a beautiful

poem, 'Vainarovsky,' the sufferings of a Little Russian patriot. Several memoirs of the 'Decembrists' (exiled for the insurrection of December 26, 1825), and the poem of Nekrasoff, 'The Russian Women,' are still inspiring the young Russian hearts with love for the prosecuted and hate to the prosecutors. Dostoevsky has told in a remarkable psychological study of prison life his experience at the fortress of Omsk after 1848; and several Poles have described the martyrdom of their friends after the revolutions of 1831 and 1848. . . . But, what are all these pains in comparison with the sufferings endured by half a million of people, from the day when, chained to iron rods, they started from Moscow for a two or three years' walk towards the mines of Transbaïkalia, until the day when, broken down by hard labour and privations, they died at a distance of 5,000 miles from their native villages, in a country whose scenery and customs were as strange to them as its inhabitants—a strong, intelligent, but egotistic race!

What are the sufferings of the few, in comparison with those of the thousands under the cat-o'-nine-tails of the legendary monster Rozguildéeff, whose name is still the horror of the Transbaïkalian villages; with the pains of those who, like the Polish doctor Szokalsky and his companions, died under the *seventh thousand* of rod strokes for an attempt to escape; with the sufferings of those thousands of women who followed their husbands and for whom death was a release from a life of hunger, of sorrow, and of humiliation; with the sufferings of those thousands who yearly undertake to make their escape from Siberia and walk through the virgin forests, living on mushrooms and berries, and inspired with the hope of at least seeing again their native village and their kinsfolk?

Who has told the less striking, but not less dramatic pains of those thousands who spin out an aimless life in the hamlets of the far north, and put an end to their wearisome existence by drowning in the clear waters of the Yenisei? M. Maximoff has tried, in his work on *Hard Labour and Exile*, to raise a corner of the veil that conceals these sufferings; but he has shown only a small corner of the dark picture. The whole remains and probably will remain unknown; its very features are obliterated day by day, leaving but a faint trace in the folk-lore and in the songs of the exiles; and each decade brings its new features, its new forms of misery for the ever-increasing number of exiles.

It is obvious that I shall not venture to draw the whole of this picture in the narrow limits of a review article. I must necessarily limit my task to the description of the exile as it is now—say, during the last ten years. No less than 165,000 human beings have been transported to Siberia during this short space of time; a very high figure of criminality, indeed, for a population numbering 72,000,000, if all exiles were 'criminals.' Less than one-half of them, however,

crossed the Ural in accordance with sentences of the courts. The others were thrown into Siberia, without having seen any judges, by simple order of the Administrative, or in accordance with resolutions taken by their communes—nearly always under the pressure of the omnipotent local authorities. Out of the 151,184 exiles who crossed the Ural during the years 1867 to 1876, no less than 78,676 belonged to this last category. The remaining were condemned by courts: 18,582 to hard labour, and 54,316 to be settled in Siberia, mostly for life, with or without loss of all their civil rights.[1]

Twenty years ago, the exiles traversed on foot all the distance between Moscow and the place to which they were despatched. They had thus to walk something like 4,700 miles in order to reach the hard-labour colonies of Transbaïkalia, and 5,200 miles to reach Yakutsk. Nearly a two years' walk for the former, and two years' and a half for the second. Some amelioration has been introduced since. After having been gathered from all parts of Russia at

[1] Our criminal statistics are so imperfect that a thorough classification of exiles is very difficult. We have but one good work on this subject, by M. Anuchin, published a few years ago by the Russian Geographical Society, and crowned with its great gold medal; it gives the criminal statistics for the years 1827 to 1846. However old, these statistics still give an approximate idea of the present conditions, more recent partial statistics having shown that since that time all figures have doubled, but the relative proportions of different categories of exiles have remained nearly the same. Thus, to quote but one instance, out of the 159,755 exiled during the years 1827 to 1846, no less than 79,909, or 50 per cent., were exiled by simple orders of the Administrative; and thirty years later we find again nearly the same rate—slightly increased—of arbitrary exile (78,676 out of 151,184 in 1867 to 1876). The same is approximately true with regard to other categories. It appears from M. Anuchin's researches that out of the 79,846 condemned by courts, 14,531 (725 per year) were condemned as assassins; 14,248 for heavier crimes, such as incendiarism, robbery, and forgery; 40,666 for stealing, and 1,426 for smuggling, making thus a total of 70,871 cases (about 3,545 per year) which would have been condemned by the Codes—although not always by a jury—of all countries in Europe. The remainder, however (that is, nearly 89,000), were exiled for offences which depended chiefly, if not entirely, upon the political institutions of Russia: their crimes were: rebellion against any serf-proprietors and authorities (16,456 cases); nonconformist-fanaticism (2,138 cases); desertion from a twenty-five years' military service (1,651 cases); and escape from Siberia, mostly from Administrative exile (18,328 cases). Finally, we find among them the enormous figure of 48,466 'vagrants,' of whom the laureate of the Geographical Society says:—'Vagrancy mostly means simply going to a neighbouring province without a passport'—out of 48,466 'vagrants,' 40,000, at least, 'being merely people who have not complied with passport regulations' (that is—their wife and children being brought to starvation, they not having the necessary five or ten roubles for taking a passport, and walking from Kalouga, or Tula, to Odessa, or Astrakhan, in search of labour). And he adds:—'Considering these 80,000 exiled by order of the Administrative, we not only doubt their criminality; we simply doubt the very existence of such crimes as those imputed to them.' The number of such 'criminals' has not diminished since. It has nearly doubled, like other figures. Russia continues to send every year to Siberia, for life, four to five thousand men and women, who in other States would be simply condemned to a fine of a few shillings. To these 'criminals' we must add no less than 1,500 women and 2,000 to 2,500 children who follow every year their husbands, or parents, enduring all the horrors of a march through Siberia and of the exile.

Moscow, or at Nijniy-Novgorod, they are transported now by steamer to Perm, by rail to Ekaterinburg, in carriages to Tumen, and again by steamer to Tomsk. Thus, according to a recent English book on exile to Siberia, they have to walk 'only the distance beyond Tomsk.' In plain figures, this trifling distance means 2,065 miles to Kara, something like a nine months' foot journey. If the prisoner be sent to Yakutsk he has 'only' 2,940 miles to walk, and the Russian Government having discovered that Yakutsk is a place still too near to St. Petersburg to keep these political exiles, and sending them now to Verkhoyansk and Nijne-Kolymsk (in the neighbourhood of Nordenskjöld's wintering-station), a distance of some fifteen hundred miles must be added to the former 'trifling' distance, and we have again the magic figure of 4,500 miles—or two years' walk—reconstituted in full.

However, for the great mass of exiles, the foot journey has been reduced by one-half, and they begin their peregrinations in Siberia in special carriages. M. Maximoff has very vividly described how the convicts at Irkutsk, to whose judgment such a moving machine was submitted, declared at once that it was the most stupid vehicle that could be invented for the torment of both horses and convicts. Such carriages, which have no accommodation for deadening the shocks, move slowly on the rugged, jolting road, ploughed over and over by thousands of heavily loaded cars. In Western Siberia, amidst the marshes on the eastern slope of the Ural, the journey becomes a true torture, as the highway is covered with loose beams of wood, which recall the sensation experienced when a finger is dragged across the keys of a piano, the black keys included. The journey is hard, even for the traveller who is lying on a thick felt mattress in a comfortable *tarantass*, and it is easy to conceive what the convict experiences, who is bound to sit motionless for eight or ten hours on the bench of the famous vehicle, having but a few rags to shelter him from snow and rain.

Happily enough this journey lasts but a few days, as at Tumen the exiles are embarked on special barges, or floating prisons, taken in tow by steamers, and in the space of eight or ten days are brought to Tomsk. I hardly need say that, however excellent the idea of thus reducing by one-half the long journey through Siberia, its partial realisation has been most imperfect. The convict barges are usually so overcrowded, and are usually kept in such a state of filthiness, that they have become real nests of infection. 'Each barge has been built for the transport of 800 convicts and the convoy,' wrote the Tomsk correspondent of the *Moscow Telegraph*, on November 15, 1881; 'the calculation of the size of the barges has not been made, however, according to the necessary cubical space, but according to the interests of the owners of the steamers, MM. Kurbatoff and Ignatoff. These gentlemen occupy for their own purposes two com-

partments for a hundred men each, and thus eight hundred must take the room destined for six hundred. The ventilation is very bad, there being no accommodation at all for that purpose, and the cabinets are of an unimaginable nastiness.' He adds that 'the mortality on these barges is very great, especially among the children,' and his information is fully confirmed by official figures published last year in all newspapers. It appears from these figures that eight to ten per cent. of the convict passengers died during their ten days' journey on board these barges; that is, something like sixty to eighty out of eight hundred.

'Here you see,' wrote friends of ours who have made this passage, 'the reign of death. Diphtheria and typhus pitilessly cut down the lives of adults and children, especially of these last. Corpses of children are thrown out nearly at each station. The hospital, placed under the supervision of an ignorant soldier, is always overcrowded.'

At Tomsk the convicts stop for a few days. One part of them—especially the common-law exiles, transported by order of the Administrative—are sent to some district of the province of Tomsk which extends from the spurs of the Altay ridge on the south to the Arctic Ocean on the north. The others are despatched farther towards the east. It is easy to conceive what a hell the Tomsk prison becomes when the convicts arriving every week cannot be sent on to Irkutsk with the same speed, on account of inundations, or obstacles on the rivers. The prison was built to contain 960 souls, but it never holds less than 1,300 to 1,400, and very often 2,200, or more. One-quarter of the prisoners are sick, but the infirmary can shelter only one-third, or so, of those who are in need of it; and so the sick remain in the same rooms, upon or beneath the same platforms where the remainder are crammed to the amount of three men for each free place. The shrieks of the sick, the cries of the fever-stricken patients, and the rattle of the dying mix together with the jokes and laughter of the prisoners, with the curses of the warders. The exhalations of this human heap mix with those of their wet and filthy clothes and with the emanations of the horrible *Parasha*. 'You are suffocated as you enter the room, you are fainting and must run back to breathe some fresh air; you must accustom yourself by-and-by to the horrible emanations which float like a fog in the river'—such is the testimony of all those who have entered unexpectedly a Siberian prison. The 'families room' is still more horrible. 'Here you see,' says a Siberian official in charge of the prisons—M. Mishlo—'hundreds of women and children closely packed together, in such a state of misery, as no imagination could picture.' The families of the convicts receive no cloth from the State. Mostly peasant women, who, as a rule, never have more than one dress at once; mostly reduced to starvation as soon as their husbands were taken into custody, they have buckled on their sole cloth when starting

from Arkhangelsk or Astrakhan, and, after their long peregrinations from one lock-up to another, after the long years of preliminary detention and months of journey, only rags have remained on their shoulders from their weather-worn clothes. The naked emaciated body and the wounded feet appear from beneath the tattered clothes as they are sitting on the nasty floor, eating the hard black bread received from compassionate peasants. Amidst this moving heap of human beings who cover each square foot of the platforms and beneath them, you perceive the dying child on the knees of his mother, and close by, the new-born baby. The baby is the delight of, the consolation to these women, each of whom surely has more human feelings than any of the chiefs and warders. It is passed from hand to hand; the best rags are parted with to cover its shivering limbs, the tenderest caresses are for it. . . . How many have grown up in this way! One of them stands by my side as I write these lines, and repeats to me the stories she has heard so many times from her mother about the humanity of the 'scelerates' and the infamy of their 'chiefs.' She describes to me the toys that the convicts made for her during the interminable journey—plain toys inspired by a good-hearted humour, and side by side, the miserable proceedings, the exactions of money, the curses and blows, the whistling of the whips of the chiefs.

The prison, however, is cleared by-and-by, as the parties of convicts start to continue their journey. When the season and the state of the rivers permit it, parties of 500 convicts each, with women and children, leave the Tomsk prison every week, and begin their foot journey to Irkutsk and Transbaïkalia. Those who have seen such a party in march, will never forget it. A Russian painter, M. Jacoby, has tried to represent it on canvas; his picture is sickening, but the reality is still worse.

You see a marshy plain where the icy wind blows freely, driving before it the snow that begins to cover the frozen soil. Morasses with small shrubs, or crumpled trees, bent down by wind and snow, spread as far as the eye can reach; the next village is twenty miles distant. Low mountains, covered with thick pine forests, mingling with the grey snow-clouds, rise in the dust on the horizon. A track, marked all along by poles to distinguish it from the surrounding plain, ploughed and rugged by the passage of thousands of cars, covered with ruts that break down the hardest wheels, runs through the naked plain. The party slowly moves along this road. In front, a row of soldiers opens the march. Behind them, heavily advance the hard-labour convicts, with half-shaved heads, wearing grey clothes, with a yellow diamond on the back, and open shoes worn out by the long journey and exhibiting the tatters in which the wounded feet are wrapped. Each convict wears a chain, riveted to his ankles, its rings being twisted into rags—if the convict has

collected enough of alms during his journey to pay the blacksmith for riveting it looser on his feet. The chain goes up each foot and is suspended to a girdle. Another chain closely ties both hands, and a third chain binds together six or eight convicts. Every false movement of any of the pack is felt by all his chain-companions; the feebler is dragged forward by the stronger, and he must not stop: the way—the *étape*—is long, and the autumn day is short.

Behind the hard-labour convicts march the *poselentsy* (condemned to be settled in Siberia) wearing the same grey cloth and the same kind of shoes. Soldiers accompany the party on both sides, meditating perhaps the order given at the departure:—'If one of them runs away, shoot him down. If he is killed, five roubles of reward for you, and a dog's death to the dog!' In the rear you discover a few cars that are drawn by the small, attenuated, cat-like peasant's horses. They are loaded with the bags of the convicts, with the sick or dying, who are fastened by ropes on the top of the load.

Behind the cars hasten the wives of the convicts; a few have found a free corner on a loaded car, and crouch there when unable to move further; whilst the great number march behind the cars, leading their children by the hands, or bearing them on their arms. Dressed in rags, freezing under the gusts of the cold wind, cutting their almost naked feet on the frozen ruts, how many of them repeat the words of Avvakum's wife:—'These tortures, ah dear, how long will they last?' In the rear, comes a second detachment of soldiers who drive with the butt-ends of their rifles those women who stop exhausted in the freezing mud of the road. The procession is closed by the car of the commander of the party.[2]

As the party enters some great village, it begins to sing the *Miloserdnaya*—the 'charity song.' They call it a song, but it hardly is that. It is a succession of woes escaping from hundreds of breasts at once, a recital in very plain words expressing with a childish simplicity the sad fate of the convict—a horrible lamentation by means of which the Russian exile appeals to the mercy of other miserables like himself. Centuries of sufferings, of pains and misery, of persecutions that crush down the most vital forces of our nation, are heard in these recitals and shrieks. These tones of deep sorrow recall the tortures of the last century, the stifled cries under the sticks and whips of our own time, the darkness of the cellars, the wildness of the woods, the tears of the starving wife.

[2] The Russian law says that the families of the convicts are not submitted to the control of the convoy. In reality they are submitted to the same treatment as the convicts. To quote but one instance. The Tomsk correspondent of the *Moscow Telegraph* wrote on November 3, 1881:—'We have seen on the march the party which left Tomsk on September 14. The exhausted women and children literally stuck in the mud, and the soldiers dealt them blows, to make them advance and to keep pace with the party.'

The peasants of the villages on the Siberian highway understand these tunes; they know their true meaning from their own experience, and the appeal of the *Neschastnyie*—of the 'sufferers,' as our people call all prisoners—is answered by the poor; the most destitute widow, signing herself with the cross, brings her coppers, or her piece of bread, and deeply bows before the chained 'sufferer,' grateful to him for not disdaining her small offering.

Late in the afternoon, after having covered some fifteen or twenty miles, the party reaches the *étape* where it spends the night and takes one day's rest each three days. It accelerates its pace as soon as the paling that incloses the old log-wood building is perceived, and the strongest run to take possession by force of the best places on the platforms. The *étapes* were mostly built fifty years ago, and after having resisted the inclemencies of the climate, and the passage of a hundred thousand of convicts, they have become now rotten and foul from top to bottom. The old logwood house refuses shelter to the chained travellers brought under its roof, and wind and snow freely enter the interstices between its rotten beams; heaps of snow are accumulated in the corners of the rooms. The *étape* was built to shelter 150 convicts; that being the average size of parties thirty years ago. At present the parties consist of 450 to 500 human beings, and the 500 must lodge on the space parsimoniously calculated for 150.[3]

The stronger ones, or the aristocracy among the convicts—the elder vagrants and the great murderers—cover each square inch of the platforms; the remainder, that is, double the number of the former, lie down on the rotten floor, covered with an inch of sticky filth, beneath and between the platforms. What becomes of the rooms when the doors are closed, and the whole space filled with human beings who lie naked on their nasty clothes impregnated with water, will be easily imagined.

The *étapes*, however, are palaces when compared with the *half-étapes*, where the parties spend only the nights. These buildings are still smaller, and, as a rule, still more dilapidated, still more rotten and foul. Sometimes they are in such a state as to compel the party to spend the cold Siberian nights in light barracks erected in the yard, and without fire. As a rule, the *half-étape* has no special compartment for the women, and they must lodge in the room of the soldiers (*see* Maximoff's *Siberia*). With the resignation of our 'all-enduring' Russian mothers, they squat down with their babies

[3] The Russian law, which mostly has been written without any knowledge of the real conditions it deals with, forbids to send out such numerous parties. But, in reality, the normal party numbers now 480 persons. In 1881, according to the *Golos*, 6,507 convicts were sent in sixteen parties, making thus an average of 406 convicts per party. N. Lopatin gives us the figure of 480 as the average size of parties.

wrapped in rags, in some corner of the room below the platforms or close by the door, among the rifles of the escort.

No wonder that, according to official statistics, out of the 2,561 children less than fifteen years old who were sent in 1881 to Siberia with their parents, '*a very small part survived.*' 'The majority,' the *Golos* says, 'could not support the very bad conditions of the journey, and died before, or immediately after, having reached their destination in Siberia.' In sober truth, the transportation to Siberia, as practised now, is a real 'Massacre of Innocents.'

Shall I add that there is no accommodation for the sick, and that one must have exceptionally robust health to survive an illness during the journey? There are but five small hospitals, with a total of a hundred beds, on the whole stretch between Tomsk and Irkutsk, that is, on a distance which represents at least a four months' journey. As for those who cannot hold out until a hospital is reached, it was written to the *Golos*, on January 5, 1881:—'They are left at the *étapes* without any medical help. The sick-room has no bedsteads, no beds, no cushions, no coverings, and of course nothing like linen. The 48½ *kopecks* per day that are allowed for the sick, remain mostly in full in the hands of the authorities.'

Shall I dwell upon the exactions to which the convicts are submitted, notwithstanding their dreadful misery, by the warders of the *étapes?* Is it not sufficient to say that the warders of these buildings are paid by the Crown, besides the allowance of corn flour for black bread, only with three roubles, or 6*s*. per year? 'The stove is out of order, you cannot light the fire,' says one of them, when the party arrives quite wet or frozen; and the party pays its tribute for permission to light the fire. 'The windows are under repair,' and the party pays for having some rags to fill up the openings through which freely blows the icy wind. 'Wash up the *étape* before leaving, or pay so much,' and the party pays again, and so on and so on. And shall I mention, too, the manner in which the convicts and their families are treated during the journey? Even the political exiles once revolted, in 1881, against an officer who had permitted himself to assault in the dark corridor a lady marched to Siberia for a political offence. The common-law exiles surely are not treated better than the political ones.

All these are not tales of the past. They are real pictures of what is going on now, at the very moment when I write these lines. My friend N. Lopatin, who made the same journey two years ago, and to whom I have shown these pages, fully confirms all the above statements, and adds much more which I do not mention only for want of space. What really is a tale of the past—of a very recent case—is the chaining together of eight or ten convicts. This horrible measure, however, was abolished in January 1881. At present, each convict has his hands chained separately from his comrades.

But still, the chain being very short, gives such a posture to the arms as renders the ten and twelve hours' march very difficult, not to speak of the insupportable rheumatic pain occasioned in the bones by the contact of the iron rings during the hard Siberian frosts. This pain, I am told and readily believe it, soon becomes a real torture.

I hardly need add that, contrary to the statements of a recent English traveller through Siberia, the political convicts perform the journey to Kara, or to the places where they are to be settled as *poselentsy*, under the same conditions as, and together with, the common-law convicts. The very fact of Izbitskiy and Debagorio-Mokrievitch having exchanged names with two common-law convicts, and having thus escaped from hard labour, proves that the English traveller's information was false. Nicholas Lopatin, whom I have already mentioned, and who has been condemned to settlement in Siberia, performed the journey on foot, in company with a dozen, or so, of comrades. It is true that a great number of Polish exiles of 1864, and notably all noblemen and chief convicts, were transported in carriages, on posting horses. The numerous political exiles, transported to Siberia by order of the Administrative, also perform the journey in the same way—where there are posting horses. But, since 1866, the political convicts (condemned by courts to hard labour or exile) have mostly made the journey on foot, together with common-law convicts. An exception was made in 1877–1879 for the few who were transported to Eastern Siberia during those three years. They were transported in cars, but following the line of the *étapes*. Since 1879, however, all political convicts—men and women alike, and many exiled by order of the Administrative—have made the journey precisely in the way I have described, very many of them chained, contrary to the law of 1827.

When writing his book on *Hard Labour and Exile*, M. Maximoff concluded it with the wish that the horrors of the foot-journey he had described might become as soon as possible matter of history. The transport of convicts on barges was then just inaugurated, and this measure had saved the State, during the first year, a sum of 40,000*l*. The Ministry of Justice was earnestly pressing at that time all honest men to tell what they knew about the exiles, and announced its readiness to undertake a complete reform of the whole system. There was no lack of men ready to devote their lives to ameliorating the sad fate of the exiles and to erasing for ever from our life the black reminiscence of exile in Siberia. But M. Maximoff's wish has not been realised. The Liberal movement of 1861 was crushed down by the Government; the attempts at reform were considered as 'dangerous tendencies,' and the transport of exiles to Siberia has remained what it was twenty years ago—a source of unutterable sufferings for nearly 20,000 of people.

The shameful system, branded at that time by all those who had

studied it, has maintained itself in full; and, whilst the rotten buildings on the highway are falling to pieces, and the whole system disintegrates more and more, new thousands of men and women transported for such crimes as those, 'the very existence of which' was doubted twenty years ago, are added annually to the thousands already transported to Siberia, and their number is increasing every year in an awful proportion.

P. Krapotkine.

(*To be concluded.*)



## *RECRI*

The kinds of recreation are so ma
business, and to pleasure are so n
to write briefly of them all. I s
active recreations on our power a
by which it may be believed that
I shall not include among the effe
general health, though it may be
and most important; neither sha
they give, or of their relations to
any except really working peopl
in mind people of all ranks and
necessity or of choice. Happily
nearly all in one social group.

In the general meaning of ac
things: namely, the cessation of
the active occupation, whether of
different in which we find pleasu
may obtain refreshment, that is,
In the former of these parts of
structures of our body which hav
exercised in a different manner;
been at work are brought into ac

These two parts of recreatio
different necessities of our econ
exceptions, that for any structure
for its office it must be sometimes
exception, that in every exercise
ture, however immeasurably sma
rest. In all active recreations j
are complied with, but in differe
which is to be accomplished dur
This must be achieved in sleep.
the complete refreshment of whi
scious in the feeling of fitness
which we may have been fatigued