

Literary Notices.

THROUGH PERSIA BY CARAVAN. By Arthur Arnold, Author of "From the Levant," &c. New York, Harper Bros. (Dawson Brothers, Montreal.)

This is a very interesting account of a tour through Poland, Russia, and Persia, undertaken by Mr. and Mrs. Arnold, in the summer of 1875—the party arriving at the Persian Gulf in February of the next year. We would like to make very extensive extracts from this work, but our space limits us to the following, which give but a scant idea of the merits of the book :

TRAVELLING IN RUSSIA.

A Russian railway carriage resembles a gypsy wagon, in having a stove-pipe issuing from the roof, and a succession of these chimneys attracts the notice of any one who is for the first time traveling in the dominions of the Tsar. Fortunately the stoves were not lighted on the mild September evening in which we set out for St. Petersburg—I say fortunately, because the Russian notion of a fire is to enjoy its warmth without ventilation. Russian climate is the coldest, Russian rooms and railway carriages the hottest, in Europe. Our train staid a few minutes at Danaburg—time enough to eat one of the excellent veal-cutlets which are always hot and ready for travellers. But at day-break, when we took coffee at Luga, in the raw and foggy morning, the guard needed the warm gloves in which he took the tickets. One notices, as a sign of the severity of the climate, how kindly people take to gloves whose equals in England would be unable to do their work with their hands so covered. White sand, grey sand, the face of the country is covered with sand in the North of Russia; flat sand, hidden for the most part with scanty crops, and with wide forest patches of fir, the sombre hues of which are occasionally varied with the more tender green and the silvery bark of birch-trees.

There is nothing interesting or picturesque in the approach to the Russian capital. One looks out to see the golden domes and spires, and is not disappointed. There from afar shines the gilded cupola of St. Isaac's Church, and there, like golden needles, glitter the spires of the Admiralty, and of the old cathedral, in which all

the greatest of the House of Romanoff lay buried. Soon we are at the station, where the uninformed or incautious traveller, who rushes at the nearest droschky-driver to secure his carriage, will be disappointed. They manage these things otherwise in Russia. One must look out for the official on the steps of the station, whose hands are filled with numbered plates, and the only cab the traveller can engage is that of which the number is received from this person.

OFF TO SIBERIA.

The usual quiet of this part of Nijni was broken, as we returned to the hotel, by the tramp of armed men. They were guarding a long procession of prisoners, who were making forced marches to Siberia. The soldiers slouched along, looking hardly less miserable, dusty, and travel-stained than the wretched people whom they watched with fixed bayonets and drawn swords. The prisoners marched, some four and others six abreast, between the files of soldiers. Some were chained in couples, others tramped alone, and all were apparently of the lower classes. There were three or four hundred convicts, as nearly as I could count. Very little talk was passing among them, and the soldiers, with sword or bayonet, rudely kept off any one who approached within their reach. All traffic was suspended while the long line passed. The prisoners were followed by twenty-seven wagons, loaded with the poor baggage of their families, upon which the women and children were uneasily mounted, among whom lay a few elderly or sick men. These women were the wives who were willing to accompany their condemned husbands, and to settle in Siberia at least for the term of their husbands' sentence, which in no case is less than four years. If the wives choose to go, they must take their children, and all submit to the degradation and rigors of surveillance and imprisonment. The pavements of Nijni are the worst imaginable; and as these springless vehicles (which were not really wagons, but simply four fir poles fastened at obtuse angles on wheels) jolted over the uneven boulders, the poor children were shaken high out of their wretched seat at nearly every yard of the journey. Soldiers with drawn swords walked beside these cartloads of weakness and childhood. It was very touching to see the old men and the sick painfully lift themselves whenever they passed a church, and with the sadness of eternal farewell, uncover their miserable heads and cross their breasts devoutly as they were borne along in their terrible journey to Siberia. For another