

presence was more painful to us than his terrible and repeated blows. He threatened us with the most horrible tortures, even to skin us alive. We would answer : " You may tear the skin off us ; we are ready to follow the example of St. Bartholomew, but we never will follow the example of an apostate." We were obliged to perform the vilest and most painful services for the *czernices*. Before six o'clock in the morning, we had to heat and sweep the house, prepare the firewood, carry and distribute water, and restore order and neatness after the orgies of the eve.

At six we were led out to our compulsory labor, which varied according to the season.

We first had to cut stones and carry them in barrows we were tied to. From noon till one o'clock, rest ; from one till night, hard labor, after which we were employed in the kitchen or the cattle-yard, or compelled to carry in wood and water for the morrow. The *czernices* sought every means of rendering our task still more difficult and painful. When our day's work was over, we were shut up in our prison, without even being relieved of our chains. A little straw was our only bed ; we had neither table nor furniture of any description : the sole ornament of our abode, the consolation of our hearts, the strength of our souls, was the dear crucifix we had brought from Minsk : it was our chapel, our altar, our Master, our Father, our All ! At its feet we passed the nights in prayer. We used to begin by the prayers and exercises of our rule, which we were unable to perform during the day. We always began our prayers by prostrating ourselves to the earth, to ask of God the conversion of the Emperor Nicolas.

Our food was so miserable, that hunger often compelled us, in summer, to eat green herbs, and in winter, to partake of the food of the cows and swine, despite the threats and blows of the *czernices*, who would say brutally : " You don't deserve the food of our hogs."

In winter, notwithstanding the excessive coldness of the climate, we were allowed no fire ; our hands and feet were frequently frozen, and the cold aggravated our sores.

After about two months (1838) commenced the torture of flogging, which we had to undergo twice a