

convict is hoisted upon another's back and carried round the room, being mercilessly beaten with knotted handkerchiefs all the time. He often suffers quite as much from this amusement as from a sound flogging by the executioner. "The Prisoner's Oath" is a pastime which in cynical blasphemy outdoes all the others: it cannot be described. "The Sewing of the Caftan," by its obscenity and the exquisite torture it inflicts on the victim, has nothing else to match it."

It is not necessary to have incurred the serious displeasure of the oligarchs to be subjected to these kinds of punishments. For "serious" offences death is the penalty, and the executioners do their bloody work with perfect impunity. In the prison of Tsh . . . ski I saw a young man for whom they had "sewn the caftan" the day before, and I shall never, as long as I live, be able to blot out from my memory the image of that martyr's face! He shortly afterwards died of the results. "As as a matter of course, the investigation that ensued brought nothing to light."

If, in the course of this or any other investigation a prisoner should say too much, if his reticence or his admissions compromise his fellows, if, generally speaking, he is of a talkative disposition, or a boaster, he is set down as a "heathen," and is mercilessly persecuted, beaten, tortured. If he informs on his colleagues, death is his portion, and the authorities are powerless to save him.

No matter how well a spy is screened and protected in secret cells, his fate will overtake him sooner or later. The greater the injury he inflicted on the convict corporation, the crueller their vengeance. I was acquainted with a convict condemned to deportation to Eastern Siberia, who, for the sake of lucre, had informed on three of his companions. Thanks to the efficient measures taken to screen him, he got as far as Moscow and in the Kolymskny courtyard was interned in a secret cell. That very night the lock was picked by some person or persons unknown and the spy beaten within an ace of his life. After several months of careful medical treatment he recovered and was forwarded on. In Kazan, in the forwarding prison he was tortured and would have been killed outright had he not been torn out of the prisoners' hands in time. Put in hospital under the doctor's care, he was poisoned and his life was with difficulty saved. He then feigned madness, and was placed in the Central Hospital for the Insane where, thanks to his extraordinary ingenuity, he succeeded in remaining for about a year. Sent on along with the first spring gang of convicts, he reached the forwarding prison of Tiumen, where he was crushed to death "by persons unknown." This is by no means an exceptional instance and the most horrible feature of such executions is that they sometimes take place on mere suspicion.

One has no difficulty in understanding the reluctance of prisoners, under such circumstances, to complain of the pain and misery inflicted upon them by their brutal colleagues, who really rule them. They are as little disposed to complain of the abuses for which the authorities are directly responsible, some few of which it may be well to point out.

A Russian gentleman named Ptitsin was sent some time ago in a purely official capacity to Siberia, where he acquitted himself in a most conscientious manner of the difficult mission with which he was entrusted, carefully examining the prisons, many of which Mr. Kennan never saw. He drew up a lengthy report, which was duly pigeon-holed, as such reports usually are, part of which he recently published with the permission of the authorities, accorded with a very bad grace. This unimpeachable document is a complete confirmation of the report inserted in the *Law Messenger*. Notwithstanding the statistical brevity and lack of consecutiveness which characterize the style of both these documents, a few extracts from them are better calculated, I believe, to convey to Englishmen a correct idea of what prison life in Russia really is than the most vivid description given by the most impartial of their countrymen.

The Sookhovsk forwarding prison, M. Ptitsin informs us, consists of two cells, "almost pitch dark," made to accommodate ten men. The majority of the prisoners live on alms alone. The same story is told by the author of the report on the prison system which appeared in the *Law Messenger*. To begin with, we there read:—

"The prisoners have no clothes to put on them. I examined their linen, clothes, and boots in scores of provincial prisons, and I was always struck by impracticability in the conception and dishonesty in the manufacture of these articles of necessity. The underclothing was always old, torn, and with very faint traces of having been washed. The cut of it was invariably absurd: the drawers, for example, are sewn out of two pieces of cloth into a perfect triangle, so that unless you rip it up, it is impossible to get inside of it or put it on; the legs below the knees are uncovered; the shirts, not meeting at the collar even on the slenderest neck, leaves the entire chest and the arms below the shoulders unprotected. The boots are mere slippers as shallow as goloshes. The clothing for the most part consists of one tunic, a parody on the Biblical tunic, which buttons nowhere, and in which no man can work.

The Kirensk prison (974 versts from Irkutsk) is a wooden building surrounded by a palisade. It is so cold and dilapidated that were it not propped up with wooden supports it would tumble down immediately. A convict stuck his finger into the wooden wall, into which it entered as into butter or soft snow, so rotten was it. The ceiling fell down in 1883 and buried a prisoner, who was fortunately dug out alive. The inspector complains that since 1882 the convicts receive no prison garb, no socks,

no warm goloshes, no clothes of any description, so that they can neither work nor walk. The prisoners complained of the overcrowding of the rooms, so that they frequently have to sleep not only on the ground but under the plank beds: thus in room No. 1 six convicts slept under the plank beds; in No. 2 five; in No. 3 nine; in Nos. 4 and 6 eleven. There is no hospital; the sick are located in the civil hospital, which is described in the Governmental report as surpassing in filthiness anything that was ever seen or heard of even in Siberia. The floor of the corridor through which the patients have to pass to the water-closet is covered with a thick coating of ice, which is soaked through and through with the foul liquids that flow from the water-closet, which is never cleaned. The sick and dying lie generally on the floor, which is so thickly strewn with them that there is no passage through the room. There they lie crying and wailing, and complaining of their specific suffering and of the cold—for they are almost naked and have not wherewith to cover themselves. The visitor standing in the room with his furs on and his head covered found the cold barely tolerable. One room was occupied by male and female syphilitic patients thrown together indiscriminately, and under a table in a corner of the room two small children, about two or three years old, were crawling about like little puppies. There was no room for them elsewhere. The convicts who come here have to remain in this corridor, as there is no accommodation for them in the rooms.

Prisoners and their gaolers become reconciled to all imaginable privations and extortions, so that they be allowed to do just what they please. . . . The "forbidden fruit" of the prison (the *vodka* with its foul-smelling fusel oil) is transformed by their imagination into a heavenly nectar, and it must be admitted that Russian prison life is in the last degree desolate and weird for people with sober brains. At first the money given for food (whenever money is given) is spent in the purchase of spirits, afterwards the prisoners' clothing is disposed of, and then both guards and convicts go begging for alms. . . . Thus the day is spent and night draws nigh, and the *étape* prison is metamorphosed into a terrible hell upon earth. The poisonous fumes turn every one's head. Neither age nor sex is recognized or respected in the wild gluttony of brutal instincts. Every attempt at resistance is speedily overcome by dint of blows of the fist and strokes given with the butt end of rifles. If, during the scuffle, a convict runs away, on the morrow a general hunt is organized, and the wretch when caught is beaten to death. It also comes to pass, as in Orenburg in the spring of 1881, that when those who run away are not overtaken, one or more of those who remained behind are deliberately killed, and a report drawn up setting forth that "three ran away, shots were fired at them, and one of the three was killed, while the other two escaped."—*E. B. Lavin, in The Fortnightly Review.*

#### MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

MRS. COSIMA WAGNER, relict of the great Richard, intends soon to visit friends in London. The length of her visit is not indicated.

MRS. CECILIA SERLE has died at Genoa in her seventy-eighth year. She was a daughter of Vincent Novello, and once sang on the stage.

Mlle. DEVERE is in Europe, but will return to New York in time to sing at the Worcester Festival in September, and at the first Philharmonic concert in that city.

THE *London Stage* publishes an item stating that Lilian Russell is to sing in the Lyric Theatre in that city; but she is also announced to return to the Casino in New York.

MADAME STRAKOSCH, the widow of Maurice, lives in London, and still retains her rich contralto voice. Years ago, as Amalia Patti, she was one of the pets of the New York public.

MR. GEORGE LYDING has been engaged for next season as leading tenor for Rice's "World's Fair" Company, now rehearsing in New York, and to open early in September in Philadelphia.

MADAME ANNA DE LA GRANGE, in her recent career as a vocal teacher at Paris, has had many American pupils. She always recurs with gratification to her long series of lyric triumphs in this country.

ANTON RUBINSTEIN has completed a new opera entitled "The Unfortunate," which will be produced at St. Petersburg. The subject is based upon the love adventures of a Russian prince of the twelfth century.

THE first week's engagement of Miss Emma Juch proved the most successful ever known in the history of Denver. The gross receipts, which far exceeded that of the Patti Company, amounted to nearly \$30,000.

MR. ABBEY has completed arrangements for the engagement of Mme. Sarah Bernhardt for a tour through the United States under his management. "Cleopatra," by Emile Moreceau and Victorien Sardou, will be her main card.

MARCELLA SEMBRICH has gone to Switzerland to spend her vacation in the Alps. She has received offers to sing in the United States, Russia, Spain or Italy, just as she may decide, but will come to no conclusion on the subject at the present time.

MR. EDWARD SOTHERN met with an accident at New Rochelle lately while in bathing, which will prevent his

attendance for a week or so at the rehearsals of the new play "The Maister of Wood-Barrow." He is staying at Bronson Howard's cottage.

THE asp used by Mrs. Potter in Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra" is said to have died from lack of nourishment. Fanny Davenport states that her asp will be trained by Sardou himself, who recommends that it be applied to the arm.—*Dramatic Mirror.*

GLUCK once said of his "Armida," with an indomitable sense of power and a daring sense of satisfaction: "I have composed this piece in a manner which will prevent its getting old." He said to Marie Antoinette: "Madame, the opera is finished, and indeed it is superb!"

THE farewell performances of Madame Materna, the famous Wagnerian soprano, will take place next winter at Vienna. She will then gracefully sink into the inevitable fate of all great *passée* artists—become a vocal instructor. Patti and Cary seem to be the only two exceptions.

THE following somewhat remarkable statement is vouched for by *Harper's Bazar*: "Although Mr. Edwin Booth has so identified himself in the popular mind with the part of 'Hamlet' that all other 'Hamlets' stand or fall by comparison with his personation, and although he has himself played it some thousands of times he has never yet seen the play as a spectator."

MAX HAMBURG is the name of a ten-year-old boy pianist who lately appeared in London, and played Beethoven sonatas with much delicacy and refinement. Paderewski admires him, but a London critic thinks that he is one of "those abhorred prodigies who have little claim to be judged by any high canons of art." Probably the writer of this remark was a stupid youth himself, who, remembering the fact, cannot forgive brilliant precocity in others.

RUBINSTEIN, who is sojourning at Badenweiler in the Black Forest, is engaged in composing new and interesting works. A collection of piano pieces has just been finished by him, consisting of five characteristic compositions intended for a young lady pupil who is to perform them the first time at her *debut*. Her name is Sophie Posnanska, and the collection is called "Second Akrostic for piano, op. 114." Bartholf Senff, Leipzig, will publish the collection.

GERMAN military music is henceforth, we hear, to be printed with the variations in *tempo* and signs of expression not as hitherto, in Italian, but in the language of the Fatherland, the war minister having pronounced that the use of Italian is unpatriotic. Surely the object of adhering to one set of expressions should be that all may understand them, for if during military operations musical directions are never to be given in an enemy's language, compositions must be published for the occasion whenever a war breaks out.

THERE is a rumour afloat that Tamagno will soon leave the stage, but there seems no reason for his doing so while his voice is yet fresh and vigorous; and as he is very fond of making money it is not probable he will throw away the ample opportunities to this end which his voice and popularity offer him. Tamagno, by the way, is a very strong man physically—strong enough to be a wonder in a museum as a lifter of heavy weights. The strength of his hands and wrists are said to be something absolutely phenomenal.

ONCE upon a time the celebrated contralto, Trebelli, (it was at Riga in 1861) sang a tenor part. The regular tenor was ill, and she, in order that the performance might not be abandoned, undertook a portion of the music of "Almaviva" in "Il Barbiere." Madame Trebelli had been cast for "Rosina," but another artist was able to sing this part, and, in order that Madame Trebelli should be heard in the lesson scene, Rosina turned round to "Almaviva," saying, "And you, Don Alonzo, will you not sing also? I should like to hear my new master," whereupon "Don Alonzo" sang an extra solo.

THE great Alboni—the contralto of the world—is still living in Paris, well-to-do, comfortable and happy. When she sang in opera in England, "so many years ago," Signor Sangiovanni was the tenor, and he is the same Sangiovanni who is now the celebrated vocal teacher at Milan. He had a light, flexible voice, and was at home in florid music. Rossini's "Cenerentola" has not been sung entire in England since the days of Alboni at the old, old Broadway Theatre, near Leonard Street, nor has there been since that period her equal as a contralto.

AT a recent "annual service" concert by the Royal Society of Musicians in Westminster Abbey, the programme included choruses from "Saul," and selections from "Belshazzar," "Theodora," "Samson," "Jephtha," and "Judah." The artists were Nordica, Patey, Kearton, Lloyd, and Hilton, who, as if inspired by the solemn beauty of their surroundings, sang admirably. Madame Nordica's best performance was that of "Let the Bright Seraphim," the trumpet obligato, to which was finely played by Mr. Solomon; but the finest thing of the evening was, beyond question, the superb rendering by Mr. Lloyd of "Sound an Alarm." The choruses were given throughout with wonderful precision and effect, Dr. Bridge conducting.

IN a Sicilian town lived a poverty-stricken music teacher, Pietro Mascagni by name. Some manager offered a money prize for an opera, and Mascagni sent in a manuscript of a half-forgotten operetta. It