

ences. According to the Russian penal code, these condemnations are variously graduated, the punishment is hard labor or life, or the severest sentence of death; after which the felon becomes an ex-felon, occupying land, a house and some cattle, and being attached to some rural community, and enjoying the right of this class of inhabitants.

*Smaller offenders are punished with imprisonment of less than two years.*

*The following is a sketch of the*

*privileges of a felon:* After his trial he receives of the Emperor a certificate of his conviction, and the privilege of returning to Russia. His condemnation is the only offence whatever never returns him home; and thus Siberia becomes, to them at least,

*a home to him.* The following incidents illustrate the decision of the sovereign, and of the court martial by which they are condemned. Small offenders are generally formed into battalions, forming the corps of the Siberian army. If the verdict does not define the exact sentence, it is referred to the Emperor, who decides upon the years of their servitude, and sends them to the army to work as soldiers, and those sent to the colonies will members of some community. Such a convict very seldom, and did only through some extraordinary exception, can be promoted to the grade of commissioned officer. Those condemned to transportation to Eastern Siberia, are considered as some who deserve punishment that is severe.

Wives and children following the exiles, lose all their status and privileges enjoyed in Russia. The bulk of the Russian population in Siberia, by which we mean all persons of civilization—that is to say, of those who are not engaged in agriculture, but in some districts, but perh[as] military duties and those of internal police. There are also many Chinese with some Mongolian tribes, who have immigrated from China, and who preserve their original customs and superstitions. Christians, others not. These are called *Buryats* by the Russians. The dissenters and descendants of convicts form the rest of the population.

The Russians are, however, mild, and more lenient than any other people in the world, and their treatment of convicts is as humane as any agricultural

*Wives and children following the exiles, are allowed to select the best heads.*

The destination of the social organization of Siberia is that kind of condition exists, or can be introduced there. Otherwise, too, we cannot understand how it can be possible to have an opportunity of getting some of his communications from Siberia, especially in the more northern and independent parts of that country. The requirements of the Government from the population are insignificant, and its pressure, therefore, less heavy. Thus slowly, but unerringly, a cemented chain of government extends over every district and subdivision, whether different from the mother country, not only sustained by serfdom, but even possessing a certain democratic equality. Almost the only distinction of classes is that of the Government officials. Nobility, with its rank and wealth, has no place in Siberia, and Siberians can migrate, either with their families, or without, to the cities, and it is a steady fixed principle with the Emperors not to surrendered any Crown Lands to serfdom. As far as Siberia is concerned, it is God's free soil. No nobleman can migrate, either with his servants, or with his body-servants of officials, or serfs, and so forth.

The railroads are the contrivances of the soil; the natives—nowise breed horses, cattle and sheep. But the prairie, wealth of Siberia lies in mining and agriculture. The following table shows the size of their territories, which are subdivided into various charters—as of the Great Altai, the Sayan, the Ural, the Tomiriski, the Johnnons, and the Great Altai—all of them containing various areas, considered by some geographers to be the richest in the world. The general view of the extent of the country, or the richness of these hidden treasures.

Gold-mining is the principal, if not rather, the exclusive industry.

All the principal rivers, with most of their tributaries, have their sources in the Altai and the Ural, and flow into the Caspian, the Amur, the Yenisei, and the Ob.

The Russians are covered with gigantic vegetation in summer, and various nutitious grasses, cover the plains of South-Western Siberia. In some parts, wheat and barley are sown, and oats, rye, maize, etc., are raised.

Some fifty miles south of Lake Baikal, the city of Irkutsk, situated at the confluence of three rivers, of which the Angara forms the principal, is the Capital of Eastern Siberia. The site, surrounded by elevated, perpendicular hills, is very picturesque, and the surrounding fields, the Government and the Governor-General of the Eastern Territory reside there.

Not long since the country of South Lake Baikal, embracing nearly the whole chain of the Altai, was opened up, and now covers one of the Trans-Siberian roads.

It is the richest country for mineral purposes in Northern Asia. The natives are gradually converted; and, as far as possible, the clergy selected from among them, the rites of baptism are performed, and the old religion of Tatars and Sarakhs, Greeks, for the Poles, Latin, Basque, and so forth, are severally employed for this purpose in Siberia.

These vast Asiatic possessions have been of late increased by the acquisition of the Amur, the best known territory, situated on the coast of Siberia, with the mouth of the Amur.

The Amur is taken possession of the entire left bank of the Amur, that is, from the junction of the Amur and the Arakan, down to its mouth at

the sea. The Amur is, however, a very important river, as well as fruit trees, cannot be cultivated on a large scale.

Rye, oats, barley and buckwheat thrive, and in some spots, potato and other vegetables.

The capital of Western Siberia is Tobolsk, situated on the river Irtysh.

It has some 20,000 inhabitants, and is the commercial metropolis of the whole of Russian Asia.

Its trade carried on with the European interior, and exports

are largely by land and sea.

The country is a vast plain, extending from the Ob to the Amur, and from the Ural to the Altai, bounded on the west by the Caspian, and on the east by the Okhotsk.

There is a great diversity of climate, and the Governor-General of the Eastern Territory resides there.

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