

The Saturday "News" Special Foreign Service.

Hundreds Perish in Russian Prisons

**Shocking Cases of Overcrowding Among
The Prisoners—Four Hundred Confined in
A Space Built to Accommodate Only Fifty
—Innocent Men, Suspected of Conspiracy,
Arrested and Held on Flimsiest Pretexts.**



RUSSIAN PRISON JUST OPENED.

Special Correspondence.

ST. PETERSBURG, July 2.—Prior reform in the czar's dominions is a crying need; so much so that protests frequently find their way into foreign papers and details of cruel systems awake horror in civilized lands. A case which recently was brought to the public notice was that of 73 prisoners in the Schlusselberg prison in St. Petersburg. Six of this number were women who were implicated in the recent plot to assassinate the czar and his wife and children. The plot was betrayed by one of the Cossacks on guard at the Tsar's palace who had agreed to join the conspirators and whose conscience troubled him to such an extent that he confessed the whole conspiracy and shot himself.

His statements led to the arrest of several hundred people, among whom were three members of the duma. They were sent to Schlusselberg. Seventy-three of them have managed to send out an appeal to the duma to have their grievances looked into. They are packed together in three small cells, chained hand and foot, day and night. Their diet consists of bread and water, and the filth with which they are surrounded has resulted in a malignant fever breaking out. The finishing touch was put to their misfortunes when, in response to the complaints in the duma, the director of the prisons board went to see them. One of the men, who was too weak to sit up, refused to stand when the official entered the cell. He was whipped till the blood ran from his wounds. His fellow prisoners protested against this barbarous treatment. "You shall have something better," replied a warder, and ordered the soldiers to beat them with their rifle butts. These facts have come out; but there are many more as bad, if not worse, which are hushed up by the officials. Of course, some of the prisoners are released, sooner or later, and it is from their lips that tales of cruelty, neglect, disease and starvation are heard.

A TYPICAL CASE.

A typical case of which I have heard is that of one Szymanski, a brass worker of Warsaw. He was a respectable, hard-working man, with a large family, and was spending the evening with some friends when the police entered the house and announced that he was under arrest. He protested that he was ignorant of any charge which could possibly be made against him and that he never occupied himself with politics. He was carried off by force to the town hall, where 400 prisoners are put into a space designed for 50 and was thrown into a cell filled with thieves, vagabonds and bandits of the worst type.

There is no need to describe the filth and discomfort of such a cell where 14 men live, eat, drink and sleep in a room built for two. Happily, he had a little money in his pocket and bribed one of the soldiers to give him something palatable to eat. But for the whole of the six weeks he was there, all his efforts to see a higher official or to learn the cause of his arrest were in vain. After his small stock of

money ran out the soldiers frequently used their rifle butts upon him and he soon became a mass of bruises and cuts. At last, after a month and a half, a warder told him he could go.

NONE OF HIS BUSINESS.

"But now, perhaps, you will tell me why I was brought here?" queried Szymanski. "That is no business of yours; so if you don't want to be shut up for another six weeks make yourself scarce." Which he did. He arrived home much to the joy of his wife and family, who thought he had been taken from Warsaw, having been told at all the prisons that no man named Szymanski was there.

Some weeks after he was called to the local branch of the Azov bank to make some brass rods. The porter eyed him with interest and, when he was going out, beckoned him aside.

"You look thin and hard-up since you were here last," he began. "Has anything happened to you?"

"I've been in prison and don't know what for," was the answer. "Perhaps you can tell me?" "Well, you see," he said, "it was like this. The other porter who lives here, used to keep bombs in an attic under the roof. When some of them exploded, just six weeks ago, the police came and searched my lodge. Among other papers they found your telephone number and your name on a slip of paper. If you remember, I wrote it down in case we should want to get you for a job. They asked me where you lived and what you were, and when I said I didn't know, beat me till I remembered. They must have arrested you the same night."

BARBAROUS "MISTAKE."

This sort of thing—the police call it a mistake—happens so often that some people will not leave their cards in other people's houses, or their addresses in the street. It is by following this system that the prisons are crowded with men and women who never have had the remotest connection with politics. Only the other day an engineer was measuring a pavement in Odessa for new gas pipes. A member of the secret police saw him, and, without waiting to ask questions, arrested him. The unlucky man was in prison for three days before anybody would listen to him. They then discovered that he was a servant of the municipality and let him go with the curt explanation of "pomilitsia" ("We made a mistake.") They had beaten him well before arriving at this conclusion.

HUMAN LIFE CHEAP.

But worse things than this happen. A boy named Adolf Abramowitz was in prison at Bialystok awaiting trial on a charge of plundering a government spirit store. He was put in a cell on the first floor, overlooking the street. His sister used to walk up and down the street, hoping to be able now and then to exchange a few words with him. They did this for several evenings, the brother appearing at the window whenever the wardens outside the door were dozing. One evening they were talking and did not notice that a soldier was on guard at the corner of the street. The man came up, pushed the girl aside and shouted to the prisoner, "If you don't go away from the window, I'll give you a taste of my rifle." Adolf answered him, "You will not frighten me like that because I expect I shall be hanged before long anyway." The soldier fired and the prisoner fell back dead, shot through the brain. The soldier was not even reprimanded.

STIFLING PRISON QUARTERS.

In Kieff the unhappy prisoners are being put out of the way in another

manner. During the month just past, 500 have fallen ill of "prison typhoid," and 200 of that number died. The sick are not always separated from the well, because the hospital is overcrowded, and very often the patients are not visited by a doctor until they are past all help. Of course, this typhoid is only a result of bad treatment, starvation and filth. It is quite impossible to keep men and women even comparatively healthy under the conditions which prevail in many Russian prisons. Only five minutes' exercise is allowed daily to the inmates, and this is taken in a close prison yard surrounded by high walls, where the air is nearly always stifling and the space is crowded with the prisoners and their warders.

"HUNGER STRIKE."

The prisoners are submitted to all sorts of petty persecutions. In Charkow prison several inmates were fairly well off and, by means of bribing the warders, managed to smuggle in tea and spirit lamps on which to boil water. For some time they were allowed to make their tea in peace; then suddenly one of the warders was offended by some of them and ordered the spirit lamps and tea to be confiscated at once. The governor of the prison was appealed to, but in vain, because he did not care to come and visit the cells, and therefore expressed "complete confidence" in his warders. The whole prison responded by organizing a "hunger strike" and refused to eat anything. This became troublesome to the authorities because the strikers fell ill by the hundred. The prisoners themselves, when asked why they "cut off their noses to spite their faces," replied that it was the only form of protest they had and that they were so miserable that to fall ill sooner or later did not much matter.

A RUSSIAN HABIT.

It is only fair to record that some humane governors of prisons do all they can to alleviate the sufferings of

the unhappy people in their charge. But they complain that they are as much victims of a bad system as the prisoners themselves. They can do nothing to enlarge the over-crowded prisons and the funds at their disposal are quite inadequate to feed the prisoners properly. As to the beating and other forms of barbarism which prevail, they are powerless to prevent it. A Russian soldier will use the butt end of his rifle as a man in a civilized country uses his tongue—without thinking, and because it always is at hand.

KNOUTING COMMON.

The coroner, whose duty it is to prepare cases for the public prosecutor, has to start with the supposition that the people brought before him are guilty. Therefore all sorts of "persuasive methods," such as thrashing, knouting and flogging with long Indian rubber cords, are used to make prisoners confess. Their teeth are knocked out and their faces beaten to jelly. This procedure is successful in many cases and the victims make a clean breast of it and give the names and addresses of their accomplices.

MEN ARE HARDENED.

By these barbaric methods are men and women tried in Russia. And so hardened do all those about the law courts get to it that even lawyers, humane men in all other respects, shrug their shoulders with true Slavonic fatalism, and exclaim: "What is to be done?" The victims of this treatment sometimes avenge themselves by smashing the doors and windows of their cells, electing the warders and strangling them. But such a "bunt," as a mutiny is called, always ends in the arrival of a company of soldiers, who shoot some, beat the others and restore order. Only the combined public opinion of the civilized world could make an impression, and that is a very difficult thing to set going.

SERGEI VOLKHOVSKY.

A FRENCH STATESMAN IN HIS NATIVE VILLAGE.



The picture shows M. Clemenceau, the French premier, as he appears when on a vacation in his native village in the forest of Vendee. On these annual spring visits to the home of his childhood M. Clemenceau lives the simple life and is very popular with the peasantry.

Electric Cooking Hits England Hard

**All Newest Hotels and Flats Fitted Out
With Electric Appliances to Render
Housework Pleasant—Bachelors Welcome
Electric Chafing Dish and Kettle—Potatoes
Peeled, Knives Cleaned, Dishes Washed.**



ELECTRIC KITCHEN IN ONE OF LONDON'S HOTELS.

Special Correspondence.

LONDON, July 2.—Electricity in the household is creating a sort of domestic revolution in England and other European countries just now. In the newest hotels in London, old-fashioned cooking ranges have been completely done away with. Even in King Edward's household—a conservative institution—electricity has been introduced into the kitchen; while his new yacht and the royal train have just been equipped with electric cooking and heating arrangements. In several of the big laundries electricity does all the work that human hands can't do, and its other domestic uses now range from peeling potatoes to heating curling irons for my lady's hair.

The main reason why electricity has not been more generally used heretofore has been the expense of current, but most of the big electrical supply companies have recently reduced their prices so considerably that electric energy is placed within reach of everyone. Nearly all the companies now supply electricity "for heating purposes only" at about one-half of what they usually charge for lighting.

ELECTRIC IRONS WIN.

Domestic electricity has evidently come to stay, but it has not arrived without opposition even on the part of those whose toll it was principally intended to lessen. For instance, in Eastman's great laundry works in London recently the attempt to introduce electric ironing met with strenuous resistance on the part of nearly all the laundresses. They were prejudiced against the "new fangled irons," with bits of string tied to 'em," and almost went on strike when the manager tried to make them give up the old methods. However, being an astute judge of human nature, he quietly fitted up a room with nothing but electric irons in it. Several of the more courageous and enterprising women were sent in to work on what is called the "piece work" plan, being paid at so much per piece, provided they worked solely with electric irons. The main advantage of these irons is that they remain hot all the time, and as there is no changing from tepid irons to hot ones, the women were able to do twice as much ironing as was done, in a given time, by old methods. Consequently, being paid by the piece, they made twice as much money. When the women had had a week at piece work with the "electrics," the manager put them back at the ordinary irons, and they almost went on strike once more—the time clamoring to be allowed to work by the new method. And so, the electric iron—and the manager—won a triumph. Electric irons get hot almost instantly; and all the housewife has to do when she wants to iron is to turn a switch. As to expense, it has been found, with the reduction now made by the electrical companies when supplying current for "heating only," that these irons work out at about half, and in some cases, one-third the cost of ordinary irons.

SEWING MACHINES, TOO.

The success of the electric iron has led to the application of the same power

to many other purposes. Sewing machines can now be "connected up" to electric wires running into the house, and one of the severest domestic drudgeries is done away with. A small motor is clamped on the back of the machine, and all a woman has to do is to depress the treadle in accordance with the speed she requires the machine to be driven at. For rapid work on light material the treadle is pressed far down; for slow, heavy work, only a slight depression is made. The economy in the use of the sewing machine represents a saving of health to the worker. Many physicians will not permit women to work at ordinary sewing machines. But, with electric motors to drive the machine, a woman has nothing to do now but guide the material and keep the bobbin full.

DISH WASHING MOTOR.

In a number of the big hotels, electricity is used for washing dishes, cutting cabbages, peeling potatoes, sharpening knives, and other purposes. Small motors are attached to the machines which do these things, and the work is accomplished far more rapidly than by the ordinary process. The employment of electric motors in driving labor saving machines has already proved itself so useful and economical that every day many electric installations are made; and in no case has there been a return to other methods which are already pronounced "old fashioned."

DOMESTIC NECESSITY.

Of course, for several years electricity has been used in many big manufacturing plants for driving various kinds of machinery, such as lathes and lifting-cranes, but it has only been within the last year that its general application to domestic work of all kinds has made such headway. In a large number of dairies the churns are now driven by electricity; and several bakeries are using electricity especially for heating eggs and mixing the material for cakes, where a high speed is required.

GIVES CHEAP POWER.

In Germany, particularly in the district of Westphalia, several agricultural operations are carried on wholly by electric methods. In Baden the threshing and straw-baling machines are electrically driven, and many of the dairy farms are equipped with electric power. In Switzerland, nearly everything is done by electricity now. The electric power is in use in all the Swiss laundries and hotels, and it is the one country in the world where housework has ceased to be a drudgery.

On several of the Swiss and German farms where electric power is not in use, they make their own power by bringing the water up to high-pressure tanks, and electrically controlled, the water being pumped up to the roof of the tallest building. The

water is then made to drive dynamos; and by this means such a large amount of power is obtained that even the cow-stalls are lighted by electricity; while the power is used for chopping turnips, driving churns, making butter, and threshing during the harvest. One of the great advantages of electric farming is that no naked lights are used about the barns, and the absence of the usual disastrous fires during harvest time is a marked feature in these districts.

CHEAPER THAN COAL.

In England it is mainly in the household that electricity has scored its greatest triumph. For ordinary cooking operations it is almost perfect. The installation of electric cooking ranges has wrought wonderful changes in many households. There is no unnecessary heat, smell or smoke, and the reduction of the cost of power renders the process almost twice as cheap as ordinary gas or coal. The only expense at present is the original outlay. This first expense once covered, the rest is simply electricity itself. By simply turning a switch, you can bring an electric kettle to boil in from five to eight minutes, ordinary gas taking, as a rule, fifteen minutes. The electric frying pan will cook your chops to perfection at a cost of less than one cent, while the electric oven will do a roast "to a turn" without any of the gassy smell which accompanies modern gas stoves. Compared with electric ranges the ordinary coal-burning stove is simply "not in it" for a moment. Each shelf inside an electric range can be heated separately, and you can bake two different kinds of cakes at different temperatures. The perfection of regulation in an electric range is really marvelous. For grill work, or rapidity of heating, by switching on more power at a given point, the most intense heat may be obtained instantly. One of the best points about the electric stove is that, when the cooking is over, you simply turn a switch, and the range instantly becomes cold. There is no wasteful dissipation of heat which goes on for hours after cooking has been done on an ordinary stove. While a small stove for a flat may cost \$50, those for the large house, or for big hotels, run into \$1,000 and more. The electric cooking stove recently installed on the king's train cost \$1,500, while \$1,750 was paid for the installation on the king's new yacht.

CHAFING DISH POPULAR.

Those not wishing to buy a complete range can obtain any one utensil separately by electric heat. The chafing dish is much in demand, especially for "after theater" parties and among the bachelor fraternity. With an electric chafing dish and kettle, a meal may be prepared in a jiffy. There are even electric hot water jugs by which you can prepare hot water in five minutes. You simply connect the wire in the jug while dressing and your water is ready for washing and shaving in less than no time.

TEA BY ELECTRICITY.

At many fashionable houses, afternoon teas are now prepared in the drawing-room by electricity. The kettle is placed on an artistically designed frame, and in a few minutes it is boiling. The cups are kept warm by an electric warmer. In the boudoir, "my lady" can heat her curling iron almost instantly, and what is more, the irons are brought to the exact heat required by means of an automatic cut off which prevents overheating. Just at present, what mainly prohibits the more general use of electricity is the cost of original installation. Most of the electrical equipment companies are, however, bringing the prices down more and more every year, and in the near future doubtless the use of electricity will be universal even in the poorest households.

MARTHA CUNNINGTON.