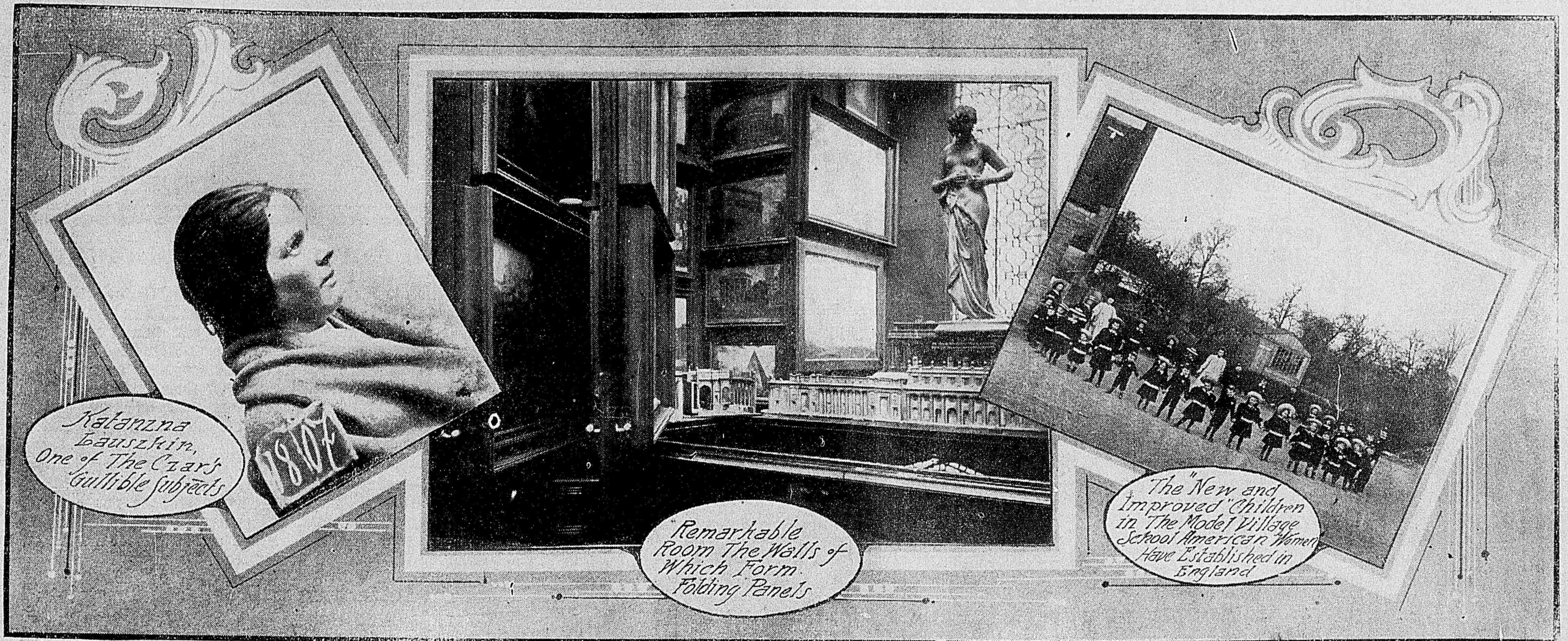


The Saturday "News" Special Foreign Service.



Katerina
Lauskin,
One of The Czar's
Gullible Subjects

Remarkable
Room The Walls of
Which Form
Folding Panels

The New and
Improved "Children
in The Model Village
School American Women
Have Established in
England

American Women Give England A Model Village School.

Special Correspondence.

LONDON, Sept. 24.—Two American ladies are setting England an example in the reform of the village school. They are Mrs. Victoria Woodhull Martin and her daughter Miss Zula Maud Woodhull. Mrs. Martin is better known in America as Victoria Woodhull, under which name she made a great fight half a century ago for the vote for women. It will be remembered that she was the only woman who was ever nominated for the presidency of the United States. Mrs. Woodhull and her daughter are teaching England a lesson on their beautiful estate at Norton Park, in Wiltshire. This estate is now the property of Miss Woodhull, having been left to her by John Biddulph Martin, the millionaire banker, who married Victoria Woodhull nearly 30 years ago. The Martin family have been large landowners in that part of Wiltshire for many generations.

Some years ago Miss Woodhull and her mother gave to the county the school at Norton Park, which was one of the poorest in England. They turned it over to the county education committee and for years it was in the hands of the county council. The children were taught little, the teacher was underpaid and overworked and the sanitary conditions were such that it is enough to say that most of the English villages today the physique of the school children is much inferior to that of the school children of the towns.

NEVER HEARD OF FROEBEL.
About a year ago Victoria Woodhull and Miss Woodhull paid a visit to the school and what they found there. The children were dirty and their health was suffering. The two women at once put themselves in communication with the county education committee and placed the school before them. They proposed that the kindergarten system of teaching should be introduced at once, that competent teachers should be engaged and that the school should be regularly inspected by a school board. She offered to bear any extra expense which might be entailed by these reforms, but the county education committee stood on its dignity and declared that what was good for the declared that what was good for the rest of Wiltshire was good enough for Norton. Their reply to the suggestion that the kindergarten method should be introduced was that they had never heard of a teacher named Froebel, and that they did not propose to introduce any new and untried method of teaching in Wiltshire.

RUN SCHOOL THEMSELVES.
It wasn't the American way to take a school like this and the demand for reform was pressed. Finally the education committee told the two women that if they didn't like the way the school was run they could take the chance of setting an example for other village schools, and today Brecon's Norton has the distinction of being the first village school in England. The first step was to clean up the building, which had been allowed to fall into a semi-ruinous condition, and to replace the old village teacher by two trained kindergarten teachers from the best training college in London. In fact, the two young women who are teaching the children of the Worcester-shire peasants in Brecon's Norton have received exactly the same training as the governess who is educating the Princess children of the Prince and Princess of Wales. Every appliance that could be thought of to make teaching easier has been supplied. They march down to the strains of a high class auto piano, the teacher thus being free to devote all her attention to the marching and dancing, and they

listen to Tetrastini, Melba and other great artists as interpreted by the best gramophone that money can buy.

DUNCES NOW MODEL PUPILS.

A doctor examines them once a week and any defect of vision or incipient illness is at once noted and attended to. One result is that children who under the old school methods were classed as dunces have developed into model pupils, because the eye weakness which caused their apparent dullness has been discovered and remedied. The walls of the school are covered with good pictures and arrangements are being made to bring lecturers down from London to talk to the children and to illustrate their talks by magic lantern exhibitions. A beginning has been made already in the lecture course. Last winter one of the teachers, Mrs. Woodhull, made a trip to Rome and since her return she has been able to take the children over the ground she traveled with the aid of photographs and magic lantern slides.

LESSONS IN FARMING.

Practical teaching is not forgotten in the Brecon's Norton school. Most of the children are the sons and daughters of farm laborers and their lot in life will be cast on the farms. There is a garden attached to the school and the children receive regular lessons in gardening and in the lighter kinds of farming. The girls are taught butter making and the care of poultry. Nature study is the excuse for delightful rambles in the woods and fields.

COUNCILORS ARE CONVERTED.

The most surprising thing of all is that the Worcester-shire county councilors are fast becoming converted to the new state of things. One after another they are informing Mrs. Martin that they are astonished at the progress the Brecon's Norton children are making and that they are sorry they did not accept her suggestions at first. They are even talking about taking Brecon's Norton as a model for the rest of the county. And it is no wonder that they have been converted. A year ago the children were ragged, dirty and ignorant. Today they are clean in mind and body, and their intelligence is the same as the children of the towns. The progress that they have made is a standing contradiction to the statement that the children of the English agricultural laborers. It seems to be only a question of catching them young enough.

GREAT SCOPE OF WORK.

The village school is only a part of the work Victoria Woodhull and her daughter are carrying out at Norton Park. The old manor house has been turned into a woman's agricultural club and training school, where a couple of scores of women are studying. The estate of 5,000 acres is being split up into small holdings ranging in size from 15 to 40 acres, which will be let to men who are competent to make the most of the land and to apply the discoveries of modern science to its cultivation. Their aim is to make Norton Park the center of a great educational movement which will help to regenerate England, and their hope is that the other English landowners will follow in their footsteps.

"We wish to revive the old motto 'noblesse oblige,'" said Victoria Woodhull to the writer. "The great families of England have duties which they have forgotten. Their lives are given up to the pursuit of pleasure and they never give a thought to the welfare of the thousands of human beings for whom they are responsible."

"I find that our neighbors are watching our experiments with the keenest interest and many of them would like to follow our example. Some of them are afraid that we are going too far and say that they cannot follow us. There is not one who could not do the same if they would only give up a little of the useless luxury by which they are now surrounded and fettered." Miss Woodhull has a large estate in South Carolina, where she will probably repeat the object lesson she is now teaching in England. It is so far away that it will not require her undivided attention.

JOHN S. STEELE.

ROMANCE OF A LONDON BACKWATER

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Charles Dickens's Granddaughter Writes For This Paper an Account of One of The Most Interesting and Least Known Corners of the Great City Dickens Loved.

Special Correspondence.

LONDON, Sept. 21.—It is always a curious experience in a small way to pass from Holborn down the narrow little passage called Great Turnstile into Lincoln's Inn Fields. Full of contrasts, startling and dramatic as London is, it offers no change that is more picturesque and suggestive than that presented here. At one moment the wayfarer stands in the full tide of London life, and the great stream rushes by him with its hurry and roar. A sharp turn, a few steps and with the next moment he stands in the heart of one of London's marvelous silences. The quiet which broods over Lincoln's Inn Fields is the quiet of a backwater, but it is also something more. The great square has fallen from its high estate of a hundred years ago, but it has lost no jot of its dignity in the process, and there is a touch of pathos about its stillness and its loneliness. The atmosphere of a bygone day lingers here, strangely untinged by the modern atmosphere which touches it so closely. And as we enter up and down the gardens we feel ourselves slipping back decade by decade, until we come to the early years of the century.

But if the spirit of the past walks under these trees, his very dwelling place is close at hand. And we may visit him whenever we feel inclined in "the house and museum on the north side of Lincoln's Inn Fields, the residence of Sir John Soane."

LITTLE KNOWN CURIOSITY.

The Soane museum is one of London's little known curiosities. Many people have heard the name, few people have been to the place, and fewer still—strange as this would seem to its founder—know anything of the life which it was intended to commemorate. And yet it is very necessary to make the acquaintance of the man before his house can be fully appreciated. Somewhere about a hundred and thirty years ago the daughter of a certain bricklayer of Reading came to London to seek her fortune as a serving maid in the house of George Dance, a celebrated architect. For the schoolboy John Soane, little as he would have believed such a thing possible, might never have existed. And here, nevertheless, still standing where so much has gone, are his living rooms exactly as he left them. Here in the hall his son's unhappy wife sat waiting, hour after hour, for an interview with her father-in-law of which he has left us the painful record. The rooms beyond must have seen many and many a terrible meeting between the father and son. One of them must have witnessed the packing of those pitiful boxes.

Of the growth of Sir John Soane's remarkable collection we have no record, but it is easy to believe that it must have come in time to take that place in the lonely old man's life which should have been filled by his children and his children's children. And the impulse which prompted him to leave the greater part of his fortune to his treasures as it were to leave it for their maintenance and to preserve them inviolate—is one which need not be ascribed wholly to vanity, though vanity no doubt had its part in it.

DEVELOPED CONCEPT.

It would have needed a great nature to keep a just sense of mental proportion and a truly balanced mind through such a career as this, and unfortunately Soane the man was less than Soane the architect. He was inordinately proud of his success, he had an overweening conceit of himself, and he developed as the years passed on certain qualities—a pompousness, a petty spitefulness and narrow-mindedness—with which home happiness is incompatible.

He had married early in life a rich woman whose fortune had been exceedingly useful to him. She seems to

have been a gentle model of all the virtues, and had she lived he might have been a different man. She died, however, leaving him with two young sons. The older and more promising of these two boys did not live to grow up, and in Soane's relations with his younger son—who made a sad failure of life—we have a pitiful revelation of character. It is a revelation which the father himself has forced upon us and forced upon us in a manner typical of the man's vain and egotism. He left at his death three boxes of papers to be opened at certain stated intervals. Much curiosity was rife and many were the speculations as to the probable contents of these boxes. The first two contained nothing but private papers of the most trivial character. But the third box when it was opened proved to contain all the details of his long quarrel with his ne'er-do-weel son—details which should long ago have passed into the realm of things forgotten and forgiven.

CANKERED WITH BITTERNESS.

The life of the successful bricklayer's son, therefore, in its domestic aspect was a life cankered with bitterness and discontent. Such a life is not the less but the more pitiful when its bitterness and its disappointments are the result of character and not of circumstance. A lonely old age is not the less but the more sad when its loneliness is created by vanity, selfishness and petty spite. The house on the north side of Lincoln's Inn Fields has witnessed the life of a man who was not the less but the more genuine for the touch of sorrow which pervades them, and it gives only another interest to Sir John Soane's collection that it bears throughout the impress of a personality singularly and even pitifully human.

ROOMS WITH HISTORIES.

It is the personal note that sounds first of all for the imaginative man who steps across the threshold of No. 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, hearing Sir John Soane's story in his mind. Almost all the man's work has passed away. Most of the great buildings which he designed and which he saw in his mind's eye standing till London itself should be a ruin have disappeared or have been altered almost out of recognition in the course of swiftly passing years. For the schoolboy John Soane, little as he would have believed such a thing possible, might never have existed. And here, nevertheless, still standing where so much has gone, are his living rooms exactly as he left them. Here in the hall his son's unhappy wife sat waiting, hour after hour, for an interview with her father-in-law of which he has left us the painful record. The rooms beyond must have seen many and many a terrible meeting between the father and son. One of them must have witnessed the packing of those pitiful boxes.

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UNIQUE MUSEUM.

In the year 1833 he obtained an act of parliament which "settled and preserved" his "Museum, Library and works of art." And his object in doing so, on his own showing, was the benefit of future generations of students in painting, sculpture and architecture. Such students would have benefited more easily had he willed his collection where it would have been more widely visited and more generally useful. There is not the gratitude he has carved in the marble of the entrance which is genuinely indebted to him. To such dilettanti the most superb treas-

ures in an ordinary museum lose something by reason of their environment. The atmosphere of loving care and reverence which surrounds great works of art or relics of a remote past evaporates in the businesslike galleries and under the inevitable numbering and classifying which a vast collection entails. In the Soane museum that atmosphere reigns supreme. Sir John's affection for his "Museum, library and works of art" may not have been wholly of the pride of possession thing of sheer pride of possession doubtless leavened it. But it is impossible to stand today in any room in the house where once he lived without feeling that the very joy of a man's life once centered in the things that room contains. And all our sympathy must needs go out to meet their silent claim.

JUST AS OWNER LEFT IT.

Exactly as Sir John Soane left them in 1837, those rooms remain today. The very carpet which we tread upon as we go into the library Soane trod upon when he walked across the floor for the last time, and the very thing that we see, we see just as his owner must have seen it in his mind's eye when his bodily eyes grew dim in death in an upper room in the same house.

The dining room and library form a large double room. Sir John was naturally his own architect, and in the description of this house, which he compiled and which lies upon the library table he dwells at length upon its architectural advantages. Those students for whom he wrote doubtless follow his details with due appreciation, but the average visitor will only observe that this room in particular is nobly proportioned and that the space available is used to the utmost advantage. This latter feature is a characteristic of Sir John Soane's work, and we shall find it curiously exemplified later on.

The first object which catches our eye as we go into the room is a portrait of Sir John Soane himself by Sir Thomas Lawrence. Its position may be significant, but unfortunately the portrait is indistinctly facing it is a very fine Sir Joshua Reynolds. But the most beautiful thing in this room is a magnificent manuscript dated about 1540, illuminated with marvelous delicacy and art by Giulio Clovio. Clovio's work is as rare as it is exquisite, and no one need wish to see a more perfect example of his skill. And now at the very outset appears the catholicity of Sir John Soane's taste. Many of the most beautiful pictures, many men collect both; but Sir John Soane collected everything. From the Clovio manuscript we may turn to a very remarkable bust of Napoleon as First Consul—remarkable in its singular likeness to the face we know as Napoleon in later years. When we have studied the bust our attention will be attracted by an admirable specimen of Chippendale furniture, or perhaps by some curious chairs of early eighteenth century English workmanship, beautifully inlaid with mother of pearl.

SCORES OF TREASURES.

The breakfast room opens out of the dining room, and here are more manuscript treasures—illuminations glowing with color now, as they glowed under the eyes of the man who placed them here nearly a hundred years ago, and as they glowed afresh from the hand of the artist who created them in the thirteenth century. Another Napoleon relic hangs on the wall. It is a Turkish pistol, and is said to have been taken by Peter the Great from a Turkish sultan and to have been given to Napoleon by Alexander the First at the treaty of Tilsit. Next to it on either side hang portraits of Napoleon—probably the earliest and latest portraits extant—the latter a miniature by Isabey. There is much more to see in this little room—the detailed catalogue of the Soane museum fills several columns—and some time will probably have elapsed before Sir John Soane's

(Continued on page eighteen.)

Amazing Gullibility of Peasants In the Czar's Back Country.

Special Correspondence.

MOSCOW, Sept. 15.—Nothing could illustrate the hopeless credulity and gullibility of a large proportion of the czar's "backwoods" subjects—40 per cent of whom can neither read nor write—than a handful of tales, some amusing and some of gruesome tragedy, that have lately come to the writer's notice. You get between the lines of them a glimpse of the real conditions that make Russia a mystery to the outside world.

In many of the remotest Russian towns the small commercial traveler, or factor as he is called, is depended on chiefly by the natives for news of the outside world. A short time ago one of these factors arrived at the village of Plasenko, in the government of Volhynia, where he was met by an eager crowd and pestered for news. There was none to tell, but for a factor to say he has no news, is, in Russia, paramount to a declaration of bankruptcy, so the factor—whose name was Szmul—scratched his head and looked very wise. "Well," he said, finally, "I don't know if I ought to tell it, because the excise man said it ought to be kept a secret."

Szmul sat in his cart, blowing cigar smoke through his nose and looking dreamily towards the west, while the crowd coaxed him to continue. At last he spoke.

"You see gentlemen," he began, "the czar, it seems, is very pleased with all the men in Volhynia. They sit quiet and don't encourage the Socialists, and the czar likes that. He means to reward you, and recently sent for the excise man to ask what he thought you'd like best. Of course he said 'vodka.'"

Here a murmur of delight interrupted him. Then he went on.

"The czar said you should have free vodka, and as much as you like. He wrote it out with his own hand, and the excise man showed it to me. To-morrow you must go to the cross roads and lie between this and Elizabethgrad, just 12 versts away, and take all the bottles you've got. The excise man will be there waiting for you, and will give you as much drink as you can carry."

The whole village believed this absurd story, and nearly drank them-

through Plasenko and the adjoining villages any more.

EXPECTED A PARDON.

The credulity of the czar's subjects, mingled with a half-savage love of crime, provided punishment does not follow, often results in strange acts. I have just heard of a case of a young peasant boy of 18, who reported to the gendarmes of a village in Mowhew that his father had been murdered. The father's body was found, terribly mutilated. A hatchet lay close by covered with blood. A few questions elicited the fact that the only person who had been near the dead man was his son, who ultimately admitted having killed his father. The boy's behavior during the subsequent trial was so quiet and indifferent that the judges remarked upon it. When sentenced to 20 years' exile in Siberia (the heaviest sentence that can be imposed except under martial law) he became terribly excited, and declared that it could not possibly be true because the czar had promised to pardon him.

The lad was regarded as insane, but the priest who visited him learned that he had gone to a fair some weeks before the murder and met a "porok" (a kind of prophet) who had told him his future in consideration of a present of eggs. The lad was under the special protection of the czar, and could do anything he liked without being punished for it, because the ruler had just issued an ukaz to the effect that he would forgive all male subjects under 21 for any crime they might commit within the following six months. The lad, who had hitherto been a quiet sort of boy, set to racking his brains as to what big crime he might commit, since no punishment would be meted out to him. At last he told the priest he thought of killing his father, as that seemed to him the greatest possible crime. He bore no grudge against his parent, "but," he said, "it seemed to me a chance to throw away. I planned it for a long time, as it was hard to be alone with him—some of my brothers or sisters were always with him. To the very day of his starting for the mines, he hoped the czar's pardon would come, and told the priest he was sure that the people entrusted with it had been killed, and that one day he would get it. If this sentence is ever day manifested, he will certainly believe that it is the long lost pardon coming from the czar."

BRUTAL MURDER.

A similar case happened a week or two ago at Vilna, where there are large barracks. Attached to one of the barracks was Gen. Lykowsky, a staff officer who lived in a villa surrounded by a pine wood on the outskirts of the town. One night, at about 3 o'clock, a policeman who was on duty near the villa heard the sound of breaking glass. Fetching a comrade, they examined the house, but found it shut up and in darkness. After knocking for some time at the kitchen door, they learned from the cook within that she could not open because it was locked from the outside. The policemen forced the door, and in the kitchen they found a soldier in the act of murdering a woman. The soldier, a Lithuanian, was armed with a revolver and a dagger. He was immediately arrested, and confessed to having stolen 20 rubles (\$2) from the room where the murder was committed.

WOMEN ASSISTED.

The women were tried by court-martial a few days afterwards. The