

# THE COMMONWEAL

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

### NOTES ON NEWS.

THE Kaiser has quite fluttered the capitalistic doves by his rescripts. Of course we get the irrepressible article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, assuring us once more that we are indeed all Socialists now, and praising heaven for the House of Hohenzollern and this last development of Monarchism. Of course, on the other hand, we get the general "Pooh! pooh!" of the orthodox capitalistic press, both Liberal and Tory.

Most of them say, "Ah! Kaiser, here's an opportunity for you! If you would only be good like us English, and have free trade, then we would go to your Congress; then, at last, and not before, would be the time to consider whether our working population should starve or thrive—or, at all events, to pretend to consider it. For, of course, you will understand, that while free trade is a practical question to us, the questions you are suggesting of the duration of the day's labour, the conditions of factories, and so forth, have ceased to be practical questions to us since we passed the consolidation of the Factory Acts in order to make the Factory Hell respectable. And as to our working-classes, we assure you we are not at all afraid of them; they are sheep and like to be shorn, and if they baa a bit under the operation, our nerves are strong enough to bear it. Liberty of the press! Free competition! Unrestricted march of economic laws! Free trade! Imitate us and keep on bawling out these phrases, which cost nothing, and you will live peacefully and die happy."

Well, perhaps! And yet, on the surface of things, it scarcely seems likely that the Kaiser should set out on his enterprise of dishing the Socialists without some reason behind him, even if his step be only an electioneering dodge, as seems likely. It is not unreasonable to suppose that he is impressed, not to say alarmed, by the spread of Socialism, and feels that it would be no bad stroke if he could detach a considerable body of working-men from the Socialist party: a thing which he may consider possible in Germany, where the superstition of loyalty is yet strong. At any rate, if the workers refuse to bite at his phantom minnow, his "intentions" will help to respectabilise his position amongst the respectables of all Europe, and in no case will they cost him much. For who knows if the quarrel with Bismark is anything else than a bit of stage effect? W. M.

Some of our Radical friends have not been best pleased at our exposure from time to time of what hollow shams "Republican institutions" can be. A few weeks ago, when we wrote of the Argentine, they could say, and some of them did, that it was a new country, populated for the most part by a heterogeneous mass of recent immigrants, and still suffering from the effects of Spanish mis-rule. But if they read the reports of the National Convention of the coloured citizens of the United States, they will find that the Stars and Stripes is still the "haunting lie" it was before the war. That in spite of the blood poured out to free the negro, he is only technically free; that so far as he is concerned, "Republican institutions" are a sham and a fraud; that even in the Northern States, where he is allowed to exercise his "political rights," he is still ostracised and treated as a helot. Together with the position of the working-classes in France, Argentina, and the United States, this continued ill-treatment of the negro needs to be accounted for, before we can accept the adequacy of "Republican institutions" to the cure of social ills.

"Ivory is worth over £2,000 per ton, and those advertising 'humanitarian' brigands, Explorer Stanley and Co., have over 600 tons of it." That is how the Sydney *Bulletin* speaks of the sainted person who is an object of worship to Mr. John P. Brown and men of his kidney. Where is divine vengeance and the power of respectability?

The newspapers are talking of another "Carnegie free library," and are praising Mr. Carnegie to the skies because he offers a million dollars for the endowment of a free library. Well! as we have said before, we should like to hear what the sweated iron-workers have to

say about this "generous" disposal of their unpaid earnings. It is all very well to have free libraries, but they would probably have preferred to live decently first of all, and then to have built libraries where they wanted them. "Justice, not Charity."

M. Lemoine, the well-known French writer, has been speaking plainly to his countrymen, who have been so jubilant about the Russian alliance. He says:

"We foolishly take the northern visitors who flock to the Mediterranean every winter, under the combined attractions of sunshine and the *roulette*, to represent the Tzar and the Russian people; and there is no man to tell us that, behind these idlers and cosmopolitan tourists, there are millions of men far away in the north who know nothing of this superficial agitation, who are ignorant of our very existence, and who acknowledge but one master on earth, whose will to them is that of a god, and whom they are prepared to obey at the sacrifice of their life. We forget in our levity that we have no means of knowing the views of the solitary man who wields such crushing power, or the workings of his mind."

His utterance is quoted by the *Pall Mall*, with the comment:

"M. Lemoine is wrong in saying that 'we have no means of knowing the views of the solitary man.' The Tzar has expressed them frankly enough, and he never speaks without sincerity. If M. Lemoine does not know what these views are, it is his own fault for not reading the *Pall Mall Gazette*."

The *Pall Mall* has often enough been accused of being a Russian organ, but has never quite so fully and cynically avowed the fact.

The richest man in Germany, according to recently published statistics, is Herr Krupp, the notorious maker of (legal) murder-machines, whose income for the current year amounts to £279,000. Clearly his business has been flourishing in the past year, for a twelvemonth ago his revenue was officially estimated at "only" £219,000. It is a profitable trade, this tool-making for tyrants. How the poor devils who never get above skeleton-keys and burglar's jemmies must look up to and admire their big brother!

An Anti-Opium League has been formed in Holland, having for its object to bring public opinion to bear on the system of raising revenue from the farming of the opium monopoly in the Dutch West Indies. The manifesto of the League is signed by a considerable number of present or former members of both branches of the Netherlands Legislature, ex-colonial officials, and other influential persons. Anyone who has read 'Baboe Dalima' and 'Ran Away from the Dutch,' must wish all success to the League; though it is difficult for an Englishman who "looks at home" to say much upon the matter. S.

### NEWS FROM NOWHERE:

OR,

### AN EPOCH OF REST.

BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

CHAP. VI.—A LITTLE SHOPPING.

As he spoke, we came suddenly out of the woodland into a short street of handsomely built houses, which my companion named to me at once as Piccadilly: the lower part of these I should have called shops, if it had not been that, as far as I could see, the people were ignorant of the arts of buying and selling. Wares were displayed in their finely designed fronts, as if to tempt people in, and people stood and looked at them, or went in and came out with parcels under their arms, just like the real thing. On each side of the street ran an elegant arcade to protect foot-passengers, as in some of the old Italian cities. About half-way down, a huge building of the kind I was now prepared to expect told me that this also was a centre of some kind, and had its special public buildings.

Said Dick: "Here, you see, is another market on a different plan

from most others: the upper stories of these houses are used for guest-houses; for people from all about the country are apt to drift up hither from time to time, as folk are very thick upon the ground, which you will find to be the case presently, and there are people who are fond of crowding through I can't say that I am."

Bob just help smiling to see how long a tradition would last. He was the ghost of London still asserting itself as a centre,—an industrial centre, for aught I knew. However, I said nothing, except that I asked him to drive very slowly, as the things in the booths looked exceedingly pretty.

"Yes," said he, "this is a very good market for pretty things, and is mostly kept for the handsomer goods, as the Houses of Parliament market, where they set out cabbages and turnips and such like things, along with beer and the rougher kind of wine, is so near."

Then he looked at me curiously, and said, "Perhaps you would like to do a little shopping, as 'tis called."

I looked at what I could see of my rough blue duds, which I had had plenty of opportunity of contrasting with the gay attire of the citizens we had come across; and I thought that if, as seemed likely, I should presently be shown about as a curiosity for the amusement of this most unbusiness-like people, I should like to look a little less like a discharged ship's purser. But in spite of all that had happened, my hand went down into my pocket again, where to my dismay it met nothing metallic except two rusty old keys, and I remembered that amidst our talk in the guest-hall at Hammersmith I had taken the cash out of my pocket to show to the pretty Annie, and had left it lying there. My face fell fifty per cent., and Dick, beholding me, said rather sharply—

"Hilloa, Guest! what's the matter now? Is it a wasp?"

"No," said I, "but I've left it behind."

"Well," said he, "whatever you have left behind you can get in this market, so don't trouble yourself about it."

I had come to my senses by this time, and remembering the astounding customs of this country, had no mind for another lecture on social economy and the Edwardian coinage; so I said only—

"My clothes— Couldn't I? You see— What do you think could be done about them?"

He didn't seem in the least inclined to laugh, but said quite gravely:

"O don't get new clothes yet. You see my great-grandfather is an antiquarian, and he will want to see you just as you are. And, you know, I mustn't preach to you, but surely it wouldn't be right for you to take away people's pleasure of studying your attire by just going and making yourself like everybody else. You feel that, don't you?" said he, earnestly.

I did not feel it my duty to stick myself up for a scarecrow amidst this beauty-loving people, but I saw I had got across some ineradicable prejudice, and that it wouldn't do to quarrel with my new friend. So I merely said, "O certainly, certainly."

"Well," said he, pleasantly, "you may as well see what the inside of these booths is like: think of something you want."

Said I: "Could I get some tobacco and a pipe?"

"Of course," said he; "what was I thinking of, not asking you before? Well, Bob is always telling me that we non-smokers are a selfish lot, and I'm afraid he is right. But come along; here is a place just handy."

Therewith he drew rein and jumped down, and I followed. A very handsome woman, splendidly clad in figured silk, was slowly passing by, looking into the windows as she went. To her quoth Dick: "Maiden, would you kindly hold our horse while we go in for a little?" She nodded to us with a kind smile, and fell to patting the horse with her pretty hand.

"What a beautiful creature!" said I to Dick as we entered.

"What, old Greylocks?" said he, with a sly grin.

"No, no," said I; "Goldyllocks,—the lady."

"Well, so she is," said he. "'Tis a good job there are so many of them that every Jack may have his Jill: else I fear that we should get fighting for them. Indeed," said he, becoming very grave, "I don't say that it does not happen even now, sometimes. For you know love is not a very reasonable thing, and perversity and self-will are commoner than some of our moralists think." He added in a still more sombre tone: "Yes, only a month ago there was a mishap down by us that in the end cost the lives of two men and a woman, and as it were put out the sunlight for us for a while. Don't ask me about it just now; I may tell you about it later on."

By this time we were within the shop or booth, which had a counter, and shelves on the walls all very neat, though without any pretence of showiness, but otherwise not very different to what I had been used to. Within were a couple of children—a brown-skinned boy of about twelve, who sat reading a book, and a pretty little girl of about a year older, who was sitting also reading behind the counter; they were obviously brother and sister.

"Good morning, little neighbours," said Dick. "My friend here wants tobacco and a pipe; can you help him?"

"O yes, certainly," said the girl with a sort of demure alertness which was somewhat amusing. The boy looked up, and fell staring at my outlandish attire, but presently reddened and turned his head, as if he knew that he was not behaving prettily.

"Dear neighbour," said the girl, with the most solemn countenance of a child playing at keeping shop, "what tobacco is it you would like?"

"Latakia," quoth I, feeling as if I were assisting at a child's game, and wondering whether I should get anything but make-believe.

But the girl took a dainty little basket from a shelf beside her, went to a jar, and took out a lot of tobacco and put the filled basket down

on the counter before me, where I could both smell and see that it was excellent Latakia.

"But you haven't weighed it," said I, "and—how much am I to take?"

"Why," she said, "I advise you to cram your bag, because you may be going where you can't get Latakia. Where is your bag?"

I fumbled about, and at last pulled out my piece of cotton print which does duty with me for a tobacco pouch. But the girl looked at it with some disdain, and said—

"Dear neighbour," I can give you something much better than that cotton rag." And she tripped up the shop and came back presently, and as she passed the boy whispered something in his ear, and he nodded and got up and went out. The girl held up in her finger and thumb a red morocco bag, gaily embroidered, and said, "There, I've chosen one for you, and you are to have it: it is pretty, and will hold a lot."

Therewith she fell to cramming it with the tobacco, and laid it down by me and said, "Now for the pipe: that also you must let me choose for you: there are three pretty ones just come in."

She disappeared again, and came back with a big-bowled pipe in her hand, carved out of some hard wood very elaborately, and mounted in gold sprinkled with little gems. It was, in short, as pretty and gay a toy as I had ever seen; something like the best kind of Japanese work, but better.

"Dear me!" said I, when I set eyes on it, "this is altogether too grand for me, or for anybody but the Emperor of the World. Besides, I shall lose it: I always lose my pipes."

The child seemed rather dashed, and said, "Don't you like it, neighbour?"

"O yes," I said, "of course I like it."

"Well, then, take it," said she, "and don't trouble about losing it. What will it matter if you do? Somebody is sure to find it, and he will use it, and you can get another."

I took it out of her hand to look at it, and while I did so, forgot my caution, and said, "But however am I to pay for such a thing as this?"

Dick laid his hand on my shoulder as I spoke, and turning I met his eyes with a comical expression in them, which warned me against another exhibition of extinct commercial morality; so I reddened and held my tongue, while the girl simply looked at me with the deepest gravity, as I were a foreigner blundering in my speech, for she clearly didn't understand me a bit.

"Thank you so very much," I said at last, effusively, as I put the pipe in my pocket, not without a qualm of doubt as to whether I shouldn't find myself before a magistrate presently.

"O, you are so very welcome," said the little lass, with an affectation of grown-up manners at their best which was very quaint. "It is such a pleasure to serve dear old gentlemen like you; especially when one can see at once that you have come from far over sea."

"Yes, my dear," quoth I, "I have been a great traveller."

As I told this lie from pure politeness, in came the lad again, with a tray in his hands, on which I saw a long flask and two beautiful glasses. "Neighbours," said the girl (who did all the talking, her brother being very shy, clearly), "please to drink a glass to us before you go, since we do not have guests like this every day."

Therewith the boy put the tray on the counter and solemnly poured out a straw-coloured wine into the long bowls. Nothing loth, I drank, for I was thirsty with the hot day; and thinks I, I am yet in the world, and the grapes of the Rhine have not yet lost their flavour; for if ever I drank good Steinberg, I drank it that morning; and I made a mental note to ask Dick how they managed to make fine wine when there were no longer labourers compelled to drink rot-gut instead of the fine wine which they themselves made.

"Don't you drink a glass to us, dear little neighbours?" said I.

"I don't drink wine," said the lass; "I like lemonade better: but I wish your health!"

"And I like ginger-beer better," said the little lad.

Well, well, thought I, neither have children's tastes changed much. And therewith we gave them good day and went out of the booth.

To my disappointment, like a change in a dream, a tall old man was holding our horse instead of the beautiful woman. He explained to us that the maiden could not wait, and that he had taken her place; and he winked at us and laughed when he saw how our faces fell, so that we had nothing for it but to laugh also.

"Where are you going?" said he to Dick.

"To Bloomsbury," said Dick.

"If you two don't want to be alone, I'll come with you," said the old man.

"All right," said Dick, "tell me when you want to get down and I'll stop for you. Let's get on."

So we got under way again; and I asked if children generally waited on people in the markets. "Often enough," said he, "when it isn't a matter of dealing with heavy weights, but by no means always. The children like to amuse themselves with it, and it is good for them, because they handle a lot of diverse wares and get to learn about them, how they are made and where they come from, and so on. Besides, it is such very easy work that anybody can do it. It is said that in the early days of our epoch there were a good many people who were hereditarily afflicted with a disease called Idleness, because they were the direct descendants of those who in the bad times used to force other people to work for them—the people, you know, who are called slave-holders or employers of labour in the history books. Well, these Idleness-stricken people used to serve booths all their time, because they were fit for so little. Indeed, I believe that at one time

they were actually compelled to do some such work, because they, especially the women, got so ugly and produced such ugly children that the neighbours couldn't stand it. However, I'm happy to say that all that is gone by now; the disease is either extinct, or exists in such a mild form that a short course of aperient medicine carries it off. It is sometimes called the Blue-devils now, or the Mulleygrubs. Queer names, ain't they?"

"Yes," said I, pondering much. But the old man broke in:

"Yes, all that is true, neighbour; and I have seen some of those poor women grown old. But my father used to know some of them when they were young; and he said that they were as little like young women as might be: they had hands like bunches of skewers, and wretched little arms like sticks; and waists like hour-glasses, and thin lips and peaked noses and pale cheeks; and they were always pretending to be offended at anything you said or did to them. No wonder they bore ugly children, for no one except men like them could be in love with them—poor things!"

He stopped, and seemed to be musing on his past life, and then said:

"And do you know, neighbours, that once on a time people were still anxious about that disease of Idleness: at one time we gave ourselves a great deal of trouble in trying to cure people of it. Have you not read any of the medical books on the subject?"

"No," said I; for the old man was speaking to me.

"Well," said he, "it was thought at the time that it was the survival of the old mediæval disease of leprosy: it seems it was very catching, for many of the people afflicted by it were much secluded, and were waited upon by a special class of diseased persons queerly dressed up, so that they might be known. They wore amongst other garments, breeches made of worsted velvet, that stuff which used to be called plush some years ago."

All this seemed very interesting to me, and I should like to have made the old man talk more. But Dick got rather restive under so much ancient history: besides, I suspect he wanted to keep me as fresh as he could for his great-grandfather. So he burst out laughing at last, and said: "Excuse me, neighbours, but I can't help it. Fancy people not liking to work!—its too ridiculous. Why, even you like to work, old fellow—sometimes," said he, affectionately patting the old horse with the whip. "What a queer disease! it may well be called 'Mulleygrubs!'"

And he laughed out again most boisterously; rather too much so, I thought, for his usual good manners; and I laughed with him for company's sake, but from the teeth outward only; for I saw nothing funny in people not liking to work, as you may well imagine.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

## IN PARIS.

I HAPPENED to be at the *Bourse du travail* last week, to hear how it stood with the general strike movement, and when in the secretary's office, citizen Ribanier showed me a letter he had just received from a certain citizen (?) Bennett, or something like that, at the Board of Trade, London, asking for information as to the working of our *Bourse du travail*, as being of the greatest interest to him. The letter was written in tolerably good French, making allowance, that is, for misplaced prepositions, which sounded very harsh to an *habitué* of the *Quartier Latin*. No matter; Mr. Bennett (?) will improve if he comes into nearer contact with French Socialists, and it will do him and his fellow-Cockneys good if they persevere in their bold enterprise.

Having read the letter, my friend Ribanier asked for my opinion upon it. "Hem!" said I, "it looks very strange to me that Englishmen should come to us for information about our *Bourse du travail*, for the whole of Europe knows us as Socialists; and, this being so, must know that our aim is not to make use of this municipal grant to "settle" disputes between masters and employed, nor to find employment for the unemployed—which, indeed, would be impossible, as we have double the number of hands needed for the work at any time of the year. No! our aim is to fight the capitalists to the bitter end; and I am sure if you say this in your answer to Mr. Bennett, as no doubt you will, for it is a fact, he will not favour you with another such letter."

Having said so much, I burst into a hearty laugh, whereon the general secretary stared at me, and musically joined in the laugh, without knowing what was the joke. However, I soon became conscious of my breach of good manners, and grew serious as a lobster. "So," said I, "it seems that the English Tory Government will give a Labour Exchange to the people of London; and what have you to say about that, Ribanier? Or rather, as I have an hour to spare, tell me how Paris got one at first; that's more interesting."

Here is the substance of what the general secretary of the Paris Labour Exchange told me. "The first idea of a *Bourse du travail* was brought before the municipality of Paris, as far back as the 2nd of March, 1790, when the motion was defeated. It was taken up again by the *Chambre des Députés*, and met with the same fate, being defeated by 413 votes against 218. A few years ago it was resolved on at the *Hotel de ville*, the Government refusing to have anything to do with it. The Municipality voted £500,000 for one central labour exchange, promising several annexes in different parts of Paris, in proportion as the Budget would admit of it.

"Before we had this first building, working-men used to meet on certain squares called *grèves*, waiting till masters came to engage them. Now the masters do not come to us, for the good reason that, the market being over-stocked, they get plenty of hands coming to them direct from the country or from private registry offices in town. The *Bourse* can give but few situations, and it will never work properly unless the Government does away with private registry offices, and this it naturally won't do. Some desperadoes, labouring under a strong sense of injury, have blown up some of these registries, and have thereby done us no good.

"Only a small proportion of the workmen are organised in unions, and have a right to hold meetings here; 130 unions, or syndicates as they are

called, have joined altogether, but the great majority of the toilers are indifferent, and do not see the good they could do by banding themselves; for our object is not so much to find work as to see our way to a complete upheaval of this cursed favouritism system."

I took leave of my friend, who gave me as I came away the statistics of the *Bourse*, in which I could see that the officials are paid at the rate of 8 frs. a-day for eight hours work; the other secretaries are paid by their trades-unions, and, all considered, I think English trades-unions are far better off than the Paris ones. They are at home, and the police are not quite so ready to interfere; whilst here, if they are "rowdy," the police may close the building, as they did two years ago, when it was closed for three weeks and troops were camped in the streets around. This brutal interference of bayonets gave the *Bourse* almost a death-blow; working-men see they can agitate better in their own localities, where they are comparatively free. If Mr. Bennett would take the trouble to see for himself, instead of writing from a distance, he would soon find that all is not gold that glitters.

In most cases the groups, or trades, have so few members syndicated at the *Bourse* that they cannot afford to pay a secretary the whole day long, so most of them come there from seven to nine at night. Wouldn't it be better for, and more worthy of them, to meet in their own little hall where they would feel at home, and never be disturbed nor molested by any busy-bobbies. Every man supporting the funds of his trade may come to the *Bourse* to get a job; his name will be taken down, and when his turn comes— But why speak of his turn that never will turn up, considering that tens of thousands are out of work at any time of the year? You can get a job through the medium of a friend lucky enough to be at work, but I never saw a master inside of the *Bourse du travail* to look for hands. Why should he take the trouble of going there, when he has only to open his door to see numbers of toilers anxious to work at any price it may please *Monsieur le patron* to give them?

I will give you some day a list of the recognised rates of wages of the syndicates at the *Bourse*, and compare it with the real wages paid with impunity by the robbers. It is all very easy for the *Bureau* to publish a wage-tariff based on the strict necessity of a man's existence. It may have done twenty years ago, when all hands were employed, but then we were all law-abiding sheep, who thought of "duty" instead of "right." Now that we have a little sense, it is only to see how our tyrants are armed against us, and that we may choose between starvation and open revolt.

I would advise the secretary of every Socialist branch or Anarchist group to write to citizen Ribanier, *Secrétaire General, Bourse du travail*, 35, Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau, Paris, for a copy of the *Annuaire de la Bourse du travail*, which will be sent them post free. If the readers have still a little remnant of respect for the present scandalous form of society, I am sure that respect will vanish after the perusal of this book, for it is heartrending to read some of the accounts given by men of the different trades in this and other countries.

It is a puzzle to understand how a man can live, as in nearly every trade men are idle four months in the year. The book does not explain what they do; but I suppose they are cursing the kind government which secures to them the right of starvation. It is interesting to read it, not so much to know about the hours, work, wages, etc., as to notice the way in which questions are answered. Some of the questions are answered with scorn, some with pride, some again with a contemptuous silence; not one complaint, that would be unworthy the dignity of a working-man. They suffer and hate until the time comes when they will endeavour to make non-producers a thing of the past.

Georges Mertz, a young Anarchist of 20, got five days prison and 15 frs. fine for having, as a conscript, drawn a handful of numbers out of the urn and thrown them on the pavement in front of the gendarmes and the Mayor. When before the judge he was asked, "If the fatherland were in danger, would you defend it?" "No," was his answer, "for to kill a man, be he a German or an Italian, is a crime!" This took place at Dijon. When the judge was reading his sentence there were interruptions and expressions of sympathy with the prisoner, which does not look bright for discipline in the French army.

I hear at the last moment that the syndicates (trades-unions) of Bordeaux are going to start a *Bourse du travail* for themselves, independent of the one given them by the municipality, unless the municipality allows them to make their own rules and statutes. This is a good hint for Englishmen who think so much of municipal grants.

Paris, Feb. 9th, 1890.

A. COULON.

## ANOTHER SIBERIAN TRAGEDY.

INFORMATION has just reached London of another horrible tragedy in the far east of Siberia, at Kara, near the north-west coast of Tobolsk. Nadejda Sihida, formerly a superior teacher in St. Petersburg, had been condemned to penal servitude. Some copies of *Narodnaia Volja* had been found in her house. This refined and highly-educated woman was detained in the Kara prison, where of late many political prisoners sentenced to hard labour have been sent. Sihida was grossly insulted by the Director of the prison, but repulsed his outrageous advances with a box on the ear, whereupon he ordered that she should be stripped and flogged, a punishment illegal for politicals even in Holy Russia. The humiliation so afflicted Sihida that she poisoned herself. The women political prisoners thought they were no longer safe from insults. No sooner had Sihida killed herself than her friend and fellow prisoner, Marie Kovalevskaya, wife of Professor Kovalevskaya of Kieff, also poisoned herself. It is said that other women destroyed themselves after the flogging of their companion, but of this there is as yet no certain evidence, though it is probably true. A few miles from the women's prison is the men's, and the inmates have contrived to establish communications. It is supposed that when the men heard of the flogging and subsequent suicides, some burst of indignant sorrow naturally took place, and this, of course, was sure to be followed by violent and brutal suppression. In any case, the procurator, whose functions are somewhat similar to that of an English sheriff, the colonel of the gendarmes, and the surgeon of Chita were summoned in hot haste to Kara. One of the letters says that every day the situation of the exiles in Siberia becomes more and more difficult. The position has now become so critical that they do not know if to-morrow they will not be involved in some affair which will result in their dying at the point of the bayonet.