DARK DUNGEONS.

SOME ACCOUNT OF RUSSIAN PRISON.

The London Globe says:

The Tower of London and Westminister Abbey arouse to the minds of most Englishmen very much the same sort of interest. They are both to be regarded with affectionate reverence as mementoes of a past that cannot be recalled. To repeat the dramas that were enacted in the old fortress, that were a palace and prison in one, or to repeople its narrow cells, is, we feel, as impossible as to give life to the dry bones of our departed kings and queens, poets and politicians. We have got to associate state prisons such as the tower with an almost mediaeval age, with joints and tornaments and knight errantry. With us they went out—or at any rate the horror and romance of them went out—with rugs and trunk hose, and habeas corpus, which unlocked the doors of the white tower, and made it impossible to pack off people to the "Little Ease" without rhyme or reason, seems to us unromantic matter-of-fact Englishmen of the present day as the work of another age; to divide us, as it were, from another England. In Russia, the contemplation of a state prison suggests no reflections of this nature. A Moscovite, with a historical bent, who meditates outside the walls of Schlusselbourg or the fortress of Sts. Peter or Paul, may trouble himself with the occupants of those old grim state prisons; but his thoughts are much more likely to run on the condition and future of their present tenants. For there is little to choose between their past and every-day incidents of their present. The latter are just as terrible just as romantic, if we like to use the term, as the former.

These dungeons—or, at least, a fair number of them—had their political prisoners in the days when our dukes and earls carved their names on the Tower walls, and ladies of high degree were rowed under Traitor's gate at the dead of night, without knowing the why nor the wherefore, and they have them still. A Londoner can read the romantic history of Lady Jane on the stone of her cell: but the native or the stranger who has penetrated by hook or by crook beyond the outer walls of the fortress of Schlusselbourg and is so venturesome as to ask to be shown the dungeon of little Ivan VI, is as likely as not to be told he cannot see it, because it is at present in the occupation of some prisoners of state. Very few, however outside the circle of those officials whose unpleasant duty is to guard its secrets, are admitted within the walls of Russian state prison. It is as hard to get in (save as a prisoner) as to unlock the gates of a castle in the Arabian Nights without possessing the charm. State prisons in Russia being fortresses as well, application for admission to them has to be made to the minister for war rather than to the minister of justice. This great official is pretty sure to resent to the tourist's curiosity. He will probably tell him that neither Schlusselbourg nor the fortress of Sts. Peter and Paul possess any real interest for the stranger, and if he yields at least to his importunity he will take very good care that he penetrates but a very little way into the secrets they conceal. The commandant of the fortress, to whom the special order for admission is shown, will probably on his part, evince no little reluctance to admit the privileged stranger—for it need hardly be said that no ordinary tourist is thus honored. And no wonder. Could the stones of the vaulted passages which echo under our tread speak in articulate language they would have a story to tell that might eclipse the romances that gathered round the Bastile or the tower. When Custine visited the fortress of St. Petersburg in 1839 there were unfortunate wretches incarcerated in the dungeons hollowed out under the Neva who had been there since the days of the First Alexander. They had ceased to be men and were only numbers. Some of them had forgotten their own titles and designations, while the crimes they had committed, or which had been made the excuse for their confinement, were quite unknown to the goalers who guarded them.

Schlusselbourg was not always so called. When in possession of the Swedes it was named Notenbourg, and was only reduced by the troops of Peter the Great after a week's bombardment and a desperate assault. The captors changed its name to Schlusselbourg, as being the key Ingria and Finland. It is built on a shelving rock in the middle of the Lake Ladoga, which it entirely commands, so that its possessor must necessarily be master of the Neva and the capitol. Its situation is one of the natural curiosities of Russia, and has naturally commended it to the Russian authorities at all times as a place of confinement for prisoners of the higher rank and consequence, whose safe custody is a matter of the utmost moment. To foreigners it is best known as the prison-house of the unfortunate Ivan VI, and the scene of the crime of the Empresses Elizabeth and Catahrine. Ivan Antonovitch whose only crime was that the Empress Anne twelve days before her death had declared him heir to the throne, was, on the usurpation of Elizabeth, seized and confined. First in the fortress of Riga and then in Oranienburg. Thence he was brought for greater security to Schlusselbourg, where he was imprisoned in a subterranean vault entirely deprived of daylight and air. When Peter III, shortly before his own dethronement and assassination, paid him a secret visit in his dungeon, and asked him what he wished for, he answered "to have more air." The emperor, touched by his moving complaint, planned a little circular palace in front of the fortress, in the center of which was to be a garden, so that the boy's craving for light and air should be in some way gratified. The idea, however, was never carried out, and subsequently it was used by Catharine as an accusation against Peter himself, and was made one pretext for his assassination. When Peter visited Ivan he was aged rather more than twenty years and had never seen the light of day since he was fourteen months old. The emperor, according to Baron Korf, who relates the interview, asked him several questions. Among others, "Who are you?"—"I am the Emperor." "Who put you into prison, then?"—"Vile, wicked people." "Would you like to be Emperor again?"—"Why not? I should then have fine clothes and servants to wait on me." "But what would you do if you were Emperor?"—"I would cut off the heads of all those who have wronged me." The idea that one day a conspiracy might reverse the position of Inan and Catharine continually haunted the Empress; and the guard of Schlusselbourg were furnished with orders to put the boy to death if any attempt should be made to convey him away. This order was carried into effect when the conspirator Mirovitch forced his way into the dungeon. He was confronted with the bleeding body of the murdered prince. So intent are the Russian police on ferreting out the crimes against the state that offences against the society often pass unnoticed. Pickpockets seem to enjoy an almost perfect immunity, while Russian prisons are crowded with persons charged with crimes and misdemeanors unknown to our law. In the old days of serfage the goals were filled with miserable monjiks, charged with having run away from their "lord;" while at the present time offences against the passport system are accountable for a large proportion of those consigned by the authorities to durance vile. At the Ostrog prison at Moscow 1,110 persons were at one time described on the prison sheet as having been confined for being without a passport; a large number for having lost this most indispensable document; and a hundred or so for having "allowed the period to expire for having their passport revised." But, considering the frequency of petty thefts in Russia, the number of persons confined for these offences seems comparatively small. The middle-class Russian, whose purse has found its way into the fingers of the light fingered gentry, seldom finds redress at the hands of the police; on the other hand the rascal who picks the pockets of a Russian high up so the Tchin does so at his peril. The St. Petersburg sergeant-de-ville, in order to curry favor with a great man, will find his lost property at any cost. An official, high in authority, came to a police officer with the complaint that he had been robed of a packet-book containing 2,000 roubles in bank notes. He could give no further description of his property than that it was a red pocket book, nor could he even be certain of the exact number of notes in it. An hour had hardly elapsed when the police officer called upon him, and with a triumphant air announced that he had laid his hand on the pickpocket, and restored him property he had lost. The great man was profuse in his acknowledgments and promised to advance the man in his profession, but the latter had hardly left the house when, having need to take up the paletot he had worn, he found between the coat and the lining the pocketbooke which he had imagined to have been stolen, and for which an unfortunate wretch had been sent to prison. The police officer had simply bought a new red pocketbook and put 2,000 roubles of his own into it, thinking that the protection of so great a man would be cheaply purchased at that price. As to the pretended thief who had to play a part in the comedy, his false arrest and imprisonment was not a matter to trouble the peace of mind of the Russian police.

Mr. David Ayers, of Camella, Mitchell co., Ga., says his sheep, 3,500 in number, cost him annuall 14 cents per head. The average clip is three pounds of unwashed wool, which sells for 30 cents per pound, a clear profit on money invested in sheep of 90 per cent. His sheep feed upon pastures the year round which is worth about $1 50 per acre,

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The Milton council have passed an ordinance providing for widening streets, and also to prevent the use of asbestos or tarred felting roof material. They also provide that porches shall be 3½ feet wide cellar doors be put in level with pavement.

The New York *Herald's* Harrisburg special says Cameron ascribes the defeat of Grant at Chicago to cowardice. He was prepared to defy the National Committee, but was overuled by other supporters of Grant who feared the disruption of the party.

MADE HIM LICK IT.—A boy was stamping some packages at the post office in Macon, Ga., when a lady came in who bought a three-cent stamp, and then, turning to the boy, cooly asked him to run out his tongue. The boy did so, when the lady moistened her three-cent stamp, applied it to the letter, mailed it and walked off.

Lem Offutt shot his father-in-law, Richard Evans, at Georgetown, Ky., two years ago, the bullet lodged in Evans' spine, paralyzing him, and thus making him an almost helpless cripple for life. He said nothing about vengeance, refused to appear in court as a complainant, and it was generally supposed he had forgiven the assailant. But Lem kept carefully away him. This spring, Evans was able to ride out in an easy carriage; and it was observed that he always had a cocked pistol lying in his lap, and closely scanned every man who came in sight. He was looking for Lem, and on finally meeting him in the road, he sent a ball directly throu gh his heart.

Rhode Island has the following statute; "All marriages between a white person and a negro shall be absolutely null and void; and the person joining them in marriage shall be subject to a penalty of $200," Samuel D. Dorrell, a full-blooded negro, was lately married at Providence to Ellen Carrington, a white girl. The Rev. George H. Smith, who performed the ceremony, is to be prosecuted, in order to test the law.

An ourang outang lately exhibited at Munich amazed the people by its skill on the violin, until one evening a doubting visitor stuck a penknife into it, and as it had no effect, pulled its tail, which came off, bringing along a piece of hide. The disguise had defied detection for a week. The wearer was the father of the exhibition of the prodigy.

Behold the work of the infidel. The plank in the republican platform suggesting an amendment to the constitution prohibiting the states from making appropriations sectarian instuti ons, is the invention of Robert Ingersoll.—*Ex.*

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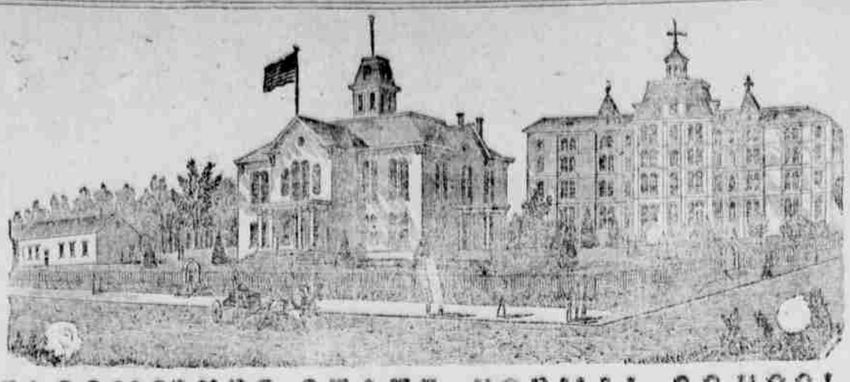

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