BIDWELL ON FRANCE

Interesting Account by Austin Bidwell of the Administration of Law in France.

Radical Differences Between Our System and That Which Satisfies People in the Land of Liberty, Equality and Praternity.

1873, are still in town. A Tribune re-porter called on them early in the week and had several interesting conversa tions. While listening to their absorb-ing and dramatic stories it was impos-sible not to feel regret that men of

such talents and such opportunities as they possessed in early life should have had so fearful a fate. Our reporter asked Mr. Bidwell what were his sensations on emerging from his imprisonment of twenty years. Mr. Bidwell is a man of magnatic personal. Bidwell is a man of magnetic personal-ity, a brilliant conversationalist, who speaks with a flow of witty and picturesque language that sustains the attention of his hearer. The interesting article we publish today is the result of several interviews. The reports which have reached us of the astonishing conduct of the judge in the recent trial of the Marquis de Nayve antirely corroborates. We Bidwell's account of orroborates Mr. Bidwell's account of that he saw. Different nations have different customs, of course, but it is revolting to our sense of decency to see a high minister of justice profaning his office by such degrading conduct. Mr. Bidwell has published an exceed-ingly interesting book of his exper-

ience written in a nervous and dramatic

style in the highest degree entertaining nd attractive. You wish, he caid to know what my feelings were on release. It would be easier to say what they were not. I had gone into prison a vigorous young man, I came out worn down. Youth was gone, middle age fading, old age already settling down upon me. Phy sically I was almost a wreck, intellect-ually perhaps not much better. The spirit in the Arabian Night's story who had passed two thousand years fastened up in a kettle at the bottom of the sea was not more unable to mingle with the world than I was, Something had to be done to pull me up again and it was thought that traveling would help me. I went to France and Italy to make myself a little less like a man who had just fallen from another planet and to find out what had been taking place in the world between my burial and my resurrection—a period of twenty-one

After a short stay in Paris and a few weeks on the Riviera, wandering on foot from Nice to Genoa, drinking in the happiness of mere life, gazing at and absorbing scenes of beauty unequalled in the world, except perhaps in the most lovely spots of southern California, the sense of existence gradually came back, and the feeling of humanity heran once more to settle on me. began once more to settle on me.

The Return to Health.

.No one who has not actually been through so frightful an experience can understand what the resurrection means from such a death as I had been for many years swallowed up in to light and to fredom and expansion of life, to joy and to the unutterable beauty of free air and free existence. Joy, how-ever, seldom kills. Happiness all men easily grow accustomed to, and in its sunshine the pressure of past misery soon grows faint and is gradually forgotten. The whitened hair and the faltering gait assert themselves, unaccustomed objects everywhere show themselves, faces we had known and loved are "lost awhile," others have come into the world and grown to manhood during the years when the blackness of easily grow accustomed to, and in its e blackness of darkness had encircled us, everywhere the world is new and we feel for a time that we are not of it; but gradually these changes, like the others, grow fa miliar, and we accept and fit into the

Prison life and every thing connected with it had burned itself too deeply into my nature for me easily to throw off the remembrance of it. I had so long resented the vindictive ferocity with which I was treated that interest of a certain kind still clung to all matters in any way belonging to such subjects.

I was curious to know something of

the attitude which France adopts to wards those of her children whom Mar tin Tupper calls the unlovely ones. I had read a good deal of it, but to see it with my own eyes was not easy unless, indeed, by qualifying myself in the way which gave me my English experience. which gave me my English experience. This way, however, was too objectionable to think of, and permission to examine is one of the most difficult of all things to obtain. At last, though, with a good deal of help, with a little expansion and a little judicious suppression, I succeeded, and with a general order from the minister of the interior to the administration of all prisons to permit me to visit them I started out on permit me to visit them I started out on a tour in quest of information. Not many steps were necessary to show me that French ideas on prison subjects

that French ideas on prison subjects are altogether different from those of England and America.

Ideas seem to change with boundary lines. Names which within one set of mountains are household words but few miles away, across a river or over a mountain, across a river or over a mountain, are not only utterly unknown, but even unpronounceable. The French are are not only utterly anknown, but even unpronounceable. The French are eternally boasting of their freedom, and would be delighted to force all other nations to accept it, but he would be a brave as well as a strong man who would attempt to persuade Americans or Englishmen to adopt it. Logal ideas and maxims which for centurie have been at the very foundation o have been at the very foundation of law with us are unknown to Frenchmen. Expressions in the highest degree idiomatic and full of meaning to ourselves are not only without meaning on the continent of Europe, but seem to be unintelligible jargon. Speak to a Frenchman about habeas corpus and it is like speaking to an Englishman about Nebraska or Oklahoma; he will think you mean a patent medicine or a new religion.

or a new religion.
Guilty Until Proved Innocent With us every man is innocent until roved guilty. In France every accused an is guilty until he proves himself to

proved guilty. In France every accused man is guilty until he proves himself to be innocent. With us no man can be compelled to incriminate himself, but in "La Republicque" no effort is spared to compel admissions. In all English speaking countries it is held better that a hundred guilty persons escape rather than that one innocent man should suffer, but in France and in all Europe the maxim seems to be "better that a hundred innocent should suffer, than that one guilty person escape."

The moment a man is accused of any offence an "agent de la surete."—in English, a detective—is sent to arrest him. The warrant is signed by the "Procureur," who in all his other functions correspond to our district attorney. He is assisted by a number of subordinates called "juges d'instruction" whose office, like their name, is unknown to us. Once arrested the procureur may order the prisoner to be kept "all secret," that is, in solitary confinement, deprived of communication with any one except the officers of the law. Emerging from their hands he goes before the judges where, after passing an unusually disagreeable quarter of an hour, he receives sentence and fades into seclusion.

Austin Bidwell, George MacDonald and Edward Noyes, on whom were passed so horrible a sentence in London for an injury to the Bank of England in scious power in reserve upon his resolute and close-shut mouth, shaded with a heavy black mustache, which seems to be typical of men of his profession the world over. My order gave him greta surprise for, for cofe reason which, no doubt, seems to it good, the French government preserves the pro-foundest reticence upon all matters re-lating to prisons and their administralating to prisons and their administra-tion. He received me, however, with great politeness, a circumstance due, perhaps, as much to my companion, an American in business for years in Havre and well known to the pferect, as to the minister's order. This, of course, would have been obeyed, but without some additional cour the great man some additional spur the great man would have seen no reason for any ex-

traordinary effusion. Tricky but Honest Officers.

I was glad to be brought close to a specimen of French beauraucracy, and to see and study at leisure one of those men, who in France, more than any other country, seem parts of a ma-chine working, intelligently, of course, but in exact harmony with all the other parts of the mechanism. He occupies a position in the "departement" analo-gous to that of Byrnes, the late superintendent of police in New York, and his salary is 6,000 a year—another cir-cumstance of similarity with the great New Yorker. One other point of likecumstance of similarity with the great New Yorker. One other point of like-ness completes the resemblance; he di-rects the movements of a police force whose purity may not perhaps excite fears of their early death, but who, on the whole, are quite unacquainted with boodle.

After a few minutes' pleasant conver-sation, the prefect sent for an "agent" whom he directed to accompany us. The contrast between this "agent" and his New York brethren was curious. The American would have shaken hands, declared himself glad to see me and as we started out would very likely have offered a cigar. The Frenchman took off his hat, bowed, and begged to know how he could serve us. Active as a cat, restless, his small black eyes actually burning in his head, his every movement seemed to be the preparation for a spring. The Rue de Paris is the great business street of France's largest port in the North, and as we went along it the agent seemed to have something to say of nearly every one,

Arrived at the station house, the cap-tain was told of my wishes and of the authority to gratify them, when he wistfully placed himself and all his be-longings at my disposal, to remain there until I wanted them. Nowhere in the world is there more hat politeness than in France, but the Frenchman who would really lift his hand to serve you would be a remarkable curiosity, in-

The captain, or Monsieur de Commis-saire, as his French title is, was a small man, nearer 60 than 50, with a sallow complexion speaking loudly of absinthe. and wearing iron-grey side-whiskers, the longest I ever saw on a man. His salary is \$400 and many a weary year of service it has taken to put him in so magnificent a position. And yet for him it is a good one. Frugality is the virtue, such as It is, of his class of Frenchmen. With 2,000 francs a year Frenchmen. With 2,000 francs a year he can have all the enjoyment he is capable of understanding, and when he is storytellers and theaters represent him, but such as he rarely appears. capable of understanding, and when he is superannuated, the certainty of enough to keep him from starvation. The room we found him in was a large one, divided in the center by a low wooden partition, behind which were a number of stretcher beds.

"You make your prisoners pretty comfortable." I said to him presenting to

fortable," I said to him, pretending to believe they were kept for that pur-

"What sir!" he gasped, " what sir! do you think we put prisoners in them? No doubt Monsieur has never seen a gendarmerie before!
"What are the beds, then, for, and

where do you put the arrested?"
"The beds are for night officers not
on actual duty; but for the prisoners, come, sir, come, I will show you how we lodge them." He skipped across the room and open-

ed a door at the end. "Here, sir, here is where we put our mauvais suiets.

I looked in. It is not easily to aston-I looked in. It is not easily to astonish me today, particularly in anything relating to police matters, but this time I was thoroughly astonished. A cell about twelve feet square, damp and freezing cold, filthy beyond expression, a small unglazed window high up, garnished with bars, and with a raised platform about two feet four the platform about two feet from the ground, was for the moment unoccu-pled, but did not long remain so.

"Do you mean to say that you put uman beings into such a place as hat?" I asked, shrinking at the same time from an iron tub in the corner, from which issued an indescribably abominable odor.
"Why certainly," he said, " why not?

ody gets in here but vagabonds It was at the moment when cholera was raging in Havre and ocean steam-

ers had stopped going there.
"Well" said I, "in my country you
would be indicted as a nuisance, and I
should think you would be all afraid of
being swept off by the cholera." Some Jail Literature.

I looked at the walls and saw specimens of the literature usually adorning such hotels. Among them was a la "Mort aux vaches!" "Mort aux tantes!" "Death to cows!" Death to Aunts!" I could not but wonder as this animosity towards animals so useful as cows, and towards relations usually so kind-hearted and indulgent as aunts, and the explanation showed that to be brought up among French people is not suffi-cient to initiate one into all the niceties of the language. Cows is the word employed by the usual occupants of the apartment to indicate what we call

stool pigeons, and aunts is the proper term to denote anyone who excites their contempt or indignation. While talking to the Commissaire, the rushed in, some of them holding a well-dressed man, who made no resistance and seemed less disturbed than any of them. Away flung the Commissaire and instantly developed a high excitement. He chattered and screamed like an enraged monkey. A score of questions were shot at the prisoner in as many seconds, and then he was abused for not answering between his coolness and the excited screaming of the Commissaire and his attendants.

He was an Englishman but spoke French with easy fluency. As soon as

He was an Englishman but spoke French with easy fluency. As soon as he got a chance to speak he said, "You have asked me a good many questions; which one would you like me to answer first?" Then the screams began once more. The commissaire jumped up and sat down agnin, picked up papers, threw them aside, upset his ink bottle, and finally asked him his name and country. While this questioning was going on I asked one of the bystanders who had crowded in with the prisoner wast the man had done. "He is an assassin, sir," but my informant was contradicted by another one, who told me that the prisoner had picked a man's pocket. At this stage a man

ing that he was the prosecutor, that he was the proprietor of an hotel and that the prisoner had cheated him by not paying his board.

A past master in the art of independence can scarcely conceive of any higner flight than for a French hotel keeper to complain of being cheated. And matchless effrontery of their own cheating, the certainty and skill with which they get at the money of every one who falls into their tentacles ought to excite a little symmethy in their bosoms toward their less skilful fellow robbers, but this one was as furious and indignant as though he had never sold St. Julien for Margaux, or charged two francs for a candle in his life.

He told the commissaire his story and the end of the matter was that the Englishman was thrust into the flithy den I had just been looking at. Here he would remain at least that night and perhaps the next one, too, lying on the raised platform, shivering with cold and suffocated with stench. From the

perhaps the next one, too, lying on the raised platform, shivering with cold and suffocated with stench. From the station house—pote de police—he would be taken before the juge d'instruc-tion to be interrogated. This was a performance I was anxious to see and I got an introduction to one of them to make myself acquainted with his meth-

Queer Practices of the Judge. The title of juge d'instruction is to our ears a little misleading. He is in no sense a judge. His office is not only unknown to us, but it would not for one noment be tolerated amongst us. The French idea is that the accused person knows more about the accusation than anybody else, and if posible he is to be made to tell about it. The juge d'in-struction is the official whose business it is to get their secrets from pris-oners and force them, by any means, to confession. Some of them have quite a reputation for their ability in this way, and nothing is more dreaded by the guilty than this "interrogation." Practice gives the questioner quite an astounding degree of skill, and the popular, probably the correct, belief is that there is no trick, no cunning, no artifice. no illusive promises .rom which they will shrink to entrap a confession. The juge d'instruction is a kind of educated policeman, with the policeman's cunning sharpened by edu-cation, and the not too scrupulous French society barely suffers him as a kind of hanger-on to its outmost de-batable fringe, where the respectable shades off into the doubtful.

The preliminary examination of the accused takes place with closed doors. No one is present but the juge d'in-struction, his clerk and the prisoner. The room is arranged something like a merchant's office, with a carpet, a couple of desks and a few chairs. As in all courts and rooms connected with the administration of justice in France, a large wooden crucifix is hung over the loor. Examinations take place at all hours, midnight being just as likely a time as any other. In important cases the juge d'instruction to whom police discoveries are at once communicated, will send for the prisoner at any hour, night or day, to ask him about the new

information.

The one I saw was a slender young man about 39, with very light hair, a white face with a frightful expression, a repulsive smile and a general Uriah Heep air. He bore an Irish name, and was probably a descendant of some was probably a descendant of some exile of Erin of "No Popery" days. In everything but his name, however, he was a typical Frenchman, the few words of English he knew being the result of hard work at school. He had heard something about the methods of the English courts, which he thought ridiculous. His surprise was great, though, when he heard that prisoners could not be compelled to speak against themselves, and wanted to know how it was possible to get at the truth. A Sample Examination.

While we were talking a prisone was brought in by a gendarme, and was brought in by a genuarme, and was invited by the juge d'instruction to seat himself on a chair by the desk. The judge sat down also, and I noticed that the light was arranged in such a manner as to fall on the prisoner, while the questioner himself was in the shadow., The time was evening, and the short October daylight had disappeared in the darkness. The pris-His ignoble face suggested nothing but cunning, and as the case against him was very weak, his cunning at present was not overshadowed by his terrors. He had been a prisoner for some weeks, and began by asking the judge to release him. I remained seated at a distance, watching these two men of lying, audacity and ruse, and mentally comparing the scene with such prosaid he supposed the prisoner was get-ting tired (ennuye) of his confinement, and asked him many and minute questions, promising to represent him in a favorable light to the judges and urg-ing him to confess, but the only answer he received was 'Je n'en sals rien'—I know nothing about it. Tired at last at the prisoner's obstinacy, the judge ordered him back with the promise that he should remain in jail until he came to a better disposition.

When we were again alone I asked the judge if there was any limit to the time an accused person could be kept. and was told thirteen months in the and was told thirteen months in theory, but in practice we sometime keep them as long as eighteen; if by that time we can find nothing against them we let them go.

It is perhaps presumptuous to criticise a state of things with which a whole nation is satisfied, but I have

since heard of cases where the hard-ship seemed to be crying. About the time I am speaking of, a young man, the owner of a boot and shoe store was arrested in Paris on a charge of theft. He was detained seven months theft. He was detained seven months when it was proved certainly that he was innocent, the real theif being dis-covered. He was brought up to the office of the procureur, where without one word of apology or sympathy, and one word of apology or sympathy, and without one farthing of damages, he was put into the street. His shop was shut. His employes had found the oc-casion good to make a little profit for themselves. The poor fellow was ut-terly ruined and in his despair he hanged himself. The papers mentioned the affair with scarcely any comment, and

the next day it was forgotten.

An instance was told me of the judge d'instruction's methods which will ex-plain better than much description French notions of what is proper and dignified in judicial investigations. Lying to Gain a Point.

dignified in judicial investigations.

Lying to Gain a Point.

In Vincennes a woman was accused of embezzling 30,000 francs, the property of her aunt. She was married to a man several years her junior, and, as is always the case in such marriages, she doted on him. There was no doubt of her guilt. She had taken the money to spend on her husband, but the judge's instruction was not satisfied, he wanted the husband also, and tried to induce the woman to implicate him, but in vain. She stuck to it that her husband was innocent. At last the judge sent for her again, and after a few questions he askeu, "Where did the money come from which your husband gave to Mademoiselle A?" "Who is Mademoiselle A?" asked the wife. "Oh, come now, don't pretend ignorance. You have told me a good many things which I know to be false and I advise you not to keep on tridling with justice. Don't try to make me believe you are not acquainted with Mademoiselle A." "But, I assure you, Monsieur le Juge d' Instruction, that I have never heard of her." "Do you really mean to say that you do not know Mademoiselle A?" "Certainly." "Oh, well then, I am sorry I said anything about her. I thought that of course you knew her." "But who is she? I desire to know." "She is your husband's mistress!" "What!" she screamed, "my husband's mistress! Ah, the wretch! Ah, the ungrateful villain. This is how he treats me for my kindness, is it! Very well, then, I have always said he is innocent. He is not. He is guilty. He knew perfectly well what I was doing and where the money came from." A deposition was at once made which she signed, and in a few moments her husband was a prisone. The whole story of Mademi

olselle A was false. No such person existed. The juge d' instruction was playing on the woman's jealousy, to get her to accuse her husband. Later, when she found how she had been duped, she tried to recede her charge, but was not permitted. Finally she was sentenced to five years' imprisonment and her husband to four, justly, perhaps, but by means which gentlemen among ourselves would as little think of employing as they would of committing the act which was punished.

The examination before the juge d' Instruction constitutes in reality the trial. The "instruction" is for the judges, and in ordinary cases the trial seldom takes more than a few minutes. The papers are sent to the court with, if possible, the prisoner's confession. The court each him if he action was a such as the prisoner's confession.

possible, the prisoner's confession. The court asks him if he acknowledges the facts read over, and if he does, sen-

The object of courts of justice in all countries is, of course, the discovery of truth, but methods differ widely. After learning how preliminaries are man-aged, the next thing was to witness a court scene. It is scarcely necesary to say these differ as much from ours as the Juge d'Instruction from any officer

Court Processes Described. The lowest criminal court in France

the "cour correctionnelle," embraces functions which we wide between the police court and the general sessions. It does ordinary police court business, judging drunks and fighters, and it has power to inflict sentences of five years imprisonment, but not more. It is compose of three judges, the president and two associate judges, who sit in robes and wear what seem to be Persian hats on their heads. At one side sits the Procureur. In the body of the court, within the bar, are the lawyers, each in his gown but not wearing wigs as in his gown, but not wearing wigs, as in England. The rest of the chamber is given to spectators. Over the judges' seats hangs the crucifix, replacing the sword in English courts, and to a considerable extent typifying the differ-ence, for, however objectionable methods in France may appear to us, the ferocity of England is conspicuously

Shortly before one o'clock the prison ers for trial were brought up from be-low. At once the three judges took their places. The president was Monsieur places. The president was Monsieur Fougere, a short, stout man, with a red swollen face, not unlike M. Thiers in figure. On his right sat one of the associates, an elderly man of no particular appearance, whose greatest duty appeared to be to look wise. On the president's left was the other, quite a young man, who merely coincided with the president's decision.

A few vaganonds were disposed of in as many minutes, and then a case was

as many minutes, and then a case was called for which the president was evi-dently waiting, for as the prisoner stepped up to the bar an expectant and gratified "Ah" escaped from the lips of His Honor.

The prisoner was charged with some

fraudulent trickery or other in which he had displayed a good deal more cunning than brains, and the prospect of

began to question him, going into every detail of his offence, laughing loudly, joking and calling the attention of the Joking and calling the attention of the filthy rabble who had crowded into the court room as spectators, probably because for the moment they were not there as prisoners. The louder they laughed the more the president joked, laughed the more the president joked, except that they were, if possible, more gesticulating, constantly appealing to the members of the court with a "n'est-ce-pas?"—is it not so?—but really intending his appeal for the rabble,

A Jocular Judge.

After completely exhausting the sub-

After completely exhausting the sub-ject and his fund of jokes he gave the prisoner's counsel permission to speak. The instant the lawyer began his pleadbusied themselves deeply with them. It must have been impossible for their honors to hear a word he said, but he struggled manfully to the end. When he sat down the papers were laid aside, the president made a pretence of con-sulting with the others about the sentence, that is he turned to the old man who nodded his answer to a whisper and then to the young one who exer-cised the muscles of his neck in the same manner. Turning to the prisoner the president recited in a breathless gabble the article of the code which con-demned him and finished with a senof eighteen months' imprison-

Not much sympathy could be felt for Not much sympathy could be felt for him, but the conduct of the judge was revolting. I afterwards learned that with the judges this kind of conduct is habitual. Their object appears to be to show their wit, or as the French call it "esprit"—a word which includes wit and cleverness and a great deal more besides.

The action of the court in the recent trial of the Marquis de Mayve excited the astonishment of the English and American press and some of the Paris papers have given the judge severe re-bukes for his unfairness and levity, but it will take something more than news paper scolding to make much of

paper scolding to make much of a change among them.

One provision of French law is altogether admirable. Every condemned man has ten days after sentence in which to appeal. He has but to notify the jailer who informs the procureur. Each department has a court of appeals situated in the "chef-lieu." the county town, and there the appellant is conveyed. The case is heard before a bench of judges, five in number, who confirm, diminish or increase the sentence as they see fit, and their decision is final. One further degree the case can be carried. The count de cassation may be appealed to for errors in form but it has no power to change the sentence. All this is done without expense to the prisoner, and if he has no money to employ oner, and if he has no money to emplo counsel one is furnished him.

Anxious to Get Into Jail. With the exception of our county jall rounders the prison class in France must be alone of its kind in the world. rounders the prison class in France must be alone of its kind in the world. In no other country do we hear of men who deliberately get themselves into prison with the object of being better off, more comfortable, better fed and better lodged. At the approach of winter the roving vagabonds who manage to dodge the police in summer, find sleeping in haystacks or in empty freight cars too trying for their delicate systems, and they accordingly prepare to return to their usual quarters, the county jail. Thieves by no means wish to get into prison. On the contrary, they are very sorry for themselves when they do get there, but the tramp who unwilling to work, is not ashamed to beg, looks upon the jail as his natural retreat in time of need. Nothing would induce him to steal in order to be found out. The law has very real terrors on that side for him, but he knows perfectly well how to profit by his asylum without running any such dangers. When freedom at last becomes a burden, and tightening his belt no longer subdues his hunger, he picks up a stone, waits until he sees a policeman looking at him and then smashes a tastiamp. Up runs the bobby and captures the tramp, who a few days after gets what he wanted. If he finds the sentence not long enough to take him through the winter, he waits until the tenth day, then appeals, which takes about ten days more, and hopes for better luck, which means a longer sentence as an appellant.

One reason for their anxiety to get

two or three months would furnish. His plan is simple, effective and without the least danger of incurring a criminal reputation. The penalties for insulting a court of justice are very severe. The intention of legislators was to prevent such offences. What they really did in making the law was to open an easy road to comparative comfort and a sure savings bank for several years to any who choose to avail themselves of the privilege. The aspirant to comfort and savings begins by breaking a gas lamp, the tramp's favorite locking-up offence. He is rewarded with perhaps thirty days, when he immediately informs the president that he is a pig, and in return for the information, is gratified with the two or three months he was looking for. If he possesses a trade he is sure of coming out with seven or eight hundred francs, besides living well in the meantime.

The court of appeals for the department of the Seine in which Havre lies, is at Rouen. A couple of hours ride took me to the quaint old city. The prison is in a suburb called by the singularly inappropriate name of Bonne Nouvelle, Good News, almost exclusive-ly occupied by German and Polish Jews the invincible, indestructible race which I had seen in former days in many an eastern city where in synagogues old Rabbis commented on the Talmud and announced the Liberator. One cannot help thinking where do the poor Jews of this quarter come from. How have they established themselves in this subthey established themselves in this stor-urb of Rouen with those stalls., of which they alone and the Auvergnats alone have the secret, those shops where the seller finds means to get rid of the un-vendable old pieces of fron, old buttons and pieces of wood and odd bits of ma-terial?

Inside a Typical French Prison. Passing the indescribable windows where hang the rags of the crowds that invade the sidewalk, and through swarms of children attesting the promswarms of children attesting the promise that theif seed shoun, be as the sands of the sea, I arrived at last at the prison, one of the largest in France, built by the first Napoleon. I was received by the chief warden, a very fine looking man, who apologized for the abceived by the chief warden, a very fine looking man, who apologized for the absence of the governor, sick at home. A moment later a number of prisoners arrived, some to submit themselves to the court of appeals. Ranged in a line the chief took their names and sentences. "Why did you appeal?" he said to one whose sentence was thirty days. "It was not enough," said the vagabond;" I wanted more. What am I to do in the cold weather? "Then you want to prolong the situation?" "That's what!" and he passed on. "Twenty-three convictions already for vagrancy," the chief said to me.

"How many prisoners have you here?" I asked. "About two thousand." "And how much can they earn a day?" "On an average, one franc, half (thirty cents) of which they may spend at the canteen. The rest is kept until their discharge. Some earn as much as five and six francs a day."

While we were talking a prisoner came from the inside and complained that he was not allowed to buy any-

ning than brains, and the prospect of tearing him to pieces seemed to give the judge an appetizing relish.

For a prosecuting attorney to roast a prisoner is nothing extraordinary. It is part of his office to make him as black as possible and to grind exceedingly fine the poor wretch who falls into his clutches, but with the name of judge we are accustomed to associate ideas of dignity and decorum, and their absence would shock us painfully.

Until the appearance of the prisoner. but for the difference in language I might have fancied myself in America.

From this moment all was changed. The charge was read and the president began to question him, going into every detail of his offence, laughing loudly, joking and calling the attention of the lithy application of the lithy application. dently.

tailors, binders, shoemakers, working quickly.

It would not be necessar: for them to do otherwise to be happy at liberty, but when at liberty, not o, e of them will retain in the feeblest degree the habit of work which they seem here to be accustomed to. I have often wondered what can be the spring so utterly warped in their interior mechanism. Some unknown influence seems to oper-Some unknown influence seems to operate in nature to produce human foxes and wolves and the best solution of the problem probably is the suppression of low saloons and a strong police force. Compared with the abject degradation of their lives without the walls, their condition is by contrast almost com-fortable, but to most men it would seem altogether loathsome.

The men are not confined in cells at night; they sleep in immense dormitor-ies, entrance to which is guarded by heavy iron doors. A bluish air was problem probably is the suppression of low saloons and a strong police force.

heavy iron doors. A bluish air was hanging in the room where a lighted match ought to cause an explosion. No bedsteads were there, but the floors were covered with filthy mattresses still more filthy blankets being rolled up at the head. The place was alive with vermin. I saw them crawling on the beds and clothing, and the stench, sev-eral hours after the men had left, was

appalling.
"How many men do you put in here?" 'About two hundred."

"They must be in a filthy condition."
"Why, sir, they are not too clean, of course. We give them a shower bath occasionally and that is all we can

manage."

Proceeding along the corridor we met prisoner who falled to give the usua alute and who was roundly abused by the keeper for want of politeness. The idea was peculiarly French. Here was a rascal proud and happy to work from 4 o'clock in the morning till 9 o'clock at night for 59 cents a day, whose one aim in life was to get money enough for a drupken surge on these rare consideration. admin file was to get money enough for a drunken spree on those rare occasions when, once a month he was allowed a day off; berating a probably better man than himself for not being polite. Had he been polite all was well, failing that, no abuse was too great for him. Reading to the Prisoners.

Beading to the Prisoners.

Down stairs we found the men awaiting trial seated on benches in a long stone passageway, cold and damp as a vault, the moisture trickling down the walls, covering the floor with wet and slime. At one side a prisoner was reading in a droning voice for the "distraction," in the French sense of the word, of the prisoners, and his tone was excellently fitted, I thought, to produce distraction in the English sense. A moment after, a bell was sounded and they rushed into a large yard for exercise. ment after, a bell was sounded and they rushed into a large yard for exercise. The day was very cold. A sharp frost was biting ears and noses. Pipes were brought out and lighted and all hands

was biting ears and noses. Pipes were brought out and lighted and all hands started to walk to keep warm.

Presently the door was flung open again to admit a new comer who was greeted with a roar partly of recognition, partly of derision. He was the most abject creature I had ever seen in my life. A tattered coat fastened with pins covered his shirtless body. His trowsers torn away from a little below the knees, left the rest of his legs naked, and a pair of shoes with no soles to speak of and well ventilated in the uppers did very little to keep his feet from the pebbles. Under his arm he carried the day's allowance of bread given him on entering. The instant he got into the yard he started off at full speed to keep himself from freezing.

While looking at the poor wretch with feelings of pity and compassion I heard a voice behind me say in English "Quite a dude!" The person addressed was evidently a man of great plety, accustomed to be what revivalists and Salvation Armyists call much in prayer, for he instantly offered up a short but fervent supplication that Heaven would blind him, blast him, curse him and damn him, and having finished his devotions he proceeded to observe that the new arrival was the bloodiest go he had seen since the last one. I turned to look at the speakers, and being turned I saw three as fine specimens of the blackleg and cuithroat as ever Baltimore produced in her plug-ugly days. Their dress and accent showed that our side of the water was responsible for them. They were from New Tork they told me, and when at home "hung out" at a serial sallors" bearing hours in

Water street, of which they gave me the proprietor's name, but as it is unknown to fame except perhaps as recorded in police court annals, I took no notice of it and it has escaped my memory. They were sailors and had come over to Havre and thence up the river to Rouen where they had deserted, been captured and were now held until the vessel was ready to sail, when they would be put on board again and sent off in her.

I have heard some swearing in my time and am not easily excited by any accomplishment in that line but so ingenious and elaborate a combination of oaths as formed their vocabulary was something fresh, and their cultivation must have cost them long practice and study. They had to sail, they said, and would go to the many adjectived Havre on the many adjectived ship and there they would desert again, but if compelled to go to the many adjectived sea with that many adjectived captain they would cut his many adjectived heart out of his many adjectived body before they were out of sight of the many adjectived land. Their looks could never bring an action for damages against their language and their deeds would doubtless correspond to both if they got the chance. But threatened men live long and I dare say the captain did not meet his fate that voyage. Sea captains are not too gentle as a rule, the forecastle of a sailing ship is not a paradise with angels, but with such inhabitants as these three thugs the crack of the captain's revolver is a better persuasive than all the precepts of the gospel.

One Assassin's Bravado. than all the precepts of the

One Assassin's Bravado. A short distance from the sailors a group had formed round a fellow who was keeping them laughing loudly. "Who is that jolly fellow?" I asked the keeper. "That is Bourdon who murdered his mistress a few days ago at Havre. He is waiting his trial at the assizes."

assizes. It was a frightfully cruel murder. While walking with the girl at night he stabbed her to the heart and ran. Forstabled her to the heart and ran. For-tunatily he was seen, chased and cap-tured. I had met many murderers be-fore but never any of such revolting in-difference. Going up to him I said: "Well Bourdon, how do you aink it will go with you?" "I don't know sir." he said, "You see I am innocent; the girl stabbed herself. But I have no money and can get no counsel so I shell have to and can get no counsel so I shall have to suffer. I may get five years. Not that I expect it. The sentence will probably be two, but I shall not be crushed if I get

"Don't you think it might be well to "Don't you think it might be well to look for something more? Murder is a serious matter. The law keeps a guillotine for that sort of thing." "Bah! he said, "What for a 'putin'?" "She may have been a 'putin,' as you say, but the judge will protect her life as carefully as Ma'a ne Carnot's."

He mocked at the thought and as I moved away asked me for some tobacco, for your French peasant's hand goes out as naturally as an Italian organ.

out as naturally as an Italian organ-grinder's. A few weeks after, I saw an account of his execution. He had gone to trial full of confidence, but as the case went on he grew anxious, then ter-rified and white, and when he was con-victed and sentenced he fainted. Cassation followed. Everything was found in form. His petition to the president was rejected and when his last morning dawned he had to be carried to the guillotte.

I came away feeling that if the French system is cheaper it is in the last degree demoralizing. In the various prisons scattered throughout the country there are always more than a hundred thous-and men confined, the great majority voluntarily because they prefer com-parative comfort and the certainty of possessing some money at release, to the squalor of vagabondage or the ne-cessity to work in freedom. cessity to work in freedom.

There are three grades of prisons.

The first like that of Rouen for mis-

The first like that of Rouen for mis-demeanors entailing no political dis-abilities. Next in severity are the maisons centrales corresponding to our penitentiaries. Incarceration in one of them brings with it loss of electoral privileges until restored. The last grade, the deepest and most terrible which can befall a Frenchman, is "travaux forces." This punishment is not inflicted in France. The forces is transported to the settlement of New transported to the settlement of New Caledonia near Australia, from which he is never allowed to return. His con-dition is that of civil death. From the to his family and to his country. Of course such a doom is the fate of only the most dangerous felons. Some ther

Habitual Criminals are Transported. France will not tolerate habitual criminals in her midst. Any one who has undergone four terms of impris-onment for felony for periods longer than three months is bandished for life to the same settlement of New Cale-donia, but is allowed to go at liberty on arrival. If he has a trade he can find work; if not the government employs him or a bit of ground with farming implements is given him. France gets rid of them. What becomes of them afterward matters lit-

The central prisons are twenty-two in number and they hold about twenty-two thousand inmates. Gaillon in the department of the Eure, midway bewen Rouen and Paris, about three miles off the railroad, is a village which grew up around the mediaeval chateau of the family of La Rochefoucauld. The present duke is the owner. In the interior of the courtyard a slab of marble let into the wall tells in a Latin inscription of the visit of Louis XIV in 1660. This was the spot first chosen for a refuge for Louis XVI, a place which he abandoned for his unlucky journey to Varennes. In 1798 the owner leased it to the government for ninety-nine years to be used as a prison. The central prisons are twenty-two

When France wants a prison instead of building a fortress like the English prisons she confiscates a monastery or hires a chateau. Tearing out the inside for dormitories and workshops, a few bars at the windows finish the work. Guards are set and the establishment is On the occasion of my visit the officer

On the occasion of my visit the officer in charge was one Beaunier. He had been about twenty years in the service and had just been promoted to the position of director. The grounds of the chateau are bartitioned off in small yards used by the inmates for exercising and the different squads are anxiously kept from becoming too closely acquainted. The entrance to the governor's office is through an old tower which has stood there more than six hundred years: Six centuries of the governor's office is through an old tower which has stood there more than six hundred years. Six centuries of grinning have not tired the old garginning to a step grinning to a with the day the carver left them two hundred years before Columbus sailed to America.

At one end of the room on a raised dais the "directeur," with several officials was sitting at a half moon table listening to reports of misdemeanors and to requests of various kinds from prisoners—"Why did you commit the act for which you are reported?" he asked one man. "Perhaps if I had been such an ass as you I would not have done it," was the answer. "Thirty days 'coachot' " roared the director and officers hustled the offender out. After the sitting I asked to see the coachot (dark cell). In a separate building the floor of which is three feet below the surface heavy doors gave entrance each to a cell paved with stone with no furniture whatever. The deathly cold chilled one even well dressed and merely passing. One after another I looked in and saw miserable wretches shivering, blue with cold, trying to keep their blood warm with walking. The only clothing they had on was what the establishment furnished, a cotton shirt, a jacket, vest and trowsers and on their feet a pair of thin slippers made from

worn out garments. If they want more they must pay for them. When under punishment extra garments are taken away. Nothing but this thin bit of cloth kept their feet from the stone floor, and their sufferings must have been lamentable. "How long do you keep men here?" "Well Monsieur, the limit it ninety days but there is a way to keep them longer. An examination of their offences can be put off from week to week so that they can really be kept ninety days more if the director chooses. Sometimes when he gets hold of a man he does not like he keeps him that way. At the end of six months few want any more of it."

More Prison Cruoities.

More Prison Cruelties

More Prisen Crueities.

After a short conversation he happened to mention the "oublicttes." I asked to be shown them. Going down a stone staircase of which I counted a hundred and twenty-two steps, when I began to suspect that the center of the earth could not be very far away, we arrived at a frightful dungeon, dug originally for who can tell what nameless crueity by some lord of the chateau in the brave days of old. Deathly cold, giving out the suffocating odor of an encased vault, black with Egyptian darkness, well might the man think who got there that he had left hope behind—"Surely," said I, "You never put men here!" "Ah, oui Monsieur, sometimes but not for long. Three or four days generally exhausts them; ten days would probably kill them, but we watch against accident. No one was in the dungeon at the moment but I could believe that an "accident" might easily happen in a good deal less than ten days.

When we reached the upper world ones.

lays. When we reached the upper world once more the men were filing from the va-rious shops to the refectories. In no French prizon is there breakfast, dinner or supper. The meal is called "la soupe," the soup, because nothing but soup is supplied by the establishment, the "soup maigre" made without meat

the "soup maigre" made without meat or any of the ingredients which in our minds go to make up what we under-stand by the name.

France has an objection to providing law-breakers with board free. What will just keep a man from dying of star-vation is given, anything more must vation is given, anything more must be paid for either by work or from the

be paid for either by work or from the prisoner's own resources.

In the refectory I watched the long lines as they walked rapidly in, taking their places at long, narrow tables, each row sitting behind another. Large trays lay on the floor filled with edibles from the cast and With the range of the cast and with the from the canteen. With the name of prison we associate usually the idea of more or less privation and suffering, but any one who visits the Callery

of more or less privation and suffering, but any one who visits the Gaillon refectory at meal time must modify for any such prejudice.

I hesitate to write for publication what I saw there. I expect to be told that my imagination serves me for facts, and yet I look down at the moment the articles I saw on the trays as they were quickly distributed to the owners. A cheap restaurant has not so many edibles, and I could not help thinking that the London board of prison directors would go into convulsions had they been permitted to look on.

Earning Good Wages. "How do you expect," I asked
M. Beaunier, "that they will keep
out if you furnish them with
such accommodation within?" "We

o not expect it," he said, we know that a certain class will "we know that a certain class will get into prison anyhow and we make them pay for their living. The government will not feed them, but it sees no reason why they should be starved or why they should be the only ones from whom no profit ought to be made. As a matter of fact the prisons are more than self-supporting. The canteen service of the state yields a considerable income. Scarcely anything is sold at less than a hundred per cent profit. We will not allow wine or tobacco, but the necessaries of life are furnished." In answer to a ouestion about the average earnings: "You shall see for yourself," he said. "In a few minutes they will return to the shops and then you will be able to judge." In one of the work rooms where a hundred prisoners were chair making I spoke to one intelligent looking fellow and asked, "How much do you earn a day?" "About six france. Sir." "Six frances." I exclaimed. much do you earn a day?" "About six francs, sir." "Six francs!" I exclaimed, "why a workman outside could hardly earn that much." "That is very true sir, but here we work much longer hours and we have no chance to 'faire la noce'—go on a spree. 'How iong is your sentence?' "Five years." "And you are obliged to save three francs a day?" "Yes sir." "Then at your release you will have between three and four hundred francs?" "Yes, sir." "What will you do with it?" "Well, sir, you see I am a tailor and I shail start a little business for myself." "Have you ever petitioned for release?" "Oh, no, sir. I am very well here. Out-"Have you ever petitioned for release?"
"Oh, no, sir, I am very well here. Outside I could only earn three francs a day and would have to support myself. I could not save a thousand francs in ten years." Little wonder that France has a hundred thousand prisoners. Not all, however, are so well paid as this one, but none leave after a five years residence without having a thousand francs and upword for a new start in life.

Passing through the office of the Monseiur de Directeur on my way to the hospital I stopped a moment to look at the library. Well as the body is looked after the wants of the mind get but scant attention. No such collection of useless, worn out, half destroyed books scant attention. No such collection of useless, worn out, half destroyed books hadl everseenin a junk store. "What do they want of books?" said the director; "what time have they for reading? On Sunday they can read if they please and f they wish for books they can buy them; besides they have something read to them in the refectory." I had noticed a prisoner sitting in a sort of a pulpit reading aloud while the rest were eating. The book was one of those sickly love novels with the broadest of allusions which in America would bring the Society of the Prevention of Vice down in fast metre on the seller, but which in France attract no atten-

tion, and this was about the only lit-erature most of them knew anything about during their detention. A Modest Dispensary. At the entrance to the hospital I was presented to the doctor who, I was in-formed, was a baron, M. le Baron la drosse. I was afterward told what, nowever, I soon found for myself, that the doctor was in a small way a char-acter. The old gentleman was accom-panied by his dog Toby, with whom he was generally believed to consult in difficult cases. However that may be, difficult cases. However that may be, the intimacy was so close that Toby's name had been conferred upon the doctor who was always spoken of as "le vieux Toby," old Toby. The hospital was one of the drearlest of dreary habitations. The dispensary looked as though fifty cents would buy all the medicines it contained, and the whole establishment seemed to have the genius of poverty resting heavily upon it. In a ward with walls so blank that one would thank his shadow for sometimes falling there, were two rows of

one would thank his shadow for sometimes falling there, were two rows of
cots, most of them occupied. Just as
I entered two stalwart prisoners
stepped up to one where lay the body
of a man who had died an hour before.
Not the slightest attention had been
paid him. His limbs had stiffened in
the position in which they lay when
death came. His eyes were open and
his jaw had fallen. The two prisoners
placed themselves, one at the head, the
other at the feet of the corpse and twisting the ends of the sheet to form a hammock, the body was lifted like a side of
beef on the shoulder of one who carried it in this manner to the dead house.
The next day it would be buried without the slightest inquirs, the doctor's
certificate of death being sufficient. In
the next bed was lying a man evidently
destined soon to follow. "You seem
(Continued on page 10.) (Continued on page 10.)

FROM WALL STREET TO NEWGATE, BY AUSTIN BIDWELL

be book a wonder to me."—Era Dr.
Denspores for all and valuable for great fibrest fibrest for all and valuable for great fibrest fibrest