

# AT ST. LAZARE, PARIS

NO GLOOM OR PATHOS AT THIS PRISON FOR WOMEN.

Many Cheerful Faces Seen Among Inmates of Dreary Place—Philosophy of French People There Exemplified.

Paris.—Henry Jones once said of the French people that their philosophy of life was 40 years ahead of the times. It is a philosophy that makes them receive good and bad luck with the same cheerful smile, the same careless shrug of the shoulders.

One finds it exemplified in its most hopeless environment at St. Lazare, the women's prison of Paris. It is a great, dreary building, this St. Lazare, but no one seems to feel any sense of its gloom or pathos.

Outside in the early morning will be standing a group of people waiting to see relatives or friends, a characteristic Parisian group: A young man of the Apache type, hat well pulled down over a low brow, very high collar and skin of that waxen pallor peculiar to the Parisian boulevardier; three smiling, coquettishly dressed women without hats, a clean little old man who talks to himself and emphasizes the monologue by beating with his stick on the pavement, and a sharp faced little girl whose red stockings hang down over a dilapidated pair of boots much too big for her. It is this last who speaks, addressing all the group:

"I've come to bring my sister some of her duds. She's been pinched again. It's the fourth time."

"Oh, well," answers the pale young man, "that's all right, little one. You will know the road when your turn comes."

When the smiling old porter opens the gates a nun comes forward to receive the visitors and to take the things they have brought or to allow them the interviews they ask for.

In a large room on the right are the clothes of the prisoners. These are all taken away from them when they enter the prison, to be kept until such time as the owners are entitled to go out into the world again. When the finery is all discarded the new inmate puts on a uniform—a coarse gown with fichu, a neat little bonnet—and wooden shoes.

All their weapons of charm are taken away from them—all but their natural coquetry, which no power can divest them of. Fichus are tied with care, hair is puffed out under the demure cap, and the first thing relatives are asked to bring to St. Lazare is a looking glass.

Yes, every woman there, no matter how poverty-stricken, old or ugly, has her bit of a mirror hung up in her

cell, and more often than not it reflects a happy, smiling and pretty face. They seem to enjoy this change of costume, and sometimes a newcomer will try a few steps in the wooden shoes when the sister in charge is not looking.

In one corridor are the women whose children have been born in the prison. The mothers look happy and the children are rolling about healthy and rosy as children anywhere.

"They do very well here," says the nun. "They are warm and comfortable and every one spoils them."

Next to the corridor of the babies who are born here is that of the old women who will die here, and very pleased with their life they look at they sit chatting of former successes



St. Lazare, the Women's Prison in Paris.

In the days of their youth and beauty in a workroom is a nun with two women helping her to mend linen. One is the girl who threw vitriol at a faithless lover not long ago.

"Yes," she says in speaking of it "I am sure he will lose an eye, though I only meant to burn his neck. I never do have any luck!"

The other girl is a tall brunette from the Midi, who has been here four times for theft. She stole first because her little boy cried with hunger. That sent her to St. Lazare for two months.

After that work was even more difficult to get. One doesn't come out of St. Lazare with a spotless reputation. When asked what she will do when she served her term this time, she replies with a bright smile:

"Oh, I'll have to go to Italy or some place far away from Paris now. I'd work if I could, really; I'd be a faithful and devoted domestic if some one would only pay me 50 francs a month. But no one will, so I'll have to go on stealing. One must live, you know." And the nun sitting by nods sympathetically.

## NEW KING OF ANNAM.

Eight-Year-Old Son Succeeds Feroocious Oriental Father.

Paris.—The news recently received that Than-Thal, the king of Annam, had been forced to abdicate in favor of his eight-year-old son caused not the slightest surprise here. Indeed, the only surprising feature of the affair was that the French resident had allowed Than-Thal to reign as long as he did.

Than-Thal was placed on the throne by the French in 1889, in succession to King Dong-Khan. He was then ten



years old. From the first he exhibited a character of a fenshish nature, and it has always been a matter for criticism that those who were responsible for his elevation to the throne should not have taken the trouble to discover the nature of the child they chose, or, at any rate, have learned of the tendencies he so soon developed. The mistake has not been repeated. The new ruler, who is Than-Thal's second son, is only nominally the king, and for a long period the country will really be ruled by the French resident at Hue.

How many of the stories of the atrocities perpetrated by Than-Thal are true nobody knows, but enough is known to make it evident that even the terrible records of Asiatic royal barbarities can show few human monsters equal to him. It is said that he found his favorite pastime in torturing his subjects with the most extraordinary refinement of cruelty, and that on many occasions the victims were his own wives. Recently, it is stated, he had seven of them executed

at once, and the body of one of these women, who had incurred his special enmity, was cooked and served at dinner to his household. Others of his wives were boiled in oil, and various members of the royal household were thrown into the cages of wild beasts, the king looking on with delight.

At about the same time, it was reported, Than-Thal, with his own hand shot and killed a prince 70 years old, a member of the Council of the Royal Family and the last surviving son of King Minh-Mang. When the French resident protested, the king replied by forbidding him to enter the palace.

It is said that in the king's seraglio were 1,000 wives and other women and their servants. Once they entered the royal household they were never permitted to leave it. Many of the wives were recruited from the ranks of the actresses at the royal theater.

## HONESTY AS A POLICY.

Reflections of a Prison Warder Whose Wife Had Taken a Prisoner's Cake.

Rather an original story comes from the criminal prison at Warsaw, Russia. A bookkeeper, named Schneider, was awaiting his trial, being charged with fraud. As his health was bad his family sent him many little delicacies unknown in the prison fare, delicacies which, no doubt, the head warden shared with him.

The other day, among other things a huge leed cake appeared. The warden's children were fond of cake and so was his wife. They therefore determined to keep half of it for themselves. Their surprise was great when, upon applying a knife to the dainty, it stuck just below the icing and refused to go any further.

"It must be baked to a cinder," said Mrs. Warden. But her good man, suspecting that something worse than carelessness baking was responsible for the cake's hardness, cut round the sides, and was rewarded by finding a revolver and seven cartridges buried in the paste.

When brought up before the authorities Schneider confessed that he had intended to shoot his guardians and escape from prison before his trial. "After all," said the warden, pensively when he told his story, "honesty is not always the best policy. If my wife had not cut into that cake I should have been a dead man by now, for I sleep hard."

## The Mission of Letters.

"So you are writing stories?" said the friend. "Not exactly," answered the cynical litterateur; "I am merely furnishing a certain amount of text to keep the illustrations from running into one another."

"The Japanese wrestler now in this country is believed to be an fat as is Secretary Taft, now in Japan," says the Charleston News and Courier. Perhaps that accounts for the fact that the world is just-as well balanced as ever.

"Taft still looms larger," exclaims an exchange. Lost no weight on his trip, eh?

In one of the current magazines a writer has an article on "How I Feel When Up in the Air." It ought to

prove of special interest to Mr. Fairbanks, since the cocktail episode.

While waiting for the excitement of football and political activity, the public is finding abundant opportunity to exercise its enthusiasm on baseball.

Japan has established an immigration bureau, just as if anybody wanted immigrate there.

So far, the only Philippine policy Secretary Taft has promulgated is the anti-cocktail pronouncement.

## WOMEN'S WORK AT MINES.

Very Few Work Underground—In Africa They Carry Heavy Loads.

Until recently women were employed in England in connection with surface work in coal mining and brick works. The women were found to be very strong, but they were otherwise unsatisfactory and were ultimately dispensed with at the collieries. The coal mines regulation act of Great Britain prohibits women labor being employed underground.

In German Southwest Africa an investigator found many native women at work about the mines. They were useful in carrying in loads, especially of firewood. The women labor was cheap and as long as they were left alone to take as much time as they liked over the work and do it as they wished they were all right.

His next experience was higher up the coast, in West Africa. Labor was short and they decided to try women to carry stones. They carried the first two loads and then they struck.

Those women quite altered the conditions of carrying stones. They carried them for a certain distance, but three or four relays had to be provided. After that they were tried at carrying sand and things like that. They went on for a short while, but did the work in fits and starts.

In another place, also on the west coast, where women had been tried against the black men, it was found that for carrying in firewood they were by far the best and cheapest. There, of course, they were on piece work, although their tickets were marked just the same as if they were on day work.

Their task was to carry in a cord of wood a day. They used to start about 4:30 a. m. and went on carrying until 7 and from 7:30 till 9 or 10. Then if they wanted to get off early the next day they used to carry an other cord of wood in the afternoon or a part of it.

They were a decided success, but they were very particular in what they called their circle. They did not mind how close it was to the boilers, but if it were a little over their distance they would go to the manager and want an increase directly.

Some women used to carry about 100 pounds on their heads; on an average about 85 to 95 pounds of wood.

Statistics published in the Mining World from time to time show that there are a number of women employed in the coal mines of Belgium and Germany, for instance, as pickers and sorters. In Germany women receive 27 to 28 cents per day.

## Bookplate Ruskin Had Made.

The death of Mr. Ruskin's publisher reminds me that among the many Ruskin drawings, engravings and other relics which Mr. Allen possessed was a proof of a bookplate engraved at Mr. Ruskin's express desire.

The fact that the distinguished author and art critic owned a bookplate is, I believe, unknown to collectors of ex-libris, and only because Mr. Ruskin after having the plate engraved and a few proof impressions taken, altered his mind and never used it. There is no copy of the plate in the national collection in the print room of the British museum. The engraving was done by W. Roffe, an old engraver in stipple, employed by Mr. Ruskin to engrave Ida in the "Story of Ida," and other small plates from drawings by Miss Kate Greenaway.

## "Dick Turpin's Tree."

The last remaining portions of a famous old elm, which was known to all lovers of Blackheath and the surrounding country as "Dick Turpin's tree," were removed to-day. Tradition goes that the famous highwayman used to hover about near the gigantic branches of this elm, well out of view of his prey, whom he used to so adroitly "hold up" with his horse pistols and relieve of whatever loose valuable they might have. The elm which had a circumference of over 12 feet, stood close to Hyde Vale, almost opposite "Ye Olde House." While it was being cut up a nail, in perfect condition, was found embedded in the center of the wood.—London Globe.

## A Discouraged Digger.

"I see they say that when a diamond passes a certain size it is worth not more than a smaller one."

"How's that?"

"If it's too large it isn't marketable. Nobody wants to wear a diamond as bulky as a glass door knob."

"Is that so? Then it must be awfully discouraging for a man to dig up a sparkler as big as a football."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

## Booming Virginia.

Here is a Kansas City man applying for a permit to carry a revolver on the ground that his mother-in-law is about to visit him. Incidents of this sort are unheard of hereabouts, Old Virginia being universally conceded to produce the kindest, sweetest and most self-obliterating mothers-in-law in the world.—Richmond Times-Dispatch.

## A Mystery Explained.

"Man is a book, which only the very few can read," says a magazine essayist. Perhaps this accounts for the proneness of physicians and surgeons to examine the appendix.—Manchester Union.

## Billiard Transformations.

We shall not be much surprised if, now that billiard tables are round, steps are taken to adopt square balls—which would formerly have appeared contrary to common sense.

## A GOOD AND NEEDED CHANGE.

A scheme which contemplates the remodeling of the House of Representatives is proposed by Representative Boutell, of Illinois, whereby all the desks from the floor of the House will be removed and chair substituted, arranged in the form of an amphitheater, and whereby the House galleries could be materially enlarged and made to accommodate nearly double the number they now seat. An increase of the space in the rear of the House is also provided for, so as to afford room for the numerous callers who are now compelled to crowd the narrow corridor outside the main door while waiting to talk to members. Mr. Boutell is in Washington consulting with Architect Woods of the capitol, about his scheme.

## EXPOSITION NOTES.

Portland, Oregon, is planning to erect a building at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific exposition, and install therein a municipal exhibit. Spokane, Tacoma and several of the other large cities of the Pacific Northwest will also do the same.

The different counties in the state of Washington are planning to make appropriations for separate buildings and displays at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific exposition.

Since the United States government began to patronize expositions to the present time congress has appropriated \$28,752,251 for its representation. Only \$485,000 of this money has been spent west of the Rocky Mountains, the Lewis and Clark exposition at Portland, one of the most successful world's fairs ever held, receiving the benefit of this amount.

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