

# RUSSIAN CIVILIZATION.

## New Polish Exiles are Punished in Siberia.

A correspondent of the London Daily Telegraph writes: At a time when so many well-meaning people are anxious that the benefits of Russian rule should be conferred on Turkey, I think they would do well to read a quotation from Rafał Piotrowski's work on Siberia, which was published in 1863 by an English firm:

I now approach a dark episode in Polish suffering. The civilized world will doubt its truth and declare it exaggerated, as it once doubted the horrors committed at Kreuzstakly and Lekny in the days of the bar confederation; as it doubted the barbarities of Cherehyn; and listened with incredulity when the story was first told how Catherine II. incited the peasants of Podolia and the Ukraine to massacre and despoil their lords; and how Szwarrow, after the storming of Prague, left no living creature within its walls. The world did not, and still does not, believe that this system was then commenced which drives us away in thousands into the heart of Russian Siberia to fill prisons and casemates; that in Warsaw in the days of Constantine, brother of Nicholas, no Polish family could lie down at night without the fear that perhaps ere morning one of its members might be torn away, consigned to a dungeon, scourged and tortured with hunger and thirst, so that the confession needed might be wrung from his agony. Sierociński and four others who had been drafted into the ranks of the Siberian army were condemned each to 7,000 blows with a stick, 'without mercy.' If any one of the members outlived the sentence he was to be sent to the Nerchinsk mines for the rest of his life. The great mass of persons implicated were variously condemned to 2,000, 1,000, or 600 blows with the stick, and those who survived in some cases to hard labor for life, in others for a number of years to penal colonization, and others again for military service \* \* \* At daybreak two battalions of 1,000 men marched out of Omsk, one charged with the execution of those condemned to 7,000 blows, the other with the execution of the lesser sentences. The battalions halted, each formed in double line face to face, leaving passage through the long-drawn ranks. The executioner, Galafeyef, superintended the arrangements, and remained with the men who had to give the 7,000 strokes. According to general usage the soldiers charged with such duties are placed closely shoulder to shoulder in dealing blows, but slightly raise the arm from the elbow and keep the feet together as when on parade. The stick should only be so thick that three can be dropped in a carbine-barrel. On this occasion all this was reversed: Galafier placed the soldiers at arm's length from each other, made them raise their arms high in carrying out the sentence, and the sticks were brought from their prisons to the place of execution. The bloody work was begun simultaneously by both battalions. From both came the same shrieks of agony. Sierociński is left to the last and compelled to witness the fate of his friends ere his own turn came, and he had long to wait for that deadly walk. Then his shirt was stripped from his shoulders, and his hands, according to the regulations in such cases, fastened to a carbine, held by two soldiers, who thus compelled him to keep regular step. The order to march was given. The priests entered the street of death, reciting in a low voice, 'Miserere mei Deus secundum magnam misericordiam tuam,' Galafreyef shouting frantically, 'Harder, harder, strike harder!' and the submissive tools of despotism obeyed so well that Sierociński, after walking once down the line and receiving 1,000 blows, fell insensible, wetting in his blood. He was lifted to his feet to fall again immediately, and then a hurdle, prepared for this occasion was brought. He was bound on it kneeling, and so dragged up and down until his sentence was fulfilled. He had given at first a few shrieks of agony, and still was breathing until the 4,000 blows, the remaining 3,000 were struck on his corpse, or rather his now fleshless bones. Eye-witnesses assure me that the flesh was cut in strips by the rods, the very bones were crushed and splintered and the entrails exposed."