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WONDERFUL FACTS.

A Visit to the Prison of Louvain-Convicts Consigned to Living Tomba

In the whole of Europe there is but one prison in which the systeme cellulaire is still enforced, and it has, on that ground, a strange and sad celebrity. That vain.

although they are condemned to silence, mode on the best sanitary principle, common, pray in common, and confine- and an iron bed. The bedding is now pen lant in France of replacing the actual penitentiary system by the solitary system adopted in Belgium gives interest to the details of a visit paid to the prison of Louvain.

The buildings are situated on the anterior boulevards, nearly outside the They date from twenty years back, but their tall reddish walls have retained the freshness of newnesss. Admission to the interior can only be given by the Minister of Justice, who grants | had a superior education are employed in the permission with so much difficulty copying student's essays. The produce that the rare visitors are always treated of each man's labor is divided equally bewith the utmost courtesy and considera- tween the State and himself. This lattion, and enabled to see as much of the | ter portion is again sub divided, one-half interior administration as is consistent being put aside for the day of his liberawith the rules and discipline.

apsis, whence a warder can easily survey private use. His earnings never exceed the six immense avenues or wings, con- two or three cents a day. In the evening, sisting of two stories of cells. While labor ended, he dines and goes to bed. To some slight repairs were being done to the dreary silence of the day succeeds the one of these cells, a figure suddenly ap- dreary silence of darkness. peared standing motionless at the door a mysterious and ghastly apparition, clad | the convicts must replace their hooded entirely in white linen, head and face masks as soon as the doors of their cells cealing headgear, the prisoner of Lou- Lassages between two high walls, partly vain must never catch a passing glimpse roofed, shut in by iron gates, stretching wears his linen hood summer and winter, fleshinesss which comes from absence of

duties. wake the convicts. They come from the of theinmates have dwelt there since 1864, open, and the prisoner who can play the to the Central house after a ten years' the wretched beings cloistered there. good conduct, they are sent to Ghent, They do not all belong to the dreg of society. Leon and Armand Pettyer are their working in common. there expiating the murder of the lawyer Berneys, whose trial two years ago startled the world by its cynical revela-

At the last sound of the organ the warders must each find a man at his work. Breakfast consists of half a pint of coffee and bread, and the other two meals of the day of soup and vegetables. Three times a week the convicts have fresh meat, but never wine. The convict who has earned a certificate of good conduct, however, can procure some at the prison canteen, as well as beer and tobacco in stated quantities. Each day the prisoners are taken out of their cells in 'rotation for solitary exercise in seperate yards. The rest of the time is entirely given to up to the accomplishment of their alloted portion of work, except on Sunday, which is a day of absolute rest. Between the religious services the convicts are at liberty to employ their liberty in their cells as they think proper. The prison library contains a considerable collection of books of travel, and sucn publications as "Magasin Pittoresque from which each man can make a selection. Only those who can neither read nor write are compelled to attend school for instruction between mass and vespers. This takes place in the chapel itself.

Nothing can be more striking than the construction and internal arrangements of this chapel. It is a huge circle, or wheel, consisting entirely of superposed flights of steps, like a circular and reversed amphitheatre, the centre of which forms a raised stage, on which stands the altar, towering far above the heads of the phantom like congregation. Each row of steps is divided into compartments or bigeon holes, just large enough for a man to siz and kneel. When the hour for divine service has come, the first cell is opened by a warder, and convict No. 1 is lead out, conducted to the chapel, and entering the row to which he belongs, walks to the furthest compartment, which at once closes upon him. Then only No. 2 leaves his cell and goes through the same performance. And so on till all are settled-no man being permitted to move until the one immediately preceding him has entered his allotted pen. After mass they are all taken back into their cells in the same order and with the same precautions.

or six immense partitions, into each of man in rubbing the floor with his shoes. eously, the operation takes comparative- if the coachman offers to go up stairs the ly only a short time. From his stall each | colt will put his two feet on the stairway convict is able to see and follow every in an attempt to follow, and if chance of movement of the priest who officiates at lifers he will steal the whip and run round the altar on the central platform, with it in triumph in his mouth. He while he cannot even catch a glimpse of will also pick a brush from the floor and his right and left hand neighbor, owing endeavor to brush himself, and like Dike to the height of the dividing doors, nor Turpin's Black Bess will lie down as if dwells not in the tones, but in the echoes can he look over at the opposite row, I dead.

shuts out from his view those above below, before and behind him.

The cells are clean and well arranged Daylight is admitted by a small window of absolute isolation by day and by night | beyond the prisoner's reach. The ventilation is perfect. In winter the mouth of a hot air pipe g ves sufficient heat, and one prison is the Maison Centrale of Lou- in the evening the necessary light is procured by a gas jet, to which there is no In England and in France prisoners access from the interior of the cell The are submitted to less severe penalties, for | furniture consists of a washstand, a comthey at least work in common, walk in shelf supporting some pewter utensils, ment in their cells is only a temporary | foundation of sacking, a mattrass, two measure recurred to in case of an insubor- sheets, one blanket in summer and two dination or misbehavior. The question in winter, and a bolster. The convict has to fold and put these things away. The bed itself is taken to pieces and placed against the wall, forming a table in front of which is a stool. The remainder of the space is taken up by the implement necessary to the convict's obligatory daily task.

Some of the convicts are shoemakers; others bookbinders, tailors, carpenters, even smiths. The new comer, who knows no trade is taught one. Those who have tion, if not incarcerated for life, and the The buildings all converge to a central other deposited at the canteen for his

The rules of the prison are such that closely masked by a hood of the same open. They cannot expose their faces material. Air was admitted to eyes, nose even to their warders. If, perchance, a and mouth by four round holes. Obey- face is seen by a doctor it is paled by the ing a rapid sign from the warder, the fig- long sunless shadow in which it lives, and ure turned to the wall, and crossed its | the want of bracing, blowing air, for even hand behind its back. It was a convict. the daily walk of an hour in the prison Even through the apertures of his con. | yards is at best only exercise in cramped of any human face beyond his keepers, out like the sticks of a gigantic fan, and and no breath of the outer world must where a few stunted plants soon wither ever pass upon his shrouded cheek. He and die. The prisoners have that flaccid but during the cold he is provided with movement and stimulating activity; yet warm brown woolen cloths. Labor is com- in contradiction to the opinion prevailing pulsory, and the days are spent in one un- in France that no man could stand selivarying monotonous round of self-same tary confinement for ten years without succumbing or getting insane, it has been At six o'clock the peals of an organ found not to be the case at Louvain. Two chapel, all the doors of which are thrown | the date of its foundation being transferred organ strikes the first chords. This is imprisonment at Ghent. They had been the signal for all the others to rise, dress, | condemned to death, but, owing to the and make up their beds and bedding. virtual abolition of the penalty of death The music lasts for fifteen minutes, and in Belgium, the King had commuted their may, at the will of the player, consist of sentence to the perpetual entombment of religious anthems, operatic airs; waltzes | their present abode. When prisoners or polkas-notes that must strike with have deserved an alleviation of their weary significance on the ears of some of penalty by ten years of uninterrapted where the rules of the prison allow of

The secondary buildings contain the infirmary, laundry, linen rooms, bath rooms, bakeries, and kitchens, all kept with a scrupulous cleanliness remarkable even in that land of unrivalled cleanliness Huge iron pots contained an abundance of excellent potatoes boiling for the evening meal, and the bread, although brown, was sweet, crisp, and of better quality than that rationed out to the army.

None but isolated cases of revolt have ever taken place at Louvain. These are punishable by incarceration in a subterranean dungeon containing nothing but a single wooden bench, where nearly total darkness prevails. The time of retention within its walls cannot exceed eight days, during which the prisoner is kept on bread and water. This mode of punishment is rarely resorted to, as there is another which is viewed with far greater dread—the privation of work! For those silent recluses, this labor is the only link which connects them ever so remotely with the living world. It is more than an occupation—it is a favor, a recreation, almost a pleasure, and the threat of taking his tools from him never

fails to insure the submission of the rebal. Whether or not the system of solitary confinement has greater advantage for the repression of crime and the security of the community than the system of labor in common now generally adopted in penitentaries, and which only half sequestrates the offender from his fellow creatures, is a question not easily or lightly solved; but it is impossible to leave the Maison Centrale of placent pride. Louvain, admirable as its administration is in the minutest details, without a feeling of almost superstitious horror at the vision of those miserable beings cloistered in eternal isolation, doomed to unbroken silence, buried in their livery of infamy as in a shroud, the face of each remaining as sealed to his six hundred companions of crime and shame, dropped into the same tomb with himself, as if the lid of a collin had closed upon it and the hand of death forever obliterated its

An Intelligent Colt.

Tom Lenard, coachman for A. I. Migeon in Torrington, has taught a 5-year-old colt in his charge a variety of tricks. He will stand with his two fore feet on the end of a barrel, lie down, or kneel at com-There are about twelve flights of steps, mand, and raise his fore feet as if in the containing about sixty seats each, but as act of shaking hands. He will stand upthe circle of the chapel is divided by five on his hind feet, and imitate the coachwhich the prisoners are carried similtan- | He will also follow through the barn and

And where have you been, my love, asked the brunette. "Travelling," responded the blonde. "Been gone three months, studying our own country. Ma said a lady's education was not finished till she had gone abroad and 'twas vulgar to go to Europe without knowing something of one's own coun-

"How grand," sighed the brunette, whose aight-seeing had been limited to Contral Park and Coney Island.

so ma and I planned and planned. Finally I fell in love with a plumber. Pa reasoned with me, so did ma, but I got firmer and declared I'd have my Jwn way. Ma got awfully uneasy (before pa) and —well, in short, pa concluded to let me travel."

"You naughty thing. But where have you been ?" "Just everywhere. First South

"Oh! then you had a chance to study some of those Southern problems one is always reading about ?"

"I don't remember them; but pa first tramped me over miles and miles of battlefields, and I saw where—Oh! what's his name !-Oh! that big general; you know who I mean?"

"Yes," responded the other, eagerly. " never mind his name."

that's it; where Grant and Lee, yes, I'm sure t'was Lee, fought, or bombarded, or surrendered; anyway, I don't remember details. And then we went to Mexico, and that was awful; flies and sand, and pa just wore me out with his old Spanish towns, and graveyards, and dug up things. But ma said it was all important, and wanted to be able to describe them all; so I just got through somehow."

"How lovely to travel and improve one's self !" murmured the listener with an admiring eye on Kitty's terra-cotta bonnet.

"So ma says. Well, then we went to Utah, to Salt Lake City."

"Oh! those horrid Mormons! Did

you .eally see them ?" "Yes indeed, and made a study of them. Ma said that was proper. Were there two or three days, and such dowdies as those women are, and the men-well, they are too insignificant. Pa took us to the-the-Oh, Temple-no, Tabernacle, 'Twas ever so queer, and ma got me a book on s atistics and things; so I'll be way up, see?"

"How splendidly you'll be ab!e to converse with everyone! I quite envy

such opportunities, and I mean to improve mine. Then we've been to California, and oh, such big trees and those RITISH AMERICAN wretched little Chinamen. San Francisco isn't much to see. The shops are not any nicer than Brooklyn. But St. Paul is too lovel. Got one of those stylish looking ulsters. Will you believe me ? Pa wanted to drag me off to see the falls of-of-Millie or Minnehaha, just because Whittier, or Lord Byron, or some Tom, Dick, or Harry wrote a poem about it. But we only had two days there, and I was a

"And you have seen all the great, grand West-the splendid mountains, the rolling prairies, and breathed that pure

"Oh, my! yes!" interrupted the tourist eagerly, "and we visited a real mining camp. But I soiled my new silk jersey. I was so disgusted. But pawell, once get him started and there's no going back. Chicago and Cincinnati are not like New York. Thank goodness, we are home. Travelling is improving and all, but pa did manage to take us to some horrid places. Now ma says, 'Europe next Spring, to give a final polish. Pa is awfully contrary, but ma and I are patient with him, and we generally work together. I guess he will give in."

"Of course he will," murmured the brunette, "for he must be proud of you." "Oh! he is, but pa is queer and thinks it silly to show one's feelings. But come round to lunch some day, and I'll tell you more. Ma says next thing to travelling one's self is to cultivate those who have enjoyed the privileges."

"How kind you are, dear !"

"Good-bye."

And the sweet creatures separated, one

nying her ribbons with an envious soul.

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