WHERE COUGHING IS A CRIME.

Tourists When on the Continent Should be Very Careful.

LOOK OUT FOR EUROPEAN ROYALTY.

Protecting Monarchy From Insult—A Count Sent to Siberia for a Thoughtless Utterance at a Ball.

The recent trial and acquittal of a New York merchant, Meyer Jonasson, in Berlin, Germany, on a charge of sneering at or about Emperor William, and the arrest of the editor of the Gotha Tagblatt for a disrespectful remark concerning Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, call attention to the risk which Americans traveling abroad incur, who fail to acquaint themselves with the law against the peculiar offense known as lese majestas, or literally, the wounding of majesty. Mr. Jonasson was accused of simply saying: "I cough at your emperor." He had not said it, but it cost him several hundred dollars, and some unpleasant experience in a police cell to prove that he did not have a cough on the occasion in question. Had he been found guilty he would have been sent to jail for a number of months—perhaps a year—and life in a German jail, especially for any one who has metaphorically coughed or spit at his imperial majesty, is not on the Ludlow street boarding house plan, says the Chicago Herald. The discipline is most severe and torture is permitted for the subjection of refractory prisoners. The American who travels abroad should be careful, therefore, not to have a spasm of coughing when any specimen of German royalty happens to be around, and as German sovereigns are quite numerous and blessed with numerous sisters, cousins and aunts, it is well to be exceedingly careful of tongue and throat while traveling through the kaiser's dominions.

The prosecution of the editor of the Gotha Tagblatt has added new and appalling terror to the doctrine of lese majestas. Heretofore it has been supposed that only the sovereign and his immediate family were within range of the law; but the Gotha editor happened to say something unpleasant about Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, who is only second cousin or something of that sort to the duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha; and presto, he was hauled before the court on the charge of wounding the majesty of the reigning family. Now it appears that the house of Gotha is related, by blood or marriage, to nearly all the ruling houses of Europe, and, in fact, all those kings and queens and emperors are interlaced together in such a way that they would be considered, in ordinary life, as one connection. For instance, the queen of England is grandmother to the German emperor; she is also mother-in-law to a sister of the Russian czar, and sister-in-law to the duke of Gotha. She is related, more or less, to the kings of Belgium, of Denmark, of Greece, to the royal house of Sweden, through Denmark to the Austrian court, through the widowed Stephanie, and to the king of Portugal, through some round-about connection of that house with the Coburgs; while her grandson, the kaiser, has some relationship to the king of Holland, or at least to the prince, who, upon the death of the Dutch king, would be heir apparent to Queen Wilhelmina. Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria and the hereditary prince of Saxe Meiningen are also among her relations, as well as other of the lesser reigning princes. Dom Pedro, the ex-emperor of Brazil, as a kinsman of the Coburgs, should be included, and the comte de Paris, claimant to the throne of France, is father-in-law to the king of Portugal. So all these royalties are so mingled through inter-marriage that Europe may almost be said to be ruled by a number of families united in one and forming a far more powerful dynastic combination than ever existed in the world's history; for in olden times kings and queens often chose their consorts from among their subjects, and each royal house maintained its distinct individuality. Now when one looks, for instance, at a picture of the young German emperor, he sees George III starting from behind one side of the canvas, and the late Kaiser William from the other side. The distinctive Hohenzollern features have a given place to a mongrel of Hanoverin and Prussian, with a strain of the ancient Stuart.

As Europe, therefore, is virtually ruled by one family, the man who dares to joke on European soil about any member of the family incurs a serious risk.

Two Frenchmen were traveling recently through the territory of a German princeling when one of them remarked that the prince, who was taking a walk around his kingdom to get up an appetite for breakfast, had a large nose. "O no," replied the other, "it is commun'" (common). "You mean 'comme deux' (like two)," was the witty reply. The joke was overheard and cost the joker a week's incarceration. In another instance, Anderson Heelis, an Englishman, made a remark in Munich recently in regard to the insanity of King Otto of Bavaria. Otto is not only insane, but under confinement as a lunatic, and allowed to indulge in the murderous pleasantry of, as he supposes, shooting pheasants from his castle wall, countrymen being trained and well paid to drop at every discharge of his actually harmless weapon. All this is well known, yet to allude, except in a distant and delicate manner, to the royal malady is a criminal offense as Mr. Heelis learned when he was confined for a day and night in the cells occupied by suspected thieves and other law-breakers. Only the energetic mediation of friends saved him from a worse fate. Nor is it safe to speak ill of a prince because you are some distance away from the dominions of his immediate family. As above stated, nearly all the sovereigns of Europe are at least cousins to each other and are vigilant in protecting each other from vulgar criticism. It is difficult for an American to imagine, for instance, the condition of affairs that makes it a crime to say that prince or this princess is not half so smart as he or she might be; or duke somebody, with a long name and short bank account, is a fussy and pompous individual. Yet it is the actual situation on the continent of Europe. The law of lese majestas follows the traveler from Calais to the uttermost bounds of Siberia, and however much monarchs may differ on some questions, they are united as to the wisdom of enforcing this gag on freedom of speech.

One of the most cruel instances of the enforcement of this arbitrary law was in relation to the late Prince Rudolph of Australia, the heir apparent to that crown, who shot himself or was shot by an angry husband in consequence of a disgraceful affair with a woman. The prince, who was noted for his lack of honor and scruples in such matters, chose a peasant girl of Styria for one of his victims. He encountered the girl while shooting chamois nerzbeg and caused her to be lured to Vienna. The girl's father, an honest mountaineer, learned of the abduction and in his anguish called down the malediction of heaven on the princely reprobate. To get rid of him he was arrested on a charge of insulting royalty, put through a mock trial and hurried away to the Galician mines. Before many months, however, Rudolph's dissipation's led to his mysterious and tragic death; and the old mountaineer was avenged. The present kaiser of Germany was a bosom friend and associate of Rudolph, and they often joined in innocent and, perhaps, other kind of sports. To this day he will permit no disparaging utterance regarding his dead companion and he not long ago gratified the Austrian emperor by the prompt court martial and degradation of a German lieutenant who was made to make an offensive allusion to Rudolph's demise.

In Russia the law of lese majestas has reached its highest European development. Indeed, in that country, to make a disparaging remark about the czar is treason and punished with the knout, if the offender is a person of low degree, and Siberia if the prisoner is of respectable condition. In either case the penalty is death, the punishment of the knout being quicker and perhaps more terrible. The instance of Count Galkine-Driesen is one of the most noteworthy in recent Russian history. While at a ball in St. Petersburg he was overheard to make a remark, intended to be jocular, about the late czar and Princess Dolgorouki. Nothing was said to him that night, but the following day the count disappeared. A carriage had called for him at his residence; he had gone on urgent business, and that was the last known of him by his family. Application at the police office elicited a shrug of ignorance. As a matter of fact, the regular police were ignorant of his fate, although they had evidently received a hint from a quarter not to be disobeyed that it was none of their business. The count was in the hands of the secret police, that body of political agents more terrible than the spies of the Venetian Council of Ten, because the power behind them is so much more far-reaching. It is the head of this force, General Shekedo, who has recently been promoted by the czar to a seat in the imperial senate in reward for his utterly unscrupulous subserviency to the autocrat of all the Russias. Where Count Galkine-Driesen was temporarily immured is not known, for he never came back to tell the story. His faithful wife died of grief and anxiety, and his youthful son, frowned on by the authorities, but always without any explanation as to the cause, sought to drown his recollections in Parisian dissipation. A few years after the count's disappearance, and when the present czar had arrived at the throne, something of the truth came to light. An escaped Siberian exile brought to Zurich, with the story of his experience, word of a noble Russian whom he had seen in the chain gang at Tomak, and who imparted to him that he was the Count Galkine-Driesen, punished for no cause that he could think of, unless it was a thoughtless remark to his partner of the dance at a ball in St. Petersburg. The two exiles were interrupted before the count had time to tell his story. A day later, for some alleged act of insubordination, the count was drafted to the Saglien mines, and that, the escaped Siberian said, meant at the best one year more of mortal existence. In Russia no one who regards his liberty of life dare breathe an utterance that might seem derogatory to the autocrat who holds the lives and fortunes of more than one hundred million in the hollow of his hand and whose predecessors have had their despotism tempered only, as the saying is, by assassination.

The secret police report directly to the czar. Their operations are irrespective and independent of the regular tribunals, and if an offender arrested for political reasons is occasionally tried before an ordinary court it is only as a matter of form and to concede something to the public opinion of the rest of the world, for there is no public opinion in Russia. As a rule, when a person suspected of hostility to the government is arraigned for trial under the provisions of law applying to general crimes it is after the secret police have satisfied themselves that they have made a mistake and that their suspicions are entirely groundless. Then they bring the victim before a court as a most convenient method of discharging him with some appearance of regularity.

In Russia, it may be added, the law of lese majestas is broadly interpreted as applying not only to the imperial family but to all public officials. For a Jew especially it is a high crime to fail to salute a Russian officer of any authority, high or low, and within a few weeks an official who thought that a Jew did not show him proper respect had him tied up and lashed so cruelly with the knout that the official's own wife begged him to spare the man, who, but for this intercession, would have perished under the blows. This is one of the many well-authenticated instances of horrible cruelty toward the Jews in Russia. The proverb says that a cat may look at a king; but a Jew may not look at a Russian official except in the humblest way.

In Turkey, also, the utmost respect is exacted for the sultan's majesty. During the late riots in Constantinople the Armenian patriarch narrowly escaped with his life, and several persons were killed and injured, but the only act of the rioters deemed worthy of death was that they had torn down a picture of the sultan.

To American minds this doctrine of lese majestas is very repugnant and very strange, and yet it is considered as one of the main props of European thrones. Once made ridiculous by the biting tongue and caustic pen, the emperors, kings and kinglets would soon find their thrones slipping from under. It is the glory of our free republic that we can make all the fun we like of our magistrates without losing due respect for the offices that the sovereign people have bestowed on its selected servants.

BIBLICAL FIGURES.

The Prominent Part They Play in Modern Novels.

The last generation, to go no farther back, has witnessed an extraordinary collection of books, centering about the chief origin to this great intellectual activity, says the Atlantic Monthly. Any one who will compare such a book as Fleetwood's "Life of the Savior," with Farrar's or Edersheim's "Life of Christ" will see at a glance the difference in the attitude of the writers. Now it was inevitable that when the art, as dominated by Protestant thought and relieved of formal church patronage, should again approach biblical subjects, and especially the central subject, it should express itself in more exact terms, whether the form was pictorial or literary. Not merely the education of the artists, but the education of the spectators, has compelled Mr. Holman Hunt to make his "Christ in the Temple," his "Flight into Egypt," and hi "Wounded in the House of His Friends" scrupulously exact archæologically. Mr. Ford Madox Brown, if he essayes to portray the raising of the Shunamite's son, does not for a moment think of disclosing the interior of a Manchester house, with a Church of England clergyman to act the part of Elisha, as his Venetian, or Florentine, or Netherland predecessors in the same field might have done, mutatis mutandis. But nowadays it is not pictorial art, it is literary art, which is likely to busy itself with Scriptural subjects, partly because the whole drift of training for painters is in other directions, but more because the literary artist is surer of an audience than the painter is of spectators. The first form of literary art to feel the influence of which we have been speaking was the poetic and dramatic. Longfellow's "Christus" in its first division, several of Browning's and Story's poems occur at once as examples. But as there are a hundred successful novels to one succersful poem, though there probably are nearly as many persons who in secret think they can write poems at there are who openly profess an ability to write stories, the form of fiction is that which may be counted on as most likely to engage the attention of those who lay hold of that great body of material which lies in and about the bible for the purposes of their art. The way has been made plain by the abundant biographical studies which have appeared. These have accustomed the reading public to a treatment of the subjects detached from a strict biblical form. From a life of the Christ which builds up a conjectural youth out of two or three texts of Scripture for a foundation and a vast amount of Judaic lore for a superstructure it is but a step to a story which imagines the same period without the necessity of a constantly guarded "From our knowledge of other Jewish youths we may suppose," etc.

There have been several stories of late which, with more or less boldness, occupy this field of New Testament life and character. We took occasion upon its appearance to speak briefly of the one which was most in the public eye, General Wallace's "Ben Hur." Probably the success of that novel had something to do with the multiplication of its class, but we have tried to show that some such manifestation was to be looked for in the premises. It is noticeable that, so far, these books refrain from making the central figure of all humanity the central figure, conventionally, of a piece of fiction. For so much reserve let us be thankful. But what the novelist gains in decorum by such a method he loses in art. There can be no middle choice between a deliberate converging of all lines toward this center, since center it already is in the reader's mind by an irresistible force of association and a mere allusive treatment. The author of "Ben Hur," with a correct instinct, clearly had this in mind, and strove to diminish the actual presence of the Christ as a character in his story, leaving him rather an influence. So, too, with a somewhat similar purpose, evidently, Mr. Brooks, in his story, "A Son of Issachar," scarcely introduces the Christ at all, though many of the scenes take place about him, and now and then he appears as an actor. Reverence is the soul of great art, and no one can miss it out of his own nature and expect others to find it in his work. It is noticeable that while men of marked literary power have been tempted by the subject of early Christianity, as Kingsley in "Hypatia," Ware in "Aurelian," no one has yet attempted to take the next step and deal with the Christ. We have hinted at some of the reasons. The underlying beauty of the New Testament narative is an additional reason. A sister art like painting may interpret, but literary art knows its limitations. It will be boldest in the forms of poetry and the drama, but fiction turns away. There is one subject before which great fiction, with all its mirror-like power, drops its eyes, and that is truth incarnate.

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