

In France, in Germany, in Russia and in England.

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Prisoners have for some time been regularly employed upon public works in France. They are, for instance, busy upon the reconstruction of a great stadium at Lyons, and they are also engaged upon the creation of a port capable of dealing with 600,000 tons of coal per annum a few miles beyond Bordeaux. Employment for them has also been found in Morocco. In Germany the prisoners, as in 1870-1, have been thrown largely on to the land, working mainly, it is suggested, in the cultivation of the beet crop. The great bulk of the British prisoners, it is understood, have refused to work for the Germans in any fashion. The Germans, contrary to the conventions, have used Russian prisoners in the making of military works in Belgium, with the result that some have managed to escape. When so employed in preparing trenches, the Russians, on getting close to the British lines, have often made a rush for liberty, sometimes at the cost of their lives. When they have been employed on farm work in Germany Russian prisoners report that they have been kindly treated. In Russia the Government has for months past been subject to severe press criticism, on the ground that the prisoners have been given "a lovely time," "a time," in fact, which never falls to the lot of the inhabitants themselves, being kept entirely idle despite the need for railways and like works; but latterly some of them have been put to the work of railway construction. In this country little appears to have been done, beyond the employment of a section of the civilians in quarrying.

In Germany the prisoners receive 7d. a day. In France they are paid 2½d. a day, together with certain perquisites. They are given a complete holiday on Sundays, and they have recreation in a weekly concert. They are under the commands of their own nationality, so that if ill-treatment is their portion it is ill-treatment by fellow Germans. The pay of the prisoners in this country may be estimated from the fact that where they have been set to work within the camps upon the making of mailbags they are paid 6d per bag, and where they have been employed in the neighborhood of the camps they have been paid (as the conventions require) the same working pay as "Tommy Atkins;" the French officers who made the road between Derby and Nottingham were paid 6d. per day—but that is 156 years ago.

Why do we not use our prisoners in the making of roads, canals, and public works? An objection to such employment which might otherwise be insuperable has no force to-day; there are no British workmen or laborers who can be robbed of work. And any fear that contractors could make a fortune out of their employment to the ultimate disadvantage of our artisans and laborers would be dispelled if we adopted the system at present operated in France, contractors there being bound to pay to the State for the labor of prisoners of war the same price that they would have to pay for French labor.