

A STARTLING MARRA- TIVE TYRANNY IN THE BALTIC PROVINCE

WHY MAREN WENT TO LONDON

NEVER SEEN "PETER THE PAINTER."

A very interesting story was related by August Maren to a "Daily News" representative this morning.

It will be remembered that Maren and Frederick Johnson were, a few weeks ago, committed for trial on a charge of having, on or about April 20, at Doodlakine, conspired together to cause the said Johnson, in the course of a hearing against E. Dreger at Kellerberrin, charged with stealing a gun, to wilfully swear that he (Dreger) went to Kellerberrin for the spe-

ger) went to Keweenaw for the special purpose of obtaining a gun. Now, however, a nolle prosequi has been entered, and the two men, who were accused of conspiracy, are free. When the case came before the City Court it excited great public interest, for this reason:—Dreger made certain statements to the police, whereby some suspicion was aroused that Maren might be identical with "Peter the Painter," who was concerned in the Houndsditch affray in London on December 17 last, and for whose arrest the Imperial Government had offered a reward of £500. Dreger's statements were communicated to the Criminal Investigation Department, and a cable was sent to Scotland Yard. The "Daily News" compared the published photographs of "Peter the Painter" with Maren, the result being that the resemblance between the two men was very vague. A representative then asked Chief Inspector Connell, of the Criminal Investigation Department, what he thought of the possibility of Maren being identical with "Peter the Painter." Chief-Inspector Connell put his views of the matter very effectively. "If you like to take the risks the other papers have done," he said, "It's your affair; I am not going to be called a blithering idiot in a couple of months' time." Events have gone to

months' time." Events have gone to prove that Chief-Inspector Connell was right in his belief that the two men were not identical.

This was Maren's story:—

South-east of the Baltic is the Baltic Province which contains Estonia, Livonia, and Courland which are accessions to Russia. In this province the Lettish people were kept down by German barons, under a kind of feudal system, which had been in force for a large number of years. The Lettish people at last began revolting against the German barons, for their lot was indeed hard. They had no rights to get firewood in the forests, nor to fish in the rivers, nor to shoot, nor hunt, nor do many other things. In fact they had no privileges, and had to work fearfully long hours at a very small remuneration. Their ill-treatment grew worse. After the revolution the barons, who were on friendly terms with the Russian Government, got a bill whereby they imported into the Baltic Province a number of German workmen, who also had to work very hard, and were harassed in every way. At length the German workmen wanted to go back to their native districts, but they had no money and the barons wouldn't help them. At length, the Lettish people, who were on very friendly terms with the German workmen, got up a subscription for them, with the result that they were provided with the wherewithal to return to their native land. He (Maren)

turn to their native land. He (Maren) had had a fairly good education, and though he was never a member of the Anarchist Club, as had been suggested, he nevertheless used to address the people, whose lot was so hard, on political and economical subjects, and pointed out the burdens under which they were laboring, not inciting them to commit offences, but simply explaining the situation. A charge against him was preferred of agitating against the Government, and on this charge he was kept in prison for not less than two years, the case being remanded from time to time, and when at last the trial came on at Riga he was acquitted. The procedure in Russia in regard to accused persons was very different to that adopted in British possessions, for there they could keep a man awaiting his trial for an almost indefinite period. The police could do anything in Russia. Twenty-three witnesses were called for the prosecution, but they could bring nothing forward against him that constituted an offence, and, on the other hand, witnesses were called for the defence to prove that his character had been exemplary, and that he had never been convicted on any charge. After the trial, of course, he was a free man, but he did not know to what they might resort to get him out of the way. Another charge might be concocted, and at length he left Russia, though he had a free passport to get back if he wished. But he did not wish, and had decided to remain in

WISU, and had decided to remain in this State.

When he arrived in London he joined no club, but he did attend as a guest the Lettish Social and Democratic Club in London, and he had been a member of the India Rubber Union in London East that agitated for better conditions. The employees, who were members of this union, worked 13 or 14 hours a day, and received in most cases only 2s. 6d. for that work. He was in London at the time of the Houndsditch affair, but personally he did not know and had never seen "Peter the Painter." The evidence given at the police court showed how he and E. Droger were not friends.