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OUR GREAT PRISON.

The Enstern Pentientinry and Its System - How Its Alm Has Been Misunderstood - Its Present

Probably no system of prison government and discipline has been so little understood and so much maligned as that in vogue in our Eastern Penitentiary. The greatest ignorance exists even as to the arrangement of the building itself, and the cause can easily be traced. While passes of admission are granted to all visitors who may apply for them, whether strangers to the city or otherwise, yet a visit to the institution in the capacity of a general visitor does not give any adequate idea of its arrangements. Very little is shown to those who come from curiosity only, as little as can be, and much less than is shown in other similar institutions. The reason for this is obvious. In such a policy lies the greater safety and efficiency of our prison.

But to the special or official visitor the case is different. He sees all the good points, and in all their bearings. To him the horrors of the so-called solitary, but more properly separate, confinement system as pictured by many fade away, and in place thereof he sees one of the greatest blessings to the criminal and the com-

munity at large. The system in use is certainly not solltary. That is the worst possible term that could have been chosen to express the idea. But separate it certainly is. By this it is meant that criminals are kept separated from each other, so that they may not, by their association with each other, make their depraved natures still worse, and when they go out into the world may not assist in the formation of a crime class, the members of which mutually help each other in wrong doing. But they are not kept solitary and alone, that is at all times, but are exposed to every good influence and association. Those who are on their good behavior, and are so fitted for it, are even allowed to leave their cells during certain hours of the day for the purpose of performing work about the building with their fellows. With such, the restriction of silence is not imposed as it is where the congregate system is used. But they are under the eye of a supervisor, who sees that no improper communication takes place between the prisoners. Such communication is not likely to happen, because only the best are allowed this privilege, and then not until they have been in the prison for a while and have proved their fitness by good conduct. If any become unruly while out, they are returned to their cells and not allowed the privilege again, at least for a time. Those who work outside of their cells are carefully guarded from unnecessary communication with all outside parties, and in hours of idleness, all separated from each other. But even those who never go outside of their cell and little yard from the time they enter to the time they leave are not in close confinement. They never see their fellow prisoners, it is true, but various persons see them and converse with them. The near friends and relations of a prisoner are allowed to see him at certain intervals under certain conditions and converse with him through the grating or inner cell door under the eye of a keeper. Others, to be mentioned, have free access to all of the men, and many who have the

authority do visit each prisoner frequently. Of course, a prisoner restricted in liberty by this separate system must suffer some disadvantages, but this should be taken as a matter of course. It is a false humanitariaa idea now gaining ground that a man convicted and sentenced for crime should suffer no inconvenience or punishment, but should be kept at the expense of the State in the best manner until the expiration of his sentence, when he shall again go forth into the world with no fear of punishment before his eyes, and caring little whether he be sent back again or not. Punishment should be so inflicted as to produce a wholesome dread upon those punished. It should produce this dread by means which are unpleasant, but not barbarous. But no one, even with a superficial knowledge of the facts, can bring the charge of barbarism against the separate system of imprisonment which owes its origin and is peculiar to Pennsylvania. Astrictly solitary confinement is nowhere enforced the world over. Such a system, by which the prisoner would not be allowed to see or speak to any one at any time, would be perfectly horrible. No one, even among the most urgent friends of our system, ever dreams of advocating such a plan. Such a course would put a prisoner either in his grave or in the worst department of the mad-house in a very short time. Such is not our system, though many believe that it is.

The official visitors to the prisoners embrace several classes. First in order, the judges of the courts may be mentioned.

These gentlemen, though possessing the right of visitation, but seldom use it. But this can readily be excused in many cases, because of the numberless other duties with which our judges are already burdened. The members of the State Legislature are also official visitors. These, like the judges, seldom trouble the prisoners, but possibly from different reasons. In this case it is probably from want of interest more than from a pressure of other business. Perhaps it is as well so. It may be that these gentlemen exert their best influence in their

absence. The main bulk of the visiting is done by the the members of the Prison Society, and chiefly by its visiting committee. This society is a voluntary organization, and has now authority from the State for its actions. Its committee consists of some thirty members, and their visits are so timed that each prisoner in the large number in the penitentiary receives a visit from one of the committee about once a

week. Besides these, the officers of the prison, and particularly the warden, are continually with the men. Unruly persons are personally talked to by the chief officer, who endeavors to conciliate them by kind treatment before applying harsh measures. The present warden, Mr. Townsend, though he has been in office but a short time, is particularly successful in this particular. In by far the majority of cases no special punishment whatever is required, and in several instances men were brought into discipline without an effort, who were given up as almost hopeless by the late warden. The other under officers of the prison and the resident physician do their share of the visiting, and some of these are brought into daily contact with the men in the performance of their several duties.

But there are two special officers whose round of duty embraces a continual visitation. One of these is the moral instructor. Rev. John Ruth, a minister of the Methodist Church, holds this office at present, and has done so for a long term of years. One of the regular duties of this gentleman is to pass from cell to cell and converse with the prisoners. They each are visited by him at least once a month. Those who specially invite him are visited more frequently. If short. If he enjoys the visit and wishes the

MINISTER OF BUILD AND A SECOND STREET OF STREET STREET, STREET STREET, STREET,

visitors to remain he does so. Those who are sick, or who express decided religious convictions, are visited more often than their fellows. The other official is the school teacher, who, under the direction of the moral instructor, imcome to the prison unable to read and write are there taken in hand and taught. The moral instructor in his visits ascertains who require instruction, and the schoolmaster teaches all such as he is ordered by the moral instructor. The teacher every day passes around from cell to cell, as no class system could be used under the circumstances. In each cell which he visits he spends ten minutes, the inmate stopping his

The duties of the moral instructor are vari-

one. Not only has he the charge of the visit-

ing and the moral and secular instruction, but

the religious services on Sunday are also under

work to receive the instruction.

his care. These in themselves require much care, forethought, and trouble. To explain how they are held it is necessary to slightly explain the construction of the building. The prison proper inside of the inclosing walls is built somewhat in the form of a wheel. There are seven spokes or radii branching out from a round centre building. Each of these radii contain a number of cells arranged in a gallery and corridor. The passage way runs down the centre of each of the seven, and is covered by a high circular celling. On either side are the cells, the door of each opening upon the passage way. These doors all open towards the centre building, and a person standing in the middle of that building can see extreme end of each radii and could notice the opening of any door. Each cell is supplied with a double door, an inside grating and an outside door of heavy oak. These outside doors are so arranged that they can be fastened or opened on a slight operation, the opening being towards the centre of the building. Each cell in the corridors has attached to it a small yard, surrounded by a high wall, the entrance to which, from the cell, is guarded by an opening similar to the corridor door. The prisoner occupying the cell is allowed to take recreation in his particular yard for one hour each day. The cells in the galleries have no yard, but have a window opening upward, and are double; that is, each cell is composed of two small communicating rooms. When a religious service is to be held the doors of the cells in a radii are fastened, partly open in inner grating and remaining closed and the radius is cut off from the centre building by closing the intervening doors. The preacher takes his stand at one end of the gallery, and thus commands both the cells in that row and those in the corridor below. The construction of the building is such that a discourse delivered in an ordinary tone of voice can be distinctly heard in every cell in the compartment. By this method, as many services are required as there are radii in the building. To supply these services is a part of the duty of the moral instructor. He counts upon himself for at least one, the Local Preachers' Association of the Methodist Church supply five other preachers, and the rest are provided for by obtaining whoever can be obtained of whatever denomination. If no others can be had, the moral instructor bimself attends to the remaining services at different hours. He has often preached as many as four times in one day.

This same gentleman has also charge of the prison library, which contains a great number, volumes in many departments of literature, and in both German and English. The keeping of se books-their numbering, their binding, and their distribution-is attended to by prisoners detailed for the purpose. Each man has a choice of books once in two weeks, and the amount supplied is sufficient for that time. The duties of the library keep those engaged

in it continually busy. It is their regular work. All are compelled to work in someway, if only for the sake of acquiring industrious habits. They are engaged in various pursuits, such as shoemaking, weaving, caning, sewing, and household work. The result of their labor is sold, but is not contracted for as in some prisons where the congregate system is in vogue. It is found impossible to make the labor pay and the prison self-sustaining, and at the same time produce any reformation in the prisoners. While we compel work, and to a certain amount, it is not made the principal thing. The articles manufactured are taken by firms doing business in the city, at prices slightly lower than the market rate, but the difference is so slight, and the amount of the product so small, compatively, that the sale does not at all interfere with the interests of legitimate trade. The punishments for unruliness or a refusal to work are the dark cell, and a deprivation either of work or food for a short time. Of these, the de nial of work is the most dreaded.

The prison fare is of the best quality. The bread is good and is made upon the spot by the prisoners under a professional head. The other eatables are of the best the market affords, on some occasions even including dainties. In the article of drink the men fare as well as the best in the land. Coffee, tea, and cocoa are served each at the respective time allotted. The cosking apartments and utensils are scrupulously clean, the cleaning operations being performed by prisoners whose work must be thoroughly inspected before the task is declared finished. The most particular need not fear to eat and drink with the prisoner. The health of the men is good, and is in fact

better than the health of the same number of men collected together in any town or village. Considering the circumstances of the case this is remarkable. Most of the inmates come with constitutions broken down with debauchery and bad living, and are here, so to speak, cured. Not only is the general health maintained, but the manner of living acts like the regime of a hospital. It is found to be actually beneficial in many particulars, and in a majority of cases men who come in sickly actually go out better than they came in. This is in the majority of cases only. Some dispositions and temperaments cannot stand confinement and their health is weakened. It is the business of the resident physician to look after all such and to lighten their punishment as much as may be deemed advisable. A common relief for such is to put them at work on the grounds surrounding the cells and inside of the outer walls.

The present number in the prison is 605, and of these only eight are females. This number is more than can be accommodated. Several have now to be confined in cells with others, though this is done with the greatest possible discretion as regards who are thus put together. The courts are continually sending new men at a rate greatly exceeding the rate of dismissal, and with each arrival the room becomes more and more insufficient. Under these circumstances the good effects of the separate system cannot be properly accomplished, for it is in reality no separation but a congregation. The results of the man does not wish to be seen the visit is the past show conclusively the great superiority of our plan, and the best interests of the com- The carcass weighed 145 pounds.

munity demand increased accommodation. The erection of a House of Correction will have a tendency to correct the evil, but the relief will

not be near sufficient. On the authority of the officers of the prison parts the rudiments of an English education to it is stated that fifty per cent. of the men who those of the prisoners who need it. Those who are sent to the Penitentiary go out reformed, to fall into line as respectable citizens in their respective stations in life. Twenty-five per cent. become a prison population, and such are again found in the prisons of this and other States. The remainder, twenty-five per cent., become a kind of pauper population, who have no aim or object in life, but idly float around ready for anything that may turn up. These are sometimes successful in life, and sometimes not. Those who come on first sentences to this prison seldom return on a recommitment, while those who are sent on a recommitment, who have served out a first sentence in a prison of the congregate system, are numerous. A third recommitment is almost unknown.

With these good results, which are better than any congregate system institution can show, and with the good name which our State has won by reason of its Pennsylvania plan of separate confiement, it would be foolish to throw all away and begin anew by reason of a want of funds to carry out the plan. It is sincerely hoped that our legislators will think seriously over this matter and give it their immediate attention.

The prison is now in the best hands. The moral instructor, Mr. John Ruth, is a man in every way qualified for his post. The present warden, Mr. Townsend, is also a most efficient officer, who has only lately been appointed to fill the vacancy caused by the death of the former incumbent, Mr. John S. Holloway, who served for a great number of years. Mr. Townsend deserves great credit as well for his act of taking the position as for what he is doing. For twenty-four years he has been an untiring worker as a member of, the visiting committee of the Prison Society. He was therefore not unacquainted with the duties which have since been assigned him. Five months ago he received the appointment. He was at that time in a large and lucrative business, but from pure motives of humanity which none can gaineay he left it to accept of the wardenship, with its smaller pecuniary reward. With such a man in such a piace it is unjust that he should be hampered in the carrying out of his favorite design, with all its advantages, through want of cooperation by the Government.

Scottish Music.—In a province where adepts claim supreme rule it would be presumption in any on-looker to define the place occupied by the song music of Scotland, or even to assert that it has a place at all in music, scientifically speaking. It is among human anomalies that the divine gift sent to scothe the savage breast has created the fiercest of exterminating wars in the arena of controversy, and those claiming absolute supremacy in the art have been denied the possession of music altogether when the test of science has been applied. But we may at least say that the Scottish school has done the duty of national music in stirring the heart of the people, and bringing a soothing and elevating element into a national character apt to be otherwise hard and rugged. The strength of its influence has been shown among the many wanderers over the world who have found in it the most powerful solace and enjoyment that music can confer in the association of the past and present, and the recall of home memories. When the music of the people found its way into higher social regions at home, whence it spread abroad, the artists of the legitimate and established schools complained bitterly of the caprice of fashion which doomed them to make something endurable out of the discordant jargon of a rude peasantry. But the taste has held its own now for nearly a hundred years, and is old enough to merge from a fashion into a school. Nor was it utterly destitute of older appreciation in high places. Dryden, when he was dressing up Chaucer's stories in presentable modern costume, says that, although the voice of their author is not deemed harmonious to a modern audience, "they who lived with him and some time after him thought it musical; and it continues so even, in our judgment, if compared with the numbers of Lidgate and Gower, his contemporaries. There is the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleasing though not perfect." Much conjectural matter has been written about the origin of Scotch music, discussing among others the question whether it was the creation of the artistic favorites of James III. or was brought over and naturalized by David Rizzio. That much of it is as old, at least, as the sixteenth century, was proved by a manuscript collection of the tunes themselves in a handwriting and notation which brought them back close to that period.

THE LAST JOUENEY.-In Spain, when a baptised infant dies, a feast is spread, and all the neighbors round come, not to condole with, but to congratulate the parents. "We rejoice with you that you have a child in glory," they say; and the last, nay, the first journey of the sinless babe is a triumphant march, the funeral a festival, the music glad. Only the mother weeps. In Greece, the last journey follows quickly upon death. The next day, at dawn, the train of white-robed priests and choristers may be seen winding along the road toward the church. There, dressed as in life, and having the face un-covered, the dead lie at rest before the altar until the moment comes when they must be committed to the earth. It is in the church that the last farewell is taken, that the last kisses are given. What of that terrible last journey in the cold North, where the dying Esquimaux is built up in his snow-house and left to draw his last breath alone? Or of the African tribe, who bury the hopelessly sick before death—hurry them out of the world altogether? They have been described as taking an affectionate leave of their relatives and performing this burying with the consent of the person chiefly concerned. Habit is everything, and they are used to it; only one fancies it must fall rather hard upon each individual as it comes to his own turn. - Once a

BOUND TO HAVE HIS DEER. -The Galt (Ont. Reporter says:—A young man named George Mays, of Tuther township, recently went in pursuit of a deer, which took refuge in a pond. Being without firearms, the hunter boldly jumped upon the back of the animal, which started from the rond and took across the fields, Mays clinging to the horns. The deer jumped the fence, and the young man's head, coming in contact with one of the stakes, was badly cut. Falling from his seat he grasped the deer by the hind legs and was again mounted and forced his prize to the ground, after receiving a severe cut in one of his legs from the animal's horns. Mays received assistance from some neighbors, who brought an axe and put an end to the struggle.