

such production "takes the bread from the honest laborer." Let us look at statistics bearing upon this subject. We find in several states the products of prison labor amount to a number of millions annually. Upon superficial examination this seems enormous, but let us remember that this includes the immense cost of raw materials and the pay of skilled labor and supervision, by no means convict labor. Viewed in this light, the actual convict production dwindles from millions to a few hundred thousands. Why have we labor in our prisons? Chiefly because of its aid in maintenance, and not from a reformatory standpoint. Whether this be right or whether it be wrong, it is upon this same laboring class the main burden of these idle convicts will lie. Challenging the charges of sentimentalism we claim that from a practical standpoint such abolition of prison labor would be very wrong.

With the awful consequences of enforced idleness hanging over us, with the knowledge that it will result in an increase in crime, in the cost of maintenance and in the loss of human souls we say emphatically "Prison labor must not go." Let it rather for a time be made less profitable by making convict labor more a system of trade learning and less a scheme for profit. Costly and complicated machinery may secure profit, but what the convict needs is knowledge of a complete trade. Slavery to a special machine will never secure this end. The popular mind must be educated to take an enlightened view of this subject so that no shortsighted false economy shall delay the onward march of progress.

As for the "lease" system, it is rapidly falling into disuse and to the reformers who have aided in the suppression of this vicious and cruel practice we have only words of commendation and wishes for God speed.

But perfect prison discipline does not imply eradication of crime.

The most vigorous and bloody punishments of the Middle Ages failed utterly to diminish crime for the reasons that the causes of crime remained.

"Give light" said Erasmus, "and darkness will disappear of itself." Education is the mighty light before which the dark shadows of vice and crime will melt away, and Christian training is doing a work which the hangman and the jailor never could have done. The world is being lifted to a higher plane, *gross poverty is the exception*. Homes are brighter and more beautiful than in the long ago. By art and eloquence, by book and picture, by comfort and economy, by schools and refinement, the poor are being made less poor and the rich less selfish, and from pulpit and platform the people are being taught that it is more blessed to give and to do than to hoard and to shrivel up.

The horizon glows with the dawn of a better day, when the necessity for prisons as prisons shall cease to exist and when hospitals for the diseased in mind will alone remain to recall the dungeon and pillory of a former time. C. H. ZINK, JR.

OUR POLITICS.

How changed have our politics become, from the politics of a little more than a hundred years ago! Under our first Presidents an office was to be filled and a certain service to be rendered. Appointments were then not made as a reward for partisan service, nor was removal, as a punishment for opposite political ideas, known.

Did Washington fill his public offices with men who were all his political allies, as a reward for services rendered in his presidential campaign? No, he selected as the leading man in his cabinet, his strongest political opponent, Thomas Jefferson, and gave to Alexander Hamilton, the champion of his own party, a lower seat.

We must remember, however, that Washington was first a patriot, and second a politician. In this liberal and magnanimous spirit were made all the appointments while the administration of this great man lasted.

While the same degree of consideration was not shown by his successors, yet very little change was seen for more than thirty years.