

THE AWFUL MONOTOY OF PRISON LIFE IS DESCRIBED BY A FORMER DARTMOOR CONVICT

"You will go to penal servitude for three years, during which time you will be taught a useful trade." Some such words usually accompany a first sentence of penal servitude, especially in cases where the prisoner pleads that he has never had a chance to earn an honest living. Of course the judge is acting in perfectly good faith, and he believes that he is serving the interests of the wrong-doer in consigning him to a place "where he will be taught a useful trade." In practice the convict is taught nothing of the sort writes a former prisoner in this article in the Manchester Guardian.

The ordinary alert-minded citizen, with something to do and many matters to think about, can form no idea of the terrible effects, both mental and physical, that a long course of idleness can have, especially upon the younger men; and so, Dartmoor having been the storm centre of late, it may not be without interest to see just how 500 men who form the normal population of the establishment are kept employed. In the matter of hours, every man is on parade with his own particular party at 8.30 a.m. and sometime after that hour he begins work. At 11.20 work ceases and everyone prepared to go in for dinner, which is served at 11.40 or shortly after. Afternoon parade is at 1.45, and "Cease labor" is rung finally at 4.20 p.m., or earlier on foggy days. Thus it will be seen that actual work is in progress less than five hours daily.

"Outside" Parties

Now as to the manner of employment. The "outside" parties are made up of men who have less than two years still to complete and who have not offended against prison regulations. These latter, by the way, although including some pretty awful characters, must not come under an armed guard and therefore cannot be allowed outside the walls. Each party consists of about 20 men and goes out with two armed officers in charge. Two parties are engaged on farm work, milking, shepherding, chaff-cutting and attending to the farm horses. Two squads work in the quarry, and other parties are engaged in the fields reclaiming bog land, planting cabbages, weeding and the like whilst in due season all hands concentrate on the hay crop. Another small party is kept to maintain the gardens of the superior officers, cut the lawns, and keep things tidy generally.

The work of all the outside parties is necessary and very healthy, but so far as the men's future is concerned it is of no value whatever. The farm possesses nothing in the way of modern machinery, no use is made of the milk from a magnificent herd of cows, no butter or cheese making is attempted,

and the milk is disposed of at a cheap rate to the prison staff. The same applies to the quarries. All is hand done, and the methods are deliberately devised to find employment for as many convicts as possible—even the haymaking is done without rakes or forks, the men walking in long rows to and from across the field using feet and hands to turn over the grass!

Within the walls there are, of course, several workshops as well as the kitchen, bakehouse and laundry. The best work is done in the carpenters' and joiners' shop—and incidentally this shop is the only one that is even moderately up to date. It has a modern planing machine, circular and band saws, and two lathes, with a gas engine to supply power. Farm carts and other vehicles are made, and the operations of this shop could be considerably extended with advantage.

In the smiths' and fitters' shop a certain amount of gas fitting is done, but not enough to keep two men constantly engaged; repairing quarry tools and jobbing repairs occupy most of the men, and, beyond instruction in the use of a soldering iron, there is little of a helpful nature here. In the so-called tailors' shop employment of a kind is found for about 40 convicts; of genuine tailoring there is practically none.

Futile Occupations

It would be useless and unjust to blame the authorities on the spot for all this; they are hard put to it to find anything at all to occupy the large number of men in their charge. It is the whole system of prison labor which his wrong and calls for reconsideration. Every effort is made through societies such as Toc H and by private individuals to improve the minds of the convicts by means of classes on a variety of subjects, lectures and personal visits, but these things occupy only an hour or one or two evenings each week, and active bodily employment in the daytime is necessary if the mental training is to have any lasting effect.

Merely to show how difficult it is to find work for all under present conditions I will mention the fact that a common sight at Dartmoor is to see about 30 men or even more holding on to a rope (one cannot say pulling!) attached to a small granite roller, which is used to press back into place any loose stones which have been kicked up! Another 20 men can be met, walking as slowly as possible, clustered round a handcart which carries a few bushels of coke. Two boys could run away with roller and handcart, but together these contraptions "employ" about 50 men. No wonder they become dull and listless under the

SPECIAL TRAINS WILL BE RUN FROM BOSTON ON AUGUST 31ST TO VIEW ECILPSE OF THE SUN

(Boston Traveller)

To see the sun in complete eclipse in Massachusetts Aug. 31, either Chatham on the Cape or Newburyport on the North Shore are the nearest to Boston points for an approximate minute of totality.

Nearer to Boston from either point and the length of totality swiftly decreases, so that in or very close to Yarmouth it becomes only partial and in Marblehead and Gloucester totality is only slight.

Cape Best Place

The tip of the Cape Race point, will, if seeing is good on that day, provide the longest Cape Cad totality.

New Haven railroad authorities already have announced that special trains will be run to the Cape. Officials of the Dorothy Bradford steamboat have arranged to run an excursion off the shore from Race point on the day of the eclipse.

Boston is beginning to experience the sense of being one of New England's big centres for this epochal phenomenon. Tens of thousands from in and around the city and suburbs are beginning to make inquiries. Boston Chamber of Commerce authorities are distributing a booklet containing a special astronomical study by Prof. Frederick Slocum, noted astronomer. Floods of queries have begun to pour into the chamber's information bureau. The New England Hotel Association also has prepared data with respect to the eclipse and the best places for observing it.

Lasts full Minute

While totality will last for a full 66 seconds at Provincetown, the fact that fogs often prevail at the Cape end have led astronomers to prefer Maine sites for setting up their apparatus for a study of the phenomenon.

"As far as the cumulus clouds are concerned," stated Dr. Willard James Fisher, Harvard lecturer on astronomy, "the Cape is a very good location. We are less likely to have these clouds there."

Generally, according to statistics gathered by the authorities of the American Astronomical Association chances for good seeing are better than 50 per cent.

Boston will see the sun in 98 per cent. eclipse only—"that is," stated Dr. Fisher, "there will be here a thin line of light around the sun but enough light so that observers here will not see anything else."

The eclipse begins at 2.23 o'clock Eastern Standard time reaches highest totality at 3.32.

"In the beginning," stated Frank E. Seagrave, Boston and North Scituate R. I. astronomer today, "a little notch will appear on the sun's western limb. From that time until the sun's disc is half covered, nothing unusual will be seen, but when from two-thirds to three-quarters is covered the darkness and gloom increases very rapidly and, as Mrs. Mabel Todd says in her little book on eclipses, 'joking and trivial chatter ceases and the observers are awed at the sight.'"

Intense Interest

"At about two minutes before totality the moon's dark shadow can be seen approaching from the northwest

terrible monotony of doing nothing. Just one more instance of utterly futile occupation. On wet or foggy days (which are roughly three in every five at Dartmoor), when outdoor work is not possible, large parties are engaged in this enlightening task—each man is provided with a hammer and pounds a small piece of granite into powder! a day's work will be represented by about a handful of dust, which lies about until scattered by the wind!

From personal experience I know that the most popular and valuable reform which could possibly be introduced into a convict prison would be the provision of interesting, useful work—work that the men could feel was going to be of some use when finished. If, at the same time, they could know that there was being saved for them a sum of money earned by their own efforts and destined to carry them on when they were at Liberty I am certain that not only would a better and more contented spirit prevail but a great step would have been taken toward permanent reclamation.

aid with tremendous velocity. At the instant of totality, and for about a minute and a half, the corona and prominence will be seen with the naked eye.

"As we are now (and probably will be for the remainder of the year) at the minimum period of sun spots, the corona will probably not be very brilliant and instead of surrounding the eclipsed sun will extend outward in the direction of the ecliptic.

"Coronal streamers and the shape of the corona depend upon solar activity which itself is manifested in the number and size of the sun spots."

In future discussion of the spectacle the astronomer stated:

"During the brief period of totality the following stars and planets will be visible: Venus, very brilliant, low down in the northwest; Vega in the northeast; Arcturus not far from the meridian; Antares in the southwest; Spica Virginis in the southwest.

"The centre of the shadow will pass into the Atlantic ocean a few miles southwest of Portland, Me."

Various Places

Places very close to the central line of the eclipse, the astronomer stated, are Sorel, Quebec, Canada; Montreal, in the totality belt but not very near the central line; Derby line, Newport and Island Pond in Vermont; Colbrook, Dixville Notch, Jackson, Mt. Washington and Kearsarge and North Conway in New Hampshire; Alfred Sebago Lake and Old Orchard Beach in Maine.

Today scores of Maine and New Hampshire towns and cities close to the central path of the sun's shadow on the day of the eclipse are making extensive plans for entertaining hosts of spectators and are arranging for preliminary programs of entertainment to accompany the arrival of the crowds.

Here and There

Captain L. D. Douglas, R.N.R., recently named commander of the Pacific speed Queen, the Empress of Japan, largest of Canadian Pacific liners on the Pacific, recently brought his 26,000-ton charge alongside Pier B, Vancouver within 44 minutes of the Pacific record.

His Excellency Rana Phagat Chandra Bahadur, Rajah of Jubbal, was a traveller on the Empress of Japan from the Far East, recently. He might have been taken for any business man but for the presence of his wife, daughter of the Maharajah of Kathiawar, India, who was attired in Indian garb.

Crop conditions in western Canada are most encouraging and, given normal weather conditions, the quantity and quality of the harvest will go a long way towards restoring confidence and prosperity, Grant Hall, vice-president of the Canadian Pacific Railway, stated recently on his return from a tour of inspection of the company's property.

Final figures of butter production in Alberta for 1931 amount to 22,957,822 pounds, which is more than 600,000 pounds above the previous highest year's record for the province. Closely associated with butter production is a movement inaugurated by the Federal and Provincial Departments of Agriculture to encourage farmers to enlarge their forage crop areas.

Major "Bill" McGeehan, one of America's best known columnists, and Lionel Hitchman, veteran defence man of Boston Bruins, landed a 19 and a 30 pounder salmon from New Brunswick waters respectively in May. The Major got his fish with a four-ounce trout rod on the Cain's River; Hitchman was fishing at Hartt's Pool near Fredericton on the Saint John River.

John Cudahy, of Milwaukee, hunting across the Great Divide near Banff, and faced by a furiously charging wounded grizzly almost within striking distance and with but one cartridge left in his rifle, coolly stood his ground and dropped the monster at his feet. Mr. Cudahy has hunted in India, Africa and Alaska, but said he had never had the thrills he experienced on this recent grizzly hunt.

Success of the bargain trips over week-ends and holidays which the Canadian Pacific has put into effect this year was further attested by the great popularity enjoyed during the recent Victoria Day holiday and in week-ends following. To take one large centre—Montreal—the city was literally invaded by the great influx of visitors from eastern Canada and the United States and other big Canadian cities report similar conditions.

One can kick the rocking chair that nips his ankle in the dark, but the chair doesn't care.

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