

What Ontario Has Done in the Way of Prison Reform

The Example Set By the Whitney Government is Worthy of Being Copied by Other Provinces—Under the New System Prisoners are Treated Like Human Beings and Given an Opportunity to Perform Some Useful Work.

(Winnipeg Tribune.)

With the sandprints of civilization gradually traversing the great universe it is becoming more tangibly evident each day that the milk of human kindness will succeed very often where the theologian's oratory fails.

Man is still somewhat of a mystery but a bequest dating from the Christian era has woven a spiral garment that continue to be magnified and which has sympathetically assisted in forming character and proven a softening asset in a world of both turmoil and peace.

In the days of the Inquisition man was dealt with ruthlessly. The vilest forms of torture and barbarism then in evidence—often perpetrated upon an innocent victim—form a striking contrast to present day methods of punishment for offences against society and the laws of the land.

A few centuries ago when a suspect was haled to the halls of justice and found guilty of the most trivial misdemeanor he had practically no redress. When a man thus became a criminal he was a creature to be loathed and the trend of public opinion doomed him to perdition.

Jails, prisons and dungeons were, according to history, seething purgatories where the soul was nurtured with the surroundings. Sweeping reformation, however, has removed a large percentage of these evils and the prison problem, while by no means solved, is in a fair way of becoming lucid. Where torture once was paramount humanity's span is now creeping over the places of confinement and battling for a better life.

Reform of the man placed behind the bars in the eyes of many is out of the question. Efforts to strike a responsive chord in a realization of a better life are scoffed at openly as utterly useless. Too often the man who falls is picked from a narrow mole into a deep chasm, and, struggling to redeem himself, he finds the road an almost insurmountable precipice. For a slight misdeed he is verbally condemned to a life of servitude with everything that is legion of crime. He is believed to be embodied with the lust for wrong doing whereas it is a well known fact that many of the minor crimes are traceable to force of circumstances and not to wilful intent.

Criminals are divided into classes and reformation of each unit will doubtless never be realized, but reform of the short sentence man is no longer a question of theory but of existence.

It has been demonstrated satisfactorily that there is a latent fibre in the make-up of man that will readily respond to the wheel of kindness and this process of expurgation, which is in effect in one portion of the Canadian east and which will be dealt with later, is having a fruitful bearing. Character, like many other things, can be molded and before public condemnation it is well to think that it is not always what the man has been, but the plane to which he may be elevated.

PRISON WITHOUT WALLS.

A prison without walls, the total absence of shackles, handcuffs, manacles and armed guards; a place of confinement where the blue heavens replace grim ceilings and where nature forms the counterpart of gray walls along which the watchful sentry paces ceaselessly, remorselessly with loaded weapon—this, in the childhood of the twentieth century, is the product of years of struggle with the prison problem.

Just how this prison problem has had to be combatted in the face of public opinion may be more openly realized by the following incident related by an ex-prisoner—a drama of life that is harmonious of the great flow of thought; In an eastern city a few years ago a lady and her young daughter were walking past the jail. One of the inmates, hair cropped close to the scalp in accordance with the regulations and wearing the primitive prison garb of striped clothes, was trimming the lawn near the edge of the walk. The child—undoubtedly attracted by the garments of the prisoner—paused, and drew closer to the man for better observation. Glancing behind, the mother took in the scene

and in a horrified voice exclaimed: "Mary, come here at once," and like a dutiful child, the youngster passed on.

The object of the woman's scorn, who had steadfastly kept his eyes upon the ground, continued his labor, but, as he explained, he felt keenly this little bye-act.

It was not the command in itself that made him wince, but the loathing in the woman's voice, and this unfortunate, as events afterwards proved, was serving a three months' term. His crime had been the theft of a small supply of provisions when, despairing of finding work, he had stolen for the sustenance of his family. That person, in the strict sense of the word, was not a criminal, but a man who through a chain of circumstances, was driven to a misdeed, at which his better nature rebelled.

NO ARMED GUARD.

What would Mary's mother think if she wandered to a farm comprising over 800 acres, which harbors close upon 150 prisoners, or trustees, as they are called, and saw these men in ordinary laborer's clothing, appearing like creatures with hearts and souls and working without armed guards at their elbows? Doubtless she would be shocked. At the least it would be a revelation to her and to thousands of others who view every wrongdoer as beyond redemption.

The west has been so busy opening and developing new territory and filling the country's breadbasket that the prison problem has not been dealt with as religiously as in said old Ontario with the result that the eastern province, through the untiring efforts of W. J. Hanna, provincial secretary, J. P. Downey, who only recently retired from the provincial parliament, and a few others, has taken the first great step towards a solution of the immense question of reforming short sentence prisoners.

THEORY IS COMPREHENSIVE.

Mr. Hanna and his associates as yet have their project in its infancy, but the theory upon which they are basing their work and a synopsis of the seed of good that has been planted cannot fail but impress the prison reformist as being comprehensive and possessing the elements of a golden yield in harvesting the better qualities of man fallen.

On the outskirts of Guelph is this prisoner's asylum, where the inmates are punished by being brought closer to nature, taught things that will be useful to him, educated to a higher sphere of life, given as much freedom as is possible on one square mile of land and has pointed out to him daily that one little misstep does not necessarily lead to an ocean of pitfalls. It is really a remarkable institution this reformatory farm of Central prison.

AIM TO DEVELOP MORAL FIBRE.

As mentioned previously there are no guards under arms continually prowling about the precincts and by force seeing that the term of sentence is completed. This reformation is aimed to develop the moral fibre and to send the man away better educated and imbued with the idea that he may fulfil some mission.

Thus, the most brutal method employed is cut from the tree of kindness. Do the trustees appreciate this treatment?

Through the courtesy of Mr. Hanna and the kindness of his deputy minister, S. A. Armstrong, a representative of The Tribune was permitted to see the evolution of reformation in its unveiled aspect and invited to inspect the grounds, buildings and work in progress.

At luncheon Mr. Hanna rather flippantly bantered one of the waiters, a trusty, by launching this half answered query:

"None of you fellows feel as if you want to escape, do you?"

"No, sir," the man replied, quietly, but earnestly. "Indeed, sir, if we were paid wages a large number of us would like to stay here."

AIR OF CONTENTMENT.

With a few exceptions a general air of contentment seemed to exude. In-

stead of sullen and uncouth looking men the vast majority of trustees presented a neat and clean appearance. Plenty of spring water is obtainable on the grounds and soap is by no means a scarce commodity.

The officials believe in doing all things well and have tried to impress the advantages of keeping clean the body, while the mind and heart are in the process of regeneration.

In this respect the men have readily taken up the views of their keepers and apparently strive their utmost to preserve a state of cleanliness. And mind you, it is not a case of merely rinsing the hands, and a slight toilet with the face. In what is at present the main, though only temporary building, there are shower baths with hot and cold water attachments. As the trustees have the privilege of getting under the sprays when they desire this liberty is said to be extremely popular.

COMPLAINTS ARE NIL.

While snowy white linen is absent the rows of neat beds recall a ward in a hospital. Each man is given the same as his fellow inmate and communalism are practically nil.

The dining room furnishings for the trustees are of the plainest materials, but little touches here and there—such as vases of flowers on the tables—accomplish a great deal toward dispersing the atmosphere of captivity.

It is possible that the reader may suspect that the reformatory is merely a pleasure grounds for the trusty. It isn't, for no trusty will become indolent while there.

There is always plenty of work and while there are no slave drivers each trusty must do his share toward cultivation, construction or the task to which he may be allotted.

They have a pretty long day, too, as the trustees arise between five and six o'clock each morning. The old maxim of early to bed, etc., in one instance is rigidly observed also and apart from an odd light in the officials' quarters, the reformatory buildings loom out black by nine o'clock each night.

SPLENDID RESOURCES.

On the farm, which, by the way, is ideally situated, there are splendid resources. Deeply wooded and with the Speed river flowing through the preserve, the timber land gives place to rich fertile soil admirably adaptable for farming purposes. Then for construction work, the very best of clay, gravel and stone are found on the premises.

Steel, cement and lumber are the only commodities required. The other requisites are at hand, even down to mechanics.

A small railway now extends over the property, while a large trestle bridge is being erected. Attention is also being directed to a scheme for good roads and drainage, but at present the biggest item is laying the foundation for the trades building, which will cover an area 50x200 feet. The main building has been surveyed to provide for a structure 700x200 feet. A telephone line is also projected.

BEE HIVE OF INDUSTRY.

The reformatory right now is a regular bee hive of industry and with a profusion of plans for beautifying the place, the remark of one of the officials to the effect that the square mile of waste of 1910 will be a beauty spot in a few years will likely be verified.

Enough garden truck is being raised this summer to tide over the winter, while in the line of meats the presence of two herds of cattle numbering in all about 125 head, places a butcher shop on the grounds.

The trusty who is a skilled mechanic is not placed in the office to act as book-keeper, but the man who is more at hand among figures is assigned to that work. So far as is possible, each trusty is allotted to duties with which his physical and mental capabilities conform. For instance, the foreign element dominate in the stone quarry. It isn't because they are foreigners that they are given this class of work, but simply because they are better acquainted with swinging a pick or shovel than a pencil or employing skillfully their

other powers at the obedience of mind.

USE NATURE'S CLOCK.

Something that aroused the curiosity of the writer was the absence of a whistle in view of the fact that the regular working hours from 7 a. m. to 12 and from 1 p. m. to 6. On this point one of the officials furnished the information. "Why," he observed, "they just seem to know the proper time to cease labor and when to return. Possibly the stomach is their clock, but at all events few mistakes in their time are recorded."

Even though it is a stern and hard grind throughout the hours of labor, the men are permitted to indulge in sports within their own boundary.

GOOD BALL PLAYERS.

Not long ago a baseball team from near Guelph sent in a challenge for a game and this day passing headquarters favorably, the trustees had an opportunity to demonstrate their ability on the diamond. A score of 15-0 at the end of the third inning in favor of the reformatory nine satisfactorily proved to their opponents that they were acquainted with some of the rudiments of this outdoor sport.

That the trustees possess a sense of some of the finer risibilities of humor was disclosed in the ball game by such remarks as: "Bill's term will be extended—*he's* a base"; "Sam hit it on the nose and laid himself open to a charge of assault."

THE "COWMAN."

One of the most interesting characters on the grounds is Tom M— who has been dubbed with the singular appellation of "cowman." He looks after the cattle and it is simply to distinguish why he was given such a nickname.

Tom is a big raw-boned Irishman, redolent of the Emerald Isle, and, according to Mr. Hanna, inculcated, with a fine fund of sparkling wit. The provincial secretary related two amusing incidents in which Tom performed the stellar role.

"Recently," said Mr. Hanna, "Tom was, as usual, tending to his charges when he saw three Italians near the river acting suspiciously. He kept his eye on this gentry and when he discovered that they were using cartridges as a means of securing fish he immediately swooped down on them."

"The intruders saw him coming and set off pell mell for the open country with Tom at their heels shouting to them to stop."

READY EXPLANATION.

"I asked him the sequel and he replied: 'Faith, it was this way; they had a start on me, but I was gaining on the devils every moment when I was forced to abandon the chase.' 'What was the matter?' I inquired."

"'Worra! the boundary,' and Tom modestly shook his head as he told how he could not overstep the lines of confinement."

"'But supposing,' I asked him further, 'you had caught up with them, what could you, single handed against three, have done?'"

"Tom's lips curled in scorn and his face hardened."

"'Phwat, thim three Dagoes! Shure and I would have made a 'maile of thim!'"

"After this round-up," continued Mr. Hanna, "the cowman was made chief constable, sheriff or any other title he choose to assume with the understanding that he had full power to arrest suspicious characters found on the precincts."

PROUDER THAIN NAPOLEON.

"Only last week he came upon two foreigners with guns in their possession. The embryo sheriff relieved them of their weapons and marched them through rows of grinning trustees to the officials' quarters. Napoleon may have been a proud general when a city crumbled beneath the onslaught of his army, but he could not have felt more satisfied with himself and the world than the cowman did when he lodged his prisoners in the officers' room."

If the inmates of this model reformatory have given a thought to escape—and the road seems easy—they have never tried to put it into execution since the place opened in April.

Four guards comprise the present staff and it was stated that this number will be reduced to three, and possibly two, within a short space of time. From a most reliable source it was also learned that it is not the intention at this date or in the near future to put on the market against free labor the product of Central reformatory.

Buttermilk has outpointed ice cream soda and even the mint julep in popularity as a summer drink in Chicago.

GUIDE FOR TRAVELLERS

INTERCOLONIAL

DEPARTURES.

No. 303—Mixed for Loggieville, 5.00
No. 317—Suburban for Gibson and Marysville, 6.15.
No. 321—Suburban for Gibson and Marysville, 11.15.
No. 323—Suburban for Gibson and Marysville, 16.20.
No. 301—Express for Loggieville, Chatham, Campbellton, Quebec, Montreal, etc., 18.30.
No. 327—Suburban for Gibson and Marysville, 18.40.
No. 329—Suburban for Gibson and Marysville, 22.00.

ARRIVALS

No. 306—Suburban from Marysville 7.45.
No. 302—Express from Loggieville, Chatham Junction 11.25.
No. 308—Suburban from Marysville 13.30.
No. 304—Mixed from Loggieville and Chatham Junction, 16.00.
No. 310—Suburban from Marysville 19.15.
No. 316—Suburban from Marysville 21.55.

CANADIAN PACIFIC

DEPARTURES

6.20 a.m.—Express for St. John, Portland, Boston, Woodstock, etc.
7.55 a.m.—Mixed for Woodstock and points North. Leaves St. Marys at 8.35.
9.45 a.m.—Express for St. John and points east.
4.45 p.m.—Mixed for Woodstock, via Gibson branch, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.
5.50 p.m.—Express for Montreal, and Boston, Woodstock, St. Stephen etc.
9.05 p.m.—Express for St. John and points east.

ARRIVALS

9.10 a.m.—Express from St. John and points east.
11.20 a.m.—Mixed from Woodstock via Gibson branch, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.
11.35 a.m.—Express from Montreal, Boston, etc.
7.50 p.m.—Express from St. John, and points east.
9.05 p.m.—Mixed from Woodstock, and points North.
10.50 p.m.—Express from Boston, Portland, Woodstock, St. Stephen etc.

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Steamer Hampstead leaves Fredericton every week day for Gagetown at 4 o'clock p.m. Arrives from Gagetown at 10.30 a.m.

Stage line for Meductic and point on western side of river leaves the post office Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 7.30 a.m.

NOTICE

All persons having claims against the Estate of the late Honourable George F. Gregory are requested to file the same duly attested within ten days from this date, with Honble. F. B. Gregory, Fredericton, N. B., or with Messrs. Gregory & Winslow, Solicitors, Carleton St. All persons indebted to the said estate are requested to make payment to the Executors.

The Executors of said Estate offer for sale that desirable residential property on the corner of Church and George Streets, also the Perley property on George Street, and other real estate owned by the late Judge Gregory.

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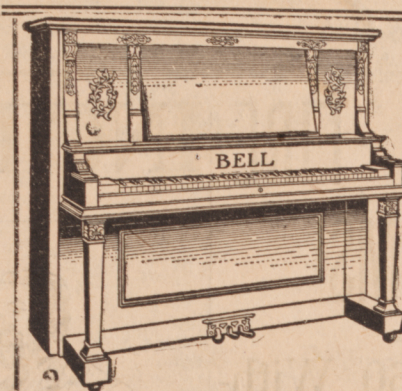
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Black spaniel answering to name of Bobbs, slight limp in one hind leg. Finder will please leave information at Mail Office.

AUCTION SALE

There will be an auction sale of household furniture at the residence of Dr. J. W. Bridges, Queen Street, on Friday evening, commencing at seven o'clock. A splendid chance for bargains.

FOR SALE

House, barn and lot in the Village of Stanley, next below Dr. Moore's residence; also one building lot in Stanley, and one house and two barns and lot in the Village of Gibson, known as the Ruel property, of four acres of land fronting the main river. This property is a good mill site as there is plenty of land and good shore for rafts of logs in the dry time in summer. Full information by calling on the owner on the premises, Gibson, B. McMennamin.

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