

convictions. If we had had 6,000 cases of smallpox or of cholera, how there would have been aroused from one end of the province to the other an intense feeling of the absolute necessity of at once ending such a state of affairs, and yet the contamination from the crime is much worse in its results than that from the disease.

It must be borne in mind that, in dealing with this question, there are two main factors,—(a) the deterrent influence to those outside; (b) the reformatory influence on those inside.

Now, take the daily farce going on at our Police Court. The constant sending down of law-breakers to a place which is not infrequently called the Criminal Club, where the culprits are reasonably well fed, well housed, and which is made the rendezvous where the criminal class is glad to meet and discuss all matters of general interest to their profession.

How completely would this cease to be such club if the two foundation principles, now admitted on all hands as guides in prison work, were introduced,—(a) separation; (b) work. It must be remembered, when we are dealing with the question of separation, that it does not mean solitary confinement. The separation consists in being separated from contamination and being separated from the power of contaminating.

How this process of contamination hardens! Take the daily illustration of the first offence. A culprit sentenced to prison, often a mere child, miserable, wretched, in tears, ashamed, sits down, apart by himself. He gets wearied of this, gradually draws near, and soon becomes a companion with the others, and thus enters, placed there by the State, a first-class school of vice. This is the act of the State for some offence, probably not more venal than breaking

a pane of glass, or stealing a few apples. This child, as a matter of common decency, should have been placed directly in a separate cell, to be visited only by the officers, a chaplain, a Christian instructor, supplied with some literature, given work, but kept absolutely apart from all contamination.

If idleness be an evil outside the gaol, it is a much increased evil inside of it. Work should be given to each. It should be constant. There should be an incentive in the shape of a reward for work well done. The same principles that act as a stimulus outside should be introduced inside the gaol. Good marks, badges, the laying aside of a sum of money for the benefit of the prisoner on his release, and the beginning of winning men and women back to citizenship.

By the principle of separation, the hardened criminal, the incorrigible, the man who is determined to continue in a course of crime when he gets his release, and who in the meantime is determined to instruct others in the way of vice, is restrained from such action.

In connection with the position of incorrigibles, it seems now to be generally admitted that the sentence on a hardened criminal should be indeterminate. He should thus be kept away from preying on society until he gives assurance that he will cease to do so. There is no doubt that there is much difficulty in working out satisfactorily this question, but the difficulties connected with it should not prevent an honest attempt being made to endeavour to work upon these lines.

In this respect we may well say,—Give the prisoners a chance. Do not let us, by keeping them together, give the worst the opportunity of educating others up to the highest standard of crime. They have nothing else to do.