

The Way Criminals Are Made.

In order to have fewer criminals we must quit making criminals. The way we treat our criminals from the time they are arrested until the time they are discharged from custody, as a rule, converts petty criminals into real criminals. When a man has committed a petty offence, if he were managed right, his first correction would probably be his reformation.

No one who has had any experience with our police courts, city prisons, county jails, justice's courts and crim-

inal courts generally, can deny that there is much ground for complaint for every criminal who passes through these experiences.

First, the manner of their arrest. The ordinary policeman makes a savage and brutal arrest. His manner is overbearing and threatening, and sometimes, even cruel. The use of his club is a common occurrence. The use of brutal language is a still more common occurrence.

To treat a man arrested as though

he were already a criminal is almost universal. He is then hauled up before the turnkey of the city prison. There he is searched, and whatever he possesses is taken from him. The manner in which this is done often arouses the fury of the victim; if he has any spirit left at all. He is then put in a cell. All intercourse with the outer world is denied him, as a rule. After a day or two he is dragged before the police court by the police officer. There he finds every man opposed to him. The prosecuting attorney, of course, is opposed to him. It is the prosecuting attorney's func-

tion to convict all criminals that are brought before him.

The policeman that made the arrest is opposed to him. Even the judge finds it much easier to be opposed to the prisoner than to be just to him. Should the judge discharge the prisoner as being not guilty of the offence for which he was arrested, he will offend the policeman. Such a decision on the part of the judge endangers the standing of the policeman.

Thus it is, that when a policeman makes an arrest it is very important that the man arrested should be convicted, and the police judge knows this full well, and is naturally inclined to justify the policeman, if he can, rather than the man arrested.

After his trial, which is usually a very short one, at which he is not allowed to say much, in which many times no witnesses have been called in his defence, he receives a sentence a fine or imprisonment. This performance convinces the prisoner that he has not had a fair trial. He may have been guilty of many crimes, or he may be even guilty of the crime for which he has been tried; but he knows he has had a slipshod trial; that he has not been justly dealt with; that the evidence had been imperfect, if not false, and that he would not have been treated in such a manner if he had been a man of money or influence.

This hardens his heart, fills him with revenge, and he only waits the time when he is at liberty again to attempt to avenge himself on society.

When he is tried he may not be, at heart, a criminal at all. He may have simply made a mistake or done some hasty act, actuated by some unusual passion, or some sudden temptation. But, having passed through a trial like this and endured an imprisonment on poor fare and hard labor, all the latent fury and revenge within him is aroused and he becomes an enemy to the civilization that has treated him in this manner. This is the way criminals are made. Most of our criminal courts are criminal manufacturers.

These men ought to be given a fair trial. They ought to be treated with consideration; every impression that their trial has been slipshod avoided. Men should not be given a hasty trial because they are poor. A man should not be denied the privileges of defence, because he is friendless. The state should provide for every man, who is charged with a crime, ample facilities for a fair trial. To convict a man of a crime when the man knows himself that he is not guilty of the crime, will generally change a well-meaning man into a real criminal. If anything can make a criminal of a man, such a procedure will.

It is safe to say that three-fourths of the criminals that are undergoing imprisonment in this country, honestly believe that they have been unfairly treated. Some of them may be mistaken, of course, but many of them are not. They know full well that money or influence would have given them a better chance to defend themselves; and, many of them believe that a fair trial would have proven their innocence.

To be put in prison under the faulty methods now in vogue so embitter the spirit of the convict that kind treatment in prison is futile. Missionary effort to soften his heart is without avail. The consciousness that he would not be there if he had been given decent consideration poisons his every thought and makes it impossible for any one to do him any good.

First offence criminals are generally converted into second offence criminals by the arbitrary, careless, off-hand legal machinery that has tried and convicted them.

The meanest citizen is entitled to a decent trial. He is entitled to all the defence that can be produced. He is entitled to an opportunity to give his version of the story. He is entitled to the services of a good lawyer, who will see to it that justice is done him.

It is a menace to a free country that any man should be falsely imprisoned, no matter how degraded he may be. Every man who is behind the bars today, unfairly convicted of crime, is not only a stigma upon our civilization, but a dangerous spirit to let loose in the world.



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