

THE VICTORIA HOME JOURNAL

Devoted to Social, Political, Literary, Musical and Dramatic Gossip.

VOL. III. No. 10.

VICTORIA, B. C., FEBRUARY 24, 1894.

\$1.00 PER ANNUM

THE VICTORIA HOME JOURNAL

Published every Saturday morning at 77 Johnson street, Victoria. Subscription, \$1.00, invariably in advance.

Advertising Rates on Application.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS—Subscribers ordering address of the papers changed must always give their former as well as present address.

CONTINUED—All papers are continued until an explicit order for discontinuance is received.

Address all communications to

THE VICTORIA HOME JOURNAL,
Office: 77 Johnson street,
Victoria, B. C.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1894.

ALL THE WORLD OVER.

"I must have liberty,
Withal as large a charter as the wind—
To blow on whom I please."

MR. FREDERICK S. HUSSEY, Superintendent of Provincial Police, has just presented his fourth annual report to the Legislature. The fact that the report was prepared by Mr. Hussey stamps the statistics contained therein with the seal of reliability, for he is known to be a scrupulously honest and trustworthy officer. Mr. Hussey knows his business and never exceeds the powers conferred on him by the department to which he is responsible for the strict performance of his duty—something which could not be said of a former superintendent. As a consequence one has no hesitation in contemplating and digesting the lessons to be learned from the really interesting data furnished by Mr. Hussey. THE HOME JOURNAL does not often pay compliments, but when it does, as in the case of the above officer, it feels that the recipient thereof should be distinguished by special recognition of merit.

The public will be pleased to learn from the report that the Provincial prisons are all in a well kept state and that the sanitary condition of each has recently received the most careful attention, consequently the general health of the prisoners is excellent. A modern jail is now in course of construction at Nanaimo, and will be completed and ready for occupation about the end of February, instant. Better jail accommodation is, Mr. Hussey says, badly needed at Kamloops, the present building being far too small for the number of prisoners confined therein. To avoid overcrowding of prisoners in this jail it has been necessary on several occasions during the past year to remove convicts to New Westminster prison to complete their terms of imprisonment.

After reporting upon the condition and requirements of the Provincial prison, superintendent Hussey prints numerous statistical statements, which may be

summarized as follows: The total number of prisoners dealt with during the year ending October 31, 1893, at the four provincial jails, in Victoria, New Westminster, Nanaimo and Kamloops, was 1,105. Nanaimo had 479, Victoria 273, New Westminster 210, and Kamloops 143. The most serious offences charged are thus enumerated: Murder 11, attempted murder 1, arson 1, abduction and rape 4, burglary 8, embezzlement 2, forgery 6, horse and cattle stealing 5, housebreaking 10, larceny 140, perjury 1, robbery 6, highway robbery 2, threatening and seditious language 10. The statistical report of the Victoria jail, for the prison year, shows a total of 273 prisoners received, an increase of 5 over the previous year.

From the above facts, it will be observed that crime, with the exception of murder, has not increased in the Province in proportion to the pressure of the hard times on the people, from which it may be inferred that honest poverty has but little to do with crime. For my part, I am inclined to believe that more crime results from laziness—and not want of work—than all other causes combined. The young man who is inherently lazy will steal rather than work. The man who prefers to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow will manage to live and get along in some honest way when he is out of employment. He will do odd jobs to sustain life, if nothing suitable to his peculiar capabilities offers. It is only when the distress and suffering of a small family drives the honest man to his wits' end that he will break the law, and then he will do some wild thing which shows his mental condition and also his own natural honesty when in his normal state.

In this Province, there are hundreds of men who will do neither mental nor manual work, but rather prefer to get their living by preying upon the community in some form or other. It is laziness—inherent laziness. Criminals are born bad—not made to any great extent. Of course, bad environment in youth has much to do in strengthening the disposition to evil or lessening the disposition toward good. It is too much to expect that the children of a criminal will be naturally good; but if by some freak of nature they did possess some germ of good, it would be deadened and utterly obliterated by the evil influence exerted upon them from their childhood up, and they are almost certain to become as bad as their progenitors, and, if they get a little education to sharpen their wits, become even worse. To this class, I imagine, Stroebel, the recently executed murderer belonged. Once let a boy get contaminated with the poison of crime, have his original propensities fully developed, and he will live and die, if condi-

tions are favorable, a law-breaker. This is why the offspring of criminals, or indolent, dissipated parents, even though misguided philanthropists of the Dr. Barnado type ship them to Canada and find homes for them in respectable families, invariably turn out bad.

Moreover, reformatories do not reform. No one ever heard tell of a boy in a reformatory who would not resort to anything in order to escape. This has been demonstrated in this city during the last week. Police magistrates can tell at a glance the children who were brought up in reformatories—their manners are deceitful, and they have a hang-dog, crouching expression of countenance. The truth is, instances of reform on the part of hereditary criminals are rare. An old police officer informs me that he never met with a genuine case during an experience of twenty years. Quite a long time may elapse between terms in the penitentiary or provincial gaol, but they are sure to return there for some new offence sooner or later, more hardened than ever. Once in a great while a generally well disposed man may fall through drink, desperation or evil associations, but he will make an honest effort to do better when he comes out. Such a man should be encouraged. As bearing on this point, I will relate an incident which came to me some years ago, from a police magistrate, and which will remind many of the labyrinth of difficulties which surrounded Hugo's wonderful creation, Jean Valjean, in *Les Miserables*: "One day, while presiding in the police court, an officer brought before me a man who wore a blouse and had an adze in his hand. I asked the officer what charge he had against the man. The policeman replied that he was an escaped convict from the penitentiary. He had been sentenced to three years, had served two, and owed another year to the country. I asked the officer where he found the man. He replied in a cooper shop, where he was working making barrels. Was he dressed as he is now, I asked. Yes, said the policeman. Well, I replied, if he escaped from prison, it was the fault of the officials. He served two years for his offence. When you arrested him, he was not in the act of committing any crime, but trying to earn an honest living by his trade and be a better man. It may be technically wrong for me to discharge him, but I think the public will sustain me when I say to him you are discharged, go back to your shop and work at your trade and do not break the laws again." This, however, was an exceptional case. Burglars will be burglars, pick-pockets cannot be reformed and confidence men would rather get a half dollar by indulging in their beguiling methods than earn ten dollars honestly in the same length of time.