

privilege of wearing their own linen, boots, watches, and neckties; they are not cropped, and may sport their face hair in what style they like. They may also have their own books sent in to them, and may receive money from their friends to the extent of a franc per diem. The prison dress is a dark pepper-and-salt suit, with no marks or badge of infamy about it; but the governor may at his discretion excuse a prisoner from wearing it. In fact, the governor can do anything. He may allow a prisoner to dress in his own clothes, have his meals brought in from a restaurant, and walk about the prison grounds all day on the pretext that he is employed in prison work. There are no visiting justices to trouble him. Prison inspectors come round every three months, but the time of their arrival is always known beforehand, and they discharge their duties in the most perfunctory way, scarcely occupying a couple of hours in the inspection of a building that contains twelve hundred cells.

III.

It has been said that any sentence of imprisonment exceeding a year relegates a man to a *maison centrale*. These penitentiaries are very grim places, affording none of the alleviations to be met with in houses of correction. To begin with, the manner of a man's transfer from Paris to a *maison centrale* is most grievous. He goes with a chain fastened around his left leg and right wrist; he is shaved and cropped, attired in a yellow prison suit, and he travels in a cellular railway carriage. At the penitentiary there is no respect of persons, or at least very little. The prisoners are divided into two categories—those sentenced simply to imprisonment and the *réclusionnaires*. The former are treated very much like the inmates of Parisian prisons on the associated system, except that they are not allowed to smoke. They sleep together in dormitories of fifty, and work together at making cardboard boxes, list shoes, lamp-shades, and other such things. Their earnings seldom exceed seventy-five centimes a day, and of this they get one-third to spend inside the prison. In Paris the number of letters which a prisoner may write, and the number of visits he may receive in a year from his friends, are points which depend a good deal on the pleasure of the governor. In the penitentiaries there is a hard and

fast line, allowing only one letter and one visit every three months.

The *réclusionnaires* lead very miserable lives of absolute solitude. As men over sixty years of age are not transported, a sentence of penal servitude (*travaux forcés*), which would mean transportation for a man of fifty-nine, becomes *réclusion* for one of sixty. Cripples are also denied the favor of transportation; and, as already said, prisoners who have committed murderous assaults on warders, in hopes of being shipped to New Caledonia, are now kept in the *maisons centrales* under life sentences. The rest of the reclusionary contingent is made up of men whose offences are, from the legal point of view, one degree less heinous than those of transported convicts. *Reclusion* is generally inflicted for terms of five, eight, or ten years; and it is a fearful punishment, because the convict has no means of diminishing it by earning good marks to obtain a ticket-of-leave. Remissions of sentence are granted on no fixed principle. Every year the governor of the prison makes out a list of the most deserving among those of his prisoners who have served out at least half their terms, and he forwards it to the Ministry of Justice. There the *dossier* of each man recommended is carefully studied by the heads of the criminal department, and, two-thirds of the names being eliminated, the remaining third are submitted to the Minister of Justice. His Excellency makes further elimination, so that, out of a list of twenty sent up by the governor of the penitentiary, probably two convicts obtain a full pardon, while two or three others get a remission. It is obvious that there must be a good deal of haphazard in this method of proceeding, and that a convict who has no friends stands a poor chance of getting his case properly considered by government. But even were the system administered as honestly as possible, there would be a strong objection to it, in that it would make the convict's chance of remission depend more upon his conduct before his sentence than after it. This is just what ought not to be the case. The convict should be made to feel that from the day of his sentence he commences quite a new life, and will be treated for the future according to the conduct he leads under his altered circumstances.

Five years of *reclusion* are quite as much as a