

PRISON DISCIPLINE CURATIVE OR DESTRUCTIVE.

The several articles on crime and its cure which appeared in these columns some months ago would seem to have been premonitions of approaching occasion for them. The recent case of excessive flogging which occurred at the Toronto Central Prison seems likely to bring the whole question of prison discipline forcibly before the public. The prisoner referred to is said to have been tortured until he fainted. As he is an American the American Consul is reported by the Toronto newspaper to have requested of the Dominion Government particulars of the case. A searching inquiry will probably be the result.

It would be therefore hardly wise to enter at present into any detail either of this case or of the defects in our prison discipline which may be imperfectly known to us. It would be equally out of place to assume that in the special instance referred to the punishment was illegally inflicted; for that is precisely the question with which the American Consul's request has to do.

That such a system of punishment is still extant upon our criminal code and can be inflicted apparently almost at will even by subordinates, has set men thinking. There are some who talk of such things lightly enough so long as they are mere theory, yet when they find the theory actually wrought out, stand aghast at the possibilities involved.

Is such brutality really a necessity we ask? Can no better method of curing crime and repressing insubordination be found than the brutal slavery of the lash? Have we not a right to expect better things of civilization even—to say nothing of Christianity? In short the questions that loudly call for answer are: do brutal, or corporal punishments really act as a deterrent to others? Are brutal punishments—short sharp and decisive as they are—really more merciful than long confinement? Are they also economical and therefore just towards the vast majority whose lowest earnings are taxed to support the majesty of the law?

The negative answer to each of these queries springs at once to the lips of every thoughtful mind. If intended to act as a deterrent, why are they not inflicted as publicly as possible? Even true philanthropists who advocated their re-introduction in England find the crop of victims increase in exact ratio to the number of punishments. There is as yet no sign of abatement, but rather of increase. Brutal forms of punishment are not the most merciful. They inflict the revenge of society upon the criminal in that form which of all others must present itself to him as revenge. Unless they can be made so severe—*i. e.*, cruel and wholly destructive of the manhood within him—as utterly to break his spirit and degrade him for ever in his own eyes, they must raise in him a similar desire of vengeance. Thus an army of lawless, revengeful men is gradually let loose upon society. These must be crushed and quelled without mercy some day. Is that the most merciful course of action which leads to such results? It can hardly be contended either that such punishments are economical, for even if resorted to more largely still, prisons would have to be maintained. It would hardly be regarded as safe to permit any considerable number of men smarting still from recent blows of the lash to be at large. The number of our city and provincial police would need to be indefinitely increased in order to keep watch upon them. A certain term of imprisonment is felt to be necessary as well as flogging.

How then explain on rational grounds this hunger of society for personal violence as a punishment for crime? Simply on these grounds, that it is not yet cure, remedy, eradication of the course of crime, that is sincerely sought, but revenge. Society is content to press the good of the criminal, the good of the State (economy), and the furtherance of the usefulness of each member of the community to the whole, for the sake of gratifying its desire of personal revenge. Verily, revenge must be sweet indeed! Faith in vengeance has not yet died out among us. Faith in the devil of self-love has not yet been renounced in favour of fidelity to the laws and nature of the One Being of Infinite Love and Infinite Wisdom, who is the God and Father of us all.

If the true economy of the Eternal One had found external restraint and external penalty the most economic and effectual method of preserving a true order amid His children, would we have had any Christian religion? Would He have displayed before us, and communicated thereby to us, the life forces of His being in a life lived out among men, perceptible to their very senses even, that He might so teach, save and heal them till He had shown us that misery and suffering were not His wrath or His deed, but brought on us by our own efforts to reverse the order in which we were created—to become beasts with animal passions only, instead of men with human longings and impulses that transcend, and may govern the bestial.

That there is any but one answer to that query is only owing to this, that Christians have yet so little learned Christ that they can still view the one Jehovah in whom He was and who was in Him, as a Being capable of revenge

and wrath; even although He who was "the express image of His person" wrought no vengeance upon any human being. True, the human nature He had assumed bore *their* wrath, suffered *their* revenge, sustained *their* hatred of His light, so abhorrent to their darkness, and yet with His latest earthly breath He forgave His enemies. So little have they followed Him, so little have they permitted Him to bestow His life upon them, that they cannot yet see Him as He is, as He said He was, the one Jehovah, our Father in Heaven. They worship Him, the Christ. They cannot help but worship Him. His infinite love attracts them. But still they say there must be another God behind Him with something in Him of this "wrath" we feel, only infinitely more justifiable than this wrath of ours which rises in us when our self-hood is injured; for then they think revenge is right. They cannot yet read the advice "be ye angry and sin not" as sublime sarcasm—as though a man could be angry and sin not! After the "seventy times seven" there comes doubtless the four-hundred-and-ninety-first time which justifies wrath and revenge.

The true principle of Christian law is, that nothing—nothing whatsoever justifies revenge. Every sin, every crime, justifies—nay brings with it a deprivation of power, a lowering of vital force a certain degree of separation, from the Divine source of all life. Men who persist in mental error or sensual crime destroy ultimately their faculties. This is a truth of the law of life which he who runs may read. It is here that the true solution of the cure of crime will be found. It is, restraint of those faculties wrongly exercised, and an enforced stimulant by necessity applied to those left dormant. If for instance a thief has hitherto preferred to scheme and filch to gratify his appetites, place him in restraint where such mental activity mis-directed is useless and perforce inert, and let his physical labour be the only means left him whereby to gain even food. The more strictly that law is carried out the more merciful it will be to him and to society. There is no need to lash him into activity and so stimulate other evil passions in him. Let Nature's laws lead him. Let him have free choice between starvation and labour. Bye and bye he will positively come to admire Nature's cure. He will find his bodily faculties crave exercise. He will be a man again when he again attains liberty. The principle is of universal application to every form of crime; to each distinct. For every poison there is its special antidote. These work by law, by Nature's law, by God's law, in the moral as well as in the Natural universe. Once rouse the will voluntarily to strive to keep the law it has broken and a channel is formed whereby new life and light may again be infused into his whole being.

Can such a course of prison discipline be carried out by men brutalized by familiarity with the use of the lash? Does it need our best men or our worst? Let society answer; for on its answer depends our success or failure in the cure of crime and criminals.

EDUCATIONAL PROTECTION.

The public will recollect the breeze that blew across the Province of Ontario last July when it was learned that Mr. Warren, a young Oxford double-first, had been promoted over the heads of the ablest and longest tried of the University of Toronto's Professors to an important position in that institution. It was felt by many that Mr. Crooks, the Minister of Education, paid, in that instance, a very poor compliment to his own adopted country, and to the graduates of its universities. It was felt by many, too, that an amplification of the N. P. was extremely desirable, so that Canadian *brains*, as well as Canadian industries, might be encouraged. How else, it was argued, can we expect our young men to devote themselves to the arduous pursuit of learning, and the laborious task of teaching? The discussion of this question by the press revealed the fact that the appointment of Mr. Warren was not an isolated instance. Other appointments had been made in the same way. The Ontario government, it seems, had no honours to bestow upon the prophets of that Province. A supervisorship in the Toronto Lunatic Asylum, which became vacant, was filled by a specially imported Englishman. This, however, might have been allowed to pass uncensured (although it *was* sad to think that the Ontario government could find, even for this position, no one in Canada fully competent), but the very next vacancy—a position in the Guelph Agricultural College—was also filled by a foreign incumbent. And so with the Chair of Practical Science, the Chair of Chemistry, and other posts of importance. It will thus be seen that the young men of Ontario growled not without reason. To the credit of the Ontario press be it said, however, that the unpatriotic policy of the government was vigorously condemned, and it is very probable that for time to come more consideration will be given to the claims of Canadian talent than has been customary.

Looking at our own Province in the light of these events, one cannot fail to observe how much less interest we take in educational matters than do our Ontario brethren. There have been made in Montreal several appointments of the kind above referred to, but in truth there might have been many more, and just as little would have been said about the matter by the public generally. The young men who have been over-ridden, apparently think it will pay best to accept the facts uncomplainingly, seeing that they cannot accept the