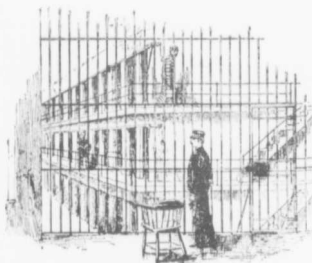


criminal are put in the background, this will ever be held. But the more society realizes its responsibility to even its erring members, and becomes conscious that often the door into prison is the beginning of settled criminal habits from which many a man might be saved if, instead of being sent to serve his sentence in prison, he were allowed to remain outside on parole, the more will it be held that often the potentiality of the prison is a greater good to society, even with some convicted criminals, than its actual use.



A BLOCK OF PRISON CELLS.

*Barbarous Tradition vs. Science and Religion.*

In this age of science, the phenomena of the criminal have been examined and noted as never before. The literature of criminology is rapidly on the increase, containing the mature views of men who have spent years of close and patient observation among criminals of all sorts. The surroundings, the motives, the treatment of convicts have been noted, with their effects; and deliberate, thoughtful conclusions, based upon carefully authenticated facts, are now before the public, divorced from all prejudice, sentimentality, or partiality.

How does our present treatment of criminals square with these universally accepted scientific infer-

ences? Time and space do not permit the detailed contrast which we would like to draw between the two; but we can say, at once, that for the most part they are almost completely opposed to each other.

Our present system is the growth of century upon century. It is largely the result of primeval savage hypotheses, of the belief in the almost utter forfeiture of all rights by the criminal, and the presumption that revenge upon the criminal is the natural, sane, and right motive for punishment. It goes largely upon the assumption that all criminals can be classified according to their crimes; all thieves, for example, are equally bent on stealing, have the same motive, are equally responsible, equally damnable. Some variation may be allowed in the term allotted for punishment, but that variation is so uncertain that though it sometimes harmonizes with justice, it is just as liable to put the balance of the light sentence on the side of the more heinous crime.

It insists, too, upon prison punishment (or its money equivalent) in virtually all cases. Recent legislation in the direction of prison reform is perhaps considerable enough to demand a very slight modification of this statement. It puts the emphasis first and foremost upon deterrent and revengeful punishment, and rarely allows its sanction to any except the most trite methods for the reformation of criminals. It gives the maximum severity of treatment allowed by public opinion, and the minimum of reformatory treatment suggested by the same self-satisfied party. To ease our consciences, to slightly lessen the immediate (though increasing the ultimate) financial tax upon us, without making the real necessary changes, it herds all convicts, good and bad, together, with a few good-looking restrictions