

fearful fate. Few events have made a more profound sensation in Montreal, or called forth a deeper and truer sympathy than the national calamity which has deprived Toronto of her beautiful halls of learning.

The Victoria Skating Rink throws a fresh interest into its fancy dress carnivals by requesting the skaters, as much as possible, to represent our early history in their costumes. The rink was gay with light and colour, beauty and music. Coats of arms of our ancient Governors were ranged around. A model of the old Prescott gate at Quebec in ice at one end; Jacques Cartier's flagship, *La Grande Hermine*, with poop lanterns and guns, anchor and basket lookout at the mast head in the centre, and all around trappers, voyageurs, Indians, Wolfes, Montcalms, etc., etc., made up a living picture of our early colonial life.

The inauguration of the new Municipal Council was the occasion of the Council Chamber being transformed by flowers, ladies, and smiles. The Mayor in assuming, or rather in re-assuming, his duties as Chief Magistrate read an address in which he reviewed the past year's work in the principal branches of service, and received the congratulations of his *confrères*. Committees were afterwards appointed, and notice was given of two motions, the effect of which must present a study to the philosophical, viz., that the tax on liquor saloons be raised to \$1,000 per annum, and the roofs of our houses are to be made so that the drips of melted, and the avalanches of frozen, snow will fall into the yards instead of into the street.

Mr. L. C. David, M.P.P., lectured before the Club National on the "Political and National Future of Canada." In dealing with the great bug-bears he said he had no sympathy with Imperial Federation, nor with Independence, and, although he did not advocate the third, he admitted the advantages to be gained by it.

Dr. F. W. Kelley, lecturing on "Canada our Country," traced the development of our rivers, canals, prairies, and provinces, drew attention to our enormous exports in animals, cheese, eggs, furs, wheat, barley, timber, fish, and minerals, and reminded us that by 1900 there will be 100 millions of English speaking people on this continent, adding that in half a century later we shall be the arbiters of the human race.

In connection with similar patriotic topics Prof. G. D. Roberts, of Windsor, lectured in the halls of Bishop's College, Lennoxville. The chancellor, principal, masters and students were present, and Prof. Roberts, while urging his audience to rouse themselves to a living interest in their country, admitted that he found a difficulty in choosing between Federation and Independence.

At this season a number of our first conservatories are always thrown open for a day to the members of the Horticultural Society. The names of Allan, Abbott, Redpath, Burnette, Angus, Mackay are celebrated for their treasures in camellias, azaleas, orchids, ferns, bread-fruit trees, calla lilies, hyacinths, palms, roses, pitcher and foliage plants.

A meeting of gentlemen representing our railway, steamship and municipal interests was held in the Mayor's office to draft a memorial to the Hon. Mr. Carling in reference to the establishment of proper quarters for immigrants at the wharves. The change in landing passengers here instead of at Quebec renders some steps in this direction absolutely imperative.

A long continued series of social gaieties was brought to an end last week. Our amusements now partake of the sombre hues of that period in an ecclesiastical calendar which is supposed to be associated with sackcloth and ashes.

VILLE MARIE.

### PRISON REFORM.

THE observance of the centenary of the death of John Howard, the philanthropist, and the honour paid to his memory in the various countries associated with his life's labours, naturally again call attention to that much discussed and vexed question known as prison reform. To regard criminals with a kindly view to their reformation, moral improvement and physical comfort is a comparatively recent development of our civilization, and the progress yet made is not very much to be boasted of.

The first step in prison reform was in Italy, 1704, when Pope Clement XI. established the prison of St. Michael for boys and youths on the plan now known as the "Auburn system"—the system of separate cells at night and silent associated labour by day, with education as the basis of reformation. Following in the footsteps of Pope Clement, in this direction, were Wesley and Whitefield, John Howard and Dr. Donne. The Empress Maria Theresa, of Austria, aided the good work, and in 1775 Viscount Vitain XIV. founded the convict-prison at Ghent, having separate cells and a more intelligent and humane system of discipline than ever before attempted on a large scale. "Here then," remarks the Rev. Dr. E. C. Wines, author of "The State of Prisons," "in the prison of Ghent, we find already applied the great principles which the world to-day is but slowly and painfully seeking to introduce into prison management."

With Howard's death this general movement of reform lost its force till, in 1813, Mrs. Elizabeth Fry, a lady of aristocratic connections in London, a member of the Society of Friends, a devout woman singularly endowed with benevolence, strength of will, and feminine graces, commenced her visits to Newgate prison. She found the condition of women in prison simply appalling, and awakened a new interest in prison reforms. Wilberforce and Buxton aided her in Parliament. As a result, in 1823, Sir Robert Peel put aside the medley of old laws

pertaining to prison discipline and framed a new code, called the Consolidated Jail Act, which went into immediate effect. It was a crude law, providing for no classification amongst convicts, but it made some steps forward, and swept away still more vicious old laws, under which prisons were simply hot-beds for the propagation of crime.

The originator of the ideal system to which the prisons of Great Britain are making gradual approaches—called the system of progressive classification—was a Scotchman, Captain Alexander Maconochie, a worthy successor of the noble Howard, who some half century ago perfected a system, and on his own application was made Governor of the British penal colony of Norfolk Island for the purpose of putting it to practical test. There were then 1,500 convicts on the island, made up of the worst malefactors from Britain. Maconochie called his plan the "social system of prison treatment." Its basis is the belief that a state of cheerfulness, hopefulness and kindly treatment is essential for improvement and reform amongst criminals. In brief, his system has four aims and methods: a labour sentence instead of a time sentence, so that prisoners know at once that they can by labour shorten imprisonment in proportion to industry; to enable them to have their punishment further lessened by their good behaviour, daily recorded and cumulative to their advantage, thus placing a constant premium on self-restraint; by giving degrees of social liberty in proportion to the good use made of it, and encouraging the exercise of genial qualities; by giving the prisoner a part of the wages of his labour, to be put in his possession on leaving the institution or to go to his family. Captain Maconochie did not attempt to bring about the emulation and ambition which this system is calculated to inspire by at once supposing the prisoners to be ready for it, but divided the terms of their sentences into three periods. During the first, or punishing stage, the men were subject to close surveillance and discipline. At the expiry of this term they could divide themselves into companies of six by mutual consent only. Each six were to have a common fund of marks, into which all their earnings were to be paid, and from which the fines of any and all that company must be paid. This is, perhaps, the most original reform of the whole system, and at once makes the germ for the growth of all the qualities that are essential to a good member of society. Of course much could be done by Captain Maconochie at Norfolk Island which other surroundings would make altogether unfeasible. But the great reformer undoubtedly taught the prisoners industry, appreciation of the rights of others, the mutuality of the obligations in a community, self-reliance, and self-respect. Sir Walter Crofton succeeded him, and organized the system more perfectly to adapt its discipline and methods to the average grade of the persons who have charge of prisons; that is to say, to a much lower level than would be required were such men as Maconochie in charge.

It would, however, be too lengthy a task to enter into detail of the system pursued at the present time in Great Britain, which dates from the year 1852, when the relinquishment of transportation led to the introduction of sentences to penal servitude of three years and upwards. There are annually about three thousand persons sentenced to penal servitude. To contain these criminals Government has in England seven large prisons, besides penal establishments at Gibraltar and the Bermudas. The first year of sentence is spent at Pentonville or Millbank, and a considerable part of it, varying according to circumstances, is passed in separate confinement. Thence the prisoner is transferred to Chatham, Portland, Woking, or Dartmoor, where the men are employed in associations on public works, Dartmoor being intended for those whose health is supposed to be unequal to the hard work of Chatham or Portland. In each of these places a competent staff is maintained, about one officer to every ten prisoners, exclusive of the governors, chaplains, and medical officers; the diet, clothing, work, and in fact the whole method of life is regulated with the utmost minuteness, and with the most careful attention to the health of the prisoners; gratuities and remissions of sentence are granted for good behaviour; and a certain amount of schooling and attendance on the service of religion is enforced. It may be asked what more can be or is necessary to be done? Yet there is much to be done to complete, or help on the reformation we will suppose has commenced while undergoing the punishment the law has decreed. It is on leaving the place of his incarceration that the guiding hand and friendly counsel is most needed. It is possible that the machine-like regularity and minute coercion of a prison life are found positively to weaken the prisoner's powers of forethought and self-government. A man comes out of prison improved in physical health; the craving for excitement, quickened by the monotony of confinement; his power of self-control, weakened by want of exercise; without means of existence, possibly with no home to go to, he seeks out his old associates, and returns to his old habits. It seems a very comprehensible process.

In most of the German States, care is taken by the authorities that a convict on his liberation should have the means of immediate subsistence provided for him; and he is placed for a probationary term under more or less surveillance from the local magistrates, with a view at once to render his relapse into crime more hazardous, and to afford him assistance in his efforts to gain an honest living. In Prussia, Wurtemberg, and also in Tuscany, voluntary societies co-operate with the Governments in this work; and their labours, we are told, have effected a marked diminution in the amount of the time.

In Spain we have a very curious instance of the amount of good achieved by one individual who struck out the right path for himself, and also of the mode in which the best organization may be frustrated by the introduction of a wrong principle.

"In the city of Valencia," wrote Mr. Recorder Hill, "there has long been a penitentiary gaol under the government of Colonel Montesinos. This gentleman acted upon the prisoners by urging them to self-reformation. He excited them to industry, by allowing them a small portion of their earnings for their own immediate expenditure, under due regulation to prevent abuse. He enabled them to raise their position, stage after stage, by perseverance in good conduct. When they had acquired his confidence he entrusted them with commissions which carried them beyond the walls of the prison, relying on the moral influence which he had acquired over them to prevent their desertion. And finally, he discharged them before the expiration of their sentences, when he had satisfied himself that they had acquired habits of patient labour, moderate skill in some useful occupation, and the estimable faculty of self-denial. . . . His success was answerable to the zeal and wisdom of his administration, and the Spanish Government appointed him Inspector-General of all the prisons in Spain. Under his system, the prisons became models of order, cleanliness, and cheerful industry; plots or desertions were almost unknown; and during the twenty years he was at Valencia he never required the presence of any armed force, not even to guard the bands of prisoners, numbering sometimes four hundred men, who worked outside the walls. The annual recommitments, which had averaged thirty-five per cent. sank to two per cent. Unhappily the Legislature was minded to introduce a new penal code, which converted sentences of imprisonment for a long term of years into imprisonment for life, and deprived the Governor of all power of alleviating the condition of the convict. Unconsoled by the hope of improving their lot, Colonel Montesinos observed that the convicts lost their energy. A feeling of despair spread among them, indeed that they continued to work at all was the result of discipline and consequent subordination; but they laboured without zeal, without any love of work. Finding no means by which he could counteract this terrible evil, which utterly destroyed his system, Colonel Montesinos resigned his appointment." Since then, we are told, hardly any work is done, and what is accomplished is badly performed; and desertions, then so rare, soon amounted to a most disgraceful number.

To come to this side of the Atlantic. In the United States prison horrors in the early days differed only from those of the parent country in the fact that prisons were rare, and of so simple a character that it was not easy for shameful cruelties to be practised unseen as in great dungeons. Dr. Wines states that "Connecticut for more than fifty years, 1773-1827, had an underground prison in an old mining pit near Simsbury which equalled in horrors all that was ever related of European prisons." In Philadelphia all grades of prisoners, and both sexes, were mingled in horrible disregard of decency and humanity, in the city prisons, and liquors were served to prisoners from a bar kept by a prison official. In Boston it is told that a thousand debtors were confined in common night-rooms with a thousand criminals. "Men, women, boys, lunatics, drunkards, innocent and guilty, were mingled pell-mell together." In New York, in the early days, negroes were burned alive and hanged in iron frames to die of starvation.

Reforms began over a hundred years ago by the foundation of a society in Philadelphia for the object of alleviating the miseries of public prisoners; other organizations followed, and in 1870 the National Prison Association of America was formed. It is now one of the most efficient in the world, unifying all the humanitarian influences of all the state officials into one body. Their intelligent and practical study of prison questions; their comparison of experiences and methods; their essays and reports form a college of experience that cannot fail of beneficent results, while state legislation has ably seconded the efforts for reform.

The United States, as a nation, has no great prison. Each state maintains one or more large establishments, conducted under many different systems, but in general tending to the "social system of progressive classification," and making more or less progress towards it. Each city has also its special prison. The association of prison management with politics and the facilities permitted in some states for prison officials to have a considerable patronage at their disposition, including the contracts for the labour of the prisoner, is the most unfortunate feature of United States prison systems. Under the plausible idea of making prisoners self-sustaining by the use of prison labour, legislatures may be pleased with those officials who make the best show of profit out of the prisoners to the State Treasury, and to effect this, prison labour is farmed out like slave labour. If this be done under the inspection of intelligent, disinterested men, devoted to the main work—that of reformation of the inmates of prisons—it is possible to unite the best interests of both convicts and the state, but it is also possible to make the system only a vitiated form of human slavery.

The tendency of experienced men in prison discipline is now to longer terms of imprisonment, in order to control and complete reformation. The propriety of definite sentences for crimes is questioned, and it is claimed that the officers of the prisons should have a wide discretion, and that conduct, character and degree of reformation should have very much to do with the long retention or earlier freedom of the criminals.