

In closing my remarks upon the subject of punishment, I would take occasion to say, that, so far as I have been able to see and examine, from enquiry and the records, the Wardens, one and all, are guided by the strictest regard to the dictates of justice and humanity, in awarding penalties, especially those of a severe character. I found it necessary in one case only, to take exception to the infliction of corporal punishment during the year. In this instance I considered that a sufficiently exhaustive enquiry had not been made beforehand. There was no doubt left on my mind that the punishment was deserved. It can be stated as a fact, that flogging is never inflicted until a verdict of the convicts, generally, if asked, would pronounce the penalty well-merited. Although it were much to be desired that the lash could be dispensed with altogether, yet as there is a certain class of men who are susceptible to no other influence, it must be retained as a deterrent. It is but proper to state that flogging is used under the restrictions set forth in the Penitentiary Act of 1875.

*The Moral and Religious Agencies Employed, are the Ministrations of the Chaplains, Attendance at School, and the use of the Library.*

There are two Chaplains, a Protestant and Catholic, appointed for each Penitentiary, who devote themselves to the religious instructions and moral improvement of the convicts. Prayers are said every morning upon the prison being opened. Divine worship is celebrated every Sunday morning at fixed hours, in all the Penitentiaries, the Catholics assisting at mass, the Protestants at the service conducted by their own Chaplain. Religious exercises are also held every Sunday afternoon at two o'clock in the Penitentiaries of Kingston and St. Vincent de Paul, and on Wednesdays, after dinner, in all the institutions. Chaplains have access to and converse with the convicts at all reasonable times, in their cells, in the hospital, or when undergoing punishment, giving them such advice and instruction that may tend to their improvement or reformation.

It were improper to make any invidious distinction as to the manner in which these gentlemen fulfil their high and important trust. Enough to say, without exception, they discharge their duties with zeal, good will, and devotedness. In very many marked individual cases, as upon the whole body of convicts, the Chaplains exercise a beneficial influence. This is proved by the great confidence reposed in them by the convicts.

The School is productive of much good. Formerly, in Kingston Penitentiary, it was conducted by a regularly-trained teacher. About four years ago, the experiment was tried of selecting six officers qualified to teach well the rudiments. The plan succeeded so well as to induce its adoption at St. Vincent de Paul, where it also has produced good fruits. Whereas upwards of one hundred pupils attend each of these schools, a better classification according to progress can be made, and more attention can be given to each division under this plan than if one teacher only were employed.

In St. John, the Storekeeper has charge of the school; and in Halifax, it is taught by the Accountant. In these institutions the number attending the school is few, and one teacher can readily discharge the duties.

Very general advantage is everywhere taken of the opportunities which the School holds out, by those who stand in need of instruction. At first a natural shyness and awkwardness is felt, but soon those feelings give place to a strong desire and an earnest effort to learn. Large numbers who were ignorant of the alphabet, upon entering the Penitentiary, have learned within an incredibly short time, to read, write and cipher tolerably well.

The Chaplains, acting in concert with the Wardens, have the direction of the Schools. They look after its proper management and efficiency, the system pursued and its results, as evidenced by the progress which the convicts make. They report anything amiss, to the Wardens, that comes to their knowledge, with such opinions or suggestions as may conduce to the educational interests of the convicts, or to the advantage of the school. This part of their duties is also properly performed by the Chaplains.