

for work performed during the last few months of their incarceration, in order that such prisoners as are disposed to lead a new life, may, on leaving jail, support themselves until they can commence life afresh. The soundness of this principle will commend itself even to those whose war cry is Retrenchment. But it is a principle which has not as yet found favor with those intrusted with the management of Rockhead. A female, abhorrent it may be, of the evil courses which brought her to the felon's dock, leaves Rockhead Prison without a cent in her pocket, and with scarce a rag on her back. She is met by some of those female monsters ever on the look out for human capital wherewith to traffic in their hideous trade. Warm clothes, comfortable shelter, wholesome food, and alcohol, are temptingly put before the shivering and famished jail-bird. On one side she sees hunger, nakedness, and a virtuous life,—on the other, comparative luxury and deadly sin. She would fain resist the temptation, but she is hungry, penniless, and in rags. She succumbs at length, and the last state of such a woman is worse than the first! We have supposed a woman to leave Rockhead in a repentant frame of mind, but her repentance has not been brought about by the exertions of those intrusted with the interior economy of the jail. On the contrary, it is ten chances to one she leaves Rockhead more depraved than when she entered it. It could, indeed, hardly be otherwise, when we come to consider the details of prison life for females. The hour for rising is 6.15; then comes breakfast, and work indoors until dinner; then comes more indoor work; supper is served at 5.15, and at 5.30, the prisoners are locked up in cells from which light is almost totally excluded. No air, no exercise, and almost the whole of each day passed in an ill ventilated work-room,—such is the life of our female prisoners. They have scarce a chance of repentance afforded them. A young girl, convicted it may be of a first offence, is thrown, day after day, and week after week, upon the society of the most hardened offenders, denied out-door exercise, and afforded no opportunity of religious instruction;—is it strange if she leaves Rockhead utterly contaminated and depraved. The condition of the male prisoners is somewhat better. They have at least the advantage of out-door employment, but in the winter months suffer much from cold, no extra underclothing being provided for their use. Their costume consists of a shirt, trousers, and jacket, and the first article is changed regularly—once a week. We think we have said enough to shew that energetic reform is needed in our prison no less than in our work-house. No blame can in any way be attached to the officer in charge of Rockhead; he does his duty humanely towards the prisoners, and courteously towards the public. But the prison is sadly mismanaged, and we trust the public will interfere. It is positively shocking to think that a girl, almost a child, should be allowed to mix daily and hourly with the most hardened and profligate of her sex. It is a crying disgrace to ourselves, that in a city such as Halifax—a city boasting its club house, and its handsome private stores,—should exist no public Reformatory for juvenile female offenders. Efforts of a private nature have been made by some charitable ladies with tolerable success; and the Ladies Committee have, by visiting Rockhead, already done some good. These ladies will have their reward. But what we want, is a public Reformatory. It is not a question of expense, but a question of duty. A Reformatory for boys has been partially established, and although still in its infancy, is a most useful institution, and the thanks of the public are due to our late mayor for his exertions in the matter. Our present mayor, Mr. RITCHIE, also seems disposed to exert himself earnestly in so good a cause. But much yet remains to be done, and the question is too important for half measures. We cannot conclude this article without calling attention to the niggard manner in which the prison is conducted. The staff of jailors is small, and their salaries wretchedly small, in proportion to the work required at their hands. The number of prisoners varies from 30 to 35 among

the men, and from 20 to 25 among the women. The staff of the jail consists of a governor and a matron, whose combined salary is only £175 a year; a female jailor, salary, £12 a year; two male jailors, at £45 each; one warden at £80, and a messenger (husband of the female jailor), at £35. We confess the salary of the female jailor appears to us mean indeed. She has to sit all day, and every day, with the female prisoners in their work-room, for a pittance of barely more than *thirteen cents a day*. Poor woman! she deserves more than this for the companionship inseparable from her office. In common charity we would suggest an extra female jailor, or double salary for her who now fills a situation so thankless.

RAILWAYS AND THE OPPOSITION.

The little wrangle which has recently taken place in the columns of the *Chronicle*, between that journal and a Mr. LIVESKY should be not only amusing but instructive. It opens up vistas of *johling*, not indeed on Mr. Livesey's part, but in our whole system of railway policy which we must confess has never "been dream't of in our philosophy."

It shows clearly, that, whilst governments may use unfair means in the furtherance of their own immediate ends, oppositions are equally liable to temptation, though their real object may not at first be discernible to the multitude. Few we imagine will deny the possibility of a good offer being made to a bad government. Whether it suits the government to accept the offer or not is quite another question. It may prove more beneficial to the bad government to hide its good opportunities. It may suit them to cast a good proposal aside labelled "useful to the province—useless to us." Such documents however may probably re-appear when on a change of ministry they are triumphantly brought forth to show what the late government could have done had not a base coalition, &c. &c. effected its overthrow. Be this as it may, it is as undeniable as is the theory of permutations and combinations, that a bad government may once in a way get hold of a good plan, and what is still more extraordinary, urge its acceptance on the Legislature. A fortunate concatenation of circumstances has led to a good offer being made to Dr. Tupper and his colleagues. It has been accepted, or there is great fear, to judge by the *Chronicle*, that it will be accepted. The idea that the present Government has at last got a chance of benefiting the Province naturally galls an opposition whose only thought is for the welfare of Nova Scotia. To judge by the reasoning of the opposition organ it is not the proposed railway plan that is bad. Not a word can be said against the scheme, so in default of this, and because there is a fear of Dr. TUPPER doing some good, Mr. LIVESKY is condemned as little better than a knave or a fool. We have got into a bad habit in Nova Scotia of judging arguments by those who uphold them, and considering the value of schemes merely in relation to the personality of their proposers. Let us consider what this scheme of Mr. LIVESKY's, or rather the plan which is urged by Mr. LIVESKY, is like.

If we are correctly informed it is as follows:—The Londonderry iron mines lie somewhere between Truro and Moncton, or some other point on the Shediac and St. John Railway. By a fortunate accident the most direct line which could be made between Truro and this other point, happens to pass through this very district, and also, which is still more important, within a few miles of the Spring Hill coal seam. A certain London firm aware of the future value of this county, so wealthy in minerals, conceives the idea of connecting it by rail with the great centres of British North American commerce. The Intercolonial Railway being in consideration and this district, which will eventually be so rich, lying in the way of a direct railway, is it astonishing that they should

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