

**THE BRITISH PRISON SYSTEM.**

Continued from First Page.

For making a speech to his constituents he (Mr. Dillon) received double the sentence a man received for nearly kicking his wife to death in Dublin. They were each confined in the same prison and no difference was made in their punishment. He recognized the right of every Government to protect itself so far as it had the power to do so, but it had no right to say to men, because you break our laws from political motives we shall degrade and trample upon, insult you, and treat you as if you were common felons.

**MR. DAVITT SPEAKS.**

Mr. Davitt, who was the next speaker, said there was a spirit of progress in the Bill which he readily recognized. He regarded the Bill in some respects as most disappointing. In fact it only touched the pivot of a great social question. In one respect the Bill they were discussing took a step back. Mr. Dillon had devoted a fair portion of his speech to the treatment of political offenders. He (Mr. Davitt) found no provision in the Bill altering the system of penal punishment of political offenders in the future. The fact was that compared with the treatment meted out to political offenders in Russia this country was far behind the enlightened spirit of that autocratic Empire. No one would contend that a political offender was likely to be made more loyal to British rule or more contented under its authority by his being reduced down to the level of the lowest of criminals (hear, hear). What was wanted was to make improvement more effective to its purpose by rendering it more reformatory. What good could they hope to effect by subjecting prisoners to starvation? He knew a friend who underwent eight years' penal servitude as a consequence of offending the law, and he could speak for him that during that time he never ceased for one single day to feel the pangs of hunger, and he did not think they had made him a better subject by their treatment. He had seen men in Dartmoor prison coming down to the putrid bone shed, and eating the putrid marrow from the bones, because they were suffering from this horrible pang of unassisted hunger, and he had seen men pick out the candle purposely made offensive to the smell so that they might not be eaten—pick them out of the cesspools, wipe them on their clothes, and eat them. He (Mr. Davitt) could not help referring to the horrible and disgusting things he had observed with his own eyes inside the Majesty's jails (cheers). He was glad, however, to find that a spirit of reform was manifesting itself, and that at public opinion in England, Scotland, and Ireland was in favour of sweeping the cranks and treadmills out of the prisons. He would ask the Home Secretary sooner or later to introduce into the penal system of this country part at least of the humane and enlightened systems of other countries.

**MR. REDMOND'S SPIRITED DENUNCIATION.**

Mr. J. E. Redmond, in dealing with the many phases of prison management, made a vigorous appeal for more humane methods. He said:—The hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat said that, in his opinion, the evils of the present prison system had been exaggerated by many speakers. But he went on to add that he did not at all accuse the hon. member for South Mayo for such exaggeration. I think if the hon. member for South Mayo drew a true picture of the prison system as it exists in England a more terrible indictment could not be drawn (National cheers). I think all parties in this house will acknowledge the self-restraint and the moderation of the speech of the hon. member for South Mayo (National cries of hear, hear). He said at the commencement of his speech that he would endeavor to treat this subject without any personal feeling, and although that was a difficult task for him to perform, I think he has kept his word (National cries of hear, hear), and with the result that his speech probably carried very much more weight with all sections of the House than if he had given way to natural personal feelings in this matter. On one occasion I visited Portland Prison on a bleak winter's day when there was a snow storm. You know of the steep ascent to Portland and the dreadful winter climate of the locality. Driving in a road in my comfortable closed carriage, I came across a gang of prisoners which had evidently been caught in the storm. There were ten or twelve of them. They were yoked exactly like beasts of burden, they had collars round their necks and were in traces, pulling a huge cart full of stones up the steep hill, and armed warders walked beside them. Can anything be more brutal or brutalizing than that?

**AN INTERRUPTION.**

At this point an hon. member of the Government stood interrupted. Mr. Redmond—I did not catch what was said. A Member—The member for Shaftesbury says quite right. Another Member—He asked, 'What had the prisoners done?' Mr. Redmond—I don't know what they had done, but the view I take is that no matter what a man had done—(a laugh)—I may be wrong in my view, but I am surely entitled to state it (Opposition cries of 'Hear, hear')—it is the duty of the state, in the punishment accorded to him, to endeavor to develop that germ of good which is in the worst natures rather than to endeavor to stamp it out by punishment of this brutal and brutalizing nature. (National cheers.) During the entire of this day, whether the prisoner be employed inside the prison or in the open air, absolute silence is enforced. I see that one of the recommendations of the departmental committees is that this system of absolute silence should be to some extent relaxed, but the answer the Commissioners have given is certainly not encouraging. The system of absolute silence is enforced in the most rigorous way in all these convict establishments. Let me give some other instances of prison treatment. Visits are allowed to these men once in three months, but the visits are held under such degrading and humiliating circumstances that to any man who has any remnants of decency or good feeling left they must be a punishment instead of a privilege. Take the case of an unfortunate man who has not seen any of his relatives, and who is visited for the first time by his wife or daughter. He is locked up like an animal in a cage on one side of the room, and on the other side of the room his visitor is put behind an iron bar. Two wardens sit between them, and during the whole time prisoner and visitor are not allowed even to shake hands with one another. I personally had experience of an extraordinary instance of the

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BRUTAL HARDNESS AND SEVERITY of your prison systems. While visiting a prisoner in Portland it was my sad task to break to him the news of the death of a very near relative. He broke down and sobbed like a child when I told him. When I showed to him a little photograph of the dead boy and the lock of the dead boy's hair the man begged of me to endeavor to get him permission to keep these little relics in his cell. I went to the Governor—one of those military gentlemen to whom the hon. member for South Mayo has alluded—but he answered my request with a look of amusement, and said, 'My dear sir, how can discipline be maintained if this kind of discipline be allowed? I took further pains with this matter, and owing I believe, to the kindly intervention of the Home Secretary himself eventually permission was given to this prisoner to keep the portrait and the lock of hair in his cell. I mention the matter to show the spirit in which these prison rules are worked by the officials. From the point of view of the Governor such a privilege was quite at variance with the whole spirit of the system he was administering (ironical cries of 'Hear, hear', from the Nationalist members). In America prisoners are allowed within certain limits to converse with one another. In their workshops, so long as they did their work, did not cause any disturbance, or commit any breach of discipline, they are allowed to converse with one another. They are on good terms with the prison officials (cries of 'Hear, hear'), and from what I have seen of the convict establishments of this country that cannot be said of the English system (cries of 'Hear, hear'). Anything in the nature of a kindly word passing between a prisoner and a convict warder is a thing unknown in the English system, and the cases are numerous in which a casual word spoken by a prisoner to a warder has led to a report and punishment of bread and water for breach of rules. The whole spirit of the system in America is more humane than the system here. The Americans desire to reach what is in a man, and to develop it for good (cheers). In England the desire seems to be to treat the prisoner as incorrigible and hopelessly bad, to degrade him to a level below that of human beings. I read the other day some lines which seem to me to very well describe the prison system in England:—

"The vilest deeds like poison weeds Bloom well in prison air,  
'Tis only what is good in man That wastes and withers there;  
Pale anguish holds the heavy gate,  
And the warder is despair."  
Such a system as that is not the best for the prevention of crime; it is quite inconsistent with the idea of reformation, it only excels its vindictive cruelty. I believe, for my part, that it is bad in policy. I believe that it is disgraceful in its nature, and I deeply regret that the Bill leaves it almost entirely untouched in its carefully organized brutality.

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**THE PRODUCE MARKETS.**

There was no further change in the situation of the egg market. The receipts continue large, for which the demand is good, but supplies are in excess of requirements. Sales were made at 9c to 9 1/2c per dozen.

The demand for beans is exceedingly slow, which is generally the case at this season, and prices are unchanged at 70c to 75c for primes and at 85c to 90c for choice hand-picked per bushel.

Honey rather slow, and the market is dull with no change to note. We quote as follows:—White, clover comb, 11c to 12c; dark, 8c to 10c; white strained, 6c to 7c, and dark, 4c to 5c.

There was no change in the maple product market. The demand continues fair, and sales are being made freely at steady prices. Syrup in wood is selling at 4 1/2c to 5c per pound, and in tins at 45c to 50c, as to size. Sugar moves freely at 6c to 6 1/2c lb.

**DAIRY PRODUCE.**

Cheese did not record anything new today. The only holder of any consequence here is disposed to ask an advance on recent prices, and as buyers have not met him so far, trading has not resulted. The cable was unchanged, and private advices brought nothing new.

The butter market continued heavy, under fewer offerings at country points and on spot. Finest creamery was sold to-day at 21c, but this is an extreme figure, the parcel in question being a small fancy selection from three different lots. In an ordinary way the range is 20c to 20 1/2c, with a possible fraction more in the case of something fancy.



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  - Boys' two piece mixed Tweed Suits, in Norfolk, from - \$2.50
  - Boys' extra all wool tweed two piece suits, with plaits, for \$1.75 and \$2.00.
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