

ask for one man, as quiet as possible," said Thomas.

He was then led into the lower corridor of a vast stone building of four storeys and placed in a cell where there were two cot beds. The floor of this cell was remarkably white, and the walls were painted in all manner of arabesques and quaint designs. There were two or three mats on the stone floor; a looking-glass and some pictures graced the wall; a table with a lamp and some books—all these things surprised Stanhope, being very different from his idea of a prison cell. True, the place was all of stone, and the window, high and narrow, was strongly barred with iron; but cleanliness, even temperature, and these little comforts, softened the prison-look of the place.

"No. 763, who went out yesterday," said the guard, "was a master-hand at keeping his cell nice, and so is No. 837, the man who is in with you. 763 left all his traps for the man who should come after him. Did you bring anything with you?"

"Nothing," said Thomas. The rules of the prison were then handed him to read. His name and number were painted on a little piece of board and slipped into the iron bars of his cell door. The next question was as to work for the new prisoner.

"What trade do you know?"

"None."

"Ah, blessed was the Jewish rule, 'Teach thy son a trade and the law.' A Jew in a penitentiary is a rare exception."

"What trade do you prefer?"

"I don't know. I'd rather learn something that I could use when I am out."

The contractors were, it seemed, fully supplied with men. Thomas must then work for the state.

"Put him," said the deputy warden, "in the shoe-mending room."

So Thomas was taken through the wide sunny court-yard of the prison, where gay flowers grew in long, well-kept beds, and squares of grass were green, into a long stone building, where hundreds of men in the odious stripes were at work, and into a room of benches, where sat over twenty silent cobblers, all mending prison shoes. A foreman sat on a platform, slightly elevated, and watched the workers. They must continue their tasks diligently and not speak except to a prison official. No conversation was allowed between prisoners at any time, except in their cells or when, on a holiday, recreation was proclaimed.

By degrees, by observation or conversing with his cell-mate at night, Thomas learned something of the routine of the prison. In the shops of the contractors, where whips, harness, shoes, clothing, and saddles were made, each man was kept at some special kind of work. The object of the contractors was to make as much money as possible, not to benefit the men or give them a means of livelihood when they left the prison. Much of the work was done by machinery. A man on entering the prison might be sent to the shop for making whips; there he might be assigned to the duty of cutting the slim strips of leather, for braiding into lashes; at this work, to which he was assigned, he was kept. Day after day, for perhaps a sentence of five or six years, he was endlesly busy, cutting long hides into thin waved strips for braiding; steadily, ceaselessly, and, after the trick of cutting was learned, brainlessly as a machine, he worked in a terrible monotony. Perhaps, instead, his work was to braid the leather strips. Two or three weeks sufficed to make him skilful, and then, hour after hour, day after day, week after week, year after year, intermitting only for Sundays or three general holidays, he braided, machine-like, the long leather thongs.

Thus it was with all the trade pursued; no man followed a piece of work to its completion; one cut out, another stitched, another stained, another polished, and so on. In the shoe room, one man with a machine flattened the hides, another cut out boot legs; a third, shoe tops; a fourth cut morocco facings; another sewed the facings on, another seamed up legs of boots, while his neighbour at another machine flattened the seams and shaped the boot leg. One man made the heels, another the soles; one ran the pegging machine, another the heading machine; it was the duty of some one else to blacken the edges

of the soles, and still another hand must run the machine that polished these edges. Thus, forever working at boots, or indeed the workers ever made a boot, or indeed a boot made; for in the other end of the work-room were other mute workers who completed the process which some unseen hand had begun.

All mutiny, impertinence, idleness, or conversation would be reported by the guard to the deputy and punished by him as he saw fit. Practically the prisoners were all helpless in the hands of the deputy warden, to whom the warden committed the entire personal administration of the place. If the deputy said tie a man up, lock him in a "blind cell," flog him, it was done. If a prisoner came up often before the deputy he was apt to consider him a "hard case," and inquire very little into the right or wrong of the accusation against him. The foreman could be exceedingly unjust, tyrannical, and aggravatingly unkind, or help them toward what was better, guards and foremen alike generally scoffed at prison reform, and said that the only way to reform a convict was to knock him on the head.

Morally there was, in many cases, precious little difference between the foremen and the convicts, but on the one side was power and freedom, on the other felony with its concomitant woes. Stern self-restraint and a fixed desire to conform to all rules, and behave the best possible, would enable a convict to pass through his term without conflict, but such ability for self-repression is usually wanting in those who have so given rein to evil passions that they are landed in a prison.

Convicts had before them certain incentives to good behaviour. After the piece work of the day, which was not exorbitant, was completed, a convict might do extra work and be paid for it, and this pay was placed to his credit with the warden, to be given to him when he left prison. A prisoner who kept all rules, and established a good character with his officers, was called "a trusty," and was put in charge of a corridor, or given some work of the kind about the prison. Good conduct also served to shorten sentence.

When no charges of disorderly conduct were laid against a man, some months were remitted from each year of sentence. These concessions served to keep hope alive, and admit a premium on self-control and honourable behaviour.

Thomas found, by observations rather than by conversation, that the prisoners counted their time by days, not by months, and each night checked off one day more from their long count. An almanac was from their long count. Some of the choicest possessions in each cell. Some of the men, when their term had passed its half, turned the stick with their name and number in the cell door, upside down, to show that their time was on its "down grade."

One characteristic of all the prisoners was their pallor, even when they were in good health. They were also nervous; there was not a steady hand or eye among them all; a constant quiver of the muscles about the lips and throat was also noticeable.

In each cell was a slate and a library catalogue. The prisoners wrote on the slate the numbers of books they desired, and the numbers of the trusty who attended to the books secured them of the chaplain. A good lamp was in each cell, and the prisoners could read or talk until ten o'clock "taps." Prisoners who could not read were allowed to pursue some little handicraft, as carving wood or bone, or making any little trinkets for which they could procure material. If they could paint they were allowed paint and brushes, and decorated their cells as they chose. Writing materials were freely afforded, and they could write and receive letters monthly. These letters were read by the chaplain or wardens.

Meals were good and plentiful, but not a word must be spoken at the table. When the bell sounded for meals, sixteen hundred prisoners in the terrible uniform formed in line and marched in "lock-step," each man's right hand on the shoulder of the man before him, to the dining-room, and when the meal was over, marched out in the same fashion, a lamentable procession.

In writing home Thomas Stanhope could not bring himself to describe this life of the prison; neither did he suggest its ameliorations of cell comforts and decorations or of shortened sentence. What right had he, who had destroyed all the beauty, peace, and comfort of his home, to speak of bringing comfort into a prison cell? Would it be any consolation to his family to think of his return before the completion of his sentence? Surely not. Those letters which must be read by strangers' eyes, would be small comfort. The inspection was evidently absolutely needful, but it made the letters less desirable. Thomas formed the habit of writing home once in four months.

For several months he worked in the shoe room, until he became a fairly good cobbler. Restrained from liquor, his natural intelligence, good manners, and general decency returned to him, and he soon became known to all the officials as a "good prisoner." As a boy he had been rather fond of reading, and this taste also revived within him. His cell-mate was a bank clerk, in for forgery, on a five years' sentence; a quiet fellow, given to reading and writing. The chaplain could be seen in the library on Wednesday afternoon, and there was a service each Sabbath morning. These services, and the talks with the chaplain, served to bring back to Thomas some of the religious atmosphere which had surrounded his youth.

After several months in the shoe-mending room, confinement and remorse told upon Thomas Stanhope, and he was taken to the hospital, he lay very ill. Removed to the hospital, he was able to walk about the ward and to take exercise in the pretty garden that belonged to the hospital department. The chaplain visited the hospital twice each week, and held a service for convalescents on Thursday afternoons. The convalescents and invalids were relieved from the law against conversation, and might visit each other in their cells, or converse in their corridors or garden.

As Thomas became stronger, he fell into a habit of aiding the nurses, and waiting upon the sick, and commended himself to the physician in charge, as a good nurse.

When he was about ready to be discharged from the hospital, one of the sick convicts died. That was a doleful funeral. The body, wrapped in a large piece of the hated stripes, was laid in a rough pine coffin, over which a pall of the stripes was thrown. The coffin was put in a prison waggon, and on it sat a guard. The waggon was driven by a convict in stripes, and behind it walked three other convicts in their tell-tale dress to aid in the burial. One of these attendants was Thomas Stanhope. Thus, dishonoured alike in life and death, the felon was carried outside of the town, to the "convicts' burial-ground." Prisoners who had friends were allowed to send for them when they were in mortal illness, and the dead or dying were also allowed to be removed by friends and given ordinary burial.

Searching thoughts filled the heart of Thomas Stanhope, that gray early morning as he followed the rattling cart which carried the dead felon to his burial. The soul of Thomas Stanhope had been brought into a dry and desert land and placed before Sinai, flaming and thundering with the wrath of God. The prayers of his fathers in many godly generations were come up for a memorial before God, and God was answering them in strange ways.

Of his soul exercises Thomas said little. Many prisoners professed loud repentance, in order to arouse sympathy or secure shortening of sentence. Overwhelmed with deep penitence as he was, Stanhope could not feel that his sentence was too long. How many "counts of wasted time, of abuse, riot, and drunkenness were against him in all his past life!"

Able to leave the hospital, but not strong enough to return to his work in the shoe-room, Thomas was sent to the kitchen department. There were men, sitting on rows of low benches, who passed the years of a sentence in peeling potatoes and turnips! By good luck the prison was also in need of brooms, and some of the men detailed to the kitchen department were set to making brooms. Fortunately Thomas was ordered to the broom-making. He took genuine interest in his brooms, and became the most expert broom-maker that had ever been in the prison. He made big brooms and little brooms and brush brooms. He

was set to making handsome brooms for presents to the prison officers, and a dozen of notable brooms to send to the Governor's lady. For eighteen months Thomas made brooms, and by that time he doubted if any one in the United States could produce a more admirable broom.

A peculiarity of prisoners is, that they have many curious hallucinations concerning their future in freedom. One and all, they fancy that as soon as they are free the gates of fortune will swing open before them. They plan the most extraordinary methods of making money, and the most dazzling successes. Thomas was not exempt from this dreaming; he, too, planned what he should do when he was free. He would open a broom factory; he would build up a large business for himself and his sons. It did occur to him sometimes that money was needed, even to set up a broom factory, but he was earning a little, now and then, by extra brooms, and somehow it seemed that in ten years he must make some large amount. He would leave prison with money, set up a broom factory, take Achilles and Samuel in with him, persuade Mercy to return to him, and a prosperous and happy home should bless and shelter his old age.

This was the prisoner's dream.

But the broom-making came to an end. Thomas, being a man of some general ability, did not keep in one routine of work as long as many of the other prisoners; he was noticed as a man to be relied upon, and so received a change. From the kitchen and the brooms he was called to the hospital department to be a nurse. A very good nurse was going out, and the surgeon remembered Thomas, and sent for him to fill the vacant place. For three years Thomas was nurse. The place was comfortable and easy, and in it he was freed from the most onerous restraints of prison life. In the hospital department he became the right hand of the doctor and the chaplain, and here Thomas Stanhope developed and maintained an upright, Christian character.

As he found his ministrations acceptable to the sick, he gradually changed his plans for his future. Perhaps his boys would have found out ways through the world for themselves by the time his sentence had expired; then, together, they would try and restore that cottage home on the mountains and make it a happy abode for Mercy and the girls, and Thomas would go out as a nurse in Ladbury; he felt sure that he could make a reputation as a valuable nurse, and so gain a comfortable support. Sometimes he wondered if he might not be tempted back to drink by physicians who would order him to use liquor freely for his patients. Would his thirst awaken and again destroy him? But now that thirst seemed dead.

Four years Thomas maintained his place as nurse in the hospital department, and he had now been six years and a half in the penitentiary when the deputy warden ordered him to take charge of a corridor of cells as a trusty. In addition to this, he was detailed as an evening instructor, for classes of such convicts as desired to learn to read, write, and cipher. This was another good change for Thomas; it aided him in the recovery of self-respect, and it helped to apparently shorten time by new occupations.

This was the life of Thomas Stanhope during his ten years' sentence; having sketched it briefly, we return to the fortunes of his family.

(To be continued.)

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

It is related of a man who stands very high in this country that once when he was young and poor, seeking a situation in order to make a living, he went into a rich man's office and inquired if he wanted to hire a boy. The rich man, who was sitting at his desk, leaned back, looked at the weakly little child before him, and quizzically asked: "Why, what can a little fellow like you do?"

"I can do what I am bid," was the reply given, promptly and respectfully, yet decisively.

He was so pleased with the boy's answer and manner that he hired him at once. The little fellow was diligent, honest, faithful and successful, and is now respected by all.