

desperate strikes for liberty ; and the probable interference of the lowest class of laborers.

And then, though, it might seem poetical justice to put an educated man, of delicate nerves, to the pickaxe or the spade, as a punishment for his crimes, it would neither be wise nor just. He would make a very unprofitable "navvy," and would probably soon break down under it; while his labor, in some employment needing skill and intelligence, might be quite valuable. *Some* kind of work must be provided ; and the same work cannot be suited for all. The Prisoners' Aid committee say "industrial employment," without specifying what ; the Knights of Labor protest against the Government entering the labor market, and setting up a sharp competition against free labor. One thing we have long practised, and long urged upon others : "Never to object to anything, without having something better to propose." Will the Knights propose something for them ? We write not in a spirit of opposition at all, but we want *li:ut*. Are there no branches of handicraft that they might work at ? They must be under watch and ward, their work must be something that has much hand-labor in it, and not too much machinery, and it must be something that will pay. Shoemaking, cabinet and lock making have all been tried at Kingston Penitentiary ; these have all been objected to. But, really, no Government can reform criminals, without, as a part of the reclaiming process, giving them some work to do.

Some other suggestions of the Prisoners' Aid Committee, as to indefinite sentences (depending on reformation), and tender treatment of young boys, deserve the greatest consideration.

SYMPOSIUM ON "DEACONS."

The *Christian World*, London, has been lately publishing a great many letters and opinions about Deacons. The subject is one of perpetual interest. Some churches seem to have too much "Deacons' board," and some too little. The more general complaint, however, is "too much." In almost every case, the remedy for this is plain and within reach : let the members take more interest in their church affairs, and *do* the business of the church ; and the Deacons will be only too glad to carry

out the details of what the Church has intelligently agreed on.

From a late issue of the *Christian World* we select three letters on the subject, following each other in the same column, each of 20 or 25 lines, which we take as representative of the *Symposium*. The first writer says his Church has 150 members ; but they rarely see twenty men at a week service, and a less number at the business meeting. Everything goes on well. They probably have some very good and wise men for Deacons ; but these have to do it all, and the members generally are not being trained to proper Church life. So we judge from this letter.

The second is from another Deacon. There, too, the members don't come out to the business meetings, and the Deacons have to do nearly everything. Apparently, the Church does not want to be "bothered" about business, and sometimes blames the Deacons "for not having some proposal ready for the Church's acceptance," at business meetings. The Deacons would rather have the Church to decide for itself, but are compelled to decide questions too often *for* the Church.

The third writer complains of the Pastor and the Senior Deacon doing everything. The remedy here will be found in having the Deacons elected for a term, and then just *leave out* that Senior Deacon ! He says, "The Senior Deacon thinks the Church has no right to discuss any matter until it has been brought before the Deacons." Well, if the Church has made for itself a rule to that effect, all right ; if not, the Church is not so bound. But, where there is such a rule (and it is a very good one in large Churches), it should always contain a proviso, that where the matter is not reported on by the Deacons for the space of two months, it is quite in order for any member to bring up a discussion on it in open meeting. The last writer mentioned says, that under the Senior-Deacon-rule "the intelligent and spiritually-minded men have long ago retired from the Diaconate." And he adds, "It is no wonder so many of our churches are half deserted and lifeless."

From all which we gather these conclusions :—That, like any other society, a Church will not "run" alone—somebody must attend to its interests ; and the parties to attend to its interests are