

EXTRACTS

From the Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Boston Prison Discipline Society.

CONTINUED.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORT OF THE INSPECTORS OF THE AUBURN STATE PRISON.

To the Hon. the Legislature of the State of New-York.
The Inspectors of the State Prison at Auburn, respectfully report:—

That the expenditures for the general support of the prison during the year ending the 31st day of October, 1828, amounted to \$33,571 84

During the same period there was received \$36,908 81.

To this may be added, in the hands of the agent 31st Oct. 1827, \$2,438 39 \$39,367 20

October 1821, \$8,796 36

On the 1st day of January last there was in the treasury a balance of a previous appropriation for building, of \$5,376

The Legislature last winter added to this fund - 2,000

And also appropriated for ordinary repairs of the prison, and for the expense of discharged convicts, - 2,000

Making a fund for objects above stated, - \$7,376

This sum has been expended for the purposes designed, and was all duly accounted for to the comptroller on the 31st day of last October; since which the agent has not only paid all the ordinary current expenses for general support from the earnings of convicts, but also for the repairs of the prison and appurtenances and the expense of discharged convicts.

On the night of the 23d day of October last, an alarming fire broke out in a paint shop in the north yard of the prison, which was connected with a lumber and a wood shed. These erections were contiguous to the north wing of the prison, and extended nearly its whole length, and were placed in that position for the want of room elsewhere.

Besides consuming the buildings spoken of, with their contents, the fire destroyed most of the windows and wooden frames of the north wing, and shattered to pieces the free stone window caps, sills, and sills, which had been injudiciously used instead of line stone.

The amount of damages which the State has sustained by this fire cannot yet be accurately stated; but considering the direct loss of buildings and other materials, the interruption of business, and other consequential damages which are of an uncertain character, the loss to the state will probably be from three to four thousand dollars.

Contractors lost about two thousand dollars.

It is proper to remark, that as the fire endangered the lives of the convicts in their cells, they were all taken out, and employed from about midnight till nearly sunrise the next morning, in suppressing and extinguishing the fire. No occasion could have so favorably exhibited the discipline of the convicts, without whose exertions, it is feared, the fire could not have been arrested in its progress through the main buildings of the prison.

The most astonishing order was preserved, and no escape or attempt to escape was made.

It will be observed that we have had no find in the treasury to defray the expense of repairs, and of discharged convicts, since the 31st Oct. last.

Notwithstanding the ordinary as well as the above mentioned extraordinary repairs that will be required, the agent believes that no appropriations by the present Legislature will be necessary, and none will be solicited.

On the first day of January, 1828, there were 525 convicts in this prison, and on the first day of January, 1829, 570.

During the year 1828, there have been 174 convicts received; 9 have died, 44 have been discharged by the expiration of their sentences, and 76 have been pardoned.

There are now as many convicts as can be confined separately in the north wing; and it is scarcely necessary to state that the south wing was not designed for solitary confinement. The number of convicts can not therefore be increased here consistently with their non-intercourse and correct discipline, until a new block of cells shall be constructed, either by altering the south wing or otherwise.

On the subject of female convicts, much has been heretofore said, and we will now only add to the following extract from a memorial presented to the last Legislature by the agent, the simple remark, that we consider the provision made for female convicts to be a blot upon the fair character of the State.

"The only place where the females can be confined and communication with the male convicts prevented, is a large single room in the attic story of the south wing, and the windows of which, even there, are necessarily closed at all seasons, to prevent communication with the male convicts, with which the entire wing is surrounded.

"Here there are already crowded together more than twenty females, of all ages, colors, and crimes, without the means of discipline or useful employment.

"This is the outline of a picture of human degradation which the imagination can scarcely fill up to the reality. And if many more shall be thrown into this receptacle of wretchedness and sin, physical as well as moral death will be the inevitable consequence.

"The undersigned represented to the late Gov. Clinton the lamentable condition of female convicts, and the manifest and gross impropriety of their ever being confined in the same prison with male convicts, and that distinguished statesman presented the subject to the Legislature in strong and forcible language."

We have also heretofore deemed it our duty to speak of the liberal, not to say judicious, exercise of the pardoning power, and will now only add the following facts:—

In 1826 there were 86 convicts pardoned in this prison, the average number being 426.

In 1827, 43 were pardoned from an average number of 476; and in 1828, 76 were pardoned from an average number of 544; making the aggregate of pardons at this prison in three years 205, while during the same period there were only 122, the terms of whose sentences expired. Does this exhibit the prompt, steady, and uniform, execution of the laws?

The degree of health which has prevailed in this institution for several year past, probably surpasses any in the world of an equal number of convicts; the number of patients confined to the hospital being about one per cent, and the number of deaths one and a half.

Of the nine deaths during the last year, two only were occasioned by fever, and three others were occasioned by diseases which the convicts brought with them to prison, as will appear by a reference to the physician's report hereto annexed.

It is an interesting fact that there are few Indian convicts who can long endure confinement without destroying their health and depressing their spirits.

To show the moral influence of this institution upon the convicts, we refer with great satisfaction to the annexed statement concerning the characters of discharged convicts, the facts in which statement have been collected with great labour and considerable expense.

The agent expresses to us his acknowledgements for the able and efficient assistance of the resident chaplain, in preparing these two valuable documents, as also for his discreet, faithful, and beneficial services in his appropriate department. The Sabbath School, which is under his general superintendence, is highly flourishing, and embraces 125 scholars.

On the subject of a rail-road to connect this prison with the Erie Canal, we can only refer to the documents in the journals of the last Legislature, and add, that another year's experience has fully sustained the views and facts therein presented.

In conclusion, we beg leave to invite the special attention of the Legislature to the compensation paid to the subordinate officers and guard of the prison, and more particularly to the latter.

It is difficult for those who are not personally acquainted with the subject, duly to appreciate the character and services of these men.

It is not the mere duty of a common soldier, that our guard are required to perform. The trust reposed in them is of an important character, requiring judgment, fidelity, and vigilance. Every night they have in charge the keys of the whole institution;—and upon their honesty and watchfulness depend its safety from fire, from the nocturnal incursions of discharged convicts, or other daring villains from without. And to a certain degree, the lives of officers and convicts are put in the keeping of the guard; they should therefore be men of character, having families and a stake in society.

And it is reasonable to suppose that such men can be obtained for \$18 per month, and without the least perquisite in board or otherwise from the prison? Experience has admonished us that it cannot be done.

We therefore, in behalf of the public interest and safety, do respectfully but earnestly solicit, that a law may be passed allowing the agent to pay the guard twenty-five dollars, per month, the same as the sergeant of the guard is now paid, there being no sufficient reason for his receiving more than the rest, their duties being equal.

A SINGULAR LETTER FROM SOUTHERN AFRICA.
Communicated by Mr. Hogg, the Eltrick Shepherd.

My Dear Friend.—In my last I related to you all the circumstances of our settlement here, and the prospect that we had of a peaceful and pleasant habitation.

In truth it is a fine country, and inhabited by a fine race of people, for the Kousies, as far as I have seen of them, are a simple and ingenious race, and Captain Johnstone having ensured the friendship and protection of their chief, we have lived in the most perfect harmony with them, trafficking with them for oxen, for which we gave them iron and copper in exchange, the former held in high estimation by them. But alas! sir, such a fate has befallen to me since I wrote your last, as I am sure never fell to the lot of a human being. And I am now going to relate to you one of those stories which, were it to occur in a romance, would be reckoned quite out of nature; and beyond all bounds of probability, so true is it, that there are many things in heaven and earth that are not dreamed of in our philosophy.

You knew my Agnes from her childhood—she was at our wedding at Beattock, and cannot but remember what an amiable and lovely girl she then was. I thought so, and so did you, at least you said you never had as bonny a bride on your knee. But you will hardly believe that her beauty was then nothing in comparison with what it became afterwards; and which she was going about our new settlement with our little boy in her arms, I have often fancied that I never saw so lovely a human being.

Be that as it may, the chief Karoo came to me one day with his interpreter, whom he caused to make a long palaver about his power, and dominion, and virtues, and a great desire to do much good. The language of the fellow being a mixture of Kaffre, High Dutch, and English, was peculiarly ludicrous, and most of all so when he concluded with expressing his lord's desire to have my wife to be his own, and to give me in exchange for his four oxen, the best that I could choose from his herd!

As he made the proposal in presence of my wife, she was so much tickled with the absurdity of the proposed barter, and the manner in which it was expressed, that she laughed immoderately. Karoo, thinking she was delighted with it, eyed her with a look that surpasses all description, and then caused his interpreter to make another palaver to her concerning all the good things she was to enjoy, one of which, was that she was to ride upon an ox whose horns were tipped with gold. I thanked the great Karoo for his kind intentions, but declared my incapability to part with my wife, for that we were one flesh and blood, and nothing could separate us but death. He could comprehend no such tie as this. All men sold their wives and daughters as they listed, as I was told,—for that the woman were the sole property of the men. He had bought many women from the Tambookies, that were virgins, and had never given above two cows for any of them; and because he desired to have my wife, he had offered me as much for her as would purchase four of the best wives in all the two countries, and that therefore I was bound to give her up to him. And when I told him finally that nothing on earth could induce me to part with her, he seemed offended, bit his thumb, knitted his brows, and studied long, in silence, always casting glances at Agnes of great pathos and languishment, which were perfectly irresistible, and ultimately he struck his spear's head into the ground, and offered me ten cows and a bull for my wife, and a choice virgin to boot. When this proffer was likewise declined, he smiled in derision, telling me I was the son of foolishness, and that he foretold I should repent it. Three times he went over this, and then he went away in high dudgeon. Will you, sir, believe, or will any person alive believe, that it was possible I could live to repent this?

My William was at this time eleven months old, but was still at the breast, as I never could prevail