

had not hindered the spread of this infection, or if prestige and influence had not preserved them from the consequences of more or less hidden transgression? Let us return to the ex-convict. In most of them there is a degree of moral unreliability. Whether it was there before, or whether it was engendered through imprisonment, I do not know—it is in him nevertheless. As a consequence, the solid and lasting reformation of the ex-convict, if he has also been a criminal, presents some difficulties. If he be left to his own devices, even with employment and wages, he is likely to show some unrest that sooner or later will force him away from his work. If he be in undisturbed possession of his leisure time and of a lustful or intemperate disposition, soon he is more or less implicated with strong drink or women. Hence I feel that a man from prison, to be solidly reformed must be taken and kept well in hand—mere perfunctory interest in him will not achieve lasting results.

The lack of success in reclaiming ex-convicts that so often attends the efforts of organizations and individuals, I attribute to the absence of distinct and determined influence—of influence from individual upon individual. I wish that every convict in whom the prison chaplain had produced at least the beginnings of a change of heart, could on release from prison be put immediately in touch with a whole-souled man on the outside, who could stand by and assist the convict to rehabilitate himself in the community.

WHAT MIGHT BE DONE.

This leads to some thoughts on what might best be done in order to bring about a rehabilitation of the fallen ones. As an essential prerequisite to any practical steps I demand a more correct judgment of the ex-convict along the lines suggested thus far. There must be a greater degree of optimism introduced into the consideration of the matter, and an assumption of a percentage of failures. Failures there will be, disappointment will be at times met. But why be pessimistic? Why stand about like the Pharisees of old and gloat over the fallen? Why merit to have hurled at us: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her"—i. e., the guilty sinner.

If a more charitable and more just sentiment could be universally called into being, an unshakable foundation would be laid for practical efforts.

The indeterminate sentence with the prospect of provisional release from imprisonment is, in my opinion, thus far the nearest approach to a solution of the problem. If the true spirit of this legal enactment be followed, if those entrusted with the execution of its provisions be wise and impartial, if in truth the man in prison can earn his release, and if every convict, independently of his past, can be impelled by the same incentive, then I believe that the cornerstone of solid reformation will be laid.

But the parole without after care is not complete. Simply to release a man from prison even on his merits while there is not enough. He needs associates and friends; he cannot stand alone—no man can. Some of our States provide vaguely for the care of a paroled man, by requiring employment before releasing him, and by establishing a somewhat indefinite supervision over him, or by demanding stated reports from him. These arrangements are often very crudely planned and very perfunctorily carried out, but with all its shortcomings, the system of release on parole, especially when it is a sequel to an indeterminate sentence, is highly prized wherever it is in existence and the results achieved serve as arguments that a man from prison can be rehabilitated.

In regard to after treatment of prisoners, whether paroled or not, Switzerland serves as an admirable model. Switzerland has fourteen societies for discharged convicts, with a central committee in the chief city of each canton, and having district committees or corresponding members that carry the spirit of philanthropy into the smallest borough. The extension of aid to the discharged prisoner is

made not through money, but through work and personal sympathy, counsel and interest. The prisoner can be brought into touch with these workers, before ever he has left the prison. The committees seek for him a patron, a charitable and unselfish man or woman chosen to be friend, guide and counselor to the discharged convict. To this patron is committed the work of directing the prisoner in the right way, of following his career until he is rehabilitated. Thus direct personal influence has an immense scope. The patron either reconciles the prisoner to his family and friends or seeks a place of employment and endeavors to create a new environment for his protégé. These societies have diffused among the public more just ideas in regard to liberated prisoners and made the people understand that it is for their interest to associate in this work.

Employers willingly admit such men, for there is the surveillance of the patron, and further the societies guarantee to them the reimbursement of depredations that the ex-prisoners might inflict on the employers. Remarkable to relate, in twenty-three years the societies have had no expenditures on this account. Recidivism is remarkably rare. In the canton of Neuchâtel, statistics for three consecutive years show that the highest number of reconvictions in one year was fifteen out of 360 or about 4 per cent.

Why could we not in our own country establish ourselves on similar lines? Surely philanthropy, the love of our fellows, is not rare among us. The many organizations that exist throughout the land for the amelioration of the distressed and the defective bear testimony that charity is not dead, but lives a vigorous life. Why can there not be more organizations for the benefit of the delinquent? We are not yet sufficiently aroused to the importance of this matter. Great strides are being made in advance in preventive and reformatory work; why shall not more be done on lines of rehabilitation? Can we not find men and women to join in the work of helping the ex-convict? Have we not many men and women of means, devotedness and leisure, that could take up patronage of men and women from State prison and penitentiary?

I ask the question, I make the appeal. Who will answer?

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Feb. 3, 1904.

D. F. Allman, Esq.,
Winnipeg, Man.

Dear Sir and Brother:—

The members of St. Mary's Branch No. 52 of the Catholic Mutual Benefit Association, cannot allow your retirement from the position of Financial Secretary to pass unnoticed.

Your continued re-election to that important office year after year for the past fifteen years, and the desire of the members to re-elect you this year, may be pointed to as strong indications of the satisfactory manner in which you have administered the financial affairs of the Branch, but we desire tonight to add to this a special assurance of our appreciation of your good and loyal service, and of our heartfelt regret that you have found it necessary to relinquish the position.

From the inception of the Branch you have been one of its most loyal members, and during your long tenure of office have given an unexampled evidence of faithfulness both to the interests of the Branch as a whole and of the members individually, and we assure you that this is thoroughly appreciated by each and all of us.

As a slight token of our feelings, in this respect, and of our regard for you personally we ask you to accept this "C.M.B.A." emblem which we hope you will receive, and keep as a memento of your many years of faithful service, and of the good-will of your brother members.

Signed on behalf of the members,

R. MURPHY, President.

R. F. HINDS, Rec. Secy.

THE IGNORANCE OF SYBILLA.

(Continued from last week.)

There was a deathlike silence. The professor sat, tingling and stupefied, the sound of his own voice ringing in his ears, till presently a rustling of skirts aroused him, and he looked up, to find Sybilla standing by his side. Her cheeks were flushed, and her eyes bright with anger.

"How dare you sit here and listen to what I was saying?" she demanded, and Stamford trembled before her. For one foolish moment he had imagined that he was the injured person, but Miss Sybilla soon set him right on that point.

"I—I am very sorry. I had just returned from town and was taken by surprise," he explained, haltingly, and the young lady seated herself beside him with a forgiving smile.

"Well, accidents will happen! I didn't mean you to hear, but the poor dears get so dull. They must be amused. You laughed yourself when I imitated the other lecturers."

"I did."

"You said it was very clever."

"Just so, and this—ah—latest impersonation is, I feel sure, equally truthful." Then the Professor's face fell, and he stammered in painful embarrassment, "But, er—er, that extraordinary coughing? Is it really that I—that I do possess that very bad habit?"

Sybilla nodded gravely.

"Dreadfully! Such a pity, for when you are once started, you go on so well. But every time you begin to speak—even at home, as I hear you—"

"You surprise me! I was quite unconscious." Stamford put up his hand and ruffled his hair in helpless fashion. "I have always held that a man who is in the habit of addressing public audiences should endeavor to cultivate an address at once soothing and agreeable to his hearers. It is distressing to find that I have fallen so short of my ideal; but I am indebted to you for pointing out my deficiencies. There may even yet be time to overcome them."

"I'll help you!" cried Sybilla, cordially. "Keep looking at me and I'll make signs to show you how you are getting on. When you forget I'll frown, and when you do well I'll smile like this!"

"I see!" said the professor gravely. He bent forward and peered at her with his short-sighted eyes. Seen close at hand, his face was surprisingly young and boyish. "It's so kind of you to trouble," he said. "I won't forget. I'll look at you all the time."

Sybilla turned her head aside and stared fixedly down the garden.

"How hot it is," she said. "Really extraordinary weather for the time of year."

For the remainder of the professor's visit he and Sybilla remained on the most friendly terms. The young lady did not, it is true, show any more inclination to attend the lectures, but she bestowed the light of her presence upon the concluding soiree and constituted herself Stamford's guide on an excursion to a "place of interest" in the neighborhood, which lived in his memory as one of the historic occasions of his life. When his visit came to an end, and he took leave of the family, he presented Agatha with a copy of his latest book and remarked that her society had been a pleasure and a privilege, but when it came to Sybilla's turn he shook hands in limpest fashion, and, turning hastily aside, stumbled up against the music stool with such violence that it fell spinning to the ground. Then he drove off and Agatha laid the volume in a conspicuous position on the drawing-room table, and immediately sallied forth to the local tennis club. After the mental exertions of the last ten days she considered herself in need of a little recreation, and Archie Manners had casually mentioned that he expected to be at the ground. As for Sybilla, she went out also, ostensibly to pay calls, and quarreled with five separate bosom friends before the day was over.

A fortnight passed by and then a day dawned never to be forgotten in the annals of the French family. Sybilla sat in her room trimming an autumn hat with the seriousness befitting the occasion, when suddenly the door burst open

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and her sister rushed into the room. For once in her life the stately Agatha was overcome with emotion and gasped and panted in a manner which filled the beholder with dismay.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" she cried. "Oh, Sybilla, the most wonderful thing! You will never guess. He has written—the professor! Father has had a letter. He can't forget me. He says he loved me when he was here, but he thought it was only a fancy. He has fought against it, but he can't—he can't. He says he must see me and end the suspense. He is in town and sent the letter from the hotel. In half an hour he will be here. Oh, Sybilla can you believe it? Professor Stamford—the Great Professor—to care for me! His wife!"

Sybilla unfastened the feather from her hat and deliberately placed the big black pin between her lips. She gazed at her work with an anxious expression as she mumbled out a question in return.

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