

Tom Osborne Returns

By J. W. MACMILLAN.

What does it mean when a prison goes en fete on the return of its warden?

The defeated political ring of New York State doubtless maintains that such popularity is won by the destruction of discipline, the cozening of slackness, the winking at loose and idle conduct, and the entire subversion of the punitive purpose for which the building was erected. In their view it is like the mice organising a demonstration for a favorite cat.

Whatever may be said against the new regime instituted in Sing Sing by Thomas Mott Osborne his political foes are not likely to gain a favorable hearing for their strictures. They, of all men, have shown themselves unfitted to pose as champions of order and law. The overthrow of their charges against Mr. Osborne has left them exposed to public scorn and condemnation. They are revealed as base slanderers, who tried by abominable defamations to ruin and remove the honest man whose heroic purpose was robbing them of their graft. In their charges they did not forbear to accuse him not only of rascality but also of the vilest personal vices, and they were unable to produce a single item of evidence to support their foul slanders.

Two Systems of Administration.

It is clearly unfortunate that the case between two systems of administration of justice should be obscured by such an infamous attack on the champion of the newer methods. The public, with its eye ever cocked for the spectacular, is apt to conclude that Osborne's methods must be right because he is proven an honorable man, and that the severer methods are wrong because they are championed by a band of scoundrels.

To a lesser degree, also, the wild rejoicing of the convicts at Osborne's acquittal and restoration to office is likely to divert the public attention from the real issue. There again we have a factor both spectacular and indecisive. The fact that he makes criminals happy means little in the greater question as to whether he protects society from their depredations. There must indeed be notable qualities in a man who can waken sixteen hundred criminals to the celebration of a holiday. Spectators who crowded the hills about the prison and looked over the walls saw a parade headed by a brass band, carrying banners, with clowns and effigied figures, and with floats displaying the prison manufactures. The procession gathered about a platform, read an address of welcome to Mr. Osborne, and in serio-comic fashion conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Humanity.

We may fairly estimate a portion of this festivity as mere hilarity, the joy of helpless men in the prospect of milder treatment. We may be sure they have no love for an iron discipline, punctuated with cruel punishment. The return of the warden meant less repression, less pain, more freedom, more pleasure. Perhaps to some of these convicts this motive was the sole motive of gladness.

Even so, while we disallow it from influencing our judgment upon prison methods, we must admit that it is not an absolute sign of failure. A prison which can go en fete is not in a hopeless condition. A man who laughs is not so dangerous to society as one who scowls. Rebels have bitter hearts. No man is radically improved unless his interest be kindled.

Criminals Made, Not Born.

It is generally admitted now that the alleged "criminal type" does not exist. Lombroso and his school have done criminology a service in starting the scientific study of crime, but their famous "born criminal" is no longer believed in. There is however a "prison type" and a "made criminal." Of these the prisons are the chief producers. Criminals are made, not born. The social outlaw becomes perfected in his trade in the gaol. He learns from more experienced offenders the ways of crime. He becomes a member of their social group. He learns to be sullen, sly and false. His strength of body and of mind is sapped so that when he completes his sentence he has become debilitated, devitalised and dehumanised. He is fitted now to prey upon his fellow men as he was not before.

This being the usual state of affairs in prisons, almost anything is better. The methods of punishment of the past generation, however better than those which John Howard and Elizabeth Fry disclosed, cannot be defended. If an offender is to be let

out of prison at all the prison discipline should do something else to him than make him a confirmed and efficient enemy of society. Therefore, if there was more fun in the prisons, however it might shock the ultra respectable, and scandalise the he-ought-to-be-kicked debauchees of moral resentment, it could not be worse for the world than at present.

But all this, of course, is of little moment. The great question is, Does Mr. Osborne turn rogues into honest men? If he does not, there is no profound reason for putting him in the place of the political scallawags. If he does, that is the triumph and vindication of his system.

Now, no one but the discomfited political ring will deny that a large part of the welcome Mr. Osborne received was because he represented a victory of justice. It is the astonishing but indubitable truth that, in this instance, we have the group which wields the power of government standing for falsehood, malice and greed; while, over against them, is the group which represents disobedience and crime standing for fair play and honor. A mad world, is it not?

If New York is ashamed of politicians she may be proud of her convicts. If her patronage committees are a menace, her prisons may become a protection.

Since "Tom Brown, No. 33,333," was released from voluntary confinement in Auburn Penitentiary and made warden at Sing Sing enough evidence has gathered to prove that bad and dangerous men have become honest and industrious while serving their

sentences under him. There are ex-convicts, well-known to the public, for their careers are good copy and any slip on the part of a graduate of the Osborne school would be jubilantly advertised by his foes, whose lives have become steady, sober and hard-working, whereas they have formerly consisted of periods of law-breaking liberty alternated by periods of incarceration. This is the simple and convincing marvel concerning Tom Osborne.

But there is more than that to be said. He has succeeded in kindling a moral fervor in many of these offenders. They have banded themselves together for mutual support. They are enthusiasts for prison reform, and once last winter held a monster meeting in Carnegie Hall, New York, and addressed it themselves, and got into the front pages of the newspapers, and became the chief topic of metropolitan conversation for a day.

The venerable controversy between the several theories of punishment must give way to observation of experiment. The expiatory, the deterrent, and the reformatory theories may remain topics of academic discussion. Probably, as so often happens, they all contain some truth and are not necessarily in conflict with each other at all. Human nature and human society are two things which prove unmanageable on a prior principle. Organized society has been experimenting for many centuries as to how it can best deal with its rebellious members. The experiments are the things to be considered, not the theories. Fortunately, there are now many experiments such as is being conducted in Sing Sing. We have some of them in Canada. And they all appear to teach the same lesson, that prisons may and can and should mend broken men rather than shatter them utterly.

Newfoundland Is Prosperous

Ancient Colony Adjusting Herself to War Conditions

(Special to JOURNAL OF COMMERCE.)

St. John's, August 7.

The financial position of the Colony, is, from latest showings, in an excellent condition. When making his Budget speech, during the session of the Assembly, the Finance Minister estimated that the revenue by the end of June would be \$4,160,000 which would give a surplus of \$60,000. This surplus has been more than realized; and the Colony starts out on a new fiscal year with excellent prospects. The total excess of revenue is fully \$1,000,000.

Business houses on Water Street—our great artery of traffic—report splendid sales for this season, usually an "off" one; and travellers for the wholesale houses have brought in an unusually big sheaf of orders. One house reports its sales for the twelve months, ended June 30th, as the largest in its history. There is a good deal of money in circulation; and the depression which was so much in evidence has disappeared. The railway and steamship lines report the traffic as unusually large. The Red Cross steamers from New York are bringing capacity freights and full complements of passengers; and the Reid-Newfoundland company are having the best season on record.

The fishery which opened very promisingly has had a set back within the past fortnight; and little is being done, except on the south coast around Cape St. Mary. The northern bays are faring very badly; and the catch is short. Reports from Labrador just to hand are most discouraging; and most of the big fleet have gone to the far north from which we do not hope to get returns for some weeks.

Our exportations for the six months from January to June 30th were, 426,492 quintals as compared with 320,000 quintals during the same period of 1915. Our exports to Spain and Portugal have doubled. Italy is short to the extent of some 4,000 quintals; but England has taken 20,000 quintals more than in 1915. Brazil exports are practically the same as in 1915.

A somewhat unusual feature of the fish trade this season is the presence of English buyers from Grimsby—the large English fish centre. These buyers will likely take up a large quantity of our Labrador catch. It is a much cheaper product than that which we prepare for the Mediterranean and Brazilian markets. The trade in fish generally at the moment is dull. We still hold some 30,000 quintals of last season's catch which we have been unable to market owing to difficulty in securing bottoms for shipment.

Seal skins are going out rapidly. To-date we have shipped 32,860 skins to Great Britain as against 736 for the corresponding period in 1915. Our sales to

the United States are shorter than last year; and some 175,000 skins are still held here. These will be shipped at an early date as both the demand and price are satisfactory. Our seal skins are now being used very largely as a substitute for fine leather work.

The pit-prop industry, which was a prospective bonanza for local contractors, has been a sorry disappointment. The cut represents (locally) a value of \$750,000. It is difficult to secure ships to freight it to destination (Wales); but during the past fortnight several vessels have reached northern ports to load for Cardiff. Some 20,000 cords have gone out; but it is feared that a large quantity will remain on the bank as it will be impossible to move it before the close of navigation. Most of the cut is in the northern bays; and these freeze up towards the end of December.

The lack of shipping facilities will fall hard on the contractors; and the Government will also suffer, as pit-props pay an export duty of \$1.00 per cord.

Premier Morris, who is now in England, is, we understand, trying to secure the release of some ships by the Admiralty to enable exporters to market their output. We need bottoms also for the freighting of fish to Mediterranean ports from Labrador shortly. Though we have been purchasing vessels largely of late, there is still a shortage of shipping. For many years we were dependent on Norwegian and Danish bottoms for the fish trade; but these are now engaged elsewhere at charter rates which are presumably more satisfactory than our exporters can offer.

The Premier is also endeavoring to bring about closer relations between the Colony and Great Britain in the matter of general trade. Our trade with the Mother Country has declined alarmingly of late, and especially since the war. This is due chiefly to lack of shipping facilities and other difficulties which have been intensified since the outbreak of the war.

The pulp and paper industry is having a boom; and the Harmsworth plant at Grand Falls is being enlarged. The new additions and installations will give the A. N. D. Company an additional capacity of fully fifty per cent.; and it is stated that their mills will within a short period have a capacity of 400 tons per day.

It is also stated that the Company will build a railway from Grand Falls to some point in Fortune or Hermitage Bay on the South Coast. Their present shipping point—Botwood in Notre Dame Bay—debars them from shipping during the winter months, as the Exploits Reach freezes over in December, and

(Continued on page 15).