

Behind Prison Walls.

The line of dingy-coated men stretched along the broad granite walk and like a great gray serpent wound in and out among the wagon-shops and planing-mills and filled the prison yard.

Down beyond the foundry the beginning of the line, the head of the serpent, was lost at the stairway leading to the second floor of a long, narrow building in which whisk-brooms were manufactured.

An hour before, on the sounding of a brass gong at the front, that same line had wound round the same corners into the building whence now it crawled. There, the men had seated themselves on four-legged stools before benches that stretched across the room in rows. Before each man was set a tin plate of boiled meat, a heavy cup of black coffee, a knife, a fork, and a thick bowl of steaming, odoriferous soup.

During the meal other men, dressed like the hundreds who were sitting in suits of dull gray, with little round-crowned, peaked-visored caps to match, moved in and out between the rows, distributing chunks of fresh white bread from heavy baskets. Now and then one of the men would shake his head and the waiter would pass him by, but usually a dozen hands were thrust into a basket at once to clutch the regulation "bit" of half a pound. The men ate ravenously, as if famished.

Yet a silence that appalled hovered over the long, bare dining hall while eight hundred were being fed. There was no clatter of knives and forks; there were no jests; the waiters moved about as noiselessly as ghosts.

There were faces stamped with the indelible marks of depravity and vice, but now and then the "bread-tossers" would see uplifted a pair of frank blue eyes, in which burned the light of hope, and there were who dreamed of a day to come when all would be forgiven and forgotten; when a hand would again be held out in welcome, and a kiss again be pressed to quivering lips. Men there were of all kinds, of all countenances, young and old, the waving sunlit hair of youth side by side with locks in which the snow was thickly sprinkled. All these men were paying the penalty society imposes on proved criminals.

And now, their dinner over, they were marching back to the shops and mills of the prison, where days and weeks were spent at labor. Those employed in the wagon-works dropped out of line when they came opposite the entrance to their building. Those behind pushed forward as their prison mates disappeared, and never for more than ten seconds was there a gap in the long, gray line.

The whisk broom factory occupied the second floor of the building at the far end of the prison yard. On the ground floor men worked at lathe, turning out wooden handles to the brooms that were finished, sorted and tied upstairs. At the corner the line divided, sixty-five of them climbed the stairway to the second floor, the other thirty entered the lathe room below.

A dozen men in blue uniforms marched beside the line on its way from the mess-hall, six on each side, at two yards' distance. Their caps bore "Guard" in gold letters, and each guard carried a short, heavy, crooked cane of polished white hickory.

On entering the workroom of the second floor, the men assembled before a raised platform, upon which a red faced, coatless man stood behind a desk. In cold, metallic tones he called the numbers of the convicts employed "on the whisk broom contract," and the latter, each in turn, replied "Here!" when their numbers were spoken.

"Twenty-thirty-four!" called the red-faced man.

There was no response. The red-faced man leaned over the desk and glared down. Then a voice from somewhere on the left answered, "Here!"

"What was the matter with you the first time?" snapped the foreman.

The man thus questioned removed his cap and took three steps toward the platform. In feature, the word "hard" would describe him. His head was long, wide at the forehead, and yet narrow between the temples. His eyes were small and close together. His nose was flat, and his mouth hardly more than a straight cut in the lower part of his face. The lower jaw was square and heavy, and the ears protruded abnormally. A trifle above medium height, with a pair of drooping, twitching shoulders, the man looked criminal.

To the question he replied doggedly, "I answered the first time, sir, but I guess you didn't hear me."

The foreman gazed steadily at the man. Their eyes met. The foreman's did not waver, but "2034" lowered his, and fumbled nervously at his cap.

"All right," said the foreman, quietly, "but I guess you'd better report to the warden as soon as you get through here. Don't wait for any piece-work. Go to him as soon as you have finished your task. I'll tell him you're coming. He'll be waiting for you in the front office."

"Yes, sir," the convict did not raise his eyes. He stepped back into line.

Then, at a clasp of the foreman's hands the men broke ranks, and each walked away by his own bench or machine. Five minutes later, the swish of the corn-wisps as they were separated and tied into rough-brooms, and the occasional tap of a

hammer, were the only sounds in that long room where sixty-five men toiled.

Now and then one of the men would go to the platform where the foreman sat bent over half a dozen little books, in which it was his duty to record the number of "tasks" completed by each of the workmen.

"On the contract"—a "task," in the prison vernacular, being the amount of work each man is compelled to accomplish within a given space of time, and the approach of a workman, the foreman would look up, and a few whispered words would pass between the two. Then the broom-maker would dart into the stock-room, adjoining the factory, upon receiving a written requisition from the shop foreman, the official in charge would give him the material which he needed in his work—a ball of twine, or a strip of plush with which the handles of the brooms were decorated.

Ten minutes past three o'clock 2034 crossed to the platform.

"What do you want?" asked the foreman, as he eyed keenly the man in the dull gray suit.

"A paper of small tacks," was the reply, quietly spoken. The order was written, and as 2034 moved away toward the door leading to the stock-room, the man on the platform watched him closely from between half-closed lids.

A guard who had come round from behind the broom-bins noticed the way in which the foreman followed every movement of the convict, and stepping over to the platform asked, in an undertone, "Anything wrong, Bill?"

"That's what I don't know," George, the foreman replied. "That man Riley has been acting queer of late. I've got an idea there's something up on his sleeve. There's not a harder nut on the contract than that fellow, and by the way, he's been carrying on, sullen like and all that, I'm fearing something's going to happen. You remember him, don't you? What, no? Why, he's that Riley from Acorn. He came in two years ago on a job in the mill, and the warden, where he shot a drug clerk that offered objections to his carrying off all there was in the shop. They made it manslaughter, and he's in for fifteen years. And I'm told he's another warrant ready for him when he gets out, for a job done four years ago in Kentucky. He's a bad one. A fellow like that is no good round this shop."

The guard smiled cynically at the foreman's suggestion that a convict may be too bad even for prison surroundings.

"And his influence over the boys isn't for good, either," went on the foreman. "There's not a fellow inside these walls that for the sake of getting out would commit violence quicker than that fellow Riley. I've got my eye on him and I'm sending him up to the warden this afternoon. Say, George, when you go back, will you tell the warden Riley's coming up to call on him this afternoon, and tell him what I've been telling you about him, will you?"

"Sure, Bill," was the smiling reply of the guard as he moved away. 2034 had returned with a paper of tacks and gone directly to his bench.

It was quarter to four by the foreman's watch when the door at the head of the stairway opened, and the warden entered, accompanied by two friends whom he was showing through the "plant," as he always persisted in calling the prison. The warden was a stout, jovial man, who looked more like a bishop than a "second father" to eight hundred criminals. The foreman did not observe his entrance into the room, and only looked up when he heard his voice.

"This is where the whisk-brooms are made," the warden was explaining to his friends. "On the floor below, which we just left, you will remember we saw the boys turning out broom-handles. Well, here the brooms are fastened to those little wooden handles. Some of the work, you see, is done by machine. The broom is tied and sewn, though, by hand, over at those benches. In the room beyond, through that door, we keep the stuff handy that is called for from time to time, and in a further room is stored the material getting out of manufacture of the brooms, the tin tips, the twine, the tacks, and about ten tons of broom straw."

As the warden ceased speaking, the foreman leaned across the desk and tapped him on the shoulder. "Riley's coming in to see you this afternoon. He's been acting queer—don't answer the call, and the like. I thought maybe you could call him down."

The warden only nodded, and continued his explanation of the visitors of the work done in the shop.

"Now," he said, moving away toward the door leading into the stock-room, "if you will come over here I'll show you our storerooms. You have to keep a lot of material on hand. Beyond this second room the stuff is stored up, and is taken into the stock-room as it is wanted. Between the rooms we have arranged these big sliding iron doors that, in case of fire, could be dropped, and thus, for a few minutes at least, cut the flames off from any room but that in which they originated. See?"

He pulled a lever at the side of the door, and a heavy iron sliding-sheet dropped slowly and easily to the floor. "You see," he went on, "that completes the wall."

The visitors nodded. "Now come on through here and look at the straw and velvet we have stored away in bins."

The visitors followed the warden through the second room, and into the third. There, ranged regularly on the floor, were huge bales of broom-straw, and against the walls of the

room, boxes upon boxes of velvets, tacks, ornamental bits of metal, and all the other separate parts of the commercial whisk broom.

The visitors examined the tacks and the twine and felt the bales of straw.

"Very interesting," observed one of the men, as he drew his cigarette from his pocket, and biting the tip from one of the cigars it contained, struck a little wax match on the sole of his shoe. He held the match in his hand until it had burned down, then threw it on the floor, and followed the warden and the other visitor under the heavy iron screen into the workroom of the factory.

The foreman was busy at his books and did not observe the little party as it passed through the shop on the other side of the broom-bins and out at the big door.

Two minutes later 2034 happened to look out through the window across his bench, and he saw the warden with his friends crossing the prison yard to the foundry. A guard just then sauntered into the room and stopped at the first of the bins. He idly picked up one of the finished brooms and examined it. His attention a moment later was attracted by some one pulling at his coat from behind. He turned.

"Why, Tommy, my boy, what is it?"

The two soft brown eyes of a little boy were turned up to him. "I'm looking for papa," replied the little fellow. "The foreman down stairs said he come up here. Uncle George is back in the house, and mamma sent me out to find papa."

The guard put the little fellow's head, "And we will find him, Tommy," he said. He went over to the foreman's desk. "Bill, did the warden come up here? Tommy is looking for him; his mother sent him out."

The foreman raised his eyes from his books. "Yes," he replied, "he went in there, with a couple of gentlemen."

The guard looked down at the little boy. "He's in the stock-room," he said. "You'll find him in there, Tommy."

Then he turned and walked out of the shop. The child ran on into the room beyond. His father was not there. The stock-keeper did not observe the little boy as he tiptoed, in a childish way, past the desk. Tommy passed on into the farther room. He knew he would find his father in there, and he would crawl along between the tiers of straw bales and take him by surprise.

He had hardly passed the door when the stock-keeper, raising his head from the lists of material he was preparing, held his face up and sniffed the air. Quietly he rose from his revolving chair and went to the door of the straw-room. He merely peered inside. Turning suddenly, he pressed upon the lever near the door and the iron screen slid down into place, cutting off the farther room.

Then, snatching a few books that lay on his desk, he slipped out into the shop, and at that door released the second screen. As it fell into place with a slight crunching noise, the foreman turned in his chair. The eyes of the two men met. The stock-keeper raised his hand and touched his lip with the first finger. "He crossed rapidly to the desk."

"Get the men out! Get the men out!" he gasped. "The storeroom is on fire!"

The foreman rapped on the table twice. Every man working in that room turned and faced the desk.

"Work is over for to-day," said the foreman. His manner was ominously calm, and the men looked at one another wonderingly.

"Fall in!"

At the order, the dingy gray suits formed the same old serpent, and the line moved rapidly through the door at the end of the room and down the outside stairs.

There, in front of the building, they were halted, and a guard was dispatched to find the warden. He was discovered in the foundry. "Fire in the broom-shop!" whispered the guard.

The warden's face paled. He dashed through the doorway, and one minute later came round the corner of the building, just in time to see the first signs of flame against the windows of the rear room upstairs.

Within five seconds, a troop of fifteen guards had drawn the little hand engine from its house and hitched the hose to the hydrant nearest the shop. From all the other buildings the men were being marched to their cells.

"These men!" hurriedly whispered

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the foreman to the warden. "What shall I do with them?"

"Get 'em out as soon as you can! This won't last long, the front of the building is cut off. It'll all be over in ten minutes."

The foreman gave an order. At that instant a woman came running down the prison yard. Reaching the warden's side, she fell against him heavily.

"Why, Harriet," he exclaimed, "what is the matter?"

"Oh," she gasped, "Tommy! Tommy! Where is Tommy?"

A guard at the end of the engine rail turned ash white. He raised a hand to his head, and with the other grasped the wheel to keep from falling. Then he cried, "Mr. Jetties, I—I believe Tommy is up there in the stock-room. He went to look—"

The warden clutched the man's arm. "Up there? Up there?" he cried. The sudden approach of the woman and the words that followed had wrought so much confusion that the men had paid no attention to the foreman's command, and he had even failed to observe their lack of attention, in the excitement of that moment.

"Great God!" cried the warden. "What can I do—what can I do? No one can live up there!"

There was a crash. One of the windows fell out. "Get a ladder!" some one cried. A guard ran back toward the prison house. Then, in the midst of the hubbub, a man in a dingy gray suit stepped out a yard from the line of convicts. His prison number was 2034. He touched his little square cap.

"If you'll give me permission, I think I can get up there," was all he said.

"You'll die!" exclaimed the warden. "No, no, I shall tell no man to do it!"

There was a second crash. Another window had fallen out now, and the tongues of flame were lapping the other walls above.

The convict made no reply. With a bound he was at the end of the line and dashing up the outer stairway.

The warden's wife was on her knees, clinging to the hand of her husband. In his eyes was a dead, cold look. A few of the men bit their lips, and a faint shadow of a smile played on the mouths of others.

They all waited. A convict had broken on a regulation—had run from the line! He would be punished! Even as he had clambered up the stairs a guard had cried, "Shall I shoot?"

The silence was broken by a shriek from the woman clinging to the warden's feet. "Look!" she cried, and pointed toward the last of the upstairs windows.

There, surrounded by a halo of smoke, and hemmed in on all sides by flames, stood a man in a dingy gray suit. One sleeve was on fire, but he beat out the flames with his left hand. Those below heard him cry, "I've got him!" Then the figure disappeared. Instantly it reappeared, bearing something in its arms. It was the limp form of a child.

All saw the man wrap smoking straw round the little body and tie round that two strands of heavy twine. Then that precious burden was lowered out of the window. The father rushed forward and help up his arms to receive it.

Another foot—heugged the limp body of his boy to his breast! On the ground a little way back lay a woman, as if dead.

"Here's the ladder!" cried the foreman, and at that moment the eyes that were still turned upon the window above, where stood a man in a dingy gray suit, witnessed a spectacle that will reappear before them again and again in visions of the night.

The coat the man wore was ablaze. Flames shot out on either side of him and above him. Just as the ladder was placed against the wall, a crackling was heard—not the crackling of fire. Then, like a thunder-bolt, a crash occurred that caused the men to turn their cells to start.

The roof caved in.

In the prison yard that line of convicts saw 2034 reel and fall backward, and heard as he fell, his last cry, "I'm a convict, warden!"

He was a convicted criminal, and had been in prison for years. When that man's soul took flight the Recording Angel did write his name in the eternal Book of Record, with the strange, cabalistic sign; a ring around a cross—that stands for "good behavior."—Kenneth Herford, in the Catholic Columbian.

Maritime records since the introduction of the ironclad would seem to fully justify the condemnation of the new naval architecture, by the Admiralty for the use of the British sovereign, but found to be unwieldy, if not actually dangerous, to those on board of her. More than one terrible naval catastrophe has resulted from faulty construction, the modern iron or steel battleship being far more dangerous than the old wooden warship.

Such a vessel is likely to "turn turtle" and go to the bottom within a few minutes, whereas the wooden warship, though full of water, would float. The fires and engines in the modern warship add, moreover, to the dangers of the craft in case of accident.

The first accident which called attention to the terrible dangers of ironclads was the loss of H. M. S. Captain in 1871. She was a sea-going, masted, turret ship, of 6,900 tons, and was regarded as the finest fighting vessel in the British navy. She was 320 feet long, with a beam of 63 feet, a draught of 25 feet 9 inches, with a freeboard of only 6 feet 8 inches. The turret armor was 13 to 18 inches thick, and that on the water line 6 to 8 inches. She had

an immense sail spread on her three masts, and carried five hundred officers and men.

On September 6, 1871, she was manoeuvring in the Bay of Biscay with the British Channel squadron, near Cape Finisterre. Under sail, but with steam up, she was rolling at angles of from 12 to 14 degrees in heavy squalls of wind. The last seen of her was at a quarter past one a. m. When dawn broke she had vanished, and a few hours later parts of her wreckage were found.

Some of the survivors struggled to Cape Finisterre. They reported that the Captain, with steam up but screw not working, and under three double reefed topsails, began to roll heavily and then to lurch from side to side at increasing angles of from 18 to 28 degrees. She finally rolled to her beam ends and lay down on her side, her masts in the water. The sea rushed down the funnel onto the furnace fire, and many of the engineers were scalded to death. As the Captain slowly turned over some of the men walked on her bottom. Suddenly she sank, stern foremost. Out of five hundred men on board only eighteen survived. The catastrophe was attributed by the Admiralty to too great top-weights.

The second disaster to an ironclad was unattended by loss of life, but it emphasized the "sunkability" of the new ships. The British Channel squadron left Kingston for Quebec town on September 1, 1875, when the Iron Duke, steaming at seven knots, struck the Vanguard four feet below her armor on the port quarter, a rent twenty-five feet square, the opening being into the two largest compartments in the ship. One hour after the collision the Vanguard, which was heavily down by the stern, was a total wreck, and three times and then sank, after her crew and officers had been taken off.

Three years later a similar disaster occurred to the German fleet when the Koenig Wilhelm collided with the Grosser Kurfurst off Folkestone. The ram ploughed up the armor as if it had been orange peel. The water poured through the great breach into the stokehold, flooding the furnaces, and a heavy list to port ensued. The vessel on her beam ends and prevented the crew from getting out the boats. The captain tried to run her into shallow water, but she sank within five minutes of the time of being rammed. Of a crew of 497, 216 were saved. The Grosser Kurfurst was a turret ship of 6,600 tons.

But the most tragic of all these misadventures was the loss of the Victoria, flagship of the British Mediterranean squadron, which occurred June 22, 1893. The fleet was manoeuvring off Tripoli in two columns, one led by the Victoria, the other by the Camperdown. Admiral Tryon, on board the Victoria, ordered the two columns to turn in, and at an angle which would inevitably bring the leading vessels into collision.

As the Victoria and Camperdown approached each other it became evident that one would strike the other. The screws were reversed when it was too late. Four minutes after the signal the Camperdown struck the Victoria, almost at right angles, near the forward turret.

The ram ploughed its way in about nine feet, and the deck and the Camperdown pulled away at it. When it was too late the Victoria struck the signal the Camperdown struck the Victoria, almost at right angles, near the forward turret.

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do's 'ere? Caretakin? Man on steps: No, I'm the hower, 'ere. Man with tools: Ow's that? Man on steps: Why, I did a bit o' plumbing in the 'ouse, an' I took the place in part payment for the job.

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The non-irritating cathartic—Hood's Pills.

NEW INVENTIONS.

List of patents recently granted by the Canadian Government:—69,564.—Ben. Broughton, Hamilton, Ont., bicycle tire.

69,679.—Chas. Albert Barclay, Brougham, Ont., attachment for the cure of balking and kicking horses.

69,768.—Messrs. Casley & Logan, Eganville, Ont., combination tool.

69,802.—Arthur Atkinson, Winnipeg, Man., apparatus for handling grain.

69,944.—Thos. H. Arnold, Acton, Ont., fasteners for mittens and gloves.

69,984.—W. Birkett, Brantford, Ont., starting mechanism for sewing machines.

70,127.—John David Archer, Toronto, Ont., self-igniting gas medium.

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