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## CRIMES AND CRIMINALS.

Their Punishment and Reformation.

(By OBSERVATOR)

ARTICLE VI.  
To lie in a convict's graveyard, to mix with the graceless dead, to work of glory near me, to smile at your words of pity, for what is a stone to one who lies in the breast of nature with all his tolling death-bells.

By a Convict Poet.

PREVENTION BETTER THAN CURE.

While discussing certain phases of the subject with a legal friend the other day, he asked the question: "Is it not amazing to note the comparative silence that writers on criminology have maintained upon the subject of prevention?" Indeed, one would suppose that to prevent crime, just as to prevent disease, would be an important activity of a self-conscious community really interested in its own betterment. Under any circumstances crime is an ugly thing. It eats at the heart of social well-being. Not only is it enormously expensive (last year it cost nearly \$2,000 to bring prisoners from the district of St. George's, alone, and send them back to their homes after they had served their sentences), but it is opposed to beauty, art, happiness, the service of others, and what makes for the development of the best and the growth of self-respect. It is contaminative, for its example leads down many who would otherwise escape. Its expense lies not only in the cost necessary to arrest, convict and fine offenders, but also in the loss of ability and achievement of those who spend their lives in the penitentiary. For instance, look at the size and equipment of our police department today.

ENVIRONMENT AND PERSONALITY.

Let me for a moment look at prevention under the same two heads as I have already regarded causation, namely, environment and personality. Crime is always the effect of a particular personality reacting to a particular environment, any comprehensive programme for the prevention of crime would necessarily include every measure that so modifies the individual or his environment as to decrease the kind of friction that results in anti-social conduct. One does not need to belong to a sociological, biological or any other school of criminology to accept this statement, though it may be better to speak of such measures as weaknesses rather than as preventives, since one of them, nor any considerable number together, will ever completely prevent crime; each may, in some degree, help to diminish it.

"MURDER BY WHOLESALE."

Pertaining to the present, statistics of homicide in the great American Republic, with which we are always in close commercial touch, the Digest furnishes some remarkable facts and figures. From that reliable source of information we learn that the inevitable distinction of leading that country in crime does belong to New York, as may have been popularly supposed. Statistics gathered by Judge William M. Cullen of Chicago, show that with fifty-five killings for each 100,000 inhabitants, or a total of 426 last year, St. Louis led all the cities of the United States in murders and homicides. As compared with the killings in England and Wales, those in St. Louis

were "too many to count." In a survey of the crime situation he furnished recently to the Committee on Law Enforcement of the American Bar Association, Judge Gemmill says that New York, which people think is a very wicked city, is high up on the honor roll, so far as murder is concerned. St. Paul alone having fewer arrests for murder, while Chicago ranks third, Cincinnati fourth, Buffalo fifth, and New Orleans sixth.

CRIME IN PROPORTION TO POPULATION.

By comparison, according to the survey, Los Angeles, (where, during the past few years, several Newfoundland families have made their home) has three times as many murders in proportion to population as New York, and two and a half times as many as Chicago. Detroit, "which likes to be called a model city," has more than twice as many as New York and nearly double the number of Chicago, while St. Louis reports 389 arrests for murder and 36 for manslaughter in 1921. What is true as to murder is partly true as to other major crimes, reports Judge Gemmill. He says: "If the balance of the year 1922 equals January and February of this year, or even March and April, Los Angeles will lead all other cities in the number of burglaries and housebreakings. She is not even closely followed by any other large city. Chicago comes next on the roll of honor, followed closely by Washington, Baltimore, Buffalo, St. Louis, San Francisco, Boston, St. Paul, Cleveland, New York, New Orleans, Denver and Louisville in the order named."

ARRESTS FOR INTOXICATION.

In arrests for intoxication Boston far outstrips all cities. But Chicago, with a sense of either pride or humiliation, refuses to list her cases. In contrast with these figures, I have collected the latest statistics from Canada and England and Wales concerning the same crime. About 600,000 people are arrested in England and Wales annually. The population there is about twelve times that of Chicago and seven times that of New York. For every arrest for murder in England and Wales in 1920 Chicago had eight and a half, New York six and three quarters, and St. Louis too many to count.

TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT AND PUNISH THE GUILTY.

Laws are the product of civilized society. They are made to protect the innocent and punish the guilty. When they fail in doing either of these two things, they fail society, and society degenerates into savagery. Wherever you find a lax enforcement of the law you find crime. Public officials can never have an all. Success in enforcing the law can be their only possession. Excuses won't go. The only reason why there is less crime in England than in the United States is because over there the law is supreme and whatever is needed to make it respected is done. It is for this reason that the penalty of flogging has been kept upon their statute books for a thousand years, and this last year over 1,600 criminals were flogged by order of the court.

FLOGGING FOR PROFESSIONAL CRIMINALS.

The Digest reminds us that flogging

is in vogue in only one State of the American Union—Delaware. Yet it would be a strong deterrent, thinks Judge Gemmill, to put the lash on the bare backs of the 500 professional criminals known to the police in Chicago. "Whatever is necessary to make these evildoers understand that this is a government of law and order," he says, "that we must do. Ninety-nine per cent. of our people are honest and law-abiding. They must not be ruled or intimidated by the other one per cent." Crime is not generally profitable to the criminal, and when he is made to realize that punishment is swift and certain and drastic, he will look for other fields in which to exercise his talents.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SUBJECT.

But there's another point of view from which the whole subject can be seen in a different light altogether. I refer now to what Dr. Robinson says about it in his recently-published book on "Penology in the United States." The Dr. Robinson to whom I here refer is not the talented and popular editor of the St. John's Daily News, but Dr. Louis N. Robinson of Cleveland, Ohio. It is particularly noticeable that his attitude toward the "state-use principle" is illuminated by his suggestion that it has made progress because it has "won the approval of the labor unions," and "their influence in politics can not be neglected." But more of this in a subsequent article!

THE PRISON POET AND HIS EFFORTS.

Of course, it is very natural that men who have passed through such emotional experiences, as all prisoners have, should seek relief in song. Most prison publications, such as "The Star of Hope" of Sing Sing, New York, and "Lend a Hand" of Salem, Oregon, to mention two out of many contain verse in almost every issue. This verse is not very good, for the most part, according to any serious literary judgment; it is often clumsily humorous, often morbidly introspective, and exceedingly sentimental almost always. To say this is not to censure the writers. Sometimes, however, prison walls close around a poet—a man who is a poet first and a prisoner by circumstance. Such a poet is an inmate of a large Massachusetts penitentiary, whose volume of poems, "A Tale of a Walled Town and Other Verses," with an introduction by William Stanley Braithwaite, is of more than ordinary appeal. The opening poem of the work, from which the book gets its title, is full of poignant, wistful beauty. Here is a fragment:

"They know but little of desire  
Who know no wall;  
But we who sit by no hearth-fire  
Do know it all—  
The fierce desire to see and know  
Home faces and the home-fire's glow;  
All that we let so lightly go  
And would recall!"

"NIGHT IN THE CELL HOUSE."

The superintendent of a well-known American prison, which I visited many years ago, sends me the following poetical effusion from the pen of a prisoner named Ralph Chaplin. It seems that Ralph was convicted under the Espionage Act and is now serving a twenty-year sentence. This little poem appears under the caption of "Night in the Cell House":

"Tier over tier they rise to dizzy heights—  
The cells of men who know the world no more.  
Silence descends from the ceiling to the floor!  
While through the window gleams a lone blue light  
Which casts the dark immensity of night.  
Felt-shod and ghostly like a shade of Jore,  
The guard comes shuffling down the corridor  
His key-ring jingles . . . and he slides from sight.

"Oh, to forget the prison and its scars,  
And face the breeze where ocean meets the land;  
To watch the foam-crests dance with silver stars  
While long green waves come tumbling on the sand.  
My brow is now against the icy bars  
There is the smell of iron on my hand."

Wireless of the Nerves.

THE BODY HAS A WONDERFUL TELEPHONE SYSTEM.

Our nerves are often likened to telephone wires, which send messages from various parts of the body to the brain. Actually, however, they are more like rows of tiny wireless stations, flashing messages from one point to the next over minute gaps.

Where these little gaps occur in the nerve, the nerve-end branch out like the boughs of a tree, and the message is "wirelessly" across from one branch to the next.

Medical men are not sure as to the precise use of this gap, but they think it acts as a sort of "shock absorber" which softens a sensation before it strikes the delicate nerve centres.

Sometimes, however, the nerve-ends curl away from each other and then no message can get through. In this way men can make themselves insensible to pain.

Some of the natives of India, known as Fakirs, often do this, and actually go to sleep while lying on a bed of sharp spikes. Nobody knows how they do it. Probably, by constantly



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"willing" themselves not to feel pain, they affect these nerve-ends.

Fear, too, will produce this state.

When a rabbit is fascinated by a snake it becomes rigid, and after a few seconds, with the exception of the heartbeats and breathing, it is almost like a dead creature.

The brain has become disconnected from the body because the nerve ends have curled away from each other, and left the animal powerless and insensible to anything.

A man recently condemned for murder deliberately killed his brain in this way. He refused to eat, speak, or move, and in the course of a few days he had cut his brain off from his body at the little nerve-gaps. Even when burnt he could feel nothing.

The Work of

Wilkie Collins.

On September 23, 1889, Wilkie Collins, one of the best of English novelists, died. Although not in the same category as Dickens, Lytton, or Thackeray, as a novelist, yet he deservedly holds a high place as a writer. Like Dickens, he was at first destined for the law, but soon turned his attention to literature, and his first novel "Antonia" or the "Fall of Rome," appeared, which was accorded an encouraging reception. Four years later a second novel "Basil," made Collins more widely known. He then became associated with Dickens first upon "Household Words," then on "All the Year Round." "Mr. Wray's Cashbox" (1852), and "Hide and Seek," showed a distinct advance in literary workmanship as also "After Dark" (1854), "The Dead Secret" (1857), and "The Queen of Hearts" (1859). But it was on the publication of the "Woman of White" (1860), that Collins gained general recognition as a novelist of power. In character incident and development of plot, it showed great skill and mastery. In 1862 appeared "No Name," and in 1863 "My Miscellany." In 1868 another famous book "The Moonstone" came out, followed in rapid succession by "Man and Wife" (1870), "Poor Miss Finch" (1872), "Miss or Mrs." (1873), "The New Magdalen" (1875), "The Law and the Lady" (1876), and "The Two Destinies" (1876). Collins visited America in the seventies, and gave readings from his works. His later novels were "The Hunted" (1878), "The Fallen Leaves" (1878), "A Rogue's Life" (1878), "Jezabelle's Daughter" (1880), "The Black Robe" (1881), "Heart and Science" (1883) "I say No" (1884).

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