

portant questions submitted. The leading idea present to the minds of most of those who took part in the deliberations was that of prison reform. In the past it has not perhaps been sufficiently considered by those having to do with the management of prisons that all convicts may be divided into two distinct classes, and that the mode of treatment should be modified in accordance with this classification. These two classes are the incorrigibles, who have either been born without the power of moral self-control, or have lost or destroyed that power, and those who are criminals, not from temperament or heredity, but from circumstances of education, association, stress of poverty, etc. In regard to the first class, public opinion seems to be reaching the conclusion that chronic restraint is reasonable and just and that it is as wrong to leave the morally as the mentally insane at liberty. In regard to the second class, both the interests of society and the dictates of religion and humanity demand that every influence and effort should be brought to bear for their reformation. The experiments being carried on at Elmira, Concord, and other prisons in the United States are all directed to this end, but these institutions are still in the experimental stage. Amongst other matters under consideration was that of the adoption of the Bertillon system of registration. This is recommended by the Congress. The adoption of this system would mean that "every criminal in the United States and Canada shall be registered, with his essential characteristics so defined as to make it impossible to mistake his identity if he should again come before a criminal court in any part of the country." The great utility of such a system in the prevention of frauds, as well as in the treatment of criminals with a view to reformation is obvious.

APPROPOS to the question of prison discipline, it is evident that the best system of management is in danger of being greatly impeded by the opposition of the trades' unions to convict labour. One of the messages submitted by Governor Hill to the State Legislature in the special session he recently summoned, called attention to the fact that a large part of the convicts in the prisons of the State were in absolute idleness, and that all would soon be so unless some substitute were provided for the contract system which had been abolished. The contract system is no doubt indefensible, but the new law passed under pressure of the unions, which provides that the labour of the prisoners shall not be used in the production of any articles to be sold in the general market, and that no motive power machinery of any description shall be used, must effectually hamper every effort directed towards either making the prisoners self-supporting or permanently reforming their characters. There is undeniable force in the objections urged by the labour unions against the unequal competition of skilled convict labour. But in frustrating well-directed efforts to lessen the cost of prisons and penitentiaries, and at the same time to send forth the convicts at the expiration of their terms with improved characters and a capacity for self-support, workingmen surely stand in their own light. The criminal as the enemy of society is the enemy of the workingman, no less than of everyone else, and he, like others, has to help to support and punish him. The worst and the most expensive use that can be made of the convict is to confirm him in his criminal habits. The best and highest use of a prison is to reform him and make him a man and a citizen. Enforced productive labour is the most effective means to this end. Surely some way must be found by which the prisoner may be usefully employed and taught without injustice to the honest workman.

BOULANGISM as a thing to conjure with has evidently lost its power in France. M. Floquet's sword-thrust proved too much for the bit of by-play which had been for months past verging on the serio-comic. M. Boulanger's ignominious defeat in the Departments of Dordogne and Ardeche, where he had thrown himself into the contests in a spirit of bravado, makes, in all probability, the end of the noisy but inglorious career from which so much was expected by the excitable crowd which is ever ready to follow at the heels of a demagogue. And now to cap the climax of his humiliation the convalescent General's reappearance on the public street, though carefully heralded and studiously demonstrated, fails to create more than the slightest ripple in the streets of excitable Paris. Here the curtain drops, probably forever, unless some unforeseen incident should bring him another opportunity. But yesterday and half Paris would have rushed to do his bidding, now scarcely a paltry three hundred can be found to do him reverence.

ALTHOUGH, as a matter of course, the public can know nothing certainly of the nature of the communications which may have passed between Emperor William and Prince Bismarck on the one hand and the Czar and his trusted diplomats on the other, it seems quite improbable that any

formal agreement looking to future action, or inaction, was reached. If the impression of an *entente cordiale* between the two monarchs was produced, the chief end of the interview was probably attained. Should the rumoured visit of William II. to Alsace-Lorraine take place, his Russian tour will derive its chief significance in its relation to that event. If France can be led to despair of the active sympathy and co-operation of Russia, she will find herself pretty much at the mercy of her more powerful neighbour. Nor is the rumoured intention of the German Cabinet to insist on a reduction of the French armament wholly without verisimilitude. There can be no doubt that the strain on German resources involved in keeping up the present armament is immense. So long as a good understanding exists with Russia the necessity of keeping up that strain is entirely of French imposing. Seeing that the French preparations can have no other than their avowed aim of one day regaining the lost Provinces, and avenging the humiliations of the never-to-be-forgotten defeat, it would be but a reasonable thing, from the German point of view, to demand that these preparations cease, and the French army be reduced to a peace footing. Such a demand would be very galling to French susceptibilities, but necessity knows no law. If, moreover, Germany should accompany the demand with a proposal to reciprocate by a simultaneous reduction of her own forces—and she could scarcely do otherwise—the chief sting of the demand would be perhaps drawn. For the sake of all concerned such a consummation is to be devoutly wished.

### PUNISHMENT AND REFORMATION.

THE admirers of the late Mr. Carlyle, unless they are sheer fanatics, must often have been pained by his utterances on the subject of the weak and the oppressed. His contempt for certain classes of reformers and philanthropists, although sometimes not without some measure of justification, was frequently unjust, fierce, unworthy of a man of his mental and moral stature. His *Vae Victis* was too often almost heartless. Those who were toiling for the emancipation of the slave deserved a better designation than that of Nigger-philanthropists. Men who were toiling on behalf of the sinful and suffering might plead that they were not altogether wasting their time.

Let it not be supposed that we are advocating the cause of mere sentimentalism and sentimentalists. There is no greater foe to real philanthropy. Sentimentalists gush, but they seldom work; and even when they have a good cause they are apt to repel others, by whom the work might have been done. But we cannot forget that "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy"; and we believe that the principles of the Gospel are entirely supported by the testimony of experience and by considerations of common sense.

Some time ago, conferences on the subject of the treatment of criminals were held in Toronto, but they did not seem to be very successful. Quite lately a very interesting meeting of the National Prison Congress was held at Boston, at the opening of which a noble sermon was preached by Dr. Phillips Brooks and interesting and significant speeches were delivered by ex-President Hayes, Col. Edward J. Russell, and others. Doubtless, those who are most deeply interested in this question will procure the report of the whole session of the Congress. For the present we must content ourselves by drawing attention to some of the aims of the Society and the methods which find favour with its members.

To begin with, there is not a particle of sentimentality in the utterances of the leaders of this movement. All their judgments and statements are based upon recognized principles and ascertained facts. At the very foundation of the whole is laid down the principle that the end to be sought is the good of society. The safety of the people at large is the highest law. If any particular method of dealing with the criminal class can be shown to be most productive of good on the whole—to have the greatest tendency to secure the well-being of the community, without flagrant injustice to the offender—that method should be adopted.

Such a theory is evidently distinguished, on the one hand, from the weak sentimentality which is ever ready to pity and shed tears over the condemned criminal, while it forgets the injury inflicted on the victim and his friends. On the other hand, it is distinguished from the principle of vengeance which says, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." We are rather surprised to find Dr. Phillips Brooks speaking as though such a kind of vengeance were an attribute of Almighty God. For the entire purpose of God is a loving purpose, and His aim can only be the good of His creation.

Having recognized this principle as the end of all punishment, it becomes a matter of experience to determine in what way men may be most effectually deterred from crime; in other words, how society may be best