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SARAH B. HARRIS.

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untary communications unless accompanied by  
return postage.Communications, to receive attention, must  
be signed by the full name of the writer, not  
merely as a guarantee of good faith, but for  
publication if advisable.**OBSERVATIONS.****A New Penitentiary.**

Prison architecture has been slow to respond to the sanitary reforms which have effected all other kinds of building. The largest prison in this country and the best known, Sing Sing has finally been condemned, because so large a proportion of the prisoners die of consumption. A few years ago any sort of unwholesome, ill-ventilated cells were considered good enough for convicts. The reformatory effect of plenty of sunshine and wholesome, cleanly surroundings was ignored and while other public buildings and private houses were being built with special regard to the admission of air and sunshine, prisons were constructed after plans more than a hundred years old. Society is at liberty to protect itself, but it has no right to torture the men, whose liberty it restrains, more than security requires. To men who have formed the habit of cleanliness and of breathing pure air it is an inexpressible misery to be forced to breathe air poisoned by the exhalations from the lungs and bodies of others.

Nebraska is a rich state, a republic within a republic. In rebuilding the penitentiary which has been burned down, the present site should be abandoned. In rainy times the present location is in the middle of a shallow pond, long after the uplands and slopes are dry. It is doubtless cheap, but the state with so many slightly locations to choose from, has no right any longer to keep the convicts in a spot which is a sink for all the surrounding country. Near the asylum or upon some hill where the natural drainage is good, the new building should be erected. Moreover when plans for the new building are

asked for, the competition should not be entirely on a basis of cheapness but prison architects of the new school who believe that even a convict is entitled to fresh air, pure water and sunlight from his jailer, should be consulted; men who have ideas about bath-rooms and the effect of noble architecture upon every one, even the most depraved. Criminals are segregated from society in order to protect the law-abiding. Formerly it was supposed that society had a right to revenge itself upon criminals and torture them just as the torture by chains and darkness of the insane was once justified. We are cured of that. Society is the large body of sane people, with sound minds and bodies, who recognize the insanity of murder, robbery and other horrible crimes. The sane are stronger, kinder, cleverer, less tempted. Guarded and armed by normal, clean, honest parents they have an immense advantage of those whom walls a foot thick, iron bars and armed men that patrol the cell corridors night and day, still further protect them from. Being stronger and wiser, society can afford to be just to the prisoners and to give them a chance within the awful solitude of a penitentiary. There is no such uncompassable difference between them and us as there is between God and us, for the best of men has been momentarily under the control of a criminal impulse. Yet we are free or obey an indefinable something which has been labeled conscience. The light of a countenance, whose features are the same in spring, summer, autumn and winter shines upon us whether we lie, or steal or kill or defile the temple. Yet we liars and adulterers and the not absolutely honest dare to deprive our fellow-men of sunshine, of the sight of growing things. Before the law reaches our own case, we consign the unjust to a stinking prison, where, say for ten years, the sky, the sun, the moon, the miracle of growing things, where everything that is a symbol of purity and beauty and that inclines to worship and regeneration is shut from sight by a wall supposed to be there only to protect the strong who are at liberty from the helpless wretches inside.

The new penitentiary at Lincoln might be built on a noble plan, such a building as a state of sane, strong people should erect for criminals. Gloom, strength, and a very bad smell was destroyed last week when the Nebraska penitentiary was burned down. The new penitentiary should have some architectural beauty inside where the convicts can see and where long years of silent contemplation may transfer a little of it to their barren imaginations. If it is necessary as a warning and as a moral lesson to the tempted to make it repellent on the outside, very well. But convicts do not see the outside. They are entitled to what they will not, in all probability get from us namely

sunshine, air, some little view of the world of nature as effected, by the passing seasons and justice. If society were good enough and had business sense enough to try to reform convicts, the contractors would be instructed by the Governor and board of public lands and buildings to erect a great school and workshop, wherein patient and enlightened officers might teach the feeble-minded how to get on more easily without breaking the law. In the past the state has built an immense and very ugly prison, ugly, inside and out. Possessing thousands of miles of prairie, the prison cells have been piled one upon another in such a way that the sun might never reach, clean and disinfect them. The convicts have left the Nebraska penitentiary hating society more than ever, and no wonder. Society has not demonstrated to them, its superior goodness and justice. The criminal in the place of society would not have been any meaner, more revengeful or vindictive.

The cells at the penitentiary were a pathetic sight. The state dares to do what God has not dared, i.e. say to a man that the Sun shall not shine on him any more. Nevertheless, the convicts try to decorate their ugly, dark cells, and the paper flowers, bright ribbons, and colored pictures are a rebuke to beauty-destroying society. The hopelessness of the convict's lot destroys his faith if he ever had any and the cruelty of men in the combination known as society makes him wonder why he ever felt penitent or as though he were not the aggrieved one and determines him to get even when he gets out.

**A New Woman's Club.**

Housemaids of Oak Park Chicago, to the number of twenty-two held a meeting recently and organized a club. The object of the "Young Woman's Friendly Club" is the better development of the social moral and spiritual life of the members and lending a helping hand to others. To promote this development some member is to prepare a paper on some subject, and there will be reading, music and talks. The first subject will be the study of India and its people. For "the club is to become a 'Pundita circle' to assist the native missionary, Pundita Ramabai, in her work among the child widows of India." In the selection of a subject of study the housemaids have shown the same inclination to consider distant and impossible subjects which their richer and more established sisters have exhibited, and it is not for an outsider to pronounce it an unwise selection. Housemaids labor thirteen half-days a week. They have Thursday afternoons out. For those who are on duty eighty out of the eighty-four working hours of the week a subject of consideration entirely foreign to their monotonous life is a tonic. As Louis XVI. fled from affairs of

state to a turning-lathe, the housemaids of Oak Park turn with gladness from answering bells, dusting bric-a-brac and making beds to the rescue of the child-widows of India.

At the first meeting after prayer and a Bible reading, there was a call for a name for the new club. Among the names proposed were the Young Woman's Club, the Thursday Afternoon Club, the Young Woman's Thursday Afternoon Club. A member objected to the Thursday. It smacked too strongly of the calling of the maids' day out. "I don't see what difference that makes," said a maid who is no snob; "I am not ashamed of my work, and I think we ought to have a name that will tell what we are and what we are organizing for." This opinion was received with general applause. "Fortnightly" was suggested. Another outburst of wrath. "Fortnightly" was said to "sound too high-toned." "Who cares for that?" asked the young woman who is not ashamed of her Thursday out. "If we like a name, I guess we have as much right to use it as anybody." Then "Liberty" was mentioned. "Don't you think that might be taken as a challenge to the public?" asked a lady who is not a housemaid. Then she proposed "The Young Woman's Friendly Club," and that name was accepted.

The young woman not ashamed of her calling has already progressed far and she will assuredly be an inspiration and a spring of common sense for the refreshment of the rest of the club. Her advice shows that she has advanced beyond that stage of snobbery signalized a few years ago by women clerks who insisted on being referred to as "sales-ladies." If clubs are good for some women, they are good for all women and the organization of this "Young Woman's Friendly Club" the members of which have decided to discuss one of the most difficult social problems of India, is a sign that the roots of the club movement are taking deep root in the soil. The stimulation of discussing any subject with people engaged in the same work is exemplified in the number of authors', painters', journalists', and architects' clubs. It is pleasant and encouraging to discuss pottery not with a potter, but if one happens to be an oculist, with another oculist. For the workman on my right hand, writing down thoughts such as Bixby or Bok are inspired to write on the woman subject which they understand about as well as these housemaids understand India, I feel a greater interest, than for the man across the way in another manufactory, who is making hand-cuffs, though the latter artisan may, upon occasion, deliver himself of something worth remembering. But the latter is not in the profession and his opinions are not therefore professionally relevant and it does not matter what he thinks. The housemaids, discuss-