## PROBLEM OF THE AMERICAN TRAMP

## **HOW SHALL VAGRANCY EVIL BE CHECKED?**

Laws of Various States Have Proved Unequal to the Task-Elaborate System for the Cure of Habitual institutions where misdemeanants of grancy, being a social disease devel-Idleness in Force on the Continent of Europe-Is fined, the industries maintained seem not be cured by 30 days of idleness in Striking Contrast to the Futile Efforts That Have to be far more largely carried on as a demoralizing jail. The average term Been Made Here in the United States.

brake-beam, court, jail, etc.; so it victed misdemeanants, ... ing hand, to switch the vagrant from | to fit them for useful lives." the circular track to the "straight ahead line." But generally the momentum is too great. Failures are recorded far in excess of even imagined successes writes O. F. Lewis of the Charity Organization society in the New York Times.

deal with the individual "vag," what do we find? Generally ineffective, inadequate, unjust methods of punishment, so futile as to be ridiculous, were they not so tragic. We find correctional methods in jail that, instead of correcting, debase, methods as often under one roof and management, vagrant as are the prisoners. We be- in a building so built that cries and lieve that each man who is able should contribute his share of the day's work. Nature abhors a vacuum, and the community in general abhors the constitutional idler. If the drone work not, neither shall he eat. We Vagrancy is a crime under the law. Punishment is generally and necessarily effected by the restraint of liberty, within a penal institution. Vagrants are imprisoned generally in jails or workhouses. . But how?

What are the conditions of American jails? Do they check vagrancy? Do they punish justly?

Do they reform?

N ANSWER has recently been A made public which is a scathing tion by a committee of the National

EW YORK .- The course of the | "In Birmingham, Ala., 240 men in 72 MANY of the cities use the Bertilion measurevagrant's life is in a vicious cir- cells; 25 women in ten cells. . . cle. Street, park bench, cheap The inmates of jalls are chiefly of two "usual questions," another the "name lodging house, court, jail, street, classes-those awaiting trial and con and address"-as though a vagrant's The ordiname and address would be of value! goes, from month to month, from hand hary term of convicted misdemean-What a contrast is this to the elaborto mouth, from city to city. More ac- ants, vagrants and inebriates is too curately stated, the vagrant's course short for any sort of industrial train- tion of vagrants, which centers in the is spiral and downward, with accel- ing or systematic production. A carecrated momentum toward demoraliza- ful study of the situation in all parts general identification bureau at Brustion, disease and death. Along his of the land has long ago driven many sels? In Belgium the process of trying show no evidence of any substantial road are certain "rescue stations"- to the conclusion that we must have charitable societies, missions, curb- district labor colonies or workhouses thorough. As soon as the police arrest stone breadlines, industrial homes, for those convicted of offenses, and a vagrant they communicate by tele- there are several compulsory colonies, personal visitations in nicoholic wards, that the term of degenerates must be graph with Brussels. Within a few the sentences being from six months These are efforts to extend the help- at least two years, if we really intend hours there is sent back from Brus- to two years. sels by telegraph a full description of

a living.

THE committee plainly shows that under present conditions and laws if anything of the prisoner is on recthe county jail must provide for males | magistrate, who is a graduate of the | Elimination of the Tramp," shows that and females; children, youth and university, has before him sufficient in a certain proportion of cases the adults; first offenders, habitual crimi- material about this particular vagrant inmates committed to a compulsory

nals, vagabonds, prostitutes; wit When we seek, by imprisonment, to nesses held for their testimony; poor debtors whose crime is their poverty; idiots, imbeciles, insane, epileptics, persons arrested on suspicion, and apoplectics whom the sapient policeman could not distinguish from drunkards. All these, says the report, are whispers travel along a corridor with cages open at the side.

Now, what chance is there in the average jail for the reformation of the imprisoned vagrant? We may think that Jack London draws the long bow believe that crime should be punished. In his picturesque descriptions of life on the road, but in his tale of imprisonment in the Erie county jail he never wrote of such horrifying conditions as are described by the report of the committee, of which Prof. Charles R. Henderson of the University of Chicago was chairman. What chance, above all, has the detained witness or suspect, held in the jail for his testimony, and innocent before the law until he is proven guilty? What chance has he of not suffering contamination and gaining a hatred of society that will not die? In many coun-

ty jails the only exercise "enjoyed" arraignment of conditions in a great by the prisoners is in a common large majority of American county jails, all room, with steel grating separating it the more scathing and staggering be- from the surrounding corridors, and cause made after a careful investiga- called in jail parlance the "bull pen."

Prison Congress, which does not seek A RE we not then in a wretched di

instances to the penitentiary. Boston, ed vagrant is sent to a maison de ref-Lowell and other Massachusetts towns | uge, which, besides acting as a kind report sending some vagrants to the of almahouse for the aged and handlcapped, serves somewhat as do the state farm, where there is a nine months' sentence. In these jails and | voluntary colonies of Germany for workhouses the labor required, when those wanderers who at the time of there is any, consists generally of their coming within the law are unfit breaking stone in quarry or in jail, through ignorance, filness or inefficienyard, roadmaking, chaircaning, chair- cy to make their living. making and farm work. This work is Thirdly, Belgium does not expect

'on paper." There is little or no ef that any large proportion of its vagfort made to bring reformative influ- rant population will be reformed. ences to hear on those serving short. Most of the vagrants at Merxplas are sentences or to teach a trade. Even recidivists, repeaters, who have at the Massachusetts state farm, reached their present position through where the workhouse conditions are drink. Fourthly, Belgium belleves that vafar better than in most correctional

the vagrant or inebriate class are con- oped through months and years, cansentences than as chances to earn of detention is 16 months, long enough to effect a considerable cure, if cure ta possible.

In Germany and in Switzerland the treatment of the habitual vagrant is ments. One chief reports asking the similar to that prevailing in Belgium. There are 24 compulsory labor colonles in Germany, the average length of sentence heing one year. Numerous industries are carried on and the cost ate Belgian system for the identifical is comparatively small. These workhouses have diminished vagrancy, "caster contrale de vagabondage," a while the 34 voluntary labor colonies, accommodating nearly 4,000 persons, an arrested vagrant is speedy and improvement resulting from the time spent in the colonies. In Switzerland

the vagrant and of his previous career, if anything of the prisoner is on recard. On the following morning the scribed in detail in his book on "The

the habit of working, and this is be-

lleved to be the actual result in

What, then, shall we say regarding

the treatment of vagrancy in the Uni-

ted States? First, that at present it

is thoroughly inadequate. As statis-

tics and the accompanying diagrams

show, 67 per cent, of the commitments

to penal institutions are to county

jails and workhouses in which the

conditions are often exceptionally

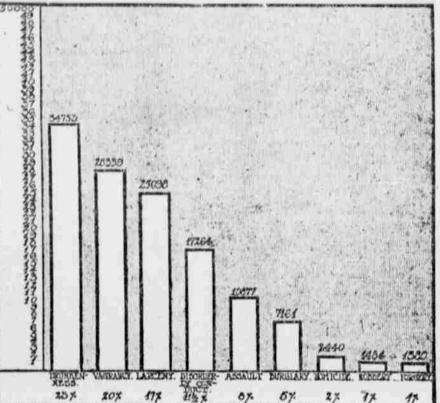
bad. Drunkenness, vagrancy and dis-

orderly conduct were responsible for

more than half the commitments dur-

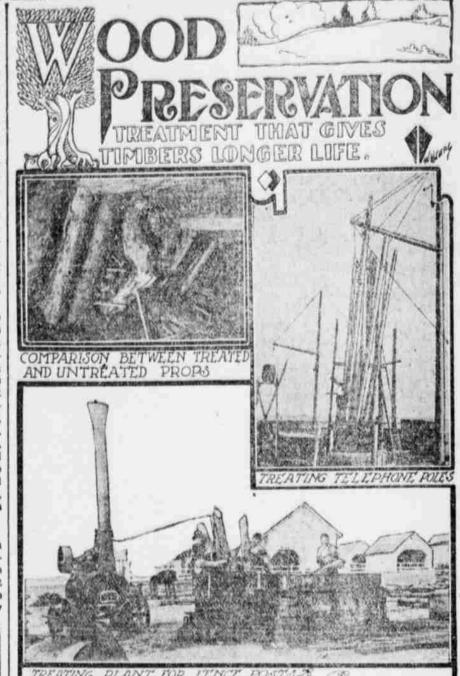
United States. For these three of-

fenses the county jails and work-



PRISONERS COMMITTED IN THE UNITED STATES DURING 1904. The table classifies the principal offenses, showing total number of sentences for each offense and percentage of each class of offenses to total number of sentences, 149,691.

Switzerland.



REATING FOR

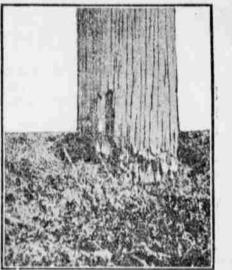
proper preservatives will last almost and then either plunge it into a cold Indefinitely," says a government ex- bath of a preservative, or else run out pert who is an authority on wood the hot liquid from the treating tank. preservation. "Engineers have known and fill it up again with liquid of a for years that this is true," he con- lower temperature. This requires only tinues, "but up to the present time, at the simplest kind of machinery, and least in America, complicated and ex- the cost of operation is so slight that pensive plants have been necessary even cheap timbers like fonce posts. for the work and wood preservation and shingles can be treated by the has often been too expensive an opera- average farmer of small means. tion to allow treated timber to come into general use."

Methods in wood preservation have the country, considers that the pracundergone a marked change in the ticability of the process has been conlast few years, however, and the work clusively proved, more or less diffiwhich a few years ago was limited to culty has been encountered in induca few experiments carried on in scat- ing others to adopt the process on a tered parts of the United States has commercial scale. In order to demongrown with such rapidity that wood strate beyond any doubt that the preservation has become a business process is adapted to commercial which figures most prominently in the industrial life of this country.

Each year railroads are treating an increasing portion of their cross ties, miners their mine props, farmers their fence posts and the men of many other industries are bringing preservatives into play to close the pores and prepare the timber they use to resist the fungi which cause decay. The

"Timber thoroughly treated with the liquid, leave it in for a few hours.

Although the forest service, by extensive experiments in all portions of



sensationalism. The following paragraphs are almost random quotations from the report:

"If the only or chief purpose of jails | ing jail conditions, allow him to roam customary mode of serving food is re-

A lemma, we who urge that the vagrant receive treatment that will deter and reform? Shall we, know-

were to keen wild beasts in cages, at large? But the vagrant habit is formost of the jails are well enough tered by idleness, mendicancy and the adapted for this purpose. . . . The absence of prosecution. Even as it is, the unwillingness of many police offivolting, demoralizing and often dan- clals or magistrates to prosecute gerous to health. . . . Often we must tramps is well known. When the imagine bunk over bunk, in the same vagrant is told to "get out of town or cell or cage, crowded until the horrors be run in" he of course decamps, and of stench or suffocation are indescrib- the town finances are spared, while able. . .'. Under an open jail system the neighboring community receives the flithiest, vilest prisoner punishes the shifted burden. Yet if the conor tortures those who have not yet victed vagrant is sent to jail he besunk to his level. . . . The very struc- comes a source of contamination to

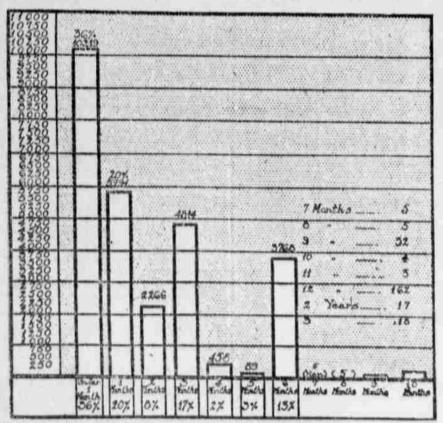


Table showing the prisoners committed in the United States for vagrancy in 1904, the length of aentences, and the percentages of commitments for various periods.

wrong, and offends against the laws of often glad to hibernate or spend a few health. . . . Almost all the reports from jails record the dull, mononton- and the company of vicious fellows is ous, maddening tramp of prisoners walking aimlessly up and down the latering the law, condemning the vagcorridor. . . . It is the path of lunacy. Why not have walled yards in the open air, partly sheltered from rain, covered over with steel wire to prevent escape? But this plan is rarely thought of. . . . Card playing is the universal resource for passing the dull and anxious waking hours."

Many examples are given of excessive overcrowding.

an adequate | labor colony do not reform and rejoin to enable him to form judgment of the case.

Coupled with this carefulness and completeness of investigation, registration, and adequacy of judgment is he Belgian system for the punishment of vagrants, which differs so casentially from our opportunist methods as to be staggering at first to contemplate. We "bunch" our vagrants in law. In New York state the man with no money, no work, and no visible means of support is a vagrant. That such a man is not often jailed. unless the case is aggravated by other factors, is not the fault of the law, so to speak, but is due to the unwillingness of magistrates to commit the unemployed homeless, or to the indifference of the authorities. But in Belgium the state of "no work, no home, no money" is not a crime, uning 1904 to penal institutions in the less there is added to that the state of intentional idleness.

B UT when Belgium does commit houses, to which the large majority of vagrant, then woe to the liberty of offenders are committed, offer practically no reformative influences. For that vagrant for a long period! Conviction is to a depot de mendicite for more serious crimes, such as burglary, from two to seven years. The depot robbery, assault, forgery, etc., there de mendicite is at Merxplas, a great are reformatories and state prisons, in industrial colony with accommodations which latter in titutions some reformfor about 5,000 prisoners. Here there atory influence is felt, occurs a classification, the worst elements being at night placed in soli-THE sentences for vagrancy are in I over 90 per cent. of the cases for tary confinement and otherwise placed six months or less, and the largest under strict discipline. Intensive labor is carried on, the work being percentage of commitments is shown graded according to the physical abilito be for leas than one month. No ty of the individual inmates. cure for vagrancy can be had under

The Belgian treatment of vagrants such conditions. New York state leads all other states of our country brings out prominently several facts. in the number of its commitments for in the first place, Belgium believes in vagrancy. The burden of vagrancy in cetting vagrants off the streets and highways. Some years ago the ministhe United States was represented in ter of justice declared that there was 1904 by over 28,000 commitments, being about 20 per cent. of all commitno vagabondage in Belgium. This statement needs interpreting. There ments to penal institutions during that year. a probably fairly little vagrancy This brief resume of the present along the highways, because every vagrant must be apprehended and conditions inevitably points to the made to show cause through his pa- necessity of a material change in our pers, or by the absence of a record at system of combaling vagrancy. In Brussels, why he should not be sent to this connection it is of special interthe depot de mendicite. The fact that est that within recent months a bill Merxplas contains about 5,000 in- has been drafted in New York sizte mates, and that the average period of providing for the establishment of a detention is 18 months, and that the farm colony upon lines very similar majority of the lumates are returned to that of the Swins compulsory coloto Mersplas for succeeding offenses ny, Wlizwyl. This bill, which has the of vagrancy, shows that vagrancy in approval of the leading charitable so-Belgium is not eradicated from the so- clettes of New York city and of sevcial body, but removed as much as oral trunk lines terminating in New

S ECONDLY, Belgium does not re- the establishment in New York state of a compulsory labor colony, with inshowed that in most instances vag- are extenuating circumstances, or if determinate sentence, regular labor, rants are committed to jails, less fre- the case of vagrancy seems the result reformatory influences and classificaquently to workhouses, and in a few of physical incapacity, the apprehend tion of prisoners.

work points the way to one of the chief means of the conservation of the the ranks of the industrial army. A nation's forest resources, for as the trained English investigator stated length of the life of timber is inrecently, regarding Witzwyl, that creased the drain upon the forests is there is no doubt that the fact of havlessened, and more wood made availing worked hard for a year or 18 able for use. months makes a man apt to get into

In nearly all localities in the Rocky mountain and Pacific states is found an abundant supply of certain kinds of timber which have only a slight commercial importance. Engelmann spruce, lodgepole and other kinds of pine, aspen, and cottonwood are only a partial list of the kinds of wood which are strong enough and abundant enough to win high value for construction purposes, were it not for one single defect which has prevented to erect small treating plants-semitheir general adoption. When exposed commercial in size-on several of the to the soil and weather they decay so national forests. Tests will be made rapidly that they have to be renewed too often to justify their use.

Dead timber of lodgepole pine and other species also is found in large tracts, but is sharply discriminated against by all constructing engineers and contractors. As a matter of fact, the dead timber, provided it is sound, is just as good as green timber of the same species; and indeed, in some in successful operation during the ways, is even more valuable. For it summer. According to the present is well known that thoroughly sead plans one plant will be erected at soned timber is both stronger and some locality on or near the Black when green. Timber which was killed another on the Holy Cross National by fire or insects, and which is still forest in Colorado; and the third on in a sound condition, differs from green timber chiefly in being thor. St. Anthony, Idaho. oughly seasoned-that is to say, it is stronger, more durable and lighter. And so not only are the freight rates nothing more than the dead oil of coal considerably reduced, but a better grade of timber is secured.

Even in a thoroughly seasoned condition, lodgepole pine, Engelmann tioned above, are by no means durable woods when compared with Dougkinds of wood which are used so exbefore they can successfully compete last longer under unfavorable conditions.

After several years' study, the United States forest service has proved that in many cases the complicated and expensive plants are not necessary for the proper treatment of many kinds of timber; and that many York, and which will be introduced of the timbers which decay most rapinto the nexi legislature, provides for idly in the natural state, are among the easiest and cheapest to treat. Many of the species mentioned above offer little resistance to the entrance of the preservative. The principle of

the method is to immerse the thor- has recovered about \$400,000 in stolen oughly seasoned wood in a hot bath of property during the last year.

Pole Showing Decay at Chestnut Ground Line After Few Years' Service.

treatments, the service has arranged on the local timbers, and careful record kept of the cost of the work. The treated timber will then be placed in permanent position, where its future durability can be compared with untreated timber of the same or other kinds.

Three such plants will be erected, and it is expected that they will be more durable than the same timber Hills National forest, South Dakota, the Henrys Lake National forest, near

The investigations in wood preservation by the use of creosote, which is tar and zinc chlorid, are considered of such importance by the government that one branch of a bureau in the department of agriculture-the "Ofspruce, and the other species men- fice of Wood Preservation" in the forest service-is given over entirely to the work of experiments in co-operahas fir, Oregon cedar, and the other tion with railroad companies, mining corporations and individuals who detensively in construction work. And sire to prolong the life of the timber which they use. Advice and practical with such timbers, in spite of their assistance is furnished all who relower price, they must be made to quest it of the forester at Washington.

## Kinematograph in Medicine.

The results which I have obtained with the kinematograph as an aid in the teaching of nervous diseases, and which I have been able to demonstrate at the Middlesex hospital and elsewhere, have met with expressions of encouragement from my colleagues and other members of the medical prolession .- Lancet.

New York city's police department

ture of the ordinary jail is radically other inmates, and in addition he is weeks where warmth, food, idleness assaured. Are we not often, by adminrant to further depths of degeneracy? What do the reports of chiefs of po-

lice show? The writer recently received extended reports from 50 much as possible from society. chiefs, representing as many different cities, representative of large and small municipalities. The letters