

division surgeon, who was considerably more of a dress parade man than a man of science, cruelly jabbed his thumb into the wound. Although this division surgeon was his superior officer the surgeon of the Seventh Illinois seized him and with an angry exclamation threw him half-way across the hospital floor, at the same time uttering what Major Hoagland says was the only epithet he ever heard from the lips of the righteously indignant doctor. Then the regimental surgeon, completely ignoring the presence of his superior and the members of his party, turned his attention to the alleviation of the pain of the injured soldier who had screamed with agony at the division surgeon's touch. "It was the bravest act I ever saw," says Major Hoagland, "and we expected at any moment that a guard would be sent, under instructions to place our surgeon under arrest on the charge of assaulting a superior officer. Every man in the regiment loved the Seventh Illinois surgeon, and while we admired his courage we could not help but regret his bad judgment. But for some reason or other, no action was ever taken. Perhaps the superior officer thought it would be just as well to let well enough alone."

When the national prison congress assembled in Lincoln, the members of that great body visiting the Nebraska state penitentiary agreed that it was without a superior, in the way of sanitary methods, discipline and general excellence, among all the smaller prisons of the country. The warden of this prison is A. D. Beemer. For several years he was sheriff of his county, and has served for many years as warden of the penitentiary, having held the office under a former administration. Warden Beemer is a man powerfully built, and of fine physique. His kindness and his good nature are reflected in his eyes, which are those "laughing eyes" which one occasionally sees and which are always marked characteristics. Years ago, after Mr. Beemer had served two terms as warden, and when he had no official capacity, he took a conspicuous part in the passage through the Nebraska legislature of a law providing for the

parole of prisoners, and while most of his life has been spent as sheriff and warden, he has ever been foremost in humanitarian work.

Where the Nebraska penitentiary yard was once an unsightly affair, it is now in the summertime a veritable garden, while a nicely sodded terrace, abounding with flowers and foliage adorns the outer walls, all made possible by the warden's efforts to improve the surroundings of the prisoners entrusted to his care.

Under Warden Beemer's administration the lock-step, that abominable pretense at discipline which is humiliating to every one required to witness it, as it must be to every one required to engage in it, has been abolished. Under his administration a system has been adopted whereby men may avoid the hated stripes. When a man enters the prison he is required to wear the striped garb for a period of six months. If his conduct has been good during that time he may then discard the stripes, donning a neat uniform of gray, and this uniform he is permitted to keep during good behavior. If he offends, then as a punishment the stripes are again placed upon him, and he must wear them for another six months, when, if he has behaved well, they are removed.

The prisoners are so averse to the stripes that Warden Beemer has found that this is about the only method of punishment necessary. Indeed, except in perhaps two cases where desperate men have made assaults upon guards, it has not been necessary, for some time, to resort to the solitary confinement plan or other forms of cruel punishment.

One of the essential methods of advancing prison reform is to place prisoners under the control of men of kindly impulse, men who recognize the fact that even though these unfortunate creatures are deprived of their liberty they are yet human beings, and it is the duty of society, and society's agents, to make their lot as happy as possible under the circumstances. Warden Beemer is one of these men, and he has made such progress in his reforms, and such improvements in the methods of conducting a state penitentiary that when the stranger goes

there he finds his visit robbed of much of the distressing sights that usually press upon the attention of the visitor to a prison.

Recently Warden Beemer was showing a party through the prison. Among them was a charming woman who, after the party had spent sometime in the warden's company remarked to a companion that the warden reminded her very much of her father, who had died a few years ago. When the tour had been concluded and the party reached the warden's office, this woman turning to the warden asked:

"Well, do these prisoners mind you?"

The warden rather hesitatingly replied: "Oh, yes, of course they mind me."

Then she asked: "But are they afraid of you?"

The warden laughingly answered: "Oh, I don't know that they are particularly afraid of me."

Promptly and with great earnestness—her fine eyes filled with tears, drawn doubtless by the resemblance between this big bodied and big hearted warden and her own good father—this charming woman said: "Well, I wouldn't mind you. I wouldn't be afraid of you, one bit!"

Coming as it did, it was one of the prettiest compliments ever given.

In one respect this fair visitor was right; in another she was wrong. Convicts are not "afraid" of such men as Warden Beemer, but they "mind" them. Like other men who are great in real courage and genuine strength, Warden Beemer is great in kindness and in love.

"Courage, the highest gift, that scorns to bend
To mean devices for a sordid end.
Courage—an independent spark from Heaven's
bright throne,
By which the soul stands raised, triumphant,
high, alone.

Great in itself, not praises of the crowd,
Above all vice, it stoops not to be proud.
Courage, the mighty attribute of powers above,
By which those great in war, are great in love.
The spring of all brave acts is seated here,
As falsehoods draw their sordid birth from fear."
RICHARD L. METCALFE.

INDIANA AND THE PRIMARY PLEDGE

Indiana stands eighth in the number of primary pledges returned to The Commoner office. While the democrats of Indiana have done good work in pushing this plan of organization, the field in that state has by no means been covered, and every Indiana democrat should determine to do his part in order that his party, by becoming thoroughly representative of its rank and file, may prove itself to be worthy of public confidence.

In 1896 there were cast in Indiana 305,573 democratic votes. In 1904 the number of democratic votes registered at Indiana polls amounted to 274,345. Here is an apparent loss in eight years of 31,228 votes. In 1900 the democratic votes cast in Indiana were 309,584, but in 1904, Indiana democrats registered 35,239 votes less than the number registered in 1900.

No one at all familiar with the situation imagines that this is fairly representative of Indiana's political sentiment. On the contrary it is safe to say that there are at this time more genuine democrats in the Hoosier state than at any other period in history. These men will vote the democratic ticket whenever the democratic party proves true to itself by demonstrating that it is faithful to public interests.

Thanking the good democrats of Indiana for the work they have done, The Commoner urges them to renew activity along the lines of the primary pledge plan. And those who have not so far helped in this work are urged to lend a hand. Great good will be accomplished if every democratic reader of The Commoner in Indiana will ask every democrat of his acquaintance to sign the primary pledge, and to call upon his own neighbor to do likewise. In every county a number of democrats might organize for the purpose of circulating the primary pledge form in every precinct obtaining the signature of every democrat who is willing to discharge his duty to his party. The primary pledge plan will be found to be advantageous as a basis for an organization of democratic clubs. These clubs should be organized in every county of the state and in every precinct of the county, and through them effective work could be done for the perpetuation of democratic principles.

As this copy of The Commoner may be read

by some one not familiar with the details of the primary pledge plan, it is necessary to say that according to the terms of this plan every democrat is asked to pledge himself to attend all of the primaries of his party to be held between now and the next democratic national convention, unless unavoidably prevented, and to secure a clear, honest and straightforward declaration of the party's position on every question upon which the voters of the party desire to speak. Those desiring to be enrolled can either write to The Commoner approving the object of the organization and asking to have their names entered on the roll, or they can fill out and mail the blank pledge, which is printed on page 5.

Extracts from letters received at The Commoner office follow:

L. V. S. Kellison, Willmathsville, Mo.—It is but little I can do, but I am willing to do all I can. I cast my first vote for Stephen A. Douglas, the next was for Lincoln. That was the only republican ticket I ever voted, but I thank the Lord I never voted for Cleveland. While I am anxious to do all I can, I must confess I have but little hopes of success. Enclosed you will find my pledge, and I will do all I can for The Commoner and for reform. I hope and pray that God will bless W. J. Bryan and the members of his family, giving them a safe and enjoyable trip around the world. I highly appreciate the fine sentiments Mr. Metcalfe puts in his writings. Best wishes to all concerned.

Samuel Wilson, Cosby, Tenn.—Enclosed find my primary pledge and four others. We will do all we can for the party. We are heartily in favor of Mr. Bryan's plan, and will stand by him and the principles of our party as enunciated by him. We hope to live to see the day when we will have a real democrat in the White House.

L. J. Matthews, Newark, N. J.—Mr. Hearst was beaten—if he is beaten—the same as Henry George was beaten, with Theodore Roosevelt and Abram S. Hewitt. When Theodore's chance looked slim he advocated the election of Hewitt. For the second time the republicans supported Tammany. With their record of defrauding James G. Blaine, Samuel J. Tilden, Bryan twice, and with their last attempt on Hearst, if convicted and sent to prison it will make the greatest

showing on earth for the state. I send you a few signers to the primary pledge. I suppose on Mr. Bryan's return he will be able to witness municipal reform in most of the states. It looks very much like the last run of shad with the grafters.

J. M. Crutchley, Catlin, Ill.—Enclosed find list of ninety-four primary pledge signers. Although seventy-one years old, am not able to get around as much as I would like to, yet I have not quit working for the cause—there is too much here to be done. Yours for true democracy.

T. A. Dodge, Editor the Milan Standard, Milan, Mo.—I send a number of primary pledges duly signed.

P. J. Coffman, Owensboro, Ky.—I send 35 signatures to the primary pledge.

Wm. C. Schade, Albany, N. Y.—Enclosed find primary pledge properly signed. I heartily endorse the plan proposed. I do not believe in a government of the few to the exclusion of the many. Let every democrat aid in the work outlined by Mr. Bryan and democracy will surely triumph in 1908.

Wm. Henton, Miami, Mo.—Enclosed find primary pledge with twelve names. This is the second list I have sent in. I think The Commoner is doing a great and good work in this line, and aside from this work it gives the names and addresses of many in one's own state by which we can meet one another through correspondence in regard to state issues.

Wm. Stewart, Monrovia, Calif.—You will find enclosed list of pledges of all good democrats, which I could get up to present time, but may be able to do better in a short time. I wish The Commoner success.

Lexie Parsons, Parchment Valley, West Va.—Enclosed please find 11 primary signatures to the primary pledge. I heartily endorse Mr. Bryan's plan.

W. A. Tolder, Ullin, Ill.—Enclosed you will find primary pledge signed by twenty-seven democrats. I found one democrat who refused to sign. Those who did sign seemed to be not only willing but anxious. George C. Vick, A. Echols and J. W. Sickling assisted me. Please send sample copies of The Commoner to the enclosed names.