

## Behind Prison Bars

The interest in prison life is not so much a human interest as a delight in the abstract. When a man commits crime and is jerked from public view to a mansion of cells, he loses part of his humanity and becomes an abstraction. His lot is fascinating to those whose minds are wont to fasten on system and schedule. People declare their fondness for liberty, yet to the same degree, too, they gloat over the possibilities of discipline. They love to examine into the methods that one man dictates for another's obedience. That is why they are vain of written constitutions that are cumbersome to



amend, rules, bylaws, strange manners of etiquette, styles, heraldry, caste, machine politics and countless other inventions. The imposing of mathematics on humanity's infinite wishes makes the victims interesting as a puzzle. The captive in Siberia is a more curious and edifying object than the tramp who has a park bench for his sofa. The former has been stamped with system. The cruelty that has been practiced on him becomes theatrical. He interests not because he is a man but because he is a working model of another man's torture. The tramp on his side, is an emblem of freedom. Yet on account of his local color and the customs to which he adheres would delight more readers than the affections to which he does not get an opportunity to adhere.

Now, in a penitentiary, food comes and goes by weight. Every dollar's worth is supposed to feed a certain amount of criminal. Seven hundred people nourished day by day with the same food, munching the bread of punishment, chewing the meat of rule and regulation, carry out the schedule provided for them. All appetites are met with the same supply, all tastes the one satisfaction. Vagrants, burglars, miscellaneous misdemeanants, attempters of murder, thieves, consume the same fare to thrive through their term. The right of selection is eliminated. Rejection of one dish would be likely to disrupt the rejecter's whole meal.

The lodging places of the Lombrosolites are examples of crime in architecture fitted for crime in the person. As the warden says, the sleeping places are built on the plan of the Pullman palace cars, two berths, one over the other.

The resemblance to the palace car is in economy of cubic measurements. The cells for the men are contained in two sections of the main building, one for the long-term men, the other for the short term. Down the long room are six parallel rows of cells in a block, three stories high, back to back. Skeleton stairways and platforms of iron lead to them. The cell block is just large enough to hold uncomfortably these few hundred

men fled away for reference until the expiration of their terms, when they are taken into the office and released. Each cell can hold two men. The first man to get one of these compartments takes his choice of the berths.

Out in the yard are acres of ground, seemingly for no other purpose than to keep the several buildings of the institution far apart from each other. Some good-sized and airy sleeping places could be built there, on a theory not too airy or impractical with the designs of prison life, especially for that one innocent man. The cozy but too compact cell theory now in use could be well magnified into rooms large enough for a complete yawn in all directions. But that might be too much like real life for those who endeavored to desecrate the same when it was free to them.

Every day these cliff dwellers come down and work. They sew, hammer, cut, print, manufacture. They make clothing, caps, shoes, house brooms, street brooms, brushes, beds, stockings, and other things consistent with a dinner of five ounces of pork and beans, six ounces of bread and a quart of tea. Not that the human brain could not do more on such a potential yet inspiring diet, but more is not expected of a man who could not prove his own innocence.

They work steadily, but do not seem to put a large amount of zeal in the task. For there is not much opportunity to rise in the business. The only opening they care for is the front gate. The emoluments and cold glories of the penitentiary do not seem to act like a charm on their delicate ambitions, here among the mimic industries of the prison. This is only habitual, as in the competition of life in a real city, most of them have not had their ambitions brightened since they were boys. That was many long years ago for some of them, and not so long ago for others,

**PUZZLE— Find the innocent man.**



If the actual count of years be taken; as a matter of fact, it is longer than their ages would warrant. Some of them might not have had any real, good boyhood at all. A childhood batted on one cheek by poverty and balefully illuminated on the other with gleams of crime is what sends these striped slaves of the city to a feeling

of boredom, rather than penitence. And perhaps it was incorrect to say that they are far away from childhood. They are all children yet, with just a larger amount of ingenuity and greater muscles with which to carry out the foolish, haphazard, anarchistic plans of the child.

Before their meals the men are led out from the workshops to their cells for a rest. As the long line trails through the prison yard and up the light, framey stairways to their cells, they make a continuous picture almost romantic enough for an impressionist, hued as the line is in its stripes and convicted visages of duns and grays. Wherever these men have been separately all their lives, and whatever they have been doing, they



What he thinks about himself does not injure his reputation.

seem a fine collection now. They are consistent with one another. The so-called criminal type is there. Anybody could pick it out. Eyes and nose, mouth and chin, cheekbones from the slums, jaws from strange regions of Europe, brows from poverty, lips from lack of purpose, expressions that could be lit up with anything from a cigarette to a proposal to divide the booty—the same expressions that can be seen a thousand-fold in the streets, in stores, in the cars or theater, except that in these other places there may be visible on them more expense and care. Here the fraternity of them is selected by juries of twelve men, the gang is picked out for the jail with special reference to their criminality, based on acts done. So the effect is stronger than in the streets. All useless embellishment is torn off. The black and gray stripes give a psychology uniformity to their appearance; give them the look of having the same stripe to their souls and intentions; which may be true in some particulars, as first, for instance, to get away.

Some of them have been shaved within a week; some wear mustaches; a white beard can be seen. There they come, picturesquely winding into the doorway—criminals, misproducts of nature, man with a life of sin, pallid with a term of punishment; criminal types, handsome types, ignorant, faltering, courageous, intelligent, brutal eyed, and some with a friendliness and virtue on their faces to meet a wondering glance as to why they are there. Whatever they have done in anger, in romantic episode, or in detestable crime, they are now there as mere facts, several hundred ill-kempt, hungry facts, coming in to dine on ten ounces of corned beef and cabbage, six ounces of bread and some coffee.—Brooklyn Eagle.

**Compass With a History.**

E. H. Doughton of Barre, Vt., has a surveyor's compass which may be the first ever made in America. It was built by Peregrine White, who was born on the Mayflower as the vessel lay off the coast waiting for a chance to make a landing. The compass is encased in hand hammered brass and the needle is said to point as true to-day as in the day of its maker.

**STEER DRIVEN IN HARNESS.**

**Young French-Canadian Has Succeeded in Educating Animal.**

John Fornier, a young French-Canadian, who lives at Molunkus Lake, Me., is turning a pretty penny for himself with his educated steer, John Henry. This steer is a most amiable beast, and has been trained to harness so well that he can be driven as easily as a horse, and easier than some horses.

A harness has been made for him with reins, which he minds at the slightest pull, and is "sound and kind



**Drawing the Ladies.**

and can be driven by ladies and children."

On pleasant days John trots John Henry up to Mattawamkeag village and for the small sum of one dime will let the outfit to anyone who wishes to take a pleasure drive around the town. Business is invariably good, and John has earned enough money to keep John Henry in excellent condition. The Mattawamkeag ladies are John's best customers, and John Henry really seems to enjoy their company.

The accompanying photograph shows John Henry and two of his most ardent admirers.

**BLEW DOWN CITY WALL.**

**People of Leipsic Reminded of the Fate of Jericho.**

We have been hearing a good deal about the walls of Jericho lately, and, therefore, it is curious that we should have an actual example of the power of a trumpet-blast occurring in Europe to-day.

A short time ago, at Leipsic, the conductor of a brass band used to train his musicians in his garden, which was bounded by the old walls of the city.

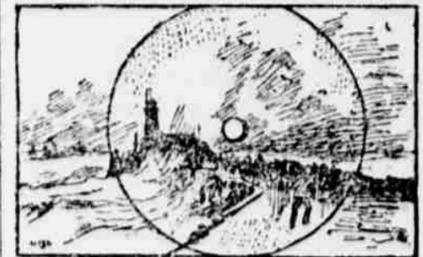
One day, when they were practicing a grand march they came to a passage in which all the trumpets had to blow fortissimo, and, as they gave one final blast all together, they were astonished to see the old wall suddenly crumble and topple over into the fields outside.

Happily, the only result was that the cows in the meadows were frightened, but it is evident that the walls of Leipsic are even more unstable than were the walls of Jericho.—Sketch.

**Talking Postcards.**

To-day the "talking postcard" is on sale at 6d in a large number of retailers' shops. The "talking postcard" is described as a picture postcard with a disc attached on which is the record of some song, or recitation, or piece of orchestral music.

The disc is made of celluloid, adheres firmly to the body of the post-



card, and is practically unbreakable, so that it is not likely to come to any grief at the hands of the postoffice people.

The disc, aided by a suitable gramophone, produces sweet music, more or less appropriate to the picture on the card.—Liverpool (Eng.) Mercury.