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# PRISON SCHOOLS

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## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

BUREAU OF EDUCATION,

*Washington, D. C., May 13, 1913.*

SIR: The State is no longer thought to have performed its full duty to itself, to society, or the criminal when, by imprisonment, it has punished the criminal for his offense. When the prisoner is set free he should be a better citizen, a more desirable and efficient member of society, and a more intelligent man, with a larger amount of self-control and self-helpfulness. While suffering for his crime and laboring to repay the State some part of the loss caused by his crime and of the expense incurred for his arrest and trial he should be given as much as possible of that education denied him in his childhood and youth, and probably because of the lack of which he has become a criminal. To this end schools have within recent years been established in many prisons and are maintained with more or less success. Because these schools are still in their experimental stage and their scope and method have not been fully worked out, there is great need of a more general knowledge of what has been done in each of the several prisons in which they are maintained. I therefore recommend that the accompanying manuscript, prepared by Dr. A. C. Hill, of the inspections division of the New York State education department, be published as a bulletin of the Bureau of Education.

Respectfully submitted.

P. P. CLAYTON, *Commissioner.*

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

## PRISON SCHOOLS.

### HISTORICAL.

What to do with bad men and women is a question older than history. It goes back to mythology and gloomy Tartarus.

In the remotest times the morally and religiously bad were consigned to endless torture of body and soul, the socially and legally bad were killed outright or put to slow death in dungeons. Revenge and punishment were the last words in early penology. Human life counted for little; the rack, the sword, and the avenging flames satisfied the rude instincts of primitive man for justice. Might made right, and the survival of the fittest was the law of life.

The onward march of the human mind and heart slowly changed the attitude of man toward his fellows. Toleration and sympathy gradually gained the mastery over hate and the spirit of retaliation. Cruelty and excessive punishment became less common. The death penalty was abolished for one offense after another. The spirit of human brotherhood dawned upon a warring world, and the leaven of peace and good will began its benign mission among the discordant elements of society.

The progress of human betterment has been slow and not altogether, perhaps, as a resultant of altruistic motives. Self-preservation and self-interest have been potent in changing conventionalities in favor of a juster relation between the strong and the weak, the good and the bad. As the struggle for existence became less intense, more thought was given to helping others and conscious efforts began to be put forth in aid of the unfortunate.

Altruism made rapid strides in the nineteenth century, and is at its height in the social propaganda of to-day. Never before in human history have the unfit and the erring been the objects of so much interest and effort as at present. Asylums, hospitals, laboratories of research for the causes and remedies of obscure diseases, free clinics, associations for the study and relief of mental defectives, prison-aid associations, and the new science of eugenics witness to the growing enthusiasm for the uplift of the human race.

The humanitarian movement has affected the prisons also. The lockstep has been abolished, cropping the hair is no longer practiced, stripes have been discarded, contract labor has largely ceased, the

parole system has been inaugurated; but one unfortunate feature of the earlier notion still persists. Youth and adults are still often put together in institutions and treated in the same way. Thus we find boys of 16 and men of 50, representing the budding and the full fruition of character, ruthlessly herded together and subjected alike to methods that can not possibly be adapted to both classes.

These and many other reforms have resulted from a gradual change of view regarding the causes of criminality and the best means of dealing with the criminal. It has become apparent that heredity, physical and mental conditions, and environment have much to do with the production of vice and crime, and that society must share with the individual the responsibility for his character and conduct. It has been found that prison bars and stripes, foul air, and poor food are not deterrent in their effect.

Since these older methods have proven largely failures the effects of education are now tried. The term education is used in this paper in its broadest sense, including every influence affecting the individual and the community life. John Stuart Mill expresses the idea in these words: "Education is whatever helps to shape the human being, to make the individual what he is, or to hinder him from being what he is not." In this sense, the whole world is a school and all the people are both teachers and learners. In this sense the whole prison is a school, and all, both officials and inmates, are consciously or unconsciously, both teachers and pupils.

Prison schools, in a narrower sense, are the organized centers from which radiate some of the more important and helpful educational influences. A prison is differentiated from a reformatory, as the latter term is generally understood; the one being defined as a place for adults whose characters are fully formed, and the other as a place for youthful wrongdoers yet in the plastic and growing stage of development.

The term school seems more appropriate for the latter, and this is subconsciously admitted in the use of the name "Borstel" in England and "training school" in this country for the more modern institutions. The removal of walls and the introduction of the cottage system are additional proofs that the popular notion is changing in regard to the nature of the work to be done for youthful delinquents. In fact, the word "delinquent" is avoided as much as possible, and the expressions, "training school for boys," "training school for girls," are becoming more common. This growing desire to shield the young from the taint of criminality is very commendable and arouses the hope that wiser and more energetic efforts will hereafter be made to so train children in the home, in the schools, and in the streets that they need never be branded as social outcasts.

This inquiry is limited to what may be regarded as a somewhat narrow field. In fact it would be surprising if some do not characterize schools for adults in prison as wasted efforts without warrant of reason or experience. The youthful delinquent arouses sympathy, and efforts have long been made to rescue him from evil habits and practices. But the adult violator of law has been left to cry in bitterness and despair, "No one cares for my soul." More, not less, attention should be given to the youth who wanders from the path of rectitude, but the adult who has fallen surely ought to have a chance to rise again.

The problem of dealing with the prison population of the country is not wholly academic. It has an administrative, as well as a humanitarian side. Its solution requires the combined efforts of philanthropists, students, and prison officials. Sentiment must be tempered with judgment, theory with practice. It is the purpose of this bulletin not to offer "counsel of perfection," but the best fruit of wisdom born of thought, human brotherhood, and experience.

## FORMATION AND REFORMATION.

It is important to note carefully the distinction between the formation and the reformation of character. They have to do with different periods of life and proceed in entirely different ways.

Character is formed in early life, under the combined influences of heredity, environment, and conscious effort. Its development may be, to a considerable extent, controlled and directed. Native impulses may be turned into right or wrong channels. The child begins life without knowledge of good or evil and without a purpose to be either good or bad. He desires only to be happy. He passes through the formative stage, reacting from impulse and native instincts, except as restrained by others, upon his environment and comes out largely what he has been educated to be.

His education forms the common mind;  
Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined.

On the other hand, reformation applies to maturity of life and character. The man does not act from impulse as the child does, but from reason and deliberate choice. He is good or bad, law-abiding or criminal, because he has consciously resolved to be. He can not be readily influenced, driven, nor restrained. His purpose is not easily changed. He has passed out of the formative stage and can no longer be reached by the formative agencies of home and school. There is no longer any question of developing latent qualities, but rather a necessity for getting rid of a crop already matured. The man has been made or has grown, or both; he must be remade if he is to be a tolerable member of society.

The formation of character is largely the work of society; its reformation is a task for the individual that needs it. Society has not yet fully admitted its responsibility for the criminal and has not done all that it should do to open the way for his reformation.

The limit of the plastic and growing period in years may not be easy to fix; it may vary with individuals, environment, and nationality. The age of 25 may not be far from the average, but exactness is not important. It is enough to realize that there are these two stages in the development of every person, the plastic and growing, and the rigid and fixed, and that methods of procedure in efforts to affect character should differ materially in the two stages. Reformatory methods are likely to fail with the young, and the educational process, applicable to the young, is likely to fail with adults.

The method to be pursued does not depend so much upon the badness of the person as upon the plasticity of his character. A boy of 15 may seem to be hopelessly bad, fully confirmed in his evil ways; nevertheless, formative remedies are the only ones likely to be effective. He is still in the period of development, and the appeal must be to native instincts. "Where anything is growing, one formatory is worth a thousand reformatories," says Horace Mann. The bad boy is a case of misdirected or arrested development, but there are still unsounded depths within him, perhaps, traits that have been dormant and untouched.

Bad conduct may not be the fruit of a depraved character. Change of environment and treatment have often been found to be all that was needed to make a good boy out of a bad one. Giving a boy, reputed to be the worst one in school, a responsible position has often resulted in changing him into one of the most reliable.

At any rate, a boy of 15 will not "reform." His crop of wild oats is not all in, and he will not stop his career of wrong doing unless he is shown something more interesting to employ his energies and give him pleasure. The right kind of a formative procedure is the only hope, even though it be a very slight one.

The formative process as it works in boys already well started in evil ways is clearly illustrated by Mr. Z. R. Brockway in describing the change wrought in an inmate of the Elmira Reformatory. He says: "He never suffered any conscious revolution of motive, but gradually and imperceptibly his inward intention-rated evil faded away." This was plainly a formative process, a growing of new fiber to take the place of the old, a case of nature working a cure by an attack on the diseased part and a sloughing off of the abnormal growth. A new direction to the life within brought greater satisfaction than the old, and the former evil activities lost their attractiveness.

Prisons are, or ought to be, reformatories. The statement is qualified, because there is some question whether they are in fact what they ought to be in this respect. One critic says:

Prisons for adults in America are not reformatories. Their administration is not based on the thought of changing habits or developing latent goodness. The dominant idea is *mercenary* not *humanitarian*.

This is a convict's view:

We in our cells sit in judgment upon the State. We know all its pretensions and we know all its deeds. We believe that the State, which professes to imprison us for our own good and the good of society and then sells us into slavery, which professes to fit us for life and fits us only for death, is no better than we are. We have broken only the law; the State has broken faith. We are, most of us, first offenders; the State is an habitual offender. We know we are guilty and are eager to reform; the State does not know and does not care. Measured by any human standard, the State is worse than we are.

This extreme view, held alike by an impartial observer and by one who has experienced the penalty for crime, undoubtedly has in it some measure of truth, more as applied to the past, let us hope, than to the present. There are good reasons for believing, however, that many prisons of this country are revising the methods of the past and are trying, in a crude way perhaps, to promote reformation among the inmates. To the extent that they have thus far failed in this, their highest function, they are open to just criticism and should be themselves reformed.

Is reformation possible? An affirmative answer is the only one that can be given, inasmuch as reformation has been accomplished in many cases. It is evident, however, that much skepticism exists among prison officials regarding the value of efforts to promote the reformation of men. The old notion is still strongly held that those who enter prison walls should abandon hope. It is only natural that men should lose faith in that which has so often resulted in failure. The response of lawbreakers to efforts in their behalf has not always been encouraging.

That reformation is easy or likely to occur in many cases can not be confidently asserted. The obstacles are so very great that every means should be employed to make reformation unnecessary. Reformation is at best a belated effort to combat a chronic condition that ought not to have been allowed to develop. Prevention is much easier than cure and much less costly.

A man must reform himself; he can not be reformed by others. The most that can be done is to provide a favorable environment, to open the door of opportunity and encourage him to enter.

Can men in prison reform? This question also must be answered in the affirmative, since there are well-authenticated instances to prove it. There are, indeed, certain features of prison life highly favorable



to reform. The loneliness of the cell affords time for reflection and leads to a realization of the unhappy outcome of the course that has been taken. The irresistible laws of life in society are brought home to the minds of convicts as never before. The men are no longer in the thoughtless and impulsive immaturity of youth, but in the period of reason and judgment. They are ready for a second thought and have opportunity for it.

This second thought may either confirm a man in iniquity or lead him to reform. All depends upon the direction it takes and the impression it makes. Bitterness against society and desire for vengeance may be strengthened, or a decision may be reached that his life has been wrecked chiefly by his own mistakes. The time is critical. Never was the help of a true friend more necessary; never was wise counsel more essential.

Much depends upon the atmosphere of the prison and the activities that prevail there. The final decision to reform or to remain depraved and criminal rests with the man himself, but in making that decision he may be greatly helped or hindered by the influences brought to bear upon him while in the prison. If he is treated like a brute by brutes, he will react like a brute, remain a brute, and become more brutalized; if he is treated as a man by men, he will at least be a man while in prison and may be led to reform and to prepare to return to society as a worthy citizen.

Whether reformation is attainable in a large percentage of cases among men in prison has not been conclusively demonstrated, because the effort has not been intelligently and efficiently made. Satisfactory results can be secured only when prisoners are treated as normal human beings. If any are found to be defectives they should be treated as such. The keynote of a sound penology has been stated in these words: "If you can not reform a man by treating him like a man, you can not reform him by treating him like a dog." Prisons should cease to be in any sense schools of crime; they should become schools of virtue. Prisoners should not be regarded as wild beasts, to be caged and beaten into subjection, but as men, to be influenced by kindness and reason.

#### SOFT PENOLOGY.

Fear has been expressed that sentimentalism is becoming too prominent in dealing with criminals, and that crime is fostered by laxity in administering justice. It is thought by some that prison life is made too easy and pleasant, and that fear of the law is thereby lessened.

In reply it may be said that no normal man fit to live in society finds prison life desirable. The love of liberty is too deeply seated to be easily eradicated from the heart of a man who deserves to be

free. Society can well afford to retain in prison all those so bankrupt in character as to desire to be there, no matter how attractive the surroundings may be.

In view of the prominence of some writers who have expressed themselves against what they call "soft penology" as an incentive to the growth of crime, it may be proper to suggest that the chief causes of the increase of crime in this country may be easily traced to sources not in the least connected with courts, prisons, or punishment, without in the least condoning the failure of these agencies of justice properly to perform their functions.

Strict discipline is entirely consistent with efforts to bring about reform in individuals—in fact, is essential to it. It is necessary only that it have the right end in view, be of the right kind, be uniform and just.

While punishment is not in itself an instrument of reform, yet many things that prisoners may regard as punishment are highly beneficial. For example, the convict is deprived of intoxicants and harmful drugs, and might for his own good be deprived of tobacco, immoral books, and many other things that an abnormal appetite may crave. Punishments of this nature are proper, and should be vigorously administered.

The modern penology that is sometimes criticized is a protest against the views expressed by a prison warden a hundred years ago, who said:

The prison should be made a place of dread and terror. Severity should replace leniency toward a criminal. Humane and mild treatment has seldom reclaimed the vicious and profligate man. The dread of punishment, more than the preaching of the divine or the advice of the good and virtuous, has restrained him from his criminal course.

Modern penology is no advocate of laxity, "luxuries," or "pamperings" in dealing with violators of law, but insists on a strict, orderly, and humane procedure with a view to protecting society against crime by segregating criminals and bringing about their restoration to moral health if possible.

#### THE MODERN PRISON PROBLEM.

What shall be done with a man whom the courts have pronounced unfit to remain in society?

Three things are possible: First, he may be put to death at once; second, he may be slowly killed in a destructive environment; third, he may be placed in a favorable environment and restored to moral health, if possible.

The first method of dealing with the violator of law is rapidly falling into disuse. As late as the eighteenth century capital punishment was decreed for more than 200 offenses; now it has been

quite generally abolished in this country for all but a few crimes, and in some States has been dropped altogether. The second process is still tolerated in many prisons, but is generally condemned by public sentiment and can not long survive. It is repugnant to intelligent humanitarianism to have men put into an environment that slowly but surely undermines bodily health, causes mental and moral degeneracy, and inevitably ends in physical and spiritual death. Segregation and reformation seem to point the way to the final solution of the problem of protecting society and giving the individual an opportunity to save himself.

\* The prison problem has four important features: When to put a man in prison; how long to keep him there; what to do with him while he is there; and when to let him out. The first involves the use of probation; the second directs attention to the indeterminate sentence; the last deals with the parole system.

Putting a man in prison is a very serious matter. It strikes the hardest possible blow, and should be resorted to only as a social necessity. Letting him out is also a matter of gravest concern to himself and to society. He should be kept in prison as long as he remains a menace to society. Some men should be kept there for life; no man should be sentenced to prison for a fixed period. As soon as a man is ready to go back to society he should be set free. Just as one is discharged from a hospital when cured of a disease or when he has recovered from a wound or a broken bone.

Probation, the indeterminate sentence, and parole are expressions of the common desire to be just and humane in dealing with wrong-doers and at the same time to protect society against crime. Their use has not yet been perfected, and there is great need of a most thorough study of these phases of the problem.

The third feature of the problem is the one specially considered in this bulletin. What shall be done with men and for them while they are in prison? The indeterminate sentence and parole rest on the answer to this question for their value and efficiency. The great problem of modern penology is to find a way by which men may be restored to such mental and moral health as will fit them to be returned to society as law-abiding, self-controlled, and self-reliant citizens.

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF PRISON SCHOOLS.

Schools in prisons are the expression of the highest conception yet formed of the proper way to deal with men and women segregated from society for violating its laws. They are an outgrowth of the belief that the door of hope must never be closed to any human being, and of the conviction that the reformation of even the most degraded and vicious is still possible. They stand for opportunity.

They indicate a popular notion that intelligence has in itself an inhibitory influence upon impulses to crime, and that mental capacity, rightly directed, is a powerful incentive to reform. They are humanity's offer of help to overcome the inertia and despair that settle down upon a man disgraced and deprived of his liberty. They are a protest against the abandonment of even the most depraved and against the fallacy "once a criminal always a criminal." They are an effort to provide an environment favorable to reformation.

Prison schools have little history, because they are of comparatively recent origin. They can scarcely be said to exist in other countries, and have been established in the United States only in recent years. The Nation that gave birth to the reformatory idea has only begun to apply it to those who must reform or remain a menace to society and destroyers of their own peace and happiness. Even now comparatively few penal institutions for adults include schools among the means employed for improving the condition and prospects of the men whom society has placed in their charge for treatment.

Reformatory influences are almost entirely lacking in jails and penitentiaries. Moral disease spreads in them unchecked. Opportunity and incentive for betterment, are alike wanting, and public indifference to the situation is a reproach to our boasted civilization. Jails and penitentiaries are still schools of crime.

The following statistics have been gathered from 55 prisons for adults in the United States and Canada:

Whole number of schools reported.....	44
Number of evening schools.....	27
Number of correspondence schools.....	8
Number of day schools.....	19
Schools in session 12 months in the year.....	11
Schools in session 10 months in the year.....	6
Schools in session 9 months in the year.....	4
Schools in session 8 months in the year.....	7
Schools in session 7 months in the year or less.....	10
Schools in session 6 days in the week.....	6
Schools in session 5 days in the week.....	15
Schools in session 4 days in the week.....	4
Schools in session less than 4 days in the week.....	10
Schools having a civilian head teacher in charge.....	33
Prisons in which chaplains have charge of libraries.....	28
Prisons in which the reading of the men is supervised.....	27
Prisons in which officers have charge of libraries.....	8
Prisons in which trades are taught.....	19

It appears that a majority of the schools have their sessions in the evening. This is evidently the most convenient time, from the economic standpoint, because it does not interfere with the prison industries. On the other hand, it is a very unfavorable time from the educational point of view, for several reasons. First, it is generally

impracticable to gather the men together in classrooms in the evening; second, the men are too weary after the labor of the day to do school work in the evening with enthusiasm and success. Evening work has to be done in the cells and must be individual, the teachers going from one cell to another. The incentive of meeting with others in the classroom is lacking, and only the few retain their zeal for study under such conditions.

Two kinds of correspondence study are found in prisons—one carried on through an ordinary outside correspondence school, the other through an organization within the prison itself. The first is useful for men of some degree of education who wish to take up some special branch of advanced work that can not well be provided in the prison. It is of very limited application. The inside correspondence school is essentially cell study, with the work corrected by a corps of teachers. Such a school has been in successful operation in the Massachusetts prisons for many years. These schools are open to the same objections and have the same advantages as evening schools.

Day schools are in operation in 19 prisons. The chief objection raised against them is that they interfere with shopwork, and thus lessen the products of the industries. On the other hand, it is claimed that the loss of time is negligible, that the men do not work all the time anyway, that the output may be kept up by increased efficiency and improved management, and that the highest welfare of the men and the good of society should not be sacrificed to the output of the shops. This view has been well stated by a superintendent of prisons in these words: "We have been running the prisons in the interests of profits; we will run them hereafter in the interests of the men."

#### THE BEST TYPE OF PRISON SCHOOL.

It is not possible to determine from the statements made how many of the schools reported really deserve the name. Measured by a proper standard, many of them doubtless may be regarded as crude experiments.

A real school must be properly organized and equipped for its work. It must have a recognized place in the activities of the prison. Its work must be systematic, continuous, and efficient. Intermittent efforts to help a few individuals do not constitute a school. It is doubtful whether a poor school is better than none; it is certain that the best is none too good. Pedagogy has no problem more difficult than the one it faces in prison, and must draw on all its resources to attain success.

The day school is undoubtedly the best type for prisons and the one that should be adopted wherever possible.

Schoolrooms should be light, clean, and attractive.



A. A SCHOOLROOM IN CLINTON PRISON, N. Y.



B. WOMEN'S PRISON SCHOOL, AUBURN, N. Y.

The school should be open all the year. The schoolroom is the best summer resort the prison can offer. Vacations help the civilian teachers, but are an affliction to the inmates. Prison schools should be managed in the interests of the convicts and of society. Periods of work and rest can be adjusted for civilian officials, but the round of the inmate is continuous.

Each man should be in school six days in the week, and provision should be made for an exercise on Sunday for those who wish it. A holiday is not a day of rest for a prisoner. The school period should be like a ray of sunlight in an environment of gloom. Locked in a narrow and cheerless cell on days set apart in the outside world for rest and pleasure, the convict welcomes an opportunity to spend even a brief time in the environment of a classroom, where he may get a glimpse of a larger and a better life.

The ideal prison school must have a corps of well-informed, trained, and enthusiastic teachers who devote their whole time and energy to their work.

#### SCHOOL SUPERVISION.

The success of any school system rests, to a large extent, upon the person who directs it. This is especially true in the case of schools in prisons. Very little satisfactory work can be done without intelligent supervision.

It is not evident from the answers given how many of the schools reported are in charge of civilian teachers who give all their time and thought to the work. It is suspected that in many cases the prison chaplains have nominal charge of the schools, leaving the real management to inmates. It is known that in some cases school work is wholly in the hands of inmate superintendents. One prominent warden says he prefers to have it so, on the ground that it promotes self-reliance and arouses interest. It is claimed that an inmate can get into closer touch with the men and can better understand them and their needs. Others assert that inmates should not be employed, either as supervisors or teachers, on the principle that if one would lift others he must stand on higher ground.

The weight of opinion and experience, however, favors the view that the planning and supervising of the work, at least, should be in the hands of a civilian head teacher, a man broadly educated, skilled in the art of teaching, morally clean, sympathetic, and sound in his judgment of men. The man who directs a movement so far-reaching in its purpose should stand on high ground in every sense. His knowledge of human nature should be extensive, and he should be a student of the problem he confronts. He should be a pedagogical expert who can select and properly train a body of teachers. He

needs to accumulate experience by constant application to his task and continuous service.

No inmate can possibly meet the requirements of the position of head teacher. He lacks the education, the training, the outlook upon life, the experience, the authority, the energy, and enthusiasm required. He may have ability to do the mechanical work of a school; he may even have the capacity that can be developed into efficiency in school work; yet he needs training and direction. This assistance must come from a competent head teacher who understands the school problem and how to solve it.

It may be said that the chaplains are qualified to act as head teachers. Granting this, it is still true that they have neither the time nor the energy for this line of work in addition to their other very important duties. The inevitable result of such an arrangement must be that the schools are practically managed by inmates.

The evident conclusion is that the highest success of the school work in prisons demands that the head teachers be civilians, specially fitted for the work, who have no other duties to perform.

#### INMATE TEACHERS.

While there seems to be little doubt of the desirability and even necessity of having civilian head teachers in prison schools, it is not so evident that all the teachers must be civilians. In fact, inmate teachers are quite generally employed. There are considerations, besides the economic one, that favor this plan.

There are all kinds of men in prison. There are men of unusual ability and men of fair average character. If the best qualified are selected and trained they make very satisfactory teachers, with the help and guidance of the head teachers.

One great aim of prison effort should be to raise the standard of community life in the prison itself. To accomplish this end, it is necessary to leaven the social body with the idea of mutual responsibility and helpfulness. In this effort to improve the prison community from within, inmate teachers of the right kind may be most helpful. They know the inner life of the prison and once enlisted in a movement for the general uplift become potent factors for the common good.

Men can not be greatly helped by those who look down upon them as inferiors; the sympathetic guidance of those having common interests may produce better results. Convicts are men like ourselves. They are not all bad and few of them are wholly bad. There is good material for teachers among them, and it is a part of the task of head teachers to find and develop it. It would, in some respects, be better to have civilian teachers of the right kind instead of inmates,



but it is not necessary to be too skeptical of results because the rank and file of teachers are inmates. Many of them are doing excellent work, and doing it in an altruistic spirit.

#### SIZE OF CLASSES.

Classes in prison schools should be small. Twenty are enough, and 25 should be the maximum. The small class gives each man an opportunity, and it is what he does himself that helps him most. The lecture method, or pouring-in process, is not well adapted to the conditions and the end in view. The effectiveness of the school depends upon the activity of the men, and they should be encouraged to help themselves as much as possible, both in getting knowledge and in expressing it. The personality and helpfulness of the teacher count for much more in a small class.

#### SCHOOL WORK.

The order of procedure in a prison school is: first, to teach the men, or, putting it in a better way, to get the men to learn to speak, read, and write the English language; second, to direct their reading into right channels.

The aim of the first step is to put the men into possession of an important means of getting and expressing knowledge and thought, and thus to remove from them one of the most serious obstacles to success in life.

There is a risk in teaching young and old to read. Ability to read is a sword that cuts both ways; so, indeed, is all knowledge and mental power. The risk must be taken, however, because of the enormous good that may follow.

Some object to having convicts taught anything, on the ground that it sharpens their wits for committing crime. It is just as reasonable to say that one should not be taught to run a buzz saw because it increases the danger of having his hand cut off.

The first step is important in itself and becomes much more important in its relation to the second. Ability to read is valuable only as it is used in acquiring beneficial knowledge. There is no greater mistake being made in modern education than in the failure to properly direct the reading of children. The climax of prison-school effort is giving right direction to the reading and thought of the men. If it fails in this, it has not performed its highest function as an agency of reform.

The reading should include the following general lines:

1. That which is likely to be helpful in gaining a livelihood, as geographical, industrial, business, and commercial information.
2. That which is useful in the matter of conduct, as social information pertaining to rights and duties, government, and law.

3. That which shows the possibilities of men, as biography, achievement, poetry, and inspirational matter generally.

A way should be found to introduce and fully and freely discuss the questions that have made the men antisocial. Right is not all on one side and wrong on the other. The men whom society has segregated have their point of view and their reasons for being hostile to law and order. Their reasoning may be wrong, and an effort should be made to correct their logic, improve their understanding of the facts, and create within them a better spirit toward society. There is a kind of work in this line that has not been done in the right way. The development of the school idea ought to open the way for more direct consideration in prison classes of the relation of men to society.

The reformation of the men, which is the most important end to be sought, can be only indirectly promoted in connection with school work. Less is being done than might be done with more time and greater skill in teaching. The men are in school not to exceed an hour a day. They are forced to leave the schools, at least in the New York prisons, to make room for others just when they have acquired reading ability and an amount of knowledge and mental alertness that fit them to reason correctly about the things of the greatest concern.

English is the only language that should be taught or encouraged in the prisons of the United States. It is a mistaken kindness that yields to requests for books in a foreign tongue. The language of the country is essential to gaining a foothold in American life. Some are in prison because of their ignorance of the language; none are prepared to go back to society without a working knowledge of it.

Convicts should not be allowed to read any but English books either in school or out of it. Books in foreign languages should not be admitted into the prisons. The task of making Americans out of adult foreigners is difficult; the time is often short. No means of familiarizing men with the language of the country should be omitted. Emphasis is given to this view by instances that have come under the observation of men connected with the prisons. Men have been taught English in the school and on leaving it have been allowed to purchase and read books in their native language and to write letters in that language, with the result that the English learned in the school has been forgotten.

#### PRISON SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

The printed page is one of the most effective teachers and will often reach men who will not listen to the human voice. A good book is a teacher of righteousness; a bad book is a destroyer of character. The right use of the right books is the key to success in

prison endeavor. Through them the men not only get useful knowledge, but are brought into touch with inspiring personalities and the achievements of the race. The companionship of books in the lonely hours spent in a narrow cell has a potency not easily estimated. It is opportunity in a most alluring form at a most favorable time.

A carefully selected library should be part of the equipment of every prison school. The books should be comparatively few, attractive in form, and valuable in contents.

A small number of books promotes concentration of mind, definite impressions, thoughtful reading.

Mr. Lee N. Taplin, head teacher in Auburn prison, says:

The men have a tendency to read too much and do not fully consider what they read. This may be corrected to a certain extent by questioning them on what they have read. If a man's reading were followed up for three or four years by requiring him to pass a test on each book read before being allowed to have another, he would acquire a correct reading habit. This would make a thinking man of him and be a powerful influence in correcting bad tendencies.

One of the chief aims in the use of the school library should be to develop an interest in profitable reading. This end may be sought, first, by having only books of the right sort available, and, second, by direct efforts to get the men to read those that are provided. Subconscious suggestion often makes a person anxious to read a book.

Mr. Charles D. van Orden, head teacher in the Clinton (N. Y.) prison, says:

I have found it easy to interest some men in good reading; with others it is more difficult. If one method does not work, we try another. If there is a book in the library that I think would help the men, I speak of it in a general way to the class and perhaps read an extract or two from it. I do not ask the men to read the book, but before I leave the room several will generally ask for it. If I wish them to read along a certain line, a debate is arranged on that subject. The men do a great deal of reading with that incentive. They not only read the books but prepare and memorize excellent papers on the subject. I can see a greatly increased interest in books of history, biography, and travel. The men ask for these and do not care for fiction.

The restrictions on reading suggested for the conduct of prison-school libraries will not meet with universal approval. The common notion is that young and old should be allowed to read what they please, within certain broad limits. The principle of a strict censorship of books to be placed in the hands of prisoners is here advocated. Even granting the propriety of allowing the utmost freedom to the general public in the choice of reading, it seems nevertheless true that the reading of men who are under treatment for moral delinquency should be rigidly restricted. The sick are not allowed the same freedom in their diet as the well, and the inference is easy that had there been less freedom in health there might be more freedom from disease.

It is no injustice to a man to restrain him for his own benefit. Pernicious literature is one of the worst foes of reformatory efforts. It is often instrumental in sending men to prison, and is certainly a most active force in intensifying their evil passions and strengthening their criminal tendencies while in prison. Not only the positively bad, but all weak and purposeless reading should be kept from men who are perishing for lack of moral fiber. Prisons should not foster the evils they seek to destroy nor afford means of increasing the warp in moral nature they are supposed to remove.

Harmful reading matter surreptitiously brought into prisons is an element of great moral danger. Such books are in circulation in many prisons. They create a moral miasma most destructive to the community life. Any scheme for improving prison conditions and promoting reformation must include a means of ridding prisons of all this filth and moral poison.

The prison library is properly an adjunct of the school, though in many cases it is under an entirely different management. It should be a continuation school which the men enter on leaving the regular prison school. In one school the men learn how to read and get a start in useful reading; in the other they apply the art in a wider field.

It is evident that the larger school should contain the right kind of books and be under expert management.

Prison libraries, as a rule, contain books enough. Ten thousand volumes is not an unusual number, and additions are being constantly made.

In regard to the quality of the reading matter provided, a very high authority, Mr. H. H. Hart, of the Russell Sage Foundation, has this to say:

Not one prison library in ten has a suitable selection of books. Most of them are composed of one-third unreadable books and one-half trash. The United States Bureau of Education can do a good work by compiling a list of 500 or 1,000 books which ought to be put into every prison library.

It does not seem necessary that a prison library should contain many books. Reading much rather than many books is most likely to produce the results sought.

#### LIBRARY SUPERVISION.

The modern conception of the function of a library places it with the school as an educational institution. Its supervision is therefore equally important with that of the school. The librarian should be essentially a teacher. He must not only know books, but how to use them and how to adapt them to individual needs. It is a low estimate of the work of a librarian to regard him merely as a mechanical dis-

tributor of books. He must create a want for books of the right sort, outline courses of reading to suit individual needs and tastes, and be able to measure results. He must therefore devote all his time and energy to the work of his special field. The choice of reading is too important a matter to be intrusted to any but the most competent and conscientious. The moral qualities of a book must be regarded, and the librarian must have the highest ideals of the ends to be sought in reading and of the means of reaching them.

It is clear from what has been said that an inmate does not ordinarily have the essential qualifications for a librarian.

It appears that in most prisons the chaplains have nominal charge of the libraries, while inmates have real charge of them. It is plainly impossible for a chaplain to properly manage a library in addition to his other duties. In some cases he has nominal charge of the school in addition to the library and his own very intimate and important work. He evidently has no time for all these tasks, granting that he is otherwise qualified for them.

An efficient civilian librarian, as one of the regular officials of the prison, would meet the requirements best. He could work in cooperation with the chaplain and the head teacher in inaugurating a most efficient system of reformatory education.

The New York State Library Association some years ago adopted the following recommendations looking toward improvement in library conditions in the prisons:

First. The entire elimination of the debasing and enervating paper-covered books that are being surreptitiously brought in and circulated in practically all the prisons of the country.

Second. A material reduction in the number of titles received into the libraries by the elimination not only of the supremely bad but of all books not distinctly bracing and informing to the mind and soul.

Third. The employment of civilian librarians of more than ordinary ability and much more than ordinary tact and sympathy; men who know the human mind in health and disease.

Fourth. The library work should be closely connected with the school work and should be directed and supervised by competent persons.

#### LECTURES AND DEBATES.

The ordinary lecture method of instruction has but a small place in a prison school. A modified form of it, however, may be used with profit in the advanced classes.

As an illustration of what might be done in this way, the following plan is suggested: Let some book, on government, for example, be given to each man in a class to read chapter by chapter. Let the teacher read the book in the same way and prepare informal talks to supplement the reading and clear up difficult points. Then when

he meets the class, say once a week, they are prepared to listen with interest and profit, to ask and answer questions, and to discuss topics intelligently.

Volunteers from outside the prisons could doubtless be found in most cases to conduct this line of work, and it may be made very helpful in promoting the purpose of prison schools.

Important economic, commercial, political, and social questions might be presented in this way and mistaken notions corrected.

Debates have been found to be a useful device in prison school work. They call for much reading, which adds to the stock of useful knowledge, afford training in sound reasoning, give fluency of expression, cultivate fairness in debate, and encourage toleration of the views of others.

#### VISUAL AND TRADE INSTRUCTION.

There seems to be a place for visual instruction in prison schools. The desire and need for entertainment may be utilized to direct thought into useful and inspiring channels. Facts of history and geography, industry, and commerce may be taught in this way. The great material achievements of man may be presented in a graphic form with such setting by the teacher as will produce beneficial results.

A number of prisons report trade instruction. It appears, however, that this instruction is in most cases incidental to work in the prison industries. Such trade schools as are common in institutions for the young do not seem to exist to any extent in prisons and perhaps are not desirable. The men are employed in various shops, and thus gain practical knowledge how to do specific things. They are thus trained to do work of economic value. If they share in the results of their labor, an impulse is given to reformation of life. Labor and wisely directed mental effort together offer the best hope there is for the regeneration of misguided men.

#### OTHER REFORMATORY INFLUENCES.

Education as a reformatory measure should not be regarded in the narrow sense of school training. School work proper is only one phase of the question. Men are led to reform or to grow more hardened and hopeless by many and various influences. Atmosphere counts for a great deal in the moral as in the physical world.

Just and impartial treatment, sympathetic relations between officials and inmates, a constant appeal from force to kindness, from the lower to the higher motive, a daily object lesson in integrity and loyalty to duty observable in the prison management will do more, perhaps, than anything else to lead wrongdoers to see their mistakes and to fill them with a determination to reform.

The warden, the chaplain, the head teacher, and the librarian represent the factors that are potential for righteousness and reform. Each of these has a field of labor wide enough to tax his powers to the utmost. The warden, by reason of his authority and appointing power, must bear the chief responsibility for the working of the whole system. The chaplain, the head teacher, and the librarian each represents a large field of activity and vitally affects the general result. There must be a personality back of every effort to reform men to make it effective. There should be a whole man for each task and all should work together.

Prisons are open to religious influences. Every prison has one or more spiritual advisers. The Bible may be read by the men. The most intolerant will not deny the right of appeal to the justice and mercy of a Supreme Being.

These facts afford opportunity and impose responsibility. No greater crime against humanity can be imagined or committed than the introduction of form and pretense in the name of religion among men who have lost hope and are in need of light. Religious hypocrisy in prison is not only blasphemous but it is a positive force to hasten moral degeneracy and defeat reformation.

The chaplain holds the chief point of vantage in prison for exerting a salutary influence over the men. He must be a rare man to do his work well. He must be blameless in his life, an example of the truth he proclaims, abounding in faith and good works, an optimist who can not be dismayed. Such a man can win his way to the hearts of men in the lowest depths of moral degradation and bring sunshine into the lives of many.

Reformation has always been closely associated with the religious life of men.

#### SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS.

Sundays and holidays are lonely for convicts, locked in their cells from morning until night, as well as from night until morning. These days should be utilized for improving the men physically, mentally, or morally. Classes of some sort should meet on these days. Reading rooms might be provided. Such days should not be days of torture to men whom the State is trying to prepare for return to society.

A number of the prisons of the United States publish papers. These are managed by the prisoners themselves and reflect the life and ideals of the prisons they represent. They are perhaps designed rather for entertainment and to afford an outlet for the thoughts of the men than as a means of social uplift, but they have in them possibilities of great helpfulness and may easily be made factors in promoting reformation.

## THE MEN IN SCHOOL.

No statistics have been obtained of the number and nationality of men in the prison schools of the whole country.

During the year 1911-12, there were 2,479 men between the ages of 17 and 56 in the schools of the New York prisons. The average age of the men was about 30 years, and 50 per cent of them were foreign born.

More than half the men in the Sing Sing school were Italians, and more than one-third of the total in all the schools were of the same nationality.

Thirty-one nationalities were represented in the Sing Sing school.

About 30 per cent of the prison population was in school. Those most in need of education are given the preference in admission to school. The schools can deal successfully only with men of normal mentality. Reformation may be expected only of those who are responsible for their actions and can think. Many subnormal and mentally defective persons are sent to prison, which is not the place for them. Other provision should be made for this class.

Speaking from a wide experience, Mr. Z. R. Brockway says:

The bulk of prisoners consists of those who are weak, habitually wayward, and unreflective persons who do not readily connect a present infelicitous experience with the remoter cause and consequence.

## A PSYCHOLOGICAL LABORATORY.

It seems very desirable that a prison should have a department for the study of the men from the physical, mental, and moral standpoint. All questions of the treatment of men in prison, parole, and discharge should come before the experts of this department for study and report. Men should be dealt with in prison with a full knowledge of their condition. Their retention and discharge should be based on scientific information regarding them. No decisions should be based on superficial or defective knowledge or on the whims or influence of interested individuals. Unless put on a scientific basis the parole system is likely to fall into just discredit and disuse.

## RESULTS FROM SCHOOL EFFORTS.

The apparent results from prison schools are improvement in the conduct of the men, relief from the depression of prison life, preparation for positions in the prisons, an increase of chances for success in life outside, and fewer returns to prison.

That the schools help men to gain an honest livelihood after their release is evident from the grateful acknowledgments of the men



themselves. A man who goes out with ability to read and write is much better fitted to cope with conditions. The schools are certainly removing the handicap of illiteracy from the men who go out of prison.

It is impossible to speak with certainty regarding the reformation of convicts through school influences. Figures on this point mean little and are often misleading. It is difficult, if not impossible, to follow men from prison back into life and measure their characters there.

The thing that may be stated with confidence is that the men are given an opportunity and surrounded, for a short time at least, with a bracing and helpful atmosphere. The door has been opened for them; the incentives to reform have been presented. Those who choose darkness rather than light, war with society rather than peace, must reap the bitter fruit to the end. Society has done its part.

#### INTEREST IN PRISON SCHOOLS.

Public interest in prison schools and what they represent in the treatment of criminals is limited and lukewarm. Prison officials are in many cases skeptical and indifferent regarding the moral uplift of the men. The prison atmosphere is rank with pessimism.

Much of the boasted progress in prison management up to the present has been on the lower level of material things. The regeneration of the men has been neglected. The pressure of public sentiment has led to the establishment of schools in some of the prisons for adults, but their work is limited by lack of hearty and effective support.

The unfortunate derelicts who have been put within prison walls are the last to get sympathy, and perhaps in most cases the last to deserve it. But every consideration of self-interest as well as of humanity demands that men unfit to remain in society should not only be segregated but also given a chance, under the most favorable conditions, to reform and prepare to resume a place in society.

It is no sentimentality that calls for a change of method in dealing with criminals, involving as one of its features the establishment of schools of character in all prisons for adults, but the enlightened mind of humanity that is dealing scientifically with the laws of cause and effect.

The school work in prisons is far from being as effective as it should be for lack of room, of teachers, and of sufficient time. It needs the support of an aroused and extended public sentiment. The work costs comparatively little, and the people would gladly furnish it if they knew its possibilities.

**THE PRISON SCHOOLS OF NEW YORK.**

The prison schools of New York were organized in their present form in 1905-6. Some school work had been done before that time, but nothing of a comprehensive and systematic nature had been attempted. It may not be too much to say that nothing so revolutionary in character had ever been undertaken in prisons for adults.

The main features of the system are:

First. Schoolrooms, to accommodate from 20 to 25 men each, equipped with modern school appliances.

Second. A civilian head teacher who outlines the work, selects and trains the teachers, supervises the teaching, and puts the right spirit into the movement.

Third. A corps of inmate teachers selected from the best qualified that are available in scholarship, character, and interest.

Fourth. A line of work divided into 12 parts, called standards, each part requiring from 2 to 4 months for completion.

Fifth. Cooperation among the schools of the various prisons, maintained by frequent conferences of the head teachers.

Sixth. A general advisory oversight of the system by the State education department by request of the superintendent of prisons.

Seventh. A card record of the work of each man, including a record of books read.

Eighth. Attendance in school of at least one hour and a quarter each day, except Sunday.

Ninth. Division of the school day into four or five periods, morning and afternoon.

Tenth. Men are gathered from the shops in companies of 100 or more, returned at the end of the period, and others taken to the school.

Eleventh. No incentive is offered the men to study except the benefits to themselves, and no penalties are applied for failure. There are no examinations that must be passed.

The head teachers give all their time and energy to the work, and it is never done. They select the teachers and train them, outline the daily work, supervise the teaching, direct the reading, and give such class instruction as seems desirable. They also confer with men outside of class and give advice regarding personal matters. They are the main factor in the success of the New York prison schools.

The inmate teachers devote all their time to the schools. This gives them time to prepare their work as well as to teach. All their interest and effort center in the schools. Many of them do excellent work, become deeply interested in it, and deserve great credit for what they accomplish. These faithful inmate teachers certainly do a great deal to atone for their wrong to society, and their services should be remembered and appreciated.

The New York prison schools rely on reading as a means of accomplishing their purpose. They have demonstrated that it is not necessary to yield to the demands of a perverted appetite for harmful reading. Mr. Taplin says:

I believe that supervised or directed reading is the most important part of our work. As soon as the men have acquired the art of reading so as to understand a book there is a great demand for reading matter. *It is not difficult to arouse interest in practically any book we have.*

Mr. J. R. Crowley, head teacher in Sing Sing, says:

The men manifest a great interest in the books of the school library, preferring them to those of the general library.

He gives this list of books that are most popular: Man Without a Country; Boys of '76; Green Mountain Boys; Stoddard's Lectures; Our American Neighbors; Around the World; First Steps in History; Young America; The New American Citizen.

Most of the men in the Sing Sing school begin as illiterates, and their progress is indicated by their interest in such books as these.

Mr. Taplin submits the following list as among the most popular with the Auburn men: Christmas Stories; The War of 1812; Civil War Stories; Days and Deeds; War for Independence; Columbus and Magellan; Four American Pioneers; The Giant Sun Family; Men of Iron; Northern Europe; Story of China; Story of Russia; In Darkest Africa; National Geographic Magazine; Boys of '76; Up from Slavery; Triumphs of Science; Boys' Life of Lincoln; The Simple Life; Elements of Physics; Stoddard's Lectures.

The results from keeping the men supplied with good reading and from oral and written reproduction of what has been read can not be otherwise than good. Knowledge of the world, of the various nations, their extent, the occupations of the people, their government and customs sets the men to thinking, and when men really think, they are in a hopeful mental and moral attitude and open to suggestions.

The fact that sessions of the New York schools are held in the daytime and all through the day has contributed in no small degree to their efficiency. The minds of the teachers are concentrated on their work. They would not be nearly as efficient if they were in school for an hour only and otherwise occupied the rest of the time. The men in the classes are more alert and interested in the day session than they could be in the evening.

The small size of the classes is another favorable factor in the New York schools. This enables the teachers to do direct personal work and gives the men a chance to take an active part in every school exercise. The interchange of thought in the classroom adds interest and gives the vibrant human note that should run through all prison effort.

What the New York schools have done and are doing is an indication of what they might accomplish with greater facilities and encouragement. They have only touched the outer edge of their possibilities, but they have pointed the way to better things which will some day be realized.

#### CONCLUSION.

Several conclusions are evident from a survey of what is done for adults in prison.

First. Every possible opportunity and incentive for reformation should be afforded even the worst criminals. The door of hope should never be closed.

Second. Better methods and greater efficiency in character building are needed all along the line, back through the institutions for the neglected, the streets, and the schools to the home, which are the ultimate sources of the influences that make men and women good and bad.

Third. Every step in wrongdoing, immorality, and crime lessens the chances of recovery and salvation from moral and social ruin.

Fourth. It is better from every point of view to keep the young in the narrow path of virtue than to neglect them until the commission of some crime calls public attention to their conduct.

Fifth. The activities of philanthropy, the benefactions of the prosperous, and public effort should be turned more fully to providing the right kind of education for the thousands of neglected children whose environment is such as to make the development of bad and dangerous characters almost inevitable.

Sixth. The hopeful sign of the times is an aroused public sentiment that is demanding a full knowledge of the facts and the vigorous use of the best means of checking moral degeneracy at its source.

## APPENDIX.

### I. THE EDUCATION OF ILLITERATE CRIMINALS.

By LEE N. TAPLIN.

*Head teacher, Auburn Prison.*

The New York State prison schools were organized on September 15, 1905. Since that time they have been in continuous operation for 6 days in the week and 12 months in the year. The men attend school in groups, and each individual is allowed only one hour of schooling daily. Before we attempt a description of the school work, let us consider for a moment the meaning of the word "criminal."

When you hear the word "criminal," what image rises in your mind? Do you not see a beetle-browed man, sullen, desperate, whom from mere wantonness or downright wickedness will steal or rob or kill? Your picture is wrong. Most criminals are men; rarely is there a monster. A criminal is defined as one who willfully inflicts injury upon his neighbor or upon society in general, and most of us are criminals in so far as we willfully or wantonly injure others. But not all crimes are brought to book; neither are all criminals prosecuted. The wealthy Sybarite, who with wine, women, and song sets an alluring example of dissipated living to the young men about him, is a far deeper criminal than the passer of counterfeit money, for he injures society far more grievously.

After conviction comes prison. There the prisoner forfeits certain rights, and we would suppose that he naturally loses the rights which he has abused, but that he retains all other rights. To illustrate, if a man in a violence of temper commit a murderous assault, he is sent to prison; but he is not dishonest; he is not a thief. He may have nothing low, mean, nor sneaky in his nature. He is still entitled to be considered and trusted as an honest man.

During the last few years there has been a growing tendency to treat each case of crime by itself and upon its own merits. We see that to expect the same sort of treatment to check or prevent all sorts of moral sickness is quite as foolish as to expect a single patent medicine to cure all bodily ills.

There are in school daily in the prisons of New York State approximately 1,200 men, ranging in age from 18 to well past 60. These men are criminals because of various combinations of circumstances, but for our consideration they may be roughly classified as, first, the product of city and village street-corner gangs; second, incorrigibles from houses of correction, and reform schools; third, foreign illiterates. After having talked with hundreds of these men who have passed through the prison school, we are convinced that all of the above-mentioned classes are products of neglected childhood.

The foreign illiterates are most numerous, over three-fourths of our pupils falling under this head. More than 25 different nationalities are daily receiving instruction in our prison schools. We try to teach them to read and write and speak the English language and to know something of the customs and laws of this country. We aim to teach only that which is necessary and practical for good citizenship in a lowly station in life.

The school work is divided into 12 sections or standards, the completion of which gives a man a fairly good grammar-school education.

The teachers are inmates of the prison. What? The blind lead the blind? No; the teachers are not blind. They understand the men under their charge as a civilian can not. They are all fairly well-educated and well-bred men. They have a deep sympathy for the boys under their instruction. They have shared their sorrows. They know prison life—the narrow cell, the vigorous discipline. They have felt the cold scorn of former friends and even the neglect of loved ones. All of these things have been burned into their souls so deeply that they are full of compassion for the men who are more unfortunate and deeper in degradation than themselves. Their zeal and enthusiasm for teaching show no waning. Their good influence over their pupils grows constantly, and the consciousness that they are doing a work of real benefit for their unfortunate associates is like balm to their suffering souls.

An hour of school work daily for each class seems to be just the right amount. The men do not weary of it. Their interest is well sustained. They like school work, are proud of their attainments, and are eager for more. They complain often that the hour passes too quickly and are jealous if a teacher gives a little extra time to any particular man. They respect learning, and they clutch close about them any clinging shreds of their former self-respect. The essential difference between the old-time retaliatory punitive treatment and the reformatory methods now used consists in how we treat those few remaining shreds of the garment of respectability. The old-time régime tore them ruthlessly away, leaving the mere brute; the new seeks to rehabilitate the man.

By means of the schools we try to arouse slumbering intellectual powers, to reclaim tracts of the brain long unused, to stimulate thought, and awaken emotions and recall memories of former better days and thus quicken sluggish moral habits.

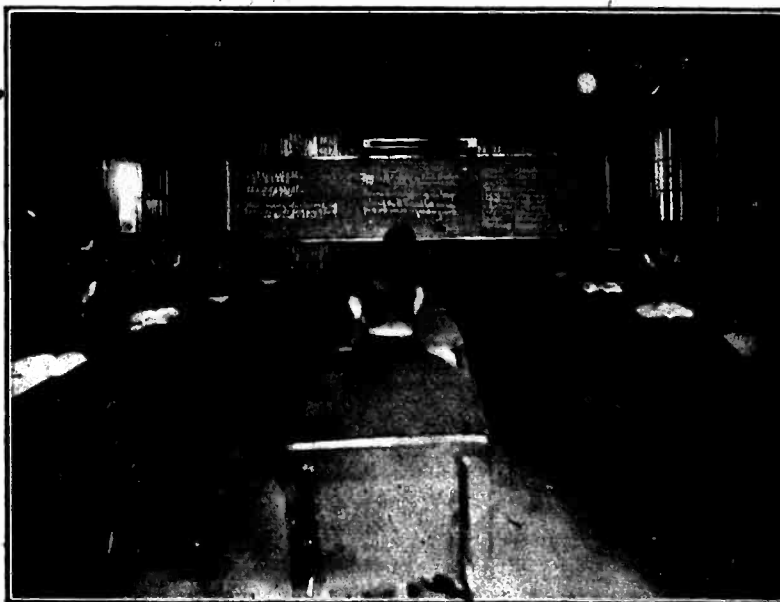
After teaching the men how to read, we endeavor to inculcate the desire for reading good books. The State provides a large library in each prison. Each cell has an electric light. Long, indeed, are the evenings for those who do not know how to read. By directing the character of the reading we are sure of getting before the minds of the men much that is mentally stimulating and valuable.

The question may well be asked, "What better off are these men for this schooling?" I will mention a few of the practical benefits accruing. The keepers and instructors in the shops tell us that the foreigners, after attending school a short time, begin to understand better the orders given them concerning their work. Men who were formerly very troublesome and disorderly are much more tractable and docile since becoming interested in the school work. Dull minds have been quickened. Men who formerly could do no more than touch the pen while the clerk signed their names for them are now signing their own names and writing their own letters home. Many men have told us of the employment which they might have secured had they been able to read and write. A large number of men have left the prison equipped for much more remunerative employment because of the education received within the prison walls. We believe that after a man has been taught to read and write, to think for himself, to reason, and to enjoy good books, that he is far less liable to return to his former evil ways.

Finally, we must acknowledge that we are working at the wrong end of the problem. A small part of the effort expended upon these same men in the innocence of their childhood would have availed more than all of our strivings now. But even the criminal is worth saving, and we believe that reformatory treatment is the cheapest and best perfection with which society can defend itself from crime.



A. "STANDARD TWO" CLASSROOM, SING SING PRISON.



B. "STANDARD FOUR" CLASSROOM, SING SING PRISON, OSSINING, N. Y.

ON 9 NOVEMBER 1907  
 ON NOVEMBER 1907  
 A NOVEMBER 1907  
 ON NOVEMBER 1907  
 ON NOVEMBER 1907  
 ON NOVEMBER 1907  
 ON NOVEMBER 1907  
 ON NOVEMBER 1907

SPECIMEN No. 1.—Auburn (N. Y.) Prison School. No. 31927. The first attempt at writing his name by an illiterate Italian, 28 years of age.

I see six pencils.

You have seven books.

He has eight fingers.

- I see nine pencils.

I see ten desks.

What do you see?

My arm is on the desk.

My hand is on my head.

Your hand is on your head.

You have my book.

SPECIMEN No. 2.—Written by the same man (No. 31927), nine months later. In the meantime he had attended school one hour a day.



## II. SING SING PRISON SCHOOL.

By J. R. CROWLEY,

*Head teacher.*

In the Sing Sing Prison school to-day—March 25, 1913—there are registered 338 men. These represent 20 different nationalities and 12 subdivisions. Of the total number, 49 per cent are Italian, 23 per cent American (which includes 10 per cent American negroes), 8 per cent Jews of various nations, 5 per cent Russians, 4 per cent Austrians, 2 per cent Germans, 1 per cent Polish, and the remaining 8 per cent are made up of many other nationalities.

The age of the men in school varies from four men (boys) who are but 16 years to one man who is 64 years of age. The average age of all men in school at this time is 20.8 years.

Educationally the school attendance is divided or classified into four grades, called standards.<sup>1</sup> The outline and daily program for the first week of these two standards as here given will convey a more exact idea of the work being done.

## STANDARD ONE.

*Syllabus outline.*—Learning to speak, recognize at sight, spell, and write 200 words; drill in pronunciation; the reading based on the words learned; copying sentences; the use of numbers to 100.

*Directions to teachers.*—These directions are the head teacher's aims, ideas, and methods regarding the particular standard of work and cover each topic of the course of study for each week of a four months' term. Oral English speech, word study, drill, pronunciation, reading, writing, spelling, number work, cell study, etc., are among the topics treated in these directions. I quote one to convey the scope of the work: "The drill in pronunciation should have for its object the clear, correct sounding of the words taught. These words, written on the board or on slips of paper to be handed to the men, should be pronounced by the teacher and then by each member of the class.

"Th, Ch, J, R, L, W, T, the aspirated H, final syllables such as 'ed' and 'ing' are some of the consonant sounds that will be found to give difficulty to the pupils of different nationalities, and special drill should be given on them, as well as the vowel sounds or any sound found to be difficult to a nationality or a class."

## DAILY PROGRAM.

Standard 1. Room A. Week ending -----

*Monday.*

Teacher to consult the outline of the course of study and the guide thereto. The lesson of to-day should be oral, the teacher being careful to pronounce all the words clearly and distinctly. Endeavor to have each pupil stand before the class and give his name, number, cell, shop, etc., and have each write this upon the blackboard. It should be first written by the teacher, after which it should be copied many times by the pupil.

<sup>1</sup> The extent of illiteracy in this prison accounts for the fact that but four standards are covered. Men have to be dropped to make room for others.—A. C. H.

*Tuesday.*

Teacher to devote the period to the teaching of the small and large (capital) letters of the alphabet. Give each pupil sufficient opportunity for practice at the board; at the same time the others of the class may be writing on paper.

(9) Give cell lessons No. 1 and No. 2 with sufficient instruction so that the members of the class will know exactly what and how you expect them to do this work.

*Wednesday.*

Teach the words of lesson No. 1; viz. "pencil, cap, book, is, have, this, box, a, I, the, that." Give practice in oral and written spelling, pronunciation, and in the meaning of the words.

(9) Give cell lesson No. 3 with an extra sheet of paper for additional copy writing. The lessons Nos. 1 and 2 should be collected, studied, corrected, and returned.

*Thursday.*

The work of cell lesson No. 4 should be written on the board by the pupils as many times as the space will allow. It should be written on the rotary blackboard and taught to the class, after which individuals should be sent to the board to copy; others to write at the desk.

(9) Give cell lesson No. 4 with proper instructions. Emphasize the writing and insist that it be as nearly perfect as possible. Drill in spelling, pronunciation, and reading.

*Friday.*

Teach the planotype lesson No. 1, first from the board as script, next from the rotary blackboard as print, and then from the sheets supplied. Each man should read the script, print, and planotype lessons before the class. Show objects, and use motions where possible.

Give cell lesson No. 5 with proper instructions, in order that the class may return the lesson written just as you would have them do it.

*Saturday.*

Use cell lesson No. 6 as a reading lesson for the class. Let each man read, then give planotype lessons for a review of the reading. Be particular in the pronunciation and enunciation of the words. Drill on recognition of words, spelling, the meaning of the words, and their proper formation upon the board and with pencil.

(9) Secure for file work a copy of the name, number, cell, written with ink on the file paper.

*Textbooks.*

No textbook is to be used in the first standard. The cell lessons and the planotype sheet lessons supplied, if saved by the men, are easily fastened together, making a book of their own. This should be encouraged by the teacher.

The teacher should preserve carefully all cell lessons written by the class, and these should be arranged in alphabetical order and filed in the cupboard in the room.

## STANDARD TWO.

*Syllabus outline:* Working vocabulary increased to 500 words; the use of the capital letter, period, and question mark; sentence writing and writing from dictation; the use of numbers to 1,000, with special emphasis on addition and sub-

traction; reading *The First Book for Non-English Speaking People*; cell lessons from the reading text.

*Directions to teachers:* These are similar to those of the first standard, but modified to conform to the work of the second standard.

## DAILY PROGRAM.

Standard 2. Room C. Week ending -----

*Monday.*

Teach the 14 words of lesson 1 by having them nicely written on the board, from which they will be taught by the teacher, pronounced, used in sentences, and copied as a spelling lesson by the class. Lesson 1 to be read before the class by each pupil. Give paper, and require lesson 1 to be written as a cell lesson; giving directions as to just how you expect the work done.

*Tuesday.*

Repeat Monday's teaching, adding the 7 new words of lesson 2. Send the class to the board and have them write as many of these words as they can remember. Writing on paper from dictation the 14 words learned. Read lessons 1 and 2. Give directions for cell lesson No. 2.

*Wednesday.*

Add the 2 new words of lesson 3 to the list of words learned; drill on pronunciation, recognition, use in oral sentence, and writing from memory the 23 words. Read lessons 1, 2, and 3. Give definite directions for cell lesson 3.

*Thursday.*

Supply the class with file paper and require reading lesson No. 4 to be neatly and carefully written with ink. Accept none but the best work, and report poor work before the class leaves the room.

Drill on list of 23 words learned. Pronunciation, recognition, spelling, use.

*Friday.*

Use the method of Monday in teaching the 14 new words of lesson 5. Give much practice in writing on the board. Read lessons 4 and 5. Require as cell lesson 4 a copy of reading lesson No. 5.

*Saturday.*

Supply the class with paper and then dictate the 36 words learned during the week. Collect these papers and require these same 36 words to be written from memory. Chase each pupil to stand before the class and read his list of words, the class checking such words as they have and adding those not on the list. Continue until each pupil has a complete list of 36 words. Review reading of lessons 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

*Textbooks.*

1. Class book: *First Book for Non-English Speaking People.*

2. Cell book: *First Book for Non-English Speaking People.*

Cell lessons: Require one cell lesson each day. Give such definite direction and lively attention to this work that the very best results may be obtained. Make a point to insist on good writing.

The above is a general outline of the work that is being done from day to day in this strange school, composed entirely of men old in years but young in English educational attainments, men of many nations, men of many tongues, men many of whom have been absolutely illiterate all their lives, men who while they may claim to have college degrees in foreign lands are illiterate

in the English tongue, men—and I may add boys as well, since I have 4 such individuals who were but 16 years of age when received in prison who have passed through the ordeals of arrest, court, and reception into prison—laboring to overcome this handicap in their ignorance of English, in order that they may be in a position to better understand our laws and customs, to speak and understand our language, and to enable themselves to battle more successfully in their endeavors to earn a living.

The success of our endeavors will be seen not so much by what I may say as by what may be observed in a study of the attached papers made by some of the many illiterates in the prison school.

The program of work for the third, fourth, and fifth standards consists of a continuation and extension of the work outlined in the two lower. Emphasis is laid on the oral English expression, the practical use of English generally—reading, spelling, and writing. The class work is supplemented by a continuation of the cell lessons, which review in a systematic and practical way the reading texts of the cell and class. Writing from dictation and from memory stories read, writing from script copy, composition or essay writing, letter writing—these are topics particularly emphasized in the fourth standard. The fifth standard, which in this prison is the "graduating class," aims to round out and finish off the educational product which has passed through the lower standards. On completing this standard the classes are able to read and understand intelligently ordinary English script and print such as is found in newspapers, magazines, books, etc. They are able to read and write their own letters intelligently, possess a practical working knowledge in arithmetic, an elementary knowledge of United States history and civics, and a fair knowledge of general business forms. By keeping in touch with the school after graduating by a free use of the school library books they are able to retain their English training received in the school, so that when the day of discharge comes a man is certainly much better prepared and fitted to earn an honest and honorable living.

Sullivan 62334

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Sullivan 62334

SPECIMEN No. 3.—Sing Sing Prison School. No. 62334. Age 64. This man was born in Australia, of Irish parents. There was no school in the locality where he lived as a child. He left there at the age of 20 and for 40 years was a sailor on a merchant ship. He was unable to read or write on entering school, June 18, 1912, but was anxious to learn; was studious and made remarkable progress. This specimen was written July 29, 1912, after he had been in school six weeks.

Who can run  
What can he do  
Can I walk  
~~that~~ Is he walking  
What are they doing  
What did it do

SPECIMEN No. 4.—Written by the same man (No. 62334) two days later.

SUBJECT

*Copying**Honesty is the best policy**Honesty is the best policy**Honesty is the best policy**Honesty is the best policy**Honesty is the best policy**Honesty is the best policy**Honesty is the best policy**Honesty is the best policy**Honesty is the best policy**Honesty is the best policy**Honesty is the best policy**Honesty is the best policy**Honesty is the best policy**Honesty is the best policy**Honesty is the best policy**Honesty is the best policy**Honesty is the best policy*

SPECIMEN No. 5.—Written by No. 82334 in January, 1913, after seven months' instruction.

### III. THE CLINTON PRISON SCHOOL, DANNEMORA, N. Y.

By CHAS. D. VAN ORDEN,

*Head teacher.*

The Clinton Prison school comprises eight standards, besides a business class. We have over 300 men on the school list at all times. Over 700 men attended school some portion of the past year. When a man enters school he must attend at least three months, unless there is some excellent reason for excusing him. A large majority of the men stay in a much longer period. A man must attend school until he completes the fourth standard, and then it is optional with him whether he attends or not. Our higher standards are always filled to their utmost capacity, with a list of men waiting to enter as soon as there are vacancies.

We have four sessions daily for six days each week. Each session is 75 minutes in length and no man is in more than one session daily and has to do the same amount of work in the shop as if he were not attending school.

The prison school has a definite aim; this is the reformation of the men. I believe that all reformation must come from within; that a man reforms when he actually perceives that his old ways are wrong, and that success will never come to him if he works along the old lines. Many criminals are proud of their profession, and it is a difficult matter for them to form any higher ideals. The work of the school is not only to show the man that he is wrong, but to make the right so attractive that he will follow it when released.

What methods are used by the prison school to accomplish this reformation? The foundation of the whole work is the belief that a man may be greatly influenced by the reading which he does while in prison; therefore the main object of the prison school should be to train the men to read intelligently and guide them in their choice of reading matter.

Many of the men on entering school are unable to speak English and can neither read nor write in any language. The first thing we do with this class of men is to teach them to speak and understand English. We use to a large extent the conversational method with them. We have a list of 100 common words which have been selected with great care and a set of lessons constructed from them. These lessons are printed in the school, and each man in the class has a copy of the day's lesson. The men are drilled on these words and lessons until they know how to pronounce and spell the words and read the lessons intelligently. After they have fully mastered this set of lessons, they have lessons based on another 100 words.

As the men are in school such a short time each day, they are expected to do a certain amount of work in their cells. We have written sentences based on their lessons. These are given to the men on leaving the class. They copy them in their cells and bring their work to the class the next day. In this way they learn to write very quickly.

When the men have completed these two sets of lessons they have a vocabulary of 200 words. They are able to spell these words, pronounce them correctly, and use them in sentences of their own construction. They are also able to write a good legible hand.

Now they are ready for the second standard. Here we use textbooks. The work is mainly reading, writing, and spelling, with sentence construction. We strive to increase their vocabulary and read as many first readers as possible in the given time. It is difficult to find first readers that are suitable for grown men, but we select the ones best adapted to their needs. We also teach them simple addition and subtraction in this standard.



When the men enter the third standard they are able to read simple English quite intelligently, and we use readers which not only drill them on reading but give them information. At present one of the readers used in our third standard is "Civics Made Easy For Foreigners," by Pluss. This book treats of this subject in the simplest manner possible and the men enjoy reading it. In this standard the men complete addition and subtraction.

In the fourth standard we give work in geography, history, civics, and arithmetic. The geography work is mostly reading geographical readers; history and civics cover the lives of our most noted men with a fundamental knowledge of our Government and the duties of an American citizen. In arithmetic they are thoroughly drilled in multiplication.

In the fifth standard we continue the work of the fourth, doing more advanced work in history, civics, and geography. In arithmetic they are taught long division. In this standard they are given a thorough course in hygiene. This same line of work is continued through the sixth and seventh standards.

In the eighth standard the men do a large amount of reading. One day they read and discuss some piece of literature; another, the teacher assigns a historical or geographical subject which they look up and afterwards write about. About once a month a subject is chosen for debate. After studying the subject thoroughly the men write papers upon it which are criticized either by the head teacher or the teacher of the class. Finally, leaders are chosen, the day is set, and they have their debate.

Men who complete the eighth standard, and other men in the prison who have a good education, are allowed to enter the business class. In this class stenography and bookkeeping are taught. Many of the men do excellent work. I believe it to be an excellent thing for the men, even if they never make any practical use of it. They learn to concentrate their minds, to be neat and accurate in their work, and to persevere until they accomplish what they undertake.

It is supposed to take three months to complete a standard. Some men can accomplish it in this time, and some can not. In each standard they learn to spell 300 new words and to use them correctly in sentences, so when they complete the school work they have an excellent working vocabulary.

We teach very little technical grammar, but drill the men on practical composition work. We start in the lower standards with sentence construction, then letter writing, reproduction, and essays.

As soon as a man learns to read we try to furnish him with suitable reading matter. They soon acquire the reading habit and will read all the books they can obtain. We have about 300 books in our school library not counting textbooks. These the men read and reread. In the higher standards the men are allowed to get certain books from the general library through the head teacher.

It is difficult to tell just what the prison school is accomplishing, but it is easy to see the improvement in many of the men, and by conversing with them one can often see that their views of life have been entirely changed.

I am going to ~~prevent~~ my ink from falling on this paper.

I do my work thoroughly.

When I get up in the fifth standed I will exchange  
my books for others.

I am an occupent of my farm.

I rejoice more and more.

I am giving attention now.

SPECIMEN No. 6.—Clinton Prison, Dannemora, N. Y. No. 9870. The writer was illiterate when he entered the school.

Box "B," Danmore, N. Y.  
Dec. 26, 1912.

Mr. James Walker  
# 42 East 49 St.  
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Sir:

I am informed that you want a man in your private stable, so I will make application for the same.

I have already been employed with Mr. Joseph Long who is in the same line of business as your. My salary received was seventy-five dollars (\$75) per month.

I am an Italian, twenty-nine years of age, I can speak an English very well.

If this application will be satisfactory to you, please write me and I will come to you at once. I remain,

Yours truly,

SPECIMEN No. 7.—Clinton Prison, N. Y. No. 9073. This writer also was illiterate when he entered the school.

## IV. WOMEN'S PRISON SCHOOL, AUBURN, N. Y.

By HELEN P. STONE,

Head Teacher.

As soon as practicable after a woman enters prison she is brought to the schoolroom, where she is given an examination regarding her education. This examination consists usually of some easy reading, a few practical questions in arithmetic, and a letter to the teacher giving an account of her school life. Classification is based largely on this letter and is roughly as follows:

- I. Illiterate foreigners.
- II. Foreigners who have had some education in their native country.
- III. American illiterates.
- IV. English speaking, able to read and write a little.
- V. Americans who have had a common-school education.

The women are either marked as excused from attending school if they have sufficient education to warrant it or assigned to the standard best fitted to their needs. By far the greater number are entered in standards I, III, or IV.

With the non-English speaking, much of the work is conversational, the aim being to familiarize them with common English words and idioms. As soon as possible they are taught to write their names, and are very proud when they possess that ability. As soon as the more common words are mastered they are given books, and, except for more conversational work, the hour is spent in much the same way as in English-speaking classes.

The average daily attendance is 57, I think. About 45 per cent of the entire population attend school. I have at present two inmate assistants, who have themselves been pupils in the school, and each of whom has one class in the afternoon.

Considerable attention is given to the common requirements of life; that is, they learn what articles may be purchased at a dry-goods store, a hardware store, etc., and the average cost of articles in use in ordinary life.

The school is in session four hours a day for five days in the week. The first class comes in at 9 o'clock, remains one hour, when another class takes its place. The lessons assigned are studied in their rooms and written work brought in on slates. These are examined quickly and criticism made before the recitation proper begins.

During the hour in school instruction is given in spelling, reading, and arithmetic. Many geographical readers are used, thus correlating the subjects, and language work is based largely on the spelling and reading. Physiology and history are taken up in the more advanced classes.

One day each week is devoted to a written lesson, a review of the lessons during the week. Letters to be sent home are also written in school, and it is a happy day for a woman when she is able to write her own letter to be sent home. The writing of business letters, making out bills of groceries, etc., is taught in connection with regularly assigned lessons.

An effort is made to cultivate a taste for good literature by memorizing poems, and by either placing in their hands good books from the school library as soon as they are able to read them or by suggesting to those in the higher classes books to be drawn from the general library.

A reading club, called The Worth While Circle, has been organized. Membership is not limited to the women who attend school, the only requirement being that a woman submit an original article of some merit. Meetings are held semi-monthly. This year we are considering particularly events in United States history.

Holidays are usually observed by an entertainment given in the chapel, to which all women in the prison are admitted. The program is in keeping with the day. The women are almost without exception not only willing but anxious to participate in these entertainments, and it has come to be regarded as an honor to be assigned some part in them.

The following program of an entertainment gives a fair idea:

#### MEMORIAL DAY EXERCISES.

1. Song: "Hail Columbia."
2. Recitation: "The Baby's Kiss."
3. "The Picket's Song."
4. "You put no Flowers on My Papa's Grave."
5. Duet: "My Rose."
6. Recitation: "The Silent Battle."
7. Recitation: "The Soldier's Dream."
8. Phonograph.
9. Recitation: "A Song of the Camp."
10. Reading: "The Invincible Veterans."
11. Recitation: "A Secret."
12. Recitation: "In His Faded Coat of Blue."
13. Recitation: "The Little Brown Seed."
14. Phonograph.
15. Recitation: "The Thinning Ranks."
16. Recitation: "A Georgia Volunteer."
17. Recitation: "Pat's Confederate Plg."
18. Song: "A Lullaby."
19. Recitation: "Blue and Gray."
20. Recitation: "An Incident of the War."
21. Memorial Day exercises by 13 girls.
22. Song: "Star-Spangled Banner."

The work has for its object the better preparation for living an honorable life when they leave here; the cultivation of taste, that she may be able to see and appreciate the beautiful in nature and in literature; the development of reasoning power; the ability to distinguish more clearly between right and wrong; in short, to help them to reform themselves.

4D88  
The Value of Prison School

This prison school has helped me wonderfully. For when I came here I could not read or write one word. And thought I never could but I soon found out different. I did not know the value of knowing how to read and write until I was taught here. I was as one asleep in this big world until I learned how to read and write. It is not only the good it will do me here in this institution but the help it will be to me in my future life. And as it was that I had to come here I am very thankful for what I have learned since I have been ~~at~~ here here.

SPECIMEN No. 8.—State Prison for Women, Auburn, N. Y. Written by a colored girl who was unable to write her name when she entered.