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The Criminal and his Needs.

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Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Canadian Club,—I regard it as a great privilege to have the opportunity of addressing this club upon a subject which I believe to be a vital interest to our national life. The manner in which any country deals with its criminal classes is a matter affecting the standard of the nation's morality. To cure criminality as far as we are able should be the earnest aim.

I believe criminals can be reformed and rehabilitated as social units, and doubt it no more than I doubt the sun shines. The treatment and prevention of crime is undoubtedly one of the greatest problems of

modern civilization. Criminals, as a rule, are the severest judges of human nature. If a man is spurious they will find it out more quickly than anyone else, and will, consequently, treat him with the contempt he deserves. On the other hand, they will take kindly to practical advice and help when it comes from a source which they can rely upon, and show gratitude for the efforts made in their behalf. All reformatory laws are a progressive science, things of growth and development to meet the varying needs of civilization.

The making men better in the penitentiaries is the same work exactly as making them better outside. It is work upon character. The reformation of bad men anywhere which leaves their character unchanged, amounts to nothing inside or outside of a prison. So far then as penitentiaries, organizations, or any systems that are trying wisely to make men better, they are doing essentially the same work, and it is done under laws, and these laws are the same in operation everywhere. They know no distinction of persons, or of times, or of places, than the law of gravitation itself. Nineteen centuries of Christian history has developed a science of character building. The work of making bad men better is the most divine art or science that is followed by anyone in this world, and this art is ruled by its own laws which no sect, organization, or people, can claim a monopoly of, and this art or science is the same in operation and effect in the church or in the penitentiaries. After all there is but one force or power that can transform life. It is the getting rid of the old and poor mental and spiritual fibre, and the developing of the new fibre of a better life, by the replacing or recreation of new paths of thought, aspirations and ambitions of the higher and nobler life. We must not forget that sixty years ago society's attitude towards its imprisoned criminals was indifferent. The governing principle was to have the greatest security with the least expense. Good men and women looked on absolutely unconscious of the wrongs inflicted on individual criminals without any regard to the injury thus inflicted on society. A few strong humane men undertook the cause of the weak and the erring; they looked into causes and conditions producing crime, as well as the needs of the criminal, and their toil and research has led up to many reforms in our prison administrations, also in the curative agencies now in vogue in our federal penal institutions. Through their research and experience we have at last learned that criminals immured in a prison are men, and that when we are dealing with units, as in dealing with prisoners they are as much a part of society as free men, and in dealing with influences that effect them we deal with influences that will help us control ourselves and our children.

Penology has of late years been elevated to the position of a science, which not only considers the cause of men inside the prison walls, but also everything that will aid in keeping men out of prison whether edu-

cational or legislative, and as a science it is now recognized in the leading universities of the Dominion, and the teachers of sociology are the teachers of many of its phases.

The attitude of society has also undergone a radical change during the past few years. It is not all we desire it to be, but there is good cause for hopefulness in the future work. Society is no longer the factor of an avenger toward the criminal, enforcing the requirements of "an eye for an eye." On the contrary the rule or principle now involved is that of self-protection and correction. If any person encroaches upon the rights and privileges of others it is the right of society or its agents to deal with the offender in any way that may seem best to stop his encroachments.

When found necessary the delinquent is placed in custody for a stated time, trusting that his conduct will give the assurance that he may sometime be trusted again outside. But the delinquent is entitled in the meantime to treatment that shall not degrade his manhood, but provoke to effort and restore. In short he is a ward of the state and should be treated in the same way that a wise and prudent parent treats his erring child.

It does not require that the delinquent should be coddled with feather beds or served with a menu card equal to the King Edward at his meals, as some mere sentimentalists or rose-water theorists would have our prison authorities adopt, but, on the contrary, the conditions of living under imprisonment should be as hard and as exacting as the discipline you find enforced on a British ship of war. Every comfort the prisoner received in prison should be fairly earned by his good conduct and close application to industry. One of the initial principles of our penitentiaries is to make the delinquent feel and clearly understand, that crime of any character is hateful to both God and man and that the way of the transgressor is hard.

Under the rule of self-protection, however, reformation is far more effective than undue severity acting as a deterrence to crime; one lasts while fear is on, while reformation is often permanently effected through strong and humane corrective agencies.

The parole system deals most effectively with young and first offenders who have not revealed or developed any special depravity. They can, by their industry and conduct, apply for the minister's consideration and receive the benefit of this far-reaching restorative agency.

This system has demonstrated that 87 per cent. of the men released on parole, during the six years of operation, have been restored to good citizenship and are now law-abiding.

In this connection it may be pointed out that, since the system was introduced by Hon. David Mills, 1,183 have been allowed out on parole. Of these only 24 have been returned to penitentiary and prison. Seventy licenses have been revoked because of failure to report, and over 600

have been accorded their full liberty. These men are out supporting their families, doing their part in the world's work, whereas in gaol they would each be costing the country some \$250 per year. The population of the penitentiaries is now 1,359, compared with 1,314 last year and 1,415 and 1,430 in the years preceding. For 15 years there has been no increasing of the criminal classes, despite the large influx of European immigration.

Youths, who have violated law, have, through the juvenile courts, been saved from the publicity of their crime, and through the suspended sentence system have been saved from the contaminating associations of a prison and graduated and trained into citizenship.

On the other hand experience has clearly shown that there are criminals who, thus far, have proved themselves incorrigibles. Some I have known congenital in their character, or moral idiots. They are criminals for crime's sake, and are dangerous to society and themselves while at large. I have had men tell me on their discharge from prison that they were going to follow the "graft" and despise the honest work opened up to them when offered this practical help.

Prison construction has wonderfully advanced during late years. They are clean and sanitary. The industrial plant which give so many men helpful employment, is one of the strongest factors I know of; not only teaching new trades and industry, but most helpful in producing the inspiration of a better life.

The moral, educational and spiritual influences brought to bear on the inmates of our penitentiaries by the chaplains, who toil devotedly and continuously for the betterment of the men under their care, produce great good in the after life of these men. I would centre my hopes as the days bring research and experience in the work of prevention rather than build too strongly on our curative agencies in the reduction of the volume of crime in the Dominion. It is true the populations of our penitentiaries are not showing any alarming increase. Take a review of the past fifteen years and you will find numbers about stationary. Taking into consideration the abnormal increase of the last few years from the tides of emigration, also the growing laxity of parental authority, the idleness of many, all conditions not producing the best results one would like to see. That we show no great increase in serious offences, is a fact that gives satisfaction and places the citizens of our Dominion by the operation of their good laws and good government, to a place second to none, with other nations. It is essential to look into some of the causes which produce crime. Our educational system might be improved. Intellectual culture is good, but the individual needs to know how to earn his way in life when the profession fails, or when conditions require him to labor. To know a trade or to be skilled in labor, should be taught to every young man of our Dominion.

Strong drink is a great destruction and the cause of the ruination of thousands annually, yet it is not the cause of crime so much as the effect. Crime drives its victims to drink more often than drink drives to crime. The most dangerous criminals I have met in our penitentiaries do not use liquors at all, as they say they are a hindrance to their profession.

The greatest agency or factor of all our efforts in the re-construction of men, is the religious. We must utilize more often than ever we have heretofore, the religious element which is inherent in the universal heart of man. You may call it what you will, but the fact remains, that man, though he be a mere animal, "whose life is rounded by a little sleep, and ends with the grave," nevertheless he is the only animal whose life is governed by what he believes and who rises and falls in accordance with his mental ideas. Personally, I am a strong believer in the Christian religion, but I have never thought it the only religion worthy of attention. What I do believe firmly, is that religion is inherent with all mortals. By religion I mean the realization of a condition dependent upon and responsible to an invisible being or person outside of themselves which say, "thou shalt" or "thou shalt not." And this is the force that we appeal largely to in dealing with delinquents in our prison administration.

There is no doubt we often get imposed upon. On one occasion I spoke to a man in one of our shelters asking him if he did not want to secure work. "Say," was his reply, "you've got the wrong pig by the ear. Work and I fell out six years ago."

Gaining his confidence he told me how he begged, winding himself into pitiful contortions, he visited the business men at ten o'clock in the morning when they were busiest and sometimes got as much as \$7 in two hours, telling a sad tale.

But such incidents must not discourage us.

We can and may prove ourselves failures through want of co-operation with the great forces of the infinite in any sphere of life and thus be led to take a pessimistic view of things because our ideals are not realized, but one thing remains—our Creator lives and loves, and the tend of humanity is upwards, not downwards. Man's redemption must surely come. As this great globe of ours swings its mighty orbits around the sun and lifts its polar ice crowns into desolving summer, so let our faith believe that in the greater and grander cycles of human destiny, we are gradually approaching the time when the long and icy winters of suffering and burdened humanity are revolving us nearer the golden summer of the "Son of Man." What the poor, the erring and the vicious need, is warmth.

There was once on his couch before Christ, a man who could not walk, the bones, the joints, the muscles were all there—perhaps these correspond to a certain extent with our systems or our organizations.

The lame man needed something and that something should come into his life. Strength if you please, and over the strange mystic lines of sympathy and love, that additional something came into his life, and the man walked. I sometimes think that Christ put that something (some call it religion, some call it gospel, some call it salvation—call it what you may but don't miss it) into one word when he said to burdened and suffering humanity, "Come, come unto me." That "come" is knowledge plus impulse, education plus courage, it is the call to duty plus the strength and assurance of a mighty help to obey the call.

In proportion as the one who said, "come" dwells in men in that proportion men can communicate to the weak and erring of our prisons, the strength they need. I often hear opinions expressed on penological questions that are not founded on logic or fact. Our opinions are generally the fruit of passion or of feelings. Judgment is more often founded on reason. Opinions are sometimes formed on appearances, but judgment on investigation. This is why opinions are often crude, irrelevant and inconsistent, while the decisions of a good judgment are systematic, regular and consistent. It is a good, wise and sound judgment men need to impart to others, to undertake the uplifting of our criminal classes, or the imparting of strength and sympathy to the fallen.
