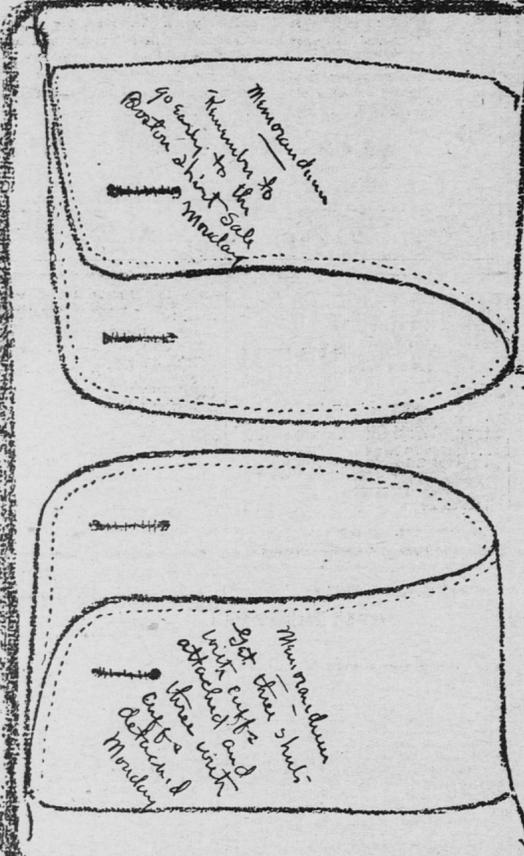


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DISCUSSES PRISON REFORM AND LYNCHING

Warden Wolfer, of Minnesota, Gives a Strong Address Before Prison Association.

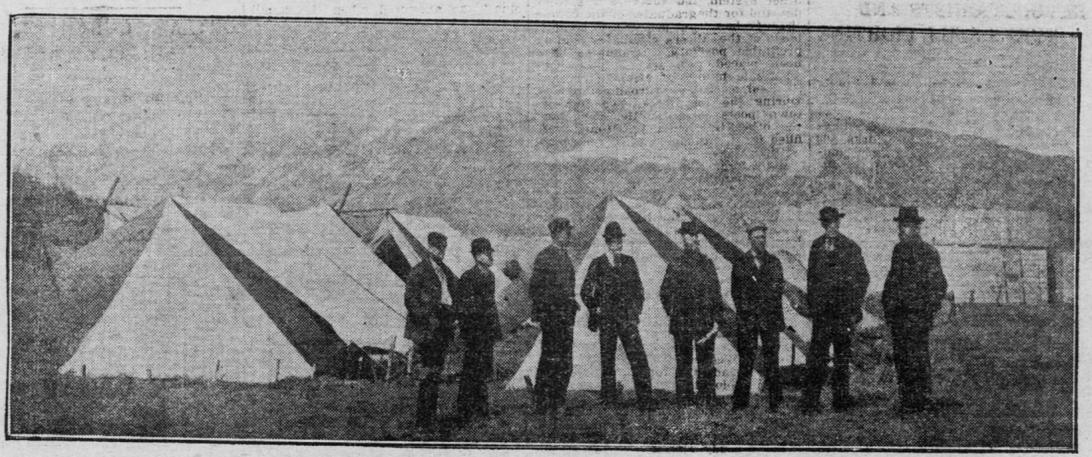
LOUISVILLE, Ky., Oct. 3.—The National Prison Association of the United States held the opening session of its annual congress here tonight, the delegates crowding Music hall almost to suffocation. The opening session was devoted for the most part to responses by officers of the association. The congress will continue for six days, and nearly every state and Canada is represented.

The feature of tonight's session was the address of the president, Henry Wolfer, warden of the state penitentiary, Stillwater, Minn. He said:

"I do not think there is any line of human endeavor in which more rapid advance has been made during the last century than in prison reform. There is still much to be done. There are still penal institutions in so-called civilized countries which are turning out hardened criminals by the score; but we have public sentiment with us now and it will only be a little while before these reactionists will be forced to get into line.

"The education of public sentiment has been our most difficult task. Through our efforts to protect society from the criminal, we have learned much, not only of the most approved treatment of criminals, but of crime itself in the abstract.

"From the evolutionary viewpoint, what



United States Surveyors in the Shadow of the Mountains on the Alaskan Boundary.

we call evil and crime originated in the struggle for existence. Such traits of character as we condemn today were at one time necessary to man in his constant warfare against other organic beings. And as long-continued habits become fixed, more or less, and as even when such habits have been partly overcome by external conditions and internal adaptations to them, there still constantly recur reversion to the primitive type, the evolutionist seems justified in concluding that criminal tendencies, inherited or otherwise, may be the result of conditions that once forced man to adapt himself to them in order to maintain his existence. Hence crime must always have existed, but was not always recognized as such. The men of the thirteenth century will condemn many of our practices which we consider entirely harmless.

"The modern scientist has shown us that traits of character that have not only become useless to man, but are detrimental, are evil, possibly criminal. The struggle for existence continually forces man to adopt new methods to meet new conditions; and as he slowly changes from one mode of existence into another, old methods gradually take on the appearance of evil, while new methods, better suited to new conditions, are termed good. Hence evil and crime are necessary concomitants of the law of evolution, or at least of superorganic evolution.

"Indeterminate Sentence and Parole.

"Philanthropists, humanitarians, theorists and practical prison men are agreed that the indeterminate sentence and parole law presents the most feasible method of dealing with criminals.

"The underlying principle of the law is sound. It presupposes that the offender, although he is for the time being opposed to the law, yet may be transformed into a social being if the useful traits of character are encouraged and the vicious ones discouraged. It deals with the criminal, not with the crime; and to appreciate the necessity of this one need but remember that life is cumulative. Nothing is isolated in this world. There is a cause for each effect. And a large and emotional school of so-called criminologists to the contrary notwithstanding, there is no such thing as accidental crime. Accidental criminals are creations of fervent and overheated imaginations.

"But while the indeterminate sentence and parole law is based on a scientific principle, and while it has been productive of much good in the past, and is accomplishing much today, it will not do to make a fetish of it and look upon it as a panacea of all social ills or the solution of the eternal problem of crime. Admirable as it is in theory, it cannot be gained that it has to a certain extent failed to meet our expectations when put into practice. This, however, is not the fault

of the law. It is due to the carelessness and inefficiency of those who are selected to administer it.

"The indeterminate sentence and parole law, unless it is administered with more system, care and conservatism than has been exercised in the past, is destined to become an object of ridicule for practical men. A law designed to reform criminals which when put into operation serves to furnish desperate and dangerous characters with an easy means of escaping the consequences of their vicious lives is not likely to become popular with thinking people. And, to a considerable extent, this is what the indeterminate sentence law is doing at the present time. There are far too many parole breakers. It is far too easy for convicts to break their paroles with impunity.

"If we are to get the best results from the indeterminate sentence and parole law, we must perforce devise some plan by means of which we can make ourselves thoroughly conversant with the lives, habits, associates and temperament of those in our charge. It is not enough that a convict has been a good prisoner. It is not enough that he has shown a disposition to obey the rules and perform satisfactory work while he is in prison. Before he is granted a parole we should know beyond peradventure what his past life has been. With such knowledge in our possession we can act with our eyes open, and if a parole is granted can so condition it that in case it is violated escape will be extremely difficult. There is at present entirely too much negligence displayed in administering the parole law. In some localities it has become almost a farce.

"What is needed to prevent frequent violations of paroles is active co-operation between the heads of penal institutions in the various states. The means at present employed to supervise paroled prisoners are well enough so far as they go, but in many states are insufficient and inadequate. The prisoner should not only be carefully watched and his movements noted, but he should be encouraged to persevere in his well-doing. The warden, or the official appointed by him to attend to such matters, should keep in touch with the prisoner, encourage him to write and tell his troubles and plans and give him good advice when the opportunity offers. Above all things, the prisoner should be given to understand that it will go hard with him if he breaks his parole. And, indeed, with the means of communication at our disposal, it should be impossible for a man who has been measured and photographed by experts to escape identification. And that brings me to the Bertillon system.

"The Bertillon System.

"If the parole law is to be universally adopted, and there is every indication that such will be the case, a single standard of measurement and identification is absolutely essential. If the Bertillon sys-

tem is inadequate, we must invent some other. But I believe the Bertillon system, when it is properly employed, will be found to give full satisfaction.

"The question of establishing a national bureau of identification is now before congress, and in all probability a law will be enacted creating such a bureau at the next regular session, as it is of importance to us to bring this matter to a rapid conclusion.

"To return to parole breakers. They must not be permitted to escape. Where violations occur we must be tireless and unremitting in our efforts to apprehend the culprits. If we cannot do this, we would better abandon the intermediate sentence and hark back to the old time sentence once more. In saying this I have also said, however, as it may, it is in the interest of both the prisoner and of society at heart.

"Our business is to build up, to try to strengthen those who are weak, and to do what we can to uphold those who are prone to fall; not to place temptation in the path of weak men. It is only an exceptionally strong man who can safely court temptation.

"Politics and Prison Management.

"We hear much nowadays about removing the judiciary from the realm of politics, and I believe the consensus is that it should be removed. As the prison, in a way, supplements the bench, it would seem a necessary corollary that if one is removed the other should be also. However, be that as it may, it is unquestionably true that politics and the best prison management are as antagonistic as oil and water.

"To appoint a warden, deputy warden, or even a subordinate official simply because he has been an active worker during the doubtful moments of a political campaign, while it may be a friendly act, is detrimental to the best interests of society. I even question if it is good politics; for there is nothing the opposite of releasing more an opportunity to attack the party in power with the weapon furnished by a misgoverned state institution. And incompetent men are pretty sure to be poor managers. The prison has nothing whatever to do with politics. If it is properly managed, it cannot possibly be made an issue of the campaign, and its management must work for the best interests of the whole state, no matter which party is in power.

"According to my notion, there is no room for the theorist, the hobbyist or the quasi-sentimental student of criminology in the government of a prison. It is business proposition and demands practical men. The warden or superintendent in particular should be conversant with every detail of prison affairs. He should be one who started at the bottom of the ladder and worked his way up through superior ability. A warden or higher official who has to rely on some

one else to tell him how the institution should be conducted is as certain to fail as he would be if he undertook the superintendence of a factory under like circumstances.

"Scientific Penology."

"I do not believe penology can be reduced to a science. It is hampered with too many ifs and buts and hows. To treat all criminals alike in every respect, and at the same time have in view what is best for the individual criminal, and for society, would lead to results altogether unsatisfactory. The ultimate aim of penology should be the protection of society and the reformation of the criminal. And the treatment that will be conducive to the reformation of one criminal may prove altogether abortive when applied to another criminal. Even in the maintenance of discipline criminals of different temperament require different treatment.

"As the careful physician makes inquiry concerning his patient's physical condition, and minutely examines the part that is affected by disease, and then selects the drugs which according to his judgment will best suit the ascertained conditions; so the penologist before he begins a certain mode of treatment should first make reasonably sure that such mode of treatment will produce the desired effect. But he is greatly handicapped. Before he has had time to study his ward thoroughly, or has had the opportunity to ascertain the nature and magnitude of the criminal's moral infirmity, in about 50 per cent of the cases the time sentence the criminal's sentence will have expired and he is turned loose, it may be unchanged, unrepentant or possibly hardened and more set in his evil ways. And while it is true that the general treatment of criminals in our time is a tremendous improvement on the treatment accorded criminals in former times, it is extremely doubtful if penology will ever be put upon such a basis as will entitle it to be classed as a science.

"Admitting that the best way to reform a criminal is to set him a good example, it is still a mooted question how such an example can best be made to appeal to the better nature of the criminal.

"The one thing the people fail to understand is that the general treatment of criminals in our time is a tremendous improvement on the treatment accorded criminals in former times. It is extremely doubtful if penology will ever be put upon such a basis as will entitle it to be classed as a science.

"There is a spirit of lawlessness abroad in the land which has grown to such magnitude as to concern every thinking person in the country. It has manifested itself in lynchings. In the last twenty-one and one-half years 2,941 persons have been lynched in the United States. These lynchings have not been confined to any particular section, nor have they been the result of any particular crime. We cannot look with indifference on the widespread moral obliqueness indicated by mob rule. I need not say it is inexcusable. The excuse that justice is slow and uncertain is not in accordance with the facts. In no part of the United States would it be difficult to select a jury to adequately punish those who now fall victims to mob rule, and furthermore it is inexcusable because it exerts influence on the criminally inclined. Violence begets violence, and respect for law and order propagates itself.

"We need to get at the root of this matter, to discover if possible why our country has been subjected to this conflagration of mob rule within the last two decades.

"Lynching is frequently condoned on the ground that the better composed citizens compose the mobs that perpetrate the outrages. Even if this assertion were true, I cannot see how it could be accepted in extenuation of the crime; but there never was anything less proved or less probable. Every person who makes one of a lynching mob should be treated as a murderer. I do not say that when they are so treated lynching will cease; but I am convinced that the knowledge that swift and sure justice will follow the commission of a crime has a salutary effect on all lawbreakers."

fundamental truths or well established facts; which truths and facts are almost altogether if not wholly wanting in penology.

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Three Sets of Twins.

NEW YORK, Oct. 3.—Mrs. John Beam, of Mitchellville, N. Y., sixty-five years old, has given birth to twins. Her daughter, who lives in the neighboring township, presented her husband twins about the same hour. Before congratulations were finished Mrs. Beam's granddaughter sent word that she had just become the mother of two healthy children.

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