EDITORIALS By The PEOPLE

Prison Labor as an Indication of Civilization.

By Carrol D. Wright,

United States Commissioner of Labor.

NOTWITHSTANDING all the facts, the experience, and the observation which go to prove that civilization has made wonderful advances in almost every direction during the last hundred years or more, the assertion is constantly made that it is an appearance of progress that attracts public attention; and, however much popular education may be stimulated and supported by public funds and universities may constantly increase, and material prosperity may attend our affairs, and music and art be nearer the common people than ever, nevertheless the pessimist rather insists that real moral conditions have not changed for the better, that crime increases, that marriages decrease relatively, that vice in great cities is more strongly intrenched than ever, and that in spite of all the wonderful prosperity and other elements which ought to make for progress, progress is only apparent and not real.

All through the nineteenth century these questions received more or less attention, but during the last quarter of it immense changes were brought about not only in methods relating to the management of prisons, but in the employment of prisoners. Economic reasons induced labor reformers everywhere to make an attack upon the methods of employing convicts. When it was thoroughly understood that penal labor was bad in every respect, the state everywhere undertook to conduct prisons on what may be called a treasury basis—that is, the utilization of prison labor in such a way as to make that labor pay the expenses of the prison and perhaps bring some profit to the public treasury. These results were sought through what was known as the contract system, under which the labor of prisoners was let out to the highest bidder. Then the manager entered the prison and utilized the labor of the prisoners, paying low prices for the work and thus having a supposed advantage in the sale of his goods. This brought the attention of labor reformers to prison labor, but the greatest result which has come from their attack has been in calling attention to the real condition of prisoners as well as the methods under which their labor was employed.

While prison labor affected wages and prices under the contract system to some extent, enough at least to incite the antagonism of organized labor, the real, great question was whether prisoners were being employed in such a way as to work their reformation or otherwise. Political parties then took up the question, and the matter was agitated in many places, labor reformers demanding in some parts of the country that prisoners should not be employed at any productive labor at all. This position was soon abandoned, however, and then the demand came that they should be employed in such a way as to secure the least competition with free labor on the outside of prisons, adopting the very thought of the burgomaster of Ghent.

Under the reformatory measures various systems were projected with the view of avoiding the contract system, until today we have two groups of systems—first those under which the product of profits of prison labor is shared by the state with private individuals, firms or corporations. Under this group three distinct systems are authorized, being known respectively as the contract system, the piece-price system and the lease system. Under all these the state has a financial advantage, but the contractors or lessees have a greater advantage.

Second, systems under which convicts are worked wholly for the benefit of the state or its political subdivisions or public institutions. Under this group there are three specific systems, known as the public-account system, the state-use system and the public-ways-and-works system. The methods named under this group are those which are attracting more attention than any others. Under them penologists see the greatest advantage to be derived from the employment of prisoners. They abandon in a certain sense the treasury idea—that is, the profit should come to the state—and recognize that the reformation of prisoners is of far more importance than profit to the state.

Under the agitation the idea has grown with legislators, economists and sociologists everywhere that the convict or the criminal should be treated from the physician's point of view—as a man morally sick, not to be degraded but to be treated, not to be punished simply for the sake of punishment but restricted in his liberty for the sake of society but while being restricted he is to be given the best possible opportunity for moral development; also for the development of his working powers, so that when he is freed from his restriction he shall be in a position to take up self-sustaining work as a good citizen of the community.

This state of affairs shows the remarkable changes in prison discipline and the development of the prisoner, and is one of the strongest answers to the allegation that progress is apparent and not real. Here is a concrete illustration of the real moral and economic progress, for the prisoner today is not only employed, but in many of our states is given a training, technical and otherwise, which shall fit him for reasonably decent citizenship. Now, instead of the old degrading conditions in all prisons everywhere civilized governments are conducting prison industries in such a way as to leave the least impression on prices and wages. They are recognizing the force of the suggestion that it is the interest of labor and capital to reduce the number of prisoners as an initiative to means of greater reform; that they must so deal with criminals as to effect a cure of moral maladies; that prisons should be conducted in the interest of the prisoners and of society primarily, and that the interest of the treasury should only be incidental to the best effect upon the prisoners themselves and upon the community; and they further recognize the great moral principle that the state should always conduct its prisons and employ its prisoners in such a way that the individual should not be degraded.

The True Realistic Novel Defined.

By Mrs. J. E. Kenney,

Member of the Thursday Club.

WHAT is a novel? What does it teach us? Perhaps we never wrong a writer more than when we try to think some definite, specific purpose into his work, a purpose that might more fitly come from our own qualifications than from his. At the same time, if he successfully delivers himself, he must bring us, however unconsciously, some philosophic message, some trend of thought that can be worked back into an axiom for our own guidance and which claims universal allegiance through its justice. The simplest, most unintentional drawing of a neat geometrical figure cannot fail, however unwittingly, to manifest a portion of the eternal laws of balance and agreement in science, and so the faithful relation of the simplest set of occurrences cannot help portending some of the moral force that we all correspond to. Therefore, a store, of whatever kind, be it even farcical and tell the truth by introversion; or romantic, and tell the truth by experiment, must have a moral, if earnestly and faithfully told, because viewed in the light of its best significance, whatever is true must preach.

What we feel after reading a story is always reducible to some philosophical statement, and it is according to whether such a statement is true or false that the story is good or bad. And the true realistic story, being good, leads us to ask, what makes it good? Is it necessarily because of its literal accuracy of event, or of its faithful character sketching? We all know that the most graphic of stories is only a silhouette of life, that there are untold myriads of equally possible, but different phases, developments and climaxes, and that those chosen, and which we accept, have rested in the arbitrary choice of the writer. Therefore, our pleasure in the realistic novel is not so much in its actuality as in something else. All of us are delighted when Orlando hangs his lady love's name on the forest trees, though we should laugh heartily at any young man of our acquaintance for doing exactly the same thing. We have here a very pertinent proof of the value of realism to make us appreciate and get the benefit of romanticism, an unspeakable boom. When does the beauty of the heavens, of the sea or of the mountain peaks appeal to us more than when we are standing safe on firm ground? When can we answer more aptly than when sustained by realism to whoever would remind us that those things are beautified into deceptive worth through the light they are viewed in? "Yes, my friend, but what about the reality of the light itself? Does not that beautiful simulation and seeming departure from the severity of reality evidence the presence of something that is blessedly true?" Yes, is it only because it leads us to apprehend such beauty that the true realistic novel is good? The true realistic novel is not the undue dignifying of the unworthy. It is not the apotheosis of mediocrity. To the earnest and striving among us it draws out of us the threads from which we weave something new and noble and we are grateful to feel within ourselves the counterpart of its best parts. To live a little more according to our own capabilities, to adjust these a little more to those of other people—the book that makes us do this is the book for us, whether its kinship of a touch of nature be felt through a sigh or a laugh.

And what is the medium of this kinship? What, in fine, makes a story good? First, last and always, the man behind it, the quality of his mind, the essence of his personality—a personality shedding the beautiful colors painted into it through his own impulses having quivered, through conjecture into allegiance to the best, and our heritage is his nature purified, perhaps, through heartsearing experience, through high resolve or through love of his kind, and redolent always of his habitual self-communings. Be his touch ever so transient, it reveals himself, and be his subject matter what it will, we are always captivated if there runs through his writing the life blood of his own sterling worth. Some writers merely set down the figures of life's sums. Other writers work the figures out to some degree. Others, yet, simply point to their results, and a few, a chosen, inspired few—and the true realistic novelist is one of these—show the best us of their application. Why all the heartache and weariness of searching through emotions and actions if at the end of all these there is nothing better than an unpleasing cluster of circumstances calling for no better comment than an ignoble sign of fatalistic helplessness? There is more economy in the providential design that instituted the kingdoms of feelings, where there are a great many solutions that we should be too idly busy to perceive were it not for the realistic novel that tells us, wittingly or not, of the ineffable end and agreement of multitudinous human passions swelling, through principle, into coherence with the divine intent that begot all right, showing, formally or not, the perpetual infiltration of this right through wrong, and therefore proving purposely or not the invincible triumph of the ultimate truth.

Relation of the Press to the Postal Service.

By Henry A. Castle,

Auditor of the Postoffice Department.

THE relations between the postoffice department and the newspapers of the country should be at all points harmonious and co-operative. The postal service renders the journalism of today possible; the postal service and journalism combined furnish a pervading, ramifying, aggressive educational institute, a national university for the people, equaled by no other enterprise, for the diffusion of intelligence now existing among the children of men. Cheap postage, far below the cost of actual service for all legitimate journals, and free circulation in the home county for the omnipresent (in the aggregate well nigh omnipotent) local weekly are the cheerful contributions a generous nation makes toward building up this potent agency of advancing civilization. Journalism owes to the postal service the conscientious discharge of a reciprocal obligation.

It has been a matter of complaint by postoffice officials for a long time that the mails have been overloaded with publications which get the advantage of rates on periodicals without being entitled to them. If any class of mail matter is to be handled at a loss, it would be better for that loss to be occasioned by cheap rates on letters and newspapers. It is bad policy to compel newspapers and letters not only to pay their own way, but to bear a portion of the cost of transporting matter which is carried for the benefit of the few rather than for the many.

The ex-postmaster general, himself an experienced journalist of more than national reputation, has correctly diagnosed the malady and helped to prescribe an effective remedy. He admits that if the mail thus carried at a heavy loss were limited to just what the law intended there would be nothing more to be said. In that case it would be a deliberate and rational public expenditure for a well defined, justifiable and worthy public object, and, taking the service as a whole, there would be no loss. But the privilege has been abused until unendurable impositions resulted, and a cure must be vigorously applied.

There is a single advertising periodical of which the copies sent through the mails during one quarter averaged 223,688 pounds for each issue, or nearly eight carloads, reckoning the weight of a carload of paper as 30,000 pounds. For transporting each issue of that periodical the government actually paid $11,184.40, against which it collected $2,236.68 in postage. It also paid $1,473 for handling, making a direct net loss of $13,421 for every issue. As compared with this cash gift of the government the publishers paid for everything else $7,337 as against a net cost to the government of $13,421; so that the government contributed about $6,084 more on every issue to the expense of running that publication than the publishers themselves contributed.

Three distinct reforms are aimed at by the department in the movement it is now seeking to carry into effect under existing law, each of which it holds to be warranted by the law's plain intent and neither of which can in in the slightest degree injure any genuine nwespaper or periodical. These reforms are cutting off purely advertising sheets, changing serial books to the class they properly belong and abolishing the abuse of returning unsold goods from newsdealers to publishers at the 1 cent per pound rate. In these reforms the postmaster general truly says all legitimate newspapers and magazines have an interest as immediate and vital as that of the government and the people themselves. No criticism falls on them, and no laying of an ax at rooted evils menaces their position. They ask no favors; they stand on their rights with their fixed place, their public object and their regular body of readers; they are the direct objects of that deliberate and enlightened public policy which in the interest of the people fosters the recognized sources of public intelligence; they observe and fulfill the requirements of the law, and because they do they have the more concern in eliminating those which do not.

The people do not know half as much as they should about the postal service. They do not realize how much it is to them and how much its efficiency may depend upon their care and watchfulness. It is the bounden duty of newspapers as the advance agent of civilization to stimulate their readers to an active interest in and to copiously supply them with correct information in regard to that system the proper working of which is so important to their social, moral and material welfare.

Our postal service is so nearly self-sustaining that the question of cheaper rates of first-class postage is being discussed, and it is creditable to the generosity of the public that there is no general demand for a decrease, but rather that any prospective surplus should be expended in the betterment of the service even to the general establishment of rural free delivery. We need the very best, most reliable system in preference to cheaper postage, and when perfection shall have been nearly attained cheaper rates will be in order.

The Registration of Tuberculosis.

By Dr. Arthur Sweeney.

IS there nothing further that can be done to prevent the enormous death rate from consumption? Much as the intelligent body of physcians has done to limit its spread, and to awaken the public to a realization of its dangers, are there no other feasible means which can be employed? The building of sanatoria, the prevention of milk infection, regulations in regard to expectorating in public places, will do much. But the one thing which is essential, the proper education of the public, is difficult and can be said scarcely to have been begun.

The legislature as a body is indifferent. At a recent hearing before the legislature of this state, the learned lawmakers sat for an hour listening to doctors recite the dreadful ravages of the disease and the means by which they could be checked, with as much interest and enthusiasm as would be vouchsafed to a recital of the low spiritual condition of the Fiji islanders. The mere recital of statistics has no apparent effect on them and they have only an academic interest in prophylaxis and hygiene. The abstract consideration of the question is of course entertaining and diverting, but does not awaken active co-operation in any movement to better the conditions. Were an economic question under discussion, if the question concerned individual interest or if the benefit to come from legislation could be expressed in dollars and cents, there would be no lack of enthusiasm and eagerness to enact laws. Is there not some way in which a little life can be infused into the problem of preventing the spread of tuberculosis?

The general public is also indifferent. We bear other people's sorrows lightly. The victim of consumption has the sympathy of his friends and a largely attended funeral, but there the matter ends. The fact that one-seventh of the population is dying of a preventable disease excites scarcely a ripple of interest or alarm. A catastrophe by fire in which a hundred lives are lost stirs the hearts of the country, and loosens purse strings to the extent of millions, but the devastation of the white plague is complacently regarded as a dispensation of Providence, or an expression of the will of God. The same mental attitude in which people accept the statement that "the poor ye have always with you" as a justification and defense of poverty, receives the terrible mortality of tuberculosis as one of the inevitable conditions of existence. Is not the effort to awaken the public well nigh hopeless There is, however, one portion of the public that can be made to realize the necessity of controlling the disease. It is that portion which is brought in direct contact with the disease in themselves or in their families. To educate the public in general is hopeless, but to educate those whose interest in the disease is personal is a relatively easy matter. They see in it a personal affliction and they are or should be anxious to lessen the burden on themselves and others. The mere fact that one member of a family has tubercular disease is sufficiently alarming to make the others use strenuous efforts to prevent the disease from afflicting themselves. But general, haphazard, occasional and perfunctory instruction from the family physician is not enough to be effective. The disease is a public as well as a private affair, and should be under the control of the public health authorities.

Not less directly than smallpox and diphtheria, tuberculosis is communicable. There is no valid reason why it should not come under the official supervision of the health boards. To be tuberculous is no disgrace, and no stigma can attach to the one who has the disease. The legislature should be urged to require a report of cases of tuberculosis, just as is done with the ordinary contagious and infectious diseases. The health officers should have the power to inspect the premises occupied by consumptives, and to require a minimum of hygienic surroundings. They should keep a register of those sick with the disease, and should periodically by personal visitation see that the general laws of prevention are being observed, and by proper literature should instruct the sick and their relatives concerning the best way to secure immunity. At present there is no supervision of consumptives, and the rules are willfully and carelessly disobeyed because there is nothing to compel their observance. There is no record of those afflicted with the disease and there can be no effective control until it is known who are sick and where the centers of dissemination are. All effort at education of the general public will fail because the effort is misdirected. There can be no result from the general dissemination of literature, but everything is to be hoped for when common sense information in regard to the disease is placed in the hands of those who have a personal interest in it.

The most effective way of preventing the spread of this devastating disease is by requiring registration of the tuberculous, by disseminating useful literature among them, by inspection of the homes by personal visitation and by enlisting the co-operation of those afflicted in controlling the spread of contamination. The physicians can secure such laws if they ask for them. They are the ones to first move in the matter.

Purpose of Manhood Suffrage.

By David Starr Jordan,

President of Stanford University.

THE purpose of manhood suffrage is not primarily to give good government, but to make men strong. Without responsibility for national affairs, men will lose interest in them. Without interest, they will fail in intelligent comprehension of them. The tendency of manhood suffrage is to give broader views, wiser methods of action, and higher patriotism. While democratic forms often yield bad government, it is through their operation that we have the best guarantee of good government in the future. A republic is a huge laboratory of civics, a laboratory where strange experiments are performed, but where, as in other laboratories, experience must bring wisdom. The failures of democracy bring their own remedy in the greater wisdom of the people.

If voting has this effect on man, we have a right to expect similar results from the extension of the suffrage to woman. That such results shall not be in all respects advantageous is also certainly true. But, so far as women are concerned, the gain would seem to outweigh its cost.

It has been made a reproach to women that they are short-sighted, devoted to the near and the immediate, careless of ultimate results. This tendency exists in the nature of things, for woman's sphere is the home, rather than the nation. But, if it be a reproach, the extension of responsibility would correct it.

It is moreover true that the average man is prone to feel a greater interest in far-away affairs, which he cannot control, than in near matters which affect him vitally. He neglects the home and its needs, in his interest in the nation. The sanitation of our own street, the extinction of the slums in our own city, the purification of centers of corrosion which destroy our own children, is far more vital to us, as individuals, than the problems of imperialism, of commercialism, or even of national finance. In great affairs our republic is the most stable of nations. Her failure is in local and municipal administration. It is the reflex of the weakness of the average man. This the shorter but clearer sight of the average woman would tend to counteract.

Equal suffrage would tend to broaden the minds of women, and to increase their sense of personal responsibility. It may help to solve the problem of honest and clean local government. It may tend to make our cities centers of sweetness and light, as well as of activity and strength.

The Enthusiasm for Literature.

By Dr. Richard Burton,

University of Minnesota.

AS a suggestive definition for culture we may take literary enthusiasm for the right things. This is by no means the common idea, for enthusiasm has come to mean often merely a cloak for ignorance. However, the deification of knowledge is not so popular in pedagogic circles as formerly. The most important development of later times is in the recognition of the emotional and inspirational as valuable forces in education. Is it not a fact of life, that our emotions, in the broad sense, make up the most of existence, and render it worth while?

So culture, in its true sense, is not merely knowledge that begets weariness and censoriousness—that creates the blase attitude which finds all things wrong without being able to say why they are wrong. This is mock culture—a degraded notion which is, alas, too common. Knowledge, to be sure, is necessary to the cultivated man or woman, but is not all, nor even half. There is a motor force which must move knowledge and that is love.

All great teachers have been first of all human beings. Such men as Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, have had personality. They have appealed to their students as being men like themselves, subject to the same influence, moved by the same feelings. So in our attitude toward literature, the most precious thing is real culture, which means the ability to read a poem and thrill in response to it. Enthusiasm, sensitiveness to noble emotional appeal, these are the basis of appreciation. The suppression of right feeling is ossification. This enthusiasm, this love for our subject, is the solvent which makes knowledge palatable.

All questions of methods, of teaching, of culture, face the same way. They must result, in the true sense, in character. They must keep us sensitive to the best and highest things of life. We must learn to let ourselves go, at the right place, as human beings. In Browning's words, "Let us be unashamed of soul."

One of the few great channels of power and spiritual beauty is literature. Literature which is only esthetic is not competent literature. Literature that endures is vitally related to life, and has also an ethical basis. Literature is not merely decorative. It is life itself, seen through a penetrating light which reveals depths of light and beauty. Shall we not then keep enthusiasm for it. Not excitement over pretty things, nor set smit a at whatever happens to be fashionable, but the nobler meaning, found in the lineage of the word—"God in us."

Advantages of Co-operative Elevators.

By Harley B. Mitchell,

Editor of the American Elevator and Grain Trade.

THE co-operative elevator, even in Minnesota and Kansas, where it is most in evidence, has hardly arrived at the dignity of a "movement." The difficulty is that farmers are not trained to the business of merchandising grain, however expert as grain growers, and in consequence too many shareholders in co-operative concerns have had their fingers burned to make further experiment popular with the initiated.

Yet in spite of these repeated failures, new co-operative elevator companies appear about as fast as old ones die. What is the reason? The Hanley-Butler type of co-operation is extremely local in its influence; moreover, the new co-operative concerns seem as a rule to come into being without their aid or suggestion. What, then, is the influence that begets them?

Without trying to give a direct answer to the query, the fact may be recalled that the co-operative elevator is most in evidence in that part of the country dominated by the great line elevator companies—the Northwest. Is this a more coincidence? The line elevator system certainly contains the germs of potential abuses that would, if put into practice, tend to cultivate the farmers' elevator system. Do those abuses, in fact, exist?

While believing with Secretary Wells, of Iowa, that the regular grain dealer is a business necessity for the economic merchandising of grain, one must also recognize the fact that the economies attained by modern methods of merchandising grain are well understood by the grain grower, and, rightly or wrongly, are further understood by him to inure most to his benefit in a natural state of competitive buying. Wherever, therefore, competitive buying is eliminated by the line company, and the usufruct of the economies is wholly appropriated by the buyer, naturally the grower becomes restless and discontented. It cannot be denied that the line elevator system, with its exclusive privileges on the right of way and presumably of a discriminative rate, also would be able to eliminate competition in a way that no body of individual grain buyers might do, however perfect their local organization. The latter are always subject to competition when conditions are favorable to invite it; the line company with a railway pull need have none it does not permit.