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## Editorials

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## EDITORIALS

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### PRISON ATHLETICS AND ENTERTAINMENTS

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Much unfavorable comment has been made in regard to the policy of prison entertainments and athletics and many witticisms have been uttered concerning imagined penitentiary alumni games and stories told of alleged exhortations from the coaches to fight for the glory of "dear old Sing Sing," "dear old Stateville" or "our dear old prison alma mater." Beneath all of this criticism and all of this attempted humor, however, there still remains the stark reality of the prison problem and often the tragedy stifles the laugh.

After all, should we laugh out of existence or sneer or hardboil out of existence our prison radios, our prison libraries, our prison entertainments and our prison athletics? Should we discourage all social contact in and make our penitentiaries places of suffering and of punishment and of suffering and of punishment alone?

Originally in Illinois and throughout the civilized world, practically the only forms of criminal punishment were the gallows, the pillory, the lash, or bodily mutilation. This was the rule of a sadistic age in which men and women would pay for the privilege of seeing even delicate women publicly flogged and would express regrets if any mercy was shown and the bare back was not torn in shreds.

Then came the demand for the penitentiary, but largely because the sight of blood was becoming repellant and not because the instinct of revenge and the desire for the punishment of the offender was not still in the forefront. It was the age of a cruel and soul-debasing incarceration and if any work was furnished it was in the form of the torture of opium picking or of the tread mill. We did not like the smell of blood but we did not hesitate at breaking human lives. Then came the idea that possibly the delinquent might be reformed and an expression of the thought of the French Revolutionary Assembly, that "the true design of punishment is to reform and not to exterminate mankind."

At first, however, the proponents of the new idea had no conception of the prisoner as a social being. Isolation and not socialization was the practice. Later and even when allowed to work in conjunction with and to eat with his fellow inmates complete silence was

enjoined and no contact with them was allowed except when he was silently at work or silently eating in the dining room.

Then thoughtful men began to realize that after all a criminal is merely a person who has lacked in the social instinct and who has suffered the consequences thereof, that he has been a super-egoist and has considered himself alone; that being careless of and being maladjusted to the society in which he has lived he has broken its laws and has become a criminal. They came to realize that what the criminal needed above all other things was socializing and that we cannot train an unsocial being to be social by shutting him off entirely from those around him and by depriving him of every rational opportunity to become socialized.

Laugh as we will at the idea of fighting for, or being loyal to, "dear old Sing Sing," to "dear old Stateville," or to "dear old Joliet," if a prisoner leaves these institutions without some sense of gratitude to their officers and some feeling of sympathy for their inmates or some feeling that he has been benefited by his sojourn there, then he has not been socialized and he has not been reformed, at any rate by our institutional treatment, and our institutional treatment has been a failure. It is better for him for the moment at least to be loyal to the composite membership of his penitentiary or of his cell block or tier than it is not to be loyal at all. The only way to make an anti-social being social is to induce him to fight for others.

It is well for us at any rate to remember that all of our prison inmates are not hardened offenders, that some of them committed their crimes when they were drunk, that some of them were mere boys and tag-alongs, that sooner or later practically all of them will be required to re-establish themselves in the world outside. They became criminals because they were anti-social. The problem of our penitentiaries is to adjust them to society. If they are not adjusted, if they are not socialized, they will become life long criminals.

It is true that our penitentiaries should be places of punishment, but the penitentiary should not in its conduct and in its discipline destroy all human personality, all hope of reformation and all possibility for a future social adjustment. We, too, must realize that though the prisoner may be marking time the outside world to which he is expected to adjust himself after his release is mercilessly marching on. Why should he not be allowed to learn something of this world? Why not the radio?

ANDREW A. BRUCE.

## EFFICIENCY OF THE RAILWAY POLICE

It was the privilege of the writer to be a guest at the annual dinner of the Chicago Railway Special Agents which was held in the City of Chicago on December 7. No one could fail but be impressed with the remarkable character of the railway policemen or special agents who were there assembled, and with the achievements of their organization which were there chronicled, and this editorial is written for the purpose of calling attention to what can be done in the police field if only the dignity of the profession is recognized and a proper support and a proper independence is given to its members. The following extract from the extremely able address of the President of the Association, Mr. Hinton G. Clabaugh, the former Chairman of the Illinois State Board of Paroles, tells a part, but not all, of the story. He said:

"It may interest you to know that Class I railroads of America paid freight claims and losses on account of theft and robberies unlocated and concealed amounting in the year 1922 to \$44,003,495. The following year it was reduced to \$31,949,184; and steadily, year by year, the amount has been reduced until the total losses for the year 1932 were \$2,171,122; and for the first eight months of this year, the losses are only \$496,687. A few years ago, in one year, the railroads paid out over \$3,000,000 for cigarettes stolen in transit. In other words, the railroads, and we modestly claim a part of the credit, have reduced these losses in thirteen years from \$44,000,000 per annum to \$2,000,000 per annum. During one of the worst depressions in history, with a great number of unemployed besides habitual hoboes riding on trains throughout the country, it would have been reasonable to expect an increase in such losses rather than a decrease. Instead of increased losses, the savings to the railroads in the freight claim deficit in the aggregate in thirteen years amounts to the stupendous sum of \$44,449,801, or 95 per cent efficiency. This is a record of which we may be proud."

Elsewhere in his address, Mr. Clabaugh disclosed the fact that the railroads' special agents have a record of successful prosecutions of almost 95 per cent. These figures can be verified. They do not exaggerate the situation. It is for us to ask why this great efficiency on the part of our railroad police and the usual inability of our State police forces to obtain convictions and to protect life and property. Is it not due to the fact that in the organization of our railroad police there is no politics, that men of ability and train-

ing are obtained for service and when they are obtained they are kept in office? They do not make arrests unless they are quite sure of their ground. When they make arrests and before they make them, they secure all of the necessary evidence. This evidence is preserved and, when the case comes for trial, the railroad is ready with its witnesses and knows what they will testify to. With our state police, however, the situation is entirely different. As a rule, our policemen are not well-trained or qualified. In almost every city of the country their numbers are entirely inadequate to the task which is before them. As a rule, they are satisfied merely with arresting. They do not, as the railroad officials, examine and question every possible witness, hunt down every clue and preserve this evidence in the form of evidence and other writings. Only too often when a state's attorney comes to try a case, he finds himself entirely without witnesses or other evidence.

In making this statement we do not wish to hold the police themselves entirely responsible. They have not the numbers necessary to spend the time in the seeking for and the preservation of evidence. Even when a detective starts on an investigation, a new and dramatic crime may take place and he is called off the job to function in the new exigency. As we have before said, both our patrolmen and our detectives are only too often not only untrained but are too few in numbers to adequately cope with the situation. So, too, the city policeman is always the victim of politics. The office of our chiefs of police is a political football. In the City of Chicago in the last twenty-five years possibly only three chiefs have held office for more than two years. The railroads, on the other hand, guarantee a permanence in office, if only the parties are efficient, and they know no politics.

ANDREW A. BRUCE