Crime and Criminals

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Published by FRANK P. O'HARE
Box 223 Girard, Kansas

NUMBER 4 10 Cents
A group photograph made by F. P. O'Hare at Girard, Kansas, January 1, 1921, the nineteenth wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. O'Hare. Kate Richards O'Hare (Mrs. F. P.), center; Kathleen, 14 years old, sitting; Richards (Dick), 17 years old, sitting; Eugene, standing, and Victor, sitting on hassock, twins, 12 years old; F. P. O'Hare, standing.
Newspapers and magazines have been busy for the past few months discussing a disturbing social phenomena which they call the "crime wave." Judging from the reports of the press, crime has increased in the United States in an alarming manner during the last year. The jails are full, the criminal court dockets are overburdened and penitentiaries are crowded to capacity. Rare indeed is the newspaper that has not demanded more effective policing, more stringent laws and more drastic penalties for the detection and punishment of crime.

This condition is not peculiar to America, it is common to all of the countries touched by the World War. And neither is this condition peculiar to the World War; it has been common to all of the wars of modern times. The aftermath of the war in Europe is sketched by a noted criminologist of the Budapest University in this stark paragraph:

"Crimes have increased in the countries to ten times their pre-war numbers. The criminal in his revolt against society is becoming more and more desperate. It is not simply that there is more crime, but what is worse, they show an appalling increase in inhumanity. The cold-blooded villains of today are far beyond anything known. There is no question that the World War, with its untold suffering, tried the faith of millions. It seemed hard to believe that there was any God controlling human affairs. If there was a God of Love, of whom the Christians spoke, how could He allow such unspeakable sorrows to come upon the world? Under the strain faith gave way." And Hell ensues.

This tremendous increase in crime is forcing intelligent people to study crime. They know that it is not a new thing; they know that crime like the poor "ye have had always with ye." But, because crime is becoming such an important factor in social life we are giving it more and deeper attention than ever before.

In all the noise and shouting of the discussion of crime and criminals I feel inclined to take part. You see, I know considerable about these great social problems from the inside. Most people who study crime and criminals study from the outside peering in, but I studied on the inside peeping out—through prison bars.
What Is Crime?

It is well in the study of any subject to have as definite as possible understanding of the meaning of the words used. I have found out that most of the hate and intolerance and prejudice that mars the lives of man are based on perfectly honest misunderstandings as to what the other fellow means when he uses a certain word. One man may use the words Christian, Freethinker, Socialist, Democracy, Americanism, Radical or Bolshevik, and these words will have a definite meaning to him, but they will in all possibility mean something far different to someone else; so they quarrel and hate and sometimes fight and kill, not over fundamentals, but over misconceptions.

Most people are extremely hazy as to what they really mean when they use the word crime. Pinned down to something concrete the average person will say that crime is a violation of law—and this is true as far as it goes—but it does not go far enough. Before this definition is at all satisfactory we must decide what law is. There is a saying so old that its author is lost in antiquity, that law is a net that lets the big criminals through to freedom and holds the little criminals for punishment. This definition too may be true as far it goes—but it does not go far enough. The dictionary helps us very little; it says: "Law is a rule of action established by authority or custom, or an enactment of a legislative, law-making body, or a moral code given by Moses and the later lawgivers."

When we attempt to give a definition of law, or to determine what a law means, or to define crime and criminals, we find human language unequal to the task. It is impossible to put into words any complete definition of even the simplest thing; how futile then to hope to adequately define the most complex relations of human life! We think we know what a law means until we go into court. Then we find that lawyers have spent their lives learning that no one knows what a law means. To find out what a certain law means a case is tried in court. The lawyers argue, the judge expresses his opinion and the jury votes on it; a court of appeals reviews the decision of the trial court, and the Supreme Court decides by majority vote what the law really means. Often the nine Supreme Court Justices disagree and then we have a minority opinion. Sometimes a Supreme Court justice dies, the President appoints another one, the case comes up again and the Supreme Court changes its decision by one vote, and determines that the law means exactly the opposite of its previous decision. This is the history of the Dred Scott decision, the Income Tax law, and may be the history of the Espionage act. So no one really knows what a law means. But we do know that laws are
somewhat like chameleons that change their shading and colors according to the color of the thing they are sitting on.

So far as I have been able to discover there is no way to find a definite, comprehensive, permanent definition to either crime or criminal. And, so far as I know, there is no exact way of determining when one is committing a crime and what acts are necessary to make an individual a criminal.

We do, however, divide people into what we call criminals and law-abiding citizens. We send the people whom we call criminals to prison and leave these we call law-abiding people free. It would seem that the only accurate method that we might use to determine what kind of people are criminals and what kind of acts are criminal would be to go to prison and study the people we find there, and what course of action brought them there.

Perhaps certain wise statesmen decided that the time had come in the United States to send some intelligent, well trained and scientifically bent minds to prison to study crime and criminals in the only place where they can be adequately studied. I can't say that I had any particular ambition to be chosen for this very important work. But some are born useful, some achieve usefulness and some have usefulness thrust upon them. And I had the task of making a study of criminals and crime thrust upon me. It was not a pleasant school; I have enjoyed certain periods of my life much better than the fourteen months I spent in Jefferson City; but it was an extremely valuable schooling. It was the opportunity that comes to few to study a great social problem at its source, and I have no regret and feel not one particle of bitterness for the men who thrust my big job upon me.

My Prison Mates.

Among my prison mates I found women were sent to prison for three kinds of crime. Crimes against property, crimes against person and crimes against the government. Crimes against property and person are common, but the sort of crimes against the government that I and my prison mates were charged with having committed are new, they have only existed since 1917; they were created by the "Espionage Act." A law penalizing treason has been upon our statute books ever since the foundation of the government, but to be guilty of treason one must commit some definite overt act, injuring or endangering the government. The "Espionage Act" penalizes not acts of injury or menace, but the expression of opinion. One need not commit an overt act to be guilty of a felony under this law; one need only say or write or print an opinion that differs, not with the fundamental laws of the country, but differs from the opinions held by the political party in power.

I know quite well, I think, every woman who served prison sen-
tences for alleged violations of the "Espionage Act." There were women of spotless character, of more than average intelligence, and all useful workers. Most of them were of middle age and had received their education some time ago, before it had become a "crime" to read the Declaration of Independence and "disloyal" to quote the Constitution of the United States. They were for the most part women who had been raised in the religious faith of yesterday. The women who could not conceive of it being a crime to quote the commands of God, given through Moses the great lawgiver—"Thou shalt not steal" and "Thou shalt not kill." They were the sort of women whose anchorage to spiritual life was that command of Jesus, "Love thy neighbor and thyself and do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you."

Of the women who had committed crimes against person and property, I found that they were for the most part tragic misfits of life. They were very poorly educated, few having reached the sixth grade in school. A large percentage were feeble-minded, or on the borderline of mental subnormality. They were practically all diseased in body, brain and soul. Ninety per cent or more of them had been convicted of some minor offense against property. A small percentage had committed offenses against person, and a few had taken human life. And they were all poor; all from the most poverty-pinched section of the working class. The net of criminal law that gathered in the catch at Jefferson City had held only the little criminals and let the big ones escape. My prison experience did not give me the advantage of association with "malefactors of great wealth." So in discussing crime and criminals from my own personal experiences, I shall be compelled to deal with that small section of the criminal class who land in prison—the poor and humble.

And this is not a criticism of law; it is merely a statement of the facts, for which there are perfectly logical reasons. Lawyers and judges, and for the most part juries, are drawn almost entirely from the "upper classes," the property-owning classes. Their birth, education, moral and political training, as well as their economic interests, are all those of the property-owning class. Their entire psychology is that of the "haves," and it is inevitable that all of their legal decisions should express their fear and dislike for the "have nots."

It is perfectly logical that when a poor, ill-dressed, uncouth, ignorant person is brought before the court charged with a minor crime against person or property, that those who administer law should do it from their own psychological bias. This human misfit has been proven a failure. His station in life proclaims his "unfitness;" he looks like a criminal, and is no doubt dangerous, and society will be safer with him behind prison bars. He has no
money to pay for an expensive defense. Laws may not have human weaknesses, but the men who interpret them and execute them have, and all legal decisions are the expression of the human bias of the court.

It is also perfectly logical that courts should feel differently towards the educated, well-bred, well-groomed, correctly tailored man who comes into court with a group of expensive and eminent legal advisors to represent him. And men of this type are not usually charged with such sordid, ugly crimes that offend the sensibilities of a cultured judge. Naturally he feels differently, and the procedure is different for a dirty bum charged with stealing from a freight car than for a respectable and wealthy business man charged with the violation of some vague law like the "Lever Act." The man charged with petty stealing "looks like" a criminal, and the man charged with "profiteering" looks like a business man, and the judge unconsciously shades the law accordingly. The dirty bum goes to prison and the respectable business man goes back to his business affairs.

In the determination of what is law and what is not law discriminations are made by the courts also. Coal miners are a sweaty, black-faced, "low-brow" lot, with no proper regard for the sacredness of profits. So that portion of the "Lever Act" which applies to coal miners who threaten to go on strike for higher wages and regular work, is a law. Coal operators are clean, cultured, respectable gentlemen with nice perceptions of the law of "supply and demand," so that part of the "Lever Act" that applies to "profiteering" in coal is not law.

In the punishment of crimes against the person the same thing is true. The person who looks like a criminal is presumed to look, and is therefore offensive to the court, goes to prison; the person who looks like a pillar of society, and behaves like one in the presence of the court goes free. Mamie F. was a "hasher" in a cheap restaurant in St. Louis. Another "hasher tried to cop her steady," according to Mamie, so she "just carved her, to spoil her map." Mamie served two years in Jefferson City for inflicting a slight gash on a woman's face. The Fulton Bag Co. used presses in their factory that were dangerous and unlawful to use. One of these presses cut off both of Marie Montemann's arms at the shoulder, making her a helpless cripple for life. But neither the owners nor the manager of the Fulton Bag Co., responsible for the use of dangerous machinery, served time in prison.

Laura was a poor love-starved "old maid" whom life had denied love or motherhood or wifehood, and given the lot of a housemaid drudging in more fortunate folks' kitchens. Laura was charged with being the mother of an illegitimate baby. The baby died. Laura was convicted for having permitted it to die for want of
food. And Laura served a five-year term in prison. Five great dairy companies in St. Louis raised the price of milk to a point where the wages of poor men cannot buy milk and hundreds of babies die as a result. But no dairy owners ever serve time in Jefferson City for starving babies to death.

The espionage act was presumed to have been enacted to catch and punish German spies, but not one single German spy was ever caught or punished by it. Only labor organizers and people who held political opinions at variance with the two great political parties were caught in the espionage act net. When a rich business man came before the court charged with violating this law, he was either released without trial, or convicted and fined a small sum. When labor organizers or persons who advocated working class political action came before the court they were convicted and sentenced to prison for long terms, not because they really helped the Kaiser, but because their opinions were “dangerous” to the property-owning class. And the espionage act was so worded that no human being, unless he was deaf, dumb, blind and too idiotic to have an opinion could avoid violating it. It is doubtful if any person in the United States could, or did live through the war without some violation of this law.

In the case of Schwartz & Jaffe vs. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Judge Vansiclin makes the position and the perfectly natural bias of the court plain. He said:

“They (the courts) must stand at all times as the representatives of capital, of captains of industry, devoted to the principle of individual initiative, protect property from violence and destruction, strongly opposed to the nationalization of industry.” And this honest judge states the case very neatly and explains why there are no captains of industry in prison, and why I missed the advantage of making a study of “malefactors of great wealth.” Not because there are no “malefactors of great wealth;” they are plentiful as fleas on a mangy pup; but because the “courts must stand at all times as the representatives of capital, of captains of industry.”

II.

When we go to prison and study the people whom society has definitely set aside, branded and caged as criminals, we find strange and puzzling things. We seem to have decided pretty definitely that most criminals who go to prison are poor people, but I doubt if we are willing to agree that poverty in itself is a crime. We know that rich people don’t go to prison, as a rule; but I doubt if we are willing to agree that wealth in itself is a virtue.

Perhaps there is nothing more puzzling to the average person who is honestly trying to study crime and criminals than the fact
that crimes in general are anti-social acts, acts that are injurious to mankind. And yet we know that there are acts punished by law as crimes that are not anti-social. We also know that there are many anti-social acts which seriously injure humanity that are not punished by law as crimes. We know too that an act may have been a crime at one time, then become not a crime, and then become a crime again.

For example: When George Washington and Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry and all of those old revolutionary ancestors of ours called the convention that issued the Declaration of Independence, they, by that act, became criminals. They were guilty of treason against their regularly established government, Great Britain. When they resorted to force of arms to sustain their "treason," they became outlaws with a price upon their heads. They were "rebels" and "revolutionists" revolting against the forces of "law and order," and if they had been caught they would have been stood up against a stone wall and shot. The established government of their day condemned them as criminals, the church of that day damned them as heretics, and "loyal" citizens of the colonies branded them as "dangerous revolutionists." But these old "criminals" of that day won by force of arms; they became victorious through "the violent overthrow of the government." After they had "overthrown by violence" the "existing government," they proceeded to set up a government of their own, and they immediately guaranteed to themselves and their posterity all of the things that the government of England had denied them: Freedom of religious convictions, free speech, free press and free assemblage. And these things for more than a century were the "sacred blood bought rights of the American people." It was inconceivable to the average American mind that one could commit a crime by expressing an opinion in speech or print. We simply could not grasp the idea that a law could make it a crime to read the Declaration of Independence in public, or to print those portions of the Constitution relating to freedom of religious convictions of free speech. We could not conceive of any law being enacted in the United States that would make it a crime to circulate copies of the Ten Commandments, or to read the Sermon on the Mount in public, or to quote in the hearing of others the commands of Jesus.

Some American people labored under the delusion that laws are fixed; they did not know that interpretations shift and change with every shift of social evolution. If Moses and Jesus had come back to earth in 1917, they might have landed in Atlanta with the Internationale Bible Students, or in a C. O. camp with the conscientious objectors to war. If George Washington and Thomas Jefferson had come back in the flesh they might be with Eugene
V. Debs in Atlanta. If Betsy Ross and Molly Pitcher should have been reincarnated about thirty years ago they might have served time with me in Jefferson City.

We face, therefore, the puzzling conditions of knowing that loyalty to the fundamental laws of the Christian religion and the United States government are not anti-social acts, but they become crimes. The time may again come when the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount will no longer be criminal. And it is very doubtful if there is any American citizen who will say that they are now, or were even during the hysteria of wartime, anti-social.

Not only are we confused between what is criminal and not anti-social, but are also bewildered trying to fathom the mysteries of what is anti-social and yet not recognized by law as criminal. I think that possibly the great majority of people will agree that there can be nothing more anti-social than the wanton and wholesale destruction of foods. Only from fresh fruits we may obtain the vitamines absolutely essential to growth and life. In California and Florida hundreds of thousands of bushels of these vitally necessary fruits are decaying under the orchard trees and poisoning the atmosphere with their sickening stench. All over the country, in every great city, in every town and village, and on the farms there are millions of growing children who are robbed of the vital elements of their food, the vitamines, that can only be secured from fresh fruit, and the physical well being of the nation is being lowered. Certainly this is a serious menace to society. No one will argue that the act of robbing the children of the nation of necessary food, and permitting that food to rot unused is not anti-social act. Yet the law does not recognize it as a crime and provides no penalties for the railroad owners and speculators who cause this condition; who render it impossible for the fruit raisers to ship their fruit and impossible for the people of this country to pay for the fresh fruit necessary to give their children sturdy physical development.

And in a comprehensive study of crime and criminals we still are more bewildered by the fact that an anti-social act that is in some instances punished with the most fiendish penalties, is in some other instances considered perfectly righteous, or at least not rebuked.

In every state there is a law making it a crime to burn property with the intention to injure or defraud. It is clear that it is morally wrong to wantonly destroy property that is useful to human beings, so legal punishment seems justified. One of the most tragic creatures I ever knew was Hattie S. who was finishing a seven-year prison sentence for the crime of arson. She was
charged with having assisted her lover to burn an old livery barn for $300 insurance. The barn was practically worthless, Hattie and her lover needed a little money to enable them to marry and establish a home; the barn burned down one night and Hattie and her lover both went to prison for seven years. Hattie entered prison a beautiful young girl. She left it a demented physical wreck fit only for a grave in the potter's field. The law recognized and punished her crime by penalty worse than death. We might, therefore, conclude it is a settled and established fact of law that burning property with the intention to injure or defraud is a crime and any person committing this act is a criminal.

But before we travel far with that conclusion we find ourselves all at sea once more.

The Cost-Plus System.

In the autumn of 1917 while in Washington, D. C., I was invited by a friend to visit the training camp near that city. When we neared the camp we saw a great fire pile, that looked like a row of frame houses burning. Naturally, I thought the cantonment was on fire but my friend informed me that this fire, about half-a-mile long, had been burning for months. He said that at one end of the camp train loads of lumber were pulled in and at the other end trucks were busy hauling the same lumber out and dumping it on the fire.

It was lumber that had never had a nail driven into it, the best lumber our country produces—flooring, siding and dimension material—and it was all going into the fire together. This was at a time when Washington was a graft-ridden bedlam because of the criminal lack of decent housing for war workers. And just outside of Washington, in sight of the dome of the capital, hundreds of thousands of feet of splendid lumber were being burned.

It was not until March, 1921, when I chanced to pick up a copy of LESLIE'S MAGAZINE that I had the explanation to this wanton waste. LESLIE'S is a perfectly respectable anti-radical publication and yet it tells this story, a story of graft and greed, of thievery and wholesale plundering that is far too long to repeat here. Go to the library and get LESLIE'S beginning with the first week of March, 1921, and read "America's Spree." It tells how the Advisory Commission of the Council of Defense, made up of "dollar-a-year-men," became the real government of this country and looted its treasury beyond belief. LESLIE'S says that army contracts were arbitrarily awarded by a man of the name of Sterrett, and that Mr. Sterrett, like the good brother that he is, awarded most of the real juicy contracts to his brother. It says that the loot in building cantonments by such methods amounted to more than $78,000,000. That all of the contracts were let on the cost-plus system, which means that the contractor was paid for every
stick of lumber and every scrap of material at the cost price, a
profit of from ten to sixteen per cent. LESLIE'S says that millions
of feet of lumber were burned; that it came into the camp by the
carload, a few planks would be taken off and used and the balance
hauled out to the fire pile and burned. The contractor would then
collect the cost of the lumber plus his profit from the government.
Yet none of the men who burned millions of dollars worth of lum-
ber to defraud, and certainly to injure the people of the United
States are in prison, or ever will be. The law provides a drastic
and inhuman punishment for Hattie, the poor, illiterate country
girl charged with burning an old shack, but the law does not
recognize, or provide punishment for the rich and powerful poli-
ticians who burned millions of dollars' worth of valuable and much-
needed lumber for the cost-plus profit.

III.

In the studies that I was able to make of that small section of
our criminal population which lands in prison, I found prison man-
agement quite as interesting a study as prison inmates. I found
that under the guise of punishment for crime, and in the name of
reformation of criminals a tremendously profitable form of chattel
slavery is carried on.

When I reached prison I found that I had been sold by the
United States Department of Justice to a prison Board made of
three men, one a backwoods editor, one a livery stable keeper, an-
other a mule buyer and all of them of the most sordid type of
professional politicians.

The process whereby the United States Department of Justice
becomes a dealer in slaves is very simple. It does not maintain
sufficient prisons to care for nearly all of its male prisoners and
has no facilities whatever for caring for female prisoners. Here at
stated times the Department of Justice sends out letters to the
various prison boards announcing that they have prisoners to
dispose of and asking for bids. One prison which feeds its pris-
soners decently, works them with some degree of humanity and
cares for them in something approaching a civilized manner, bids,
say, twenty-five dollars a month. That is, this prison will board
and guard the prisoner, the Department of Justice pays twenty-
five dollars a month, and the prison board has the right to make
all the profit possible out of the labor of the prisoner. The prison
board securing the contract is paid by the Department of Justice
for caring for the prisoner and the labor is what thieves call
"velvet." A prison less humane and decent will bid twenty dol-
ars a month. The Missouri State Prison bids eighteen dollars
per month.
So I know from actual experience what the auction block means, I have tried it. I know from actual experience that the only difference between Cassie and me was that Cassie was sold to the highest bidder and I was sold to the lowest. Cassie also had a market value that made Simon Legree give the sort of a life that would not lower her market value. I had no market value and the prison board who bought me had but one incentive, and that to transform every particle of my life in the few years they were to own me.

I found that the prison board to whom the women convicts had been sold in turn sold them for nine hours per day to the Oberman Mfg. Co., who manufactures overalls. The state of Missouri is forbidden by law to sell its convicts to contractors of convict labor. I do not know how this law is evaded. I only know that it is evaded. I also know that the Oberman Mfg. Co. made garments that bore the labels of reputable firms all over the country.

And God knows that the profits of these chattel slaves are enormous! Every day I worked in the prison slave pen I earned, at scab wages, paid in the worst of scab shops, from $4.80 to $5.20 each day. I was paid 50c a month the first three months, 75c a month the next three months and $1 a month after that. I made about $3,000 worth of unionalls, I was paid $10.50 for making them. And all of the difference between what I made and what I received went, not into the treasury of the United States, but into the pockets of the prison contractors as profits. Figure what the profit on the labor of 2,800 convicts amounts to in a year!

The Task.

The black woman on the plantation was given a cottonsack and she must do her "task" of picking a certain number of pounds of cotton each day. If she failed to do the "task" she was punished by the slave driver, hired for that purpose. I was given a power sewing machine in an overall factory, and worked under the "task" system. My "task" was to make eighty-eight unionall jackets each day, regardless of my physical condition, previous training or the size or weight of the garments. If I failed to make the "task" I too was punished by a slave driver hired for that purpose.

I don't know whether it is the deliberate plan, or merely a condition that has grown up, but the "task" consumes a woman's life in about the average length of a prison sentence, and the women usually go out fit only for the human scrapheap.

The lightest punishment for failure to make the "task" was to be sent to the punishment cell without supper, be denied mail and all communication with other inmates, and sent back to the shop the next morning without breakfast. The second time the convict failed to "pull the task" she went to the punishment cell
at noon on Saturday, stayed there until Monday morning, then went back to the shop. From Saturday morning until Monday noon she received no food except two very small slices of bread and half a teacup of water.

The third time a woman failed to make the "task" she went to the "black hole" or the "blind cell" as it is sometimes called. This cell is built in the solid stone wall; it is without light, heat or ventilation, and is without furniture or toilet facilities. The floor is concrete, and regardless of the physical condition of the women, or the temperature, they must stand continually, or lie upon the stone floor. In cold weather the women would pull the buttons from their clothing, flip them up, then crawl about on the stone floor to find them; then do it all over again to keep themselves awake for days at a time, to avoid contracting pneumonia from the ice cold stones.

While in the "black hole" the women were given two tiny slices of bread each day and half teacup of water. After I went to Jefferson City and became to some extent a public eye, the women were not often kept in the "black hole" more than fifteen days. Before I arrived, there seemed to be no limit, except the slave driver's brutality.

There is a tragic story of a young woman by the name of Minnie Eddy, which can be verified by living witnesses, who was sent to Jefferson City for some minor crime. She was mentally and physically incapable of making the task, so she went to the "black hole" again and again. Finally she was kept there twenty-one days, taken out in a dying state with pneumonia, fed on coarse prison food, and the next day Minnie Eddy died.

The most revolting punishments I saw inflicted had to do with sex perversions, and I cannot discuss them because there is no language available. If I used the prison argot, you would not understand, and if I tried to translate it into what you could grasp, I would be arrested for using vulgar and obscene language.

And the most terrible thing of all is that in one instance and one only, did I see a convict punished for bad behavior, for misconduct, for the sort of things you would naturally imagine convicts would do. Every punishment but one that I saw inflicted, was not administered for correction, or discipline, or reconstruction. Punishments were not given with any idea that they would make "bad" women "good." They were administered for one purpose only—to wring a little more profit out of the unpaid labor of these modern galley slaves—for failure to do the task.

Loathsome Diseases.

My more horrible experience in prison had to do with the lack of civilized sanitation. I was called to take my bath two days after entering. I found that there were two old dilapidated bath-
tubs and more than a hundred women forced to use them, and no attempt to separate the clean from the unclean.

As I waited my turn a woman by the name of Alice Cox stepped out of the bathroom and I was ordered to follow her. Alice was an Alaskan Indian, and her story is both old and common. The ancestors of Alice Cox lived in Alaska. Then gold was discovered in the Klondyke, the great onrush of gold seekers came, and the old, old story of the white man's invasion of the Indian's home was re-enacted.

Alice told her story, not once but many times, and it is so common that I have no reason to doubt it. She said when she was a young girl of seventeen, a white goldseeker hired her to take him out to a distant claim in her canoe. On the trip she was overpowered and violated by this white man, and in the process infected with the most terrible disease we know.

Alice was just an Indian; she had reached about the same stage of civilization as the white gentlemen down South who "lynch niggers." Alice was not fortunate enough to have any Southern gentlemen to avenge her, so she took vengeance in her own hands, and killed the man who violated her. She was arrested and held in a federal jail for seventeen months awaiting trial. During this time she insisted that she received no medical attention, though it was well known that she had been infected by the man she killed. Alice was found guilty of murder and sentenced to twenty-five years in prison. She had served at Lansing, Kan., and Jefferson City, Mo., about nine years. She had been in the custody of the United States Department of Justice about eleven years. She insisted that until the time Emma Goldman was sent to Jefferson City as a political prisoner she had never received any treatment for venereal disease. But she said that after Miss Goldman raised a row about it, she did have some sort of treatment.

As Alice stepped out of the bathroom she was one of the most appalling creatures I have ever seen. From her throat to her feet she was one mass of open syphilitic sores dripping with pus. I have seen her clothing so stiff with pus that it rattled when she walked and the live maggots working out of the filthy bandages about her throat. Alice had the cell directly under me and the flies that swarmed the cellhouse attracted by the stench from her sores would walk over them, and then come up to my cell and walk over me.

Alice had used the bathtub, and I was ordered to follow her. I asked the matron if it was necessary that I use the same tub as she and she said it was. I then asked her who cleaned the tub and she said that Alice was ill and that I should do it. I then asked what disinfectants were used. "Disinfectants, whaddaya mean?" she snarled. "I mean what prophylactic measures do you
use to keep the clean women from becoming infected," I replied. She said: "Hell, we ain't got none of them things here. This ain't no swell boardin' school; this is the pen."

I protested: "Miss Smith you know what disease Alice has, you know how communicable it is, you know if I have a scratch on my body I may be infected too. You know that I am a married woman with a husband and four beautiful children outside. You know I must travel a great deal, sleep in Pullman cars and hotels, use public lavatories and hotel bathrooms. Surely the United States Department of Justice does not expect me to become infected with this frightful disease and then go back to civilized life and infect others who are innocent of committing crime."

Sputtering and snarling with rage the matron said: "I don't know anything about that and I don't care. You are a convict, this is what is provided for you. Now get ter hell out of here and take yer bath."

But I flatly refused; "to do so would be a crime," I replied. Shrieking and cursing the matron told me that I would either bathe in the infected bathtub or she would send me to the "black hole" and "break me." I knew she had the power to do it—she had "broken" Minnie Eddy in the 'black hole" a few weeks before and Minnie had been carried out in a pine box. I was not ready to die, so I stepped into the bathroom, turned on the taps and splashed the water—but I DID NOT BATHE.

That night I got a letter out to my husband. He reproduced the letter and sent it to a thousand influential people. It was published in newspapers and magazines. A perfect storm of protest arose all over the country. In less than three weeks we had shower baths installed in that prison and that disgrace was abated.

I was able to rout the common bathtub, but I was never able to rout the diseased from handling the food. The women who were too ill to work in the shop were used in the dining room. Practically all of them were tubercular and syphilitic. I have seen women ladling out the food we were compelled to eat with syphilitic pus oozing out of their bodies and the germs of consumption being sprayed over our food by coughing convicts. The most loathsome and frightful of my prison experiences had to do with filthy diseases and disgraceful methods of dealing with them.

It is quite natural that a prison managed by a livery stable keeper and a mule buyer, with no other objective except to make profits for a prison contractor, would give its inmates about the same conditions that a mule would have in a livery stable. These men were blissfully ignorant of any knowledge of penology, criminology or psychology. I said to one of them that the young brute "overseer" should be replaced by a more mature man who knew something of human psychology. He stared at me blankly and
said: "Huh! I don't reckon we need any of them new-fangled things. A good hickory club and the 'black hole' will fix 'em.""

This brilliant specimen of public servant had not the slightest idea of the meaning of the word psychology. He did not know whether it was a breakfast food or a religion.

There was no hospital for the women at Jefferson City, no attempt to segregate the clean women from the venereally diseased, no fever thermometer, no disinfectants, and no provisions for caring for the women, one overworked physician for 2600 inmates, the majority of whom were physically, mentally and spiritually ill. Regardless of the type of woman, or how serious or contagious her illness, the women were kept locked in their cells, dependent for care upon a degenerate negro murderess, a trusty—a stool pigeon of the very worst type.

Another woman upon whom I saw the death sentence passed was Pearl Hall, sent up from Little Rock, Ark., for a violation of the Harrison Drug Act. I will speak of her case later.

The Overseers.

There are many gruesome tales that one might repeat of the tortures incident to the convict labor system, but my time is too limited. Suffice to say I saw women slugged, beaten, starved, gagged, and handcuffed to the steel bars of "blind cell" doors. I have seen every manner of punishment you can imagine, and many that you can't imagine, for normal minds can not conceive of the punishments bred in the diseased brains of subnormal perverts. And a very large percentage of all guards and under prison officials are sadistic perverts.

The foreman in charge of the shop, called by the women the "overseer" was a brutal, vulgar, obscene, ignorant, degenerate youth of about twenty-one years of age. He had gone to work in the prison as an errand boy at fifteen and spent all the formative period of his life in the brutal, vicious, degrading atmosphere of the prison regime. He was cruel and intolerant beyond words, and we were always at the mercy of his adolescent brutality and his undisciplined passions. His vocabulary was rich in unspeakably vile epithets and disgusting profanity. His favorite pastime was subjecting the women to his lewd vulgarity and filthy obscenity. But vile language was the least of his brutalities. He counted our jackets and gave us credit for our work as he saw fit, and any woman who asked for a verification of the count was terribly punished. He was the judge of our work, and if for any reason his vile temper was ruffled he would go down the line of sewing machines ripping and slashing the work without mercy or reason. We would be forced to remake the spoiled work in addition to the task, and be punished for "bad work" in addition.

I found that this young pervert practically had the power of
life and death over all of us, practically sentenced women to
death at his will.

The matron in charge of the women was ignorant, illiterate,
coarse, brutal and sadistic to a marked degree. She was neither
mentally, physically or educationally fitted to handle subnormal
and helpless human beings. The salary paid for this work is
not sufficient to command the services of any but very inferior
persons.

The assistant matron was less coarse and cruel, but not superior
in education or fitness for her position. She had been a house-
maid until approaching age made her physically unable to do this
sort of work, then a politician in whose home she had served
secured her the position of assistant prison matron.

For twelve hours each night both matrons left the cellhouse
in the absolute charge of a brutal, perverted negro murderess,
a stool pigeon, whose power over us at night was as absolute
and despotic as that of the young foreman during the day. This
stool pigeon's "graft" came from pandering to and encouraging
sex perversions, and it was during the night when she was in
sole charge that the horrible abuses of this phase of prison life
occurred.

IV.

There is much time for meditation in prison, and much to medita-
tate upon. One is presumed to meditate upon their sins and re-
pent the evil of their ways, but I was never able to regret that I
had taken, and steadfastly maintained, the position that had landed
me in prison and my conscience refused to smite me. So I spent
most of the weary, monotonous hours that we were locked like
wild beasts in fetid, disease reeking cells, trying to fathom the
dark mysteries of the application of law and morals.

I knew that prisons were social institutions, presumably founded
and maintained by society to cure the criminal of his criminal
ways, and to return him to society fit to mingle and share com-
munity life. Yet when I arrived in prison I found that by the
workings of the prison system society commits every crime against
the criminal that the criminal is charged with having committed
against society.

We send our criminals to prison to teach them not to lie and
defraud, and the prisoner is forced to live one long lie, and can
exist only by becoming party to fraud. In Jefferson City the
"silence" system is used. This means that only for one hour dur-
ing the twenty-four any conversation among the inmates is per-
mitted. For the convict who is "on punishment" for failure to
"pull the task," even this hour is withheld. No normal human
being can live day after day, week after week and month after
month surrounded by human beings and cut off from communication. Deceit and fraud and petty lying are forced upon the inmates as a matter of self-preservation. For twelve hours each day we were left at the mercy of a brutal, degenerate negro murderess—the most hated thing in prison life—a stool pigeon. Only by submitting to the most vicious forms of bribery, graft and toadying could the clean women escape having unspeakable sex perversions forced upon them.

The first work I ever did in the prison slave pen was a lie, that foisted a fraud upon the citizens who bought the product of my labor. There is a deep-seated repugnance in the heart of every really normal and decent person against wearing prison-made goods; there is a feel and smell of blood about them discernible to the souls if not to the physical senses of men. So prison-made goods are fraudulently labeled and the convict is forced to be party to the fraud. Into the first jacket I ever made in prison I was forced to stitch the label of the Sibley-Hesse Co., of Sioux City, Ia. Into the next lot I stitched the label of the Smith, Follet and Crowl Co., of Fargo, N. Dakota, and so on for the fourteen months. I stitched labels in all the way from Buffalo, N. Y., to Los Angeles, Cal., and I never left the prison slave pen to do it, and each jacket was a fraud and a lie.

We send thieves to prison to teach them not to steal and rob and all prison life is thievery and robbing. The fundamental theory of prison management, as I found it at Jefferson City, is that the first thing to be done to convicts is to "break" them. And "breaking" them means to rob them of every shred of self-respect, initiative, will, intelligence and common decency. Laughter, love and kindness are stolen also for nothing in prison is punished more brutally than these. And all human sympathy is stolen away. In all the months I lived with convicts I never heard one addressed by their keepers with common courtesy, and I never heard a kind, helpful or encouraging word given them. I never heard normal words spoken to an inmate; our keepers either snarled, cursed or screeched at us, and the echo of those snarling, rasping, hateful voices steals my rest and sleep even to this day.

The cream was stolen from our milk, every particle of sugar was stolen from our diet, the wholesome food the taxpayers paid for was grafted from us and we were fed on food filled with bugs and worms and weevils, because it could be bought cheaply. The supply of food was kept so low that in order to live and make the task the women were compelled to beg money from outside sources and buy food for existence at thievish prices. Graft stole the clothing provided by the state, and the women were compelled to depend on their friends and relatives outside for underwear, stockings, soap and the decencies that make life bearable.
There is nothing so demoralizing and degenerating to a woman wage worker as being a scab, betraying her class, dragging other fellow creatures down into poverty and misery and criminality. And in nothing perhaps were the women outraged more than in their enforced scabbery. Every hour we worked in the prison slave pen we were robbed of our right to be loyal to the working people of America. The despotic power of society was used to force us to scab on every garment worker in the country. Every jacket we made in prison pulled down the wages and made more precarious the living conditions of every decent woman engaged in the garment industry. And we are not only forced to scab on the garment workers, but we, and the state of Missouri scabbed on the decent, fair manufacturers also. The Oberman Mfg. Co., through its political pull was able to secure rent, heat, light, power and labor for a very small cost. Yet its goods, made in a state-owned shop, with state-owned heat and light and power, by unpaid convict labor, are sold in the open market in open competition with the goods made by every decent manufacturer in the country.

Society sends people to prison to punish them for crimes committed against the person of others, and the prison commits crimes against the persons of prisoners more frightful far. I am absolutely sure that no prisoner in any prison in the United States is guilty of a more atrocious crime against the person than the United States Department of Justice is guilty of, in sending women prisoners to Jefferson City.

And I am not protesting for myself—I am not asking you to protest for me. We will forget that I exist and deal only with the other women more helpless and sinned against than I. For at least I was a fairly intelligent woman who knew what infection is, how to protect myself, and had enough social and political backing to make prison officials hesitate to commit the same crimes against me that they visited on more helpless women. We will discuss the other political prisoners who served with me in Jefferson City. Some were children, some were old white-haired grandmothers.

There was Ella Antolina, a beautiful little Italian emigrant girl who had come to America seeking a home and things she believed Americanism stood for. Ella's real crime was that she belonged to a radical dramatic club of Italian working people. What many believe is that of the most dastardly and inhuman frame-ups that this country has ever known was hatched by our lovely spy system and that Ella was betrayed and framed into the penitentiary at Jefferson City, by cubs too low and vicious to be known as men. And Ella, young and innocent, I found in the midst of those loathsome horrors when I reached prison. And there is Mollie Steimer, the cleanest, most innocent little Puritan I ever knew. A girl as innocent as a five-year-old baby of vice and the diseases of vice. Mollie's crime was that she distributed a leaflet protesting that
when American soldiers were sent to Russia to make war on the Soviet Republic without a declaration of war, the Constitution of the United States was being violated. Two United States Supreme Court Judges said Mollie had as much right to circulate her leaflet as the United States Government had to circulate the printed copies of the Constitution. Yet this clean, sweet, innocent child, for Mollie is a child, is still in the disease ridden pesthole at Jefferson City, FOR THE CRIME OF CALLING THE ATTENTION OF AMERICAN CITIZENS TO A GROSS VIOLATION OF THE CONSTITUTION BY ELECTED OFFICIALS.

Another woman I found in Jefferson City was Elizabeth W. Elizabeth was a typical Kentucky hillwoman, illiterate, gentle, kind and totally helpless to protect herself, and Elizabeth was a white-haired old grandmother. When she told me she was an "espionage," I stared at her in amazement. Later I asked her: "Elizabeth are you a radical?" She said: "Law no; Miss Kate, I don't reckin' I know what them things air." Then indignantly she added: "Radical, naw; I'm a Baptist; that what I am." Then I said: "But, Elizabeth, are you a Socialist, that means a political party, you know." She gazed at me in disgust and said: "Laws amassy! Miss Kate, my grandpap was a dimmicrat, and my pap wuz a dimmicrat and my ole man is a dimmicrat, and I reckin' I'm a dimmicrat too." Elizabeth had been convicted for saying that the Germans made better dyes than Americans.

We send people to prison to punish them for murder, yet the prison system murders more human beings in one year than individuals murder in a century. For the prison system murders not only the bodies of men, but the minds and souls of them as well.

One vivid memory of my prison experience is Pearl Hall. Pearl was a "dope" sent up from Little Rock, Arkansas, charged with a violation of the Harrison Drug Act. She was too far gone to be of any value in the shop; there was no profit in her poor old body, so she was eliminated. Pearl had been a drug addict for years, and naturally when drugs were taken away from her instantly and completely she was frantic with agony. Insane with misery, craving for "dope," she moaned and cried and begged for it all the time. There was no hospital and no facilities for caring for her and she kept the women who could work from their rest. One night I saw the negro stool pigeon and a demented white convict dragging a great cake of ice down the corridor from the dining room ice box to the bathroom. A few moments later I heard Pearl Hall's cell door open, heard her dragged out, sobbing and pleading and then I heard her ducked again and again in the ice water until insensibility mercifully ended her agony. She was dragged back and thrown in her cell in her wet clothing and left without attention, so the women whose cells adjoined her told me.
I was released two days later, but all of those two days and nights I heard Pearl Hall raving in delirium. A letter was sent out underground to me a few days later saying Pearl Hall had died of pneumonia.

But Pearl Hall was one of the more fortunate victims of our prison system. Her murder was swift enough to be merciful. There were many more in Jefferson City whose murder was long drawn out, whose bodies, brains and souls were murdered bit by bit. Aggie Myers is the most tragic example of the effect of our prison system that I have ever known. And there is Hattie Shrum and Willie Wilkenson, and Cecil Tillman and Mattie Lowe and many others of my prison mates who are being murdered in body, brain and soul by the processes of slow torture.

You shudder at these things and console yourselves with the thought that these are "bad" women who have broken the law. Well, they may be "bad." I won't argue that point. But I did not find them all "bad." They were as kind and gentle and loving to me as was the harlot who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and wiped them on her hair. The only difference I found in these women and the common mass of women outside, was that they were a little more kindly and sympathetic because they had suffered more. But you may call them "bad" if you like, and I will agree that they have broken laws, and that they are being punished for crimes. "What have we to do with these degraded creatures? What are they to us?" you ask.

You have this to do with them: They are human beings, they are a part of society, they are what society has made them. They are flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone, soul of our soul! We cannot separate ourselves from them. Their lives in prison are what we in our ignorance and smugness have permitted prison officials to force on them. And these women are generous! They will return to us everything that we have given them with interest a hundredfold. They know that this thing is tragically true—we are our brother's keeper. But he is also ours. And whatever we send into the lives of our neighbors will come back into our own.

V.

Over and over again, in the murderous grind of the prison slave-pen and in the stifling murk of the steel-barred cell, I have asked myself if there is not a double standard of ethics, one for the individual and another for society. With me in all those long, frightful months in prison was the question—Is there some law of God or Nature that makes the crime of the individual the virtue of society? Is there some virtue in numbers that makes
the act that is a crime when committed by an individual, a righteous thing when done by the community?

Needless to say I did not find a logical answer to these questions in grim stone walls and cruel bars. Nor did I find it in social vengeance administered by ignorant, sadistic perverts. I came out of prison, still a seeker. I went to lawmaker and judge, educator and scientist, editor and clergyman with my question. But none had an answer for me. I spent a month in Washington in the autumn of 1920 sitting at the feet of some of the greatest sociologist, penologists, psychologists and physicians of our time, brought, from all over the world by the United States Public Health Service, to discuss social well being. Five hours each day I spent in their lecture rooms, but none of these wise men and women could or would tell me where the dividing line lay between individual crime and community righteousness. Months after I had been released from prison a book came to my desk for review. It was Psychoanalysis, Its History, Theory and Practice, by Andre Tridon. And in this book I found a gleam of light on this dark subject. Tridon quotes from Freud's "Reflections on War and Death" as follows:

"The individual citizens can prove with dismay that the state (here used to designate nation or government) forbids him to do wrong, not because it wishes to do away with wrong doing, but because it wishes to monopolize it. * * * A state at war makes use of every act of violence that would dishonor the individual. It employs not only permissible cunning but conscious lies * * * It demands the utmost obedience and sacrifice from its citizens, but at the same time treats them like children through an excess of secrecy and censorship of news and expression of opinion which renders the minds of those who are thus intellectually repressed defenseless against every unfavorable situation and every wild rumor. It absolves itself from guarantees and treaties by which it was bound to other states, and makes unabashed confession of its greed and aspiration to power."

Gradually it dawned upon me that possibly what Freud says of European states in times of war, may also be true of other nations in times of peace, when the state makes war upon crime and criminals within its own borders. I am quite sure that the individual convict can prove with dismay that society forbids wrong doing, apparently not because it wishes to do away with wrong doing, but because it wishes to monopolize it. I know from actual experience that society, through the prison system, makes use of every act of crime and violence against the convict that it punishes in the criminal. It employs not only permissible disciplinary methods but inhuman brutalities. It demands impossible servility from convicts, and at the same time treats them like brutes and beasts. By the secrecy of stone walls and fear-
locked lips it suppresses every normal human impulse until minds are warped and distorted and souls are seared and scarred beyond cure. Society through our prison system absolves itself from the decencies of civilization and makes unabashed confession of brutality and greed.

More Ex-convicts Than College Graduates.

If every prison sentence were a death sentence, and every convict who enters prison died there, we might perhaps afford to be smug and self-satisfied. But they don't! There are more convicts in our penal institutions than students in our colleges. And the criminal course is two years shorter (the average prison sentence is two years) than the college course. Every year more than two hundred thousand men and women are graduated from the University of Vice and Crime and come back to us, bringing not only all of the criminal traits and anti-social instincts that they took to prison with them, but a whole new list that they acquired there. If an open sewer were pouring a stream of filth and disease into your water supply you would be horrified, and immediately get into action to stop the dangerous pollution. The open sewer of released convicts is pouring a constant stream of filth and disease and death into our social life, and you are perfectly smug and complacent about it.

What the Convict Sends Us.

And it is not only what the convict brings back to us that is a menace. It is also what he sends through the channels of commerce. The girl who sat only two machines from me was in the last stages of both consumption and syphilis. Her mouth was covered with open sores and she coughed and spit continually. She was employed making baby unionalls for children from three years of age up. It was her habit to use the garments she was making to wipe the syphilitic pus and the tubercular froth from her lips. They were then tossed into the pile of finished garments to go into the channels of trade. They were bought by your "open shop" stores and clean girls handled them. And you American mothers buy them quite ignorant of their history. You put them on the tender flesh of your babies. Many honest preachers and educators and editors laud the "open shop" and call it the "American plan." They do this because they do not know that the prison slavepen is the ideal "open shop." There the exploiter has absolute control, and the worker has absolutely nothing to say about shop conditions, tasks or wages. There is no union label on "open shop" or prison-made goods; they cannot be distinguished in the open market. It is the "open shop" manufacturers who use prison labor. It is the "open shop" stores that sell convict-made goods, it is the spirit of the "open shop" that protects prison contract labor, and it is the greed of the "open
shop” advocate that seeks to place all free workers on a basis of competition with slave convict-labor. The advocates of the “open shop” demands that the organizations of the workers shall be destroyed, but I tell you that the only assurance that you can have your garments are not made in prison slavepens, is to be sure that there is a union label in them.

The crime wave that is sweeping over the country has brought us face to face with the complex social problems connected with the whole question of crime and criminals. And one lesson at least that this crime wave is teaching us is that we dare not go on blindly punishing individual criminals and never seek the social causes for crime.

For generations society accepted a double standard of morals for men and women, and the result of that double standard has been vice and crime, disease and death. We are now face to face with the fact that the price we pay for a double standard of morals for individual and society is more ghastly and tragic still.

There was a time when criminologists placed great stress upon heredity as a causative factor in crime, a time when we talked of “the criminal type” and the “criminal class” and a “criminal inheritance.” Now scientific men attribute little of crime to heredity and much to environment. Scientists know now that while a human being may inherit a weak body and a weak brain, it is the impressions favorable to the disregard for justice and right that surrounds the person that usually molds the weaker, and sometimes molds the stronger individual into a criminal. Society’s standard of ethics, morals, justice and humanity is mankind’s environment. And to the extent that we permit the state to have a lower standard of morals and justice than the individual, to that extent the state becomes the breeder of crime and criminals. As long as men were permitted to have a lower standard of morals than women they were the disseminaters of vice and venereal disease. As we approach a single standard of morals for men and women, we are finding that it does not mean lowering the woman’s standard, but raising the man’s. A single standard of morals for state and individuals will not lower the standard of the individual, but raise the standard of the state.

We would be both cowardly and unscientific if in looking for the cause and the cure for the crime wave we did not take into consideration such factors as the psychological reaction upon the younger and more emotional of our population of the years of preaching hate and glorification of violence as a method of solving social problems. The Baltimore Sun has stated the case very clearly in the following editorial:

“When men unfamiliar with strife are taken from their peaceful vocations, trained as killers and led into battle, where they may
win praise and promotion by displaying unusual efficiency in the
art of slaughter, they cannot return to the ways of peace with
their former dread of homicide. Those with well-developed minds,
and strong moral characters may within a short time force the
nightmare of war from their minds and become as they once
were; but the weak character and the weak mind will never
rebuild the structure torn down by war. Yesterday he killed
a fellow-mortal and rifled his pockets in the cause of democracy;
today he kills a fellow-mortal and rifles his pockets because he
needs the money. The ‘glorious’ slaughter arranged by statesmen
prepares the way for private jobs of killing.”

And drastic punishments and brutal prison methods will never
solve the problems of crime and criminals. Every intelligent
criminologist knows that in the Dark Ages punishment for crime
was as drastic as human ingenuity and brutal savagery could
make it. Capital punishment was the common sentence for almost
a hundred crimes. The most fiendish tortures were common.
The bodies of executed criminals were “drawn and quartered”
and the gruesome bits hung with the lopped-off head on the city
gates. But crime was not abated. The only effect was to make
the criminals more desperate, and the more drastic the punish-
ments the more dangerous and brutal the criminals became. The
state cannot abate crime by becoming more criminal in its own acts.

It has always been the history of crime that crime increased
in “hard times,” and abated in “good times.” It is gradually
dawning upon us that crime increases and decreases, as it is harder,
or more easy, for the individual to secure the means of life. If the
World War had been followed by “prosperity” for the masses
instead of poverty and unemployment, in all possibility the “crime
wave” would not have reached its present danger. The whole
world is seething with crime, not alone because of the evil effects
of the World War upon the souls of men, but because of the
famine and poverty and exhaustion that always follows the false
prosperity of war industry. And to lessen the “crime wave”
requires not more police, and sawed off shotguns and machine
guns, not more courts and judges and prisons, not more inhuman
punishments, but less poverty for the masses and more morality
for the state. If organized governments would curb crime among
its individual citizens, they must establish for their own discipline
the same standard of morals and righteousness that they demand
from individual citizens. If governments would reform criminals,
they must first reform themselves. If existing governments would
reduce individual crime, they must take more heed for the welfare
of the masses, they must take from private hands the unlimited
power that now exists to do the world harm, and make state
morality the pattern for individual morality.

If there is to be any abatement of the “crime wave” in the
United States, our government must show as much efficiency in making peace as in making war. It must recognize the fact that if a nation has the right to demand a human life in war, it has the duty to protect that life in peace. If it can take men from the jobs and send them out to kill, it must see that they are provided with jobs when the killing is done. If it can send men out to be maimed and gassed and shell shocked and unfit for ordinary work, it must see that these incapacitated men have decent hospital treatment, re-education and a comprehensive system of vocational training that will lift them from the ranks of beggars and criminals. If the government has the right to spend billions making war, it must also have the right, and use it, to spend millions making peace for the masses.

So much for the great, broad sweep of social justice to replace the social crimes that make for individual criminality! But we dare not wait until social justice is fully established for all before we make such progress as we may, to civilize and humanize our prison system. In my book "In Prison," which is a statement to the President of the United States and the Department of Justice of the conditions at Jefferson City, where federal prisoners are kept, I made recommendations for immediate reforms. I cannot take the time to repeat all of these recommendations. I refer you to that book. In addition to the immediate reforms I suggested we must also establish for our penal institutions as high a standard of morals as we expect from our criminals. We must pay salaries and give social supervision that will insure that our prison officials, guards and keepers be of a higher type mentally, morally and educationally than the criminals they handle. We must establish the fact that if it is a crime for an individual to steal, it is a greater crime for a public servant to steal. We must establish the fact that if it is a crime for an individual to kill in the heat of passion, it is a greater crime for public officials to kill cold-bloodedly and dispassionately, grimly and deliberately, in the effort to wring more profits from the slave labor of convicts.

We must not permit society to lose sight of the fact that it is in the blood-stained profits of the convict that much of the incentive for prison brutality centers. We must never forget that it will be impossible to make any headway worth while in prison reform until the profits are taken from convict labor. Our prisons will never be civilized until our convicts are employed at useful production, and paid adequate wages for what they produce. Convicts cannot be fitted to take their place in society until they have built up a certain amount of self-discipline, and this can only be done by the largest possible measure of self-government. And as a part of self-discipline the convicts must pay a fair price for their maintenance and turn the balance of their earnings over to their
dependents, or deposit it in a bank for capital on which to start life anew when the prison term is done.

We must demand the complete abolition of the old system of herding all type and grades of delinquents together. In every prison there are the physically diseased and the physically clean, and they must be segregated. In every prison there are the mentally normal and the mentally subnormal, and they, too, must be separated. In every prison are the adolescent, accidental criminals, and the old, hardened, hopelessly warped and ruined products of our prison system. The first are hopeful; with decent care and training they may be returned to the community an asset. The second are, I believe, practically hopeless. No man or woman can live the brutalized, abnormal life of a convict for a number of years; they cannot go through the soul searing, embittering experience of courts and trials several times, and still retain enough of the human being on which to work reform. They are the tragic products of our judicial and penal systems. There is nothing that society can do with them except to segregate them from susceptible persons; give them sane, humane, decent treatment while they live, and stop breeding more of the same kind.

We must demand that the United States Department of Justice immediately build and equip an institution of its own for the care of female convicts. This institution must not be of the old type of torture chambers with stone walls and steel bars. It must be a large farm where the women can live as nearly normal life as possible. They must be placed in the care of scientifically trained experts who know how and have the incentive to give the treatment necessary to heal broken bodies, warped brains and brutality scarred souls.

Attorney-General Daugherty has announced that he wishes to take over an abandoned army cantonment and use it for a hospital and training school for federal prisoners. Certainly this is a big step in the right direction and every American citizen should give active support to this project. Mr. Daugherty's greatest difficulty will be in securing appropriations from Congress necessary for this reform. You can help by writing your congressmen that you favor this move.

Mr. Votaw, the new Superintendent of Federal Prisons, has spent years of his life in medical missionary work. I have every hope that he will approach the problems of his position with both the scientific and humanitarian viewpoint, and that he will be very susceptible to suggestions for prison reform that comes to him from fellow church workers.

I have every reason to believe that both Mr. Daugherty and Mr. Votaw will be glad to know that public opinion is demanding of them a far higher type of public service in connection with federal prisons than was demanded of their predecessors.
I know that protests intelligently made get results. When I managed to get a letter out of Jefferson City telling my husband of the venereal disease conditions, he reproduced that letter and sent it to one thousand influential people. Soon a flood of protests reached the Attorney-General and the prison board at Jefferson City and many of the worst abuses were immediately corrected. The fact that this protest was heeded, and vicious abuses were partly corrected, convinces me that our prison system is the horror that it is only because public opinion in the United States permits it to be so. Whenever the people of the United States demand a decent penal system we will get it. There is no defense possible for our prisons; they exist and inflict their horrors upon helpless human beings simply because the great mass of citizens are totally ignorant of what goes on behind prison walls.

Many inhuman abuses have been abated since I went to prison. The year that I spent in prison making a study of crime and criminals, and the year I have spent telling the people of this country what one of its typical prisons is like, have been among the most satisfactory years of my life. In the one year following my release, which came on May 30, 1920, I have lectured in one hundred and twenty cities, covering practically all of the United States east of the Rockies. I have written and published two books, "In Prison" and "America's Prison Hells." I have written many newspaper and magazine articles and addressed many clubs and organized groups. For the time being I have not discussed political issues, but have given all of my time and energy to telling the people of this country what its prison system is. As a result of this work, public opinion is being aroused and a mighty wave of protest is shaking the very foundation of our penal system, and there is every indication that stupendous changes are coming.

Jefferson City prison is one of the oldest prisons west of the Mississippi. It is the largest penitentiary in the United States and nowhere perhaps were prison brutalities and prison exploitation so firmly entrenched, so thoroughly guarded by graft and greed and political power. When I made my first attack on this stronghold of prison brutality it seemed like tilting windmills. Less than two years have passed; I have been able to reach a very small portion of the people of this country with a very incomplete picture of Jefferson City; but these people have acted. They have bombarded the United States Department of Justice with protests against peddling its female prisoners to the lowest bidder, and there is every hope that a modern, scientifically constructed and managed Federal Reformatory for women will soon be erected. But because victory is in sight is no reason that you should not add your protest to the tens of thousands that have been made. It is the best reason in the world why you should write your congressmen now while their attention is on the matter.
No prison seemed more hopeless than Jefferson City when I entered it, but aroused public opinion has penetrated its darkest recess and a complete revolution is in process there. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch of May 31st, 1921, exactly one year to a day from the day I returned from Jefferson City prison to my home in St. Louis, carries the news that Thomas Mott Osborne and George W. Kirchwey, the two foremost penologists in the United States, are to begin a survey of the Jefferson City prison within a few weeks at the invitation of Governor Hyde, and that an effort is being made to induce Mr. Osborne to accept the position of warden. Certainly my wildest hopes never reached anything so satisfactory as this. And this revolution would not have taken place if the people of the United States had not acted upon the information I provided; I might have talked myself into the grave while greed and graft and brutality continued to hold full sway in Jefferson City. But when thousands of men and women begin to protest and demand that the inhumanities and brutalities should cease, and that this one prison, at least, be made something not so frightful, their protests got results.

But don't imagine that political graft and industrial greed will loosen their blood-stained clutches on the princely profits of convict labor without a struggle. And don't imagine that I will escape the vengeance of those whose blood-stained profits are slipping away. Neither the Department of Justice nor the officials at Jefferson City have ever refuted one single charge I have made; no attempt was ever made to publicly answer my charges, for there is no answer. But the men who profit by convict labor have waged a relentless warfare on me ever since the day I left prison. They have not dared to meet my charges; they have not dared to deny them publicly; they have not dared to come into the open and fight. They have skulked behind others, and fought in the dark.

The men whose hands are wet with human blood, the men whose bank vaults are filthy with profits wrung from convict labor, the public servants whose records are smirched with greed and graft dare not meet me in the open, so they hide their crimes behind the silly cry that I am “disloyal.” This falsity of this charge was proven by Mrs. Mathes of the Chicago Church Federation to Attorney-General Palmer, and his recommendation for my release gives the lie to the charges that have been repeated by many newspapers. The politicians and contractors of convict labor dare not oppose the work that I am doing in making prison conditions known, so they use certain organizations that can be fooled into doing their criminal work for them. So when you read in a newspaper that this or that organization has protested against my discussing “Crime and Criminals” just remember that the only people in this country who are likely to be injured in the least
by the lecture are the men who make profits from convict labor, and the politicians whose graft comes from the same source.

And do not think you will escape the vengeance of corrupt politicians and the men who profit by the prison system if you protest. A certain man was manager for a commercial credit concern at Sioux City, Iowa. I lectured in that city and made the statement that I had made garments in the prison at Jefferson City into which I sewed the label of the Sibley-Hess Manufacturing Co. of that city. This man's wife went to the office of the Sibley-Hess Co. and asked if my statement was true. I am informed the answer to this perfectly legitimate question was the discharge of her husband from his position with another firm!

But every protest against entrenched wrong has its price that we must pay; everything that has value must be paid for. By the protest of men and women brave and courageous enough to take a stand, many prison abuses are being corrected, but many a hoary abuse still remains, and will remain until enlightened, concerted, courageous public opinion roots them out.

And in the struggle for these palliative measures we must not lose sight of the fact that our ultimate goal is social justice that will remove the social cause for crime; that our ultimate aim is not merely the reformation of our prisons, but the reconstruction of our whole system of dealing with the troublesome members of society.

We must not forget that the prison, as we know it today, must go, with all of its crudities, cruelties and stupidities. The reformative institutions of the future must be hospitals where trained physicians and psychologists, kindly, sympathetic nurses, understanding teachers and skilled industrial instructors shall deal with human deviates, not as victims to be exploited and tortured, but as unfortunate derelicts upon whose helpless heads have fallen "the sins of the fathers."
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