DELAWARE COUNTY PRISON

Our friends in Delaware County know that their prison is archaic, unsanitary, unwholesome. It was worse when Warden Allen took charge a few years ago. He improved the lighting and ventilation, removed the looms from the cells to an outside structure and endeavored to find work for each inmate. Nothing more can be done with the building as it is. What is the next step? "Aye, there's the rub." We differ. We persist in our different opinions, and all of us are convinced we are right. One party moves for a structure on the same site, constructed in the most approved modern style, equipped with machinery for the manufacture of articles for use of public institutions, with every facility for segregation of the sexes and of different classes of prisoners. The other party would have the old building razed to the ground, would provide a smaller building for the detention of prisoners awaiting trial. All convicted prisoners should be sent to some farm, where they may earn their maintenance from the agricultural productions. They should also work at quarrying and crushing stone for road-making purposes. As all prisoners are not adapted for farm work, the looms should be set up on the farm and arrangements made for work in two or three other lines of industry.

Which plan shall be adopted? The tendency in nearly all parts of the country is in the direction of establishing industrial farms for the detention and reformation of delinquents.

We hope that some 750 odd of those who read these lines will at once forward to us fifty cents for a subscription to THE PRISON JOURNAL. One dollar will pay for two years. The sum asked does not defray the cost of publication, but will assist us mightily in our venture in journalism. Act, act in the living present.

THE STATE REFORMATORY IN KENTUCKY

The State Reformatory

Through the courtesy of Mr. Joseph P. Byers, formerly one of our honored members, now Commissioner of Public Institutions in the State of Kentucky, for many years efficient Secretary of the American Prison Association, we are permitted to publish extracts from a recent report of W. H. Moyer, retiring Warden of the State Reformatory. It is indicative of the progress which is being made in many of our penal institutions. The report is addressed to the Commissioner, Mr. Byers.

DEAR SIR:

When I arrived here on the morning of August 12, 1920, to take charge of the Institution, I found a large number of the inmates in open rebellion. Upon inquiry I ascertained this was because they were fearful of a return to the appalling conditions which existed a few months ago. During the short period which my immediate predecessors served as Superintendent, the inmates had been given a surcease from the rigid and unreasonable practice of former years and they seemed to be fearful that the new administration was to bring about the return of conditions which should never exist in any civilized country.

I also found an instrument, which was usually known as "The Bull," over which inmates had been stretched while they were beaten so unmercifully that the blood ran down and stained the floor. This had not been used for about five

months preceding my arrival, but it had been used within the year. My first official act was to remove this horrible machine.

I also found that chains had been fastened to the walls to which it had been the practice to trice up the prisoners. There were about thirty of these chains and my second act was to have these chains removed.

I also found gambling was of more than frequent occurrence and that the vice of sodomy permeated the Institution.

Notwithstanding these grave conditions I found a force of inexperienced officers, few of whom had been in the service more than three months, so that you will understand why the conditions which existed here when I arrived seemed almost impossible to remedy, but by the help of many loyal officers and a large number of well-meaning inmates I have been able not only to remedy these vicious conditions but make some improvements which I hope will be permanent. Among these changes and improvements may be mentioned the following:

1. *Conversation at meals.* Conversations at meals had been forbidden, but it was carried on stealthily and was therefore a general violation of the rules. Heretofore it had been the practice to forbid talking at meals, but after an investigation, which covered many State Institutions and lasted for more than two years, I changed this practice in Atlanta in 1908 and allowed the men to carry on respectful conversations while at meals. This had yielded such good results that I adopted it in every institution over which I had charge, so I changed the rule here and permitted talking at meals and the change has been beneficial.
2. *Baseball.* Some baseball had been played before I arrived, but there was no regular organization for this game and I therefore placed it upon an organized basis and during the season we played some excellent games on the Reformatory field. There is absolutely no doubt that healthful exercise of this kind is a valuable adjunct to good discipline.
3. *Mutual Welfare League.* Having found from experience that the active interest of well-meaning prisoners is essential to the success of prison administration and that this interest could be best secured by uniting the inmates into a mutual organization, I early organized the Mutual Welfare League which is to help and co-operate with the Superintendent in establishing and maintaining everything that can be made interesting and educational and also upbuilding for the inmates. This League has adopted a constitution and by-laws, and I desire here to express my appreciation of the assistance it has given me in the administration of the affairs of this Reformatory. I strongly recommend that not only should this League be continued, but that it should be given every reasonable support in its aims and endeavors. Briefly speaking, the League takes over the management of all educational, athletic, entertaining and other purely prisoners' affairs, and in this respect not only guarantees that this work will be carried on in the interest of the inmates but that the State will be relieved of the trouble and expense of maintaining these very necessary features of administration. Attention is called to the first financial report of the Mutual Welfare League, which is submitted herewith.

4. *Moving Pictures.* The value of clean moving pictures as a source of entertainment to the inmates of an institution of this kind is abundantly proved and for this reason I have caused them to be shown here.
5. *Syphilis.* When I came here it was estimated that half of the population was suffering with syphilis. Investigation showed, however, that this was not correct. The percentage was $47 \frac{6}{10}$. A specialist was employed and blood tests of every inmate taken and on December 11th we finished giving neosalvarsan to 392 prisoners whose blood had shown plus reaction. On that date this Institution was absolutely clean from syphilis and by taking blood tests and injecting neosalvarsan in everyone showing a plus reaction it is possible to maintain this clean condition permanently.
6. *League Store.* The Mutual Welfare League has established a store at which the inmates can purchase anything allowable at the same price which would have to be paid if purchased outside. This store yields the League a handsome profit which is used to pay the expenses of carrying on the educational and other work of the League.
7. *Entertainments and Shows.* Under League supervision the inmates have personally prepared and given entertainments and shows, and the funds derived from this source go into the League's fund to carry on the work of the League.
8. *Band.* A band had been organized when I arrived, but it was small and frequently disturbed by paroling its members. The number in the band had been greatly increased, and although the band is frequently depleted by the discharge or parole of its members, there is a sufficient number left to furnish all the necessary music.
9. *Orchestra.* During the past two months an orchestra has been organized which has been giving splendid service at the Sunday Services and at shows, and it is hoped that this orchestra will be fostered and built up until it shall have a prominent place in the affairs of the Institution.
10. *School.* A night school has been organized in accordance with the rules and regulations of the State Department of Education and this school is supervised and taught by inmates. No more important branch of administration can be found than the maintenance of a school for illiterate prisoners. During the calendar year of 1919, $25 \frac{5}{10}$ per cent. of the persons admitted were illiterate and during the calendar year of 1920, 24 per cent. of the admissions were illiterate. There is no good reason why all of these should not be taught to read and write and speak the English language fairly well, and I strongly recommend that a rule be passed by the Parole Commission that no one will be paroled until he can do this. A reference to the report of the Superintendent of our prison school at the Reformatory will show what has been accomplished.
11. *Disarming Guards.* A feeling prevailed here, as in a few other similar institutions, that it is dangerous to go among prisoners unarmed. This feeling is absolutely without foundation and for that reason I issued orders that guards who come into personal contact with prisoners should

not be armed. The disastrous consequences of this, which were freely predicted, have not materialized, and I am glad to say that the Kentucky State Reformatory now takes rank in this respect with the leading institutions of the country.

12. *Compensation for prison labor.* In the year of 1916 there was enacted a law providing for prison labor at from five to fifteen cents per day. This law was re-enacted in 1920, but it was not until January 3, 1921, that the State Board of Charities and Corrections placed the law into effect. The results of this humane law are expected to be beneficial but to what extent is now impossible to say because the law has not been in force sufficient time to permit it.
13. *Abolition of task system.* The adoption of compensation for prison labor necessarily abolished the old task system which was never justified from any point of view. It may be, and, in fact, was believed, that it was justifiable under the task system to flog men for short task, but I have never believed that men can be made better morally, physically or intellectually by the use of the strap or bludgeon. For that reason this inhumane method of driving men in their work has never been a part of my program.
14. *Dietary.* Steps have been taken, although the plans have not yet been completed for a well-balanced ration for this Institution. Such a ration will not only be economical but will produce better results from a physical standpoint than are produced by the present system.
15. *Advisory Board.* I have organized an Advisory Board for the consideration of all matters and policies affecting the administration of this Reformatory. This Board comprises the head of all departments and meets every two weeks with the Superintendent. At each meeting the general matters and the matters pertaining to the various departments are discussed and a policy decided upon which is followed through the Institution.

I did my full duty as well as I knew how to do it and in this I have had the earnest and co-operative support of yourself and the State Board of Charities and Corrections. For this support I thank you and I hope you will as freely give it to my successor. I cannot close this report without expressing my appreciation of the loyal support I have had from most of the officers of this Institution and of the great assistance and co-operation I have had from the Mutual Welfare League and the inmates generally.

Very respectfully,

W. H. MOYER, Superintendent.

March 7, 1921.

THE TEXAS PRISON CAMPS

BY GEORGE W. DIXON

FOR THE PRISON JOURNAL:

Replying to your request for a report on Texas prison camps, permit me to say that Texas has one of the most brutal penal systems in the world. I do not believe there is a country under the sun where brutalities are greater than in the