

responsibility, or, in other words, "the honour system." In closed-cell confinement we have the negation of this principle. The late Sir Edmund du Cane regarded this stupid and cruel punishment as "an artificial state of existence, absolutely opposed to that which nature points out, as the condition of mental, moral and physical health."

The pronouncement of the Select Committee on Prison Discipline, which deliberated as long ago as 1850, was that it was unjust to the prisoner. Why, then, has not the pronouncement of an authoritative body been given practical effect? We suppose that 66 years is not long enough for Parliament to make up its sluggish mind. In America, where reforms take place more rapidly than in this slow-moving country of ours, the "honour system" has been adopted in several prisons, and the results are a triumphant justification of the success of it. The warden of a prison should be a psychologist, a humanitarian, a philanthropist; any or all of these. The first will do, for it covers the rest. Mr. Mott Osborne is a psychologist, so also is Warden Tynan of Colorado Penitentiary, so also is the Warden of the New York State Prison at Auburn, and Dr. J. T. Gilmour of Ontario Reformatory, and Mr. W. J. Homer, Warden of Great Meadow Prison, Courstock, New York, and Mr. Robert Rosenbluth, Warden of the New Reformatory, Orange County, N.Y., and all others, we may be sure, who preside over prisons where real reform is going on. These men make themselves the friends of the prisoners; they study the character of each individual, encourage their confidence, and endeavour by every means to bring out the best that is in them. They trust them, they put them on their honour. (We have already seen that prisoners are not without honour.) This gives them a sense of responsibility. When sent out to work on the prison farms or road-making, with little, and in some cases no supervision, the convicts give their word that they will not try to escape, and with few exceptions they never betray the trust placed in them. It is not until their characters have been thoroughly tested that they are given so much freedom. Public opinion is in favour of this new and humane treatment of prisoners in the States. Warden Homer relates that prisoners on parole easily find employment in the neighbourhood with farmers and contractors; the demand, in fact, is greater than the supply.

"Let us build up the spirit with the institution," says Mr. Robert Rosenbluth, Warden of the New Reformatory, which is attached to a 600-acre farm in Orange County, State of New York. He is very careful in his selection of his officers, whom he calls "first class men." They live with the prisoners, sleep with them, and eat with them the same food, and work with them on the farm. By this method the thoughts and conversation of the men are controlled; they are being reformed without knowing. Thus it will be seen that the New York State Commission on Prison Reform has amply justified its existence. A few years ago

Captain St. John went to America and made a tour of inspection of some of the principal prisons in the States and in Canada. The information he gathered is of great value and should be utilised in a practical manner for the benefit of this country. I am myself much indebted to him for much of the data embodied in this article.

(To be continued.)

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON VENEREAL DISEASES.

When the Reports of the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases were published, we commented upon them at some length in this journal, and drew attention to their importance. But voluminous Blue Books are not for all, and Dr. Douglas White (Captain, R.A.M.C.) has done good service in compiling, in convenient size and form, a "Synopsis of the Final Report of the Royal Commission," which has been published by the National Council for Combating Venereal Diseases, Kingsway House, London, W.C., price 1s. The "Synopsis" is a "systematic abbreviation," from which, Lord Sydenham of Combe states in his preface, nothing of first-class importance has been omitted; and it is the hope of the National Council that "the Synopsis will smooth the way to wider knowledge of these most insidious and dangerous diseases, their effects upon the race, and the means of combating them. It was impressed upon the Commissioners by many witnesses that this knowledge was lacking, and that the veil of secrecy—which has too long been permitted to obscure facts of vital import to the national welfare—must be withdrawn, if a worthy attempt is to be made to cope with a deadly evil. One of the great objects of the National Council is, therefore, to diffuse necessary information in forms suited to different classes of persons who have opportunities of warning, of guidance, and of promoting administrative measures."

Lord Sydenham further states that the President of the Local Government Board has already taken measures to carry out the principal recommendations of the Royal Commission, as regards the provision of ample means of diagnosis and treatment. The success of these measures will depend upon the hearty co-operation of local authorities and the managers of existing hospitals. For them the facts and opinions embodied in this "Synopsis" should prove of special value. They will be able to realize the many forms in which venereal disease manifests itself, and the terrible results of congenital infection in causing sterility, still-births, infant mortality and infirmities which require institutional treatment at great expense to the community. They can judge how far these great evils can be prevented by the application of early and efficient remedies which medical science has placed at our disposal.

Amongst the far-reaching effects of syphilis, it is estimated that at least 90 per cent of all cases

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