

THE MODERN ATTITUDE TOWARD CRIME.

The struggle of the masses for physical and mental freedom, the incessant push of countless individualities all eager to obtain larger opportunities, have produced changes of thought the magnitude of which perpetually eludes us. Painting, perhaps, gives the surest reflection. One notes at a glance that while the artists of the Middle Ages ignored the common man, he holds today the center of the picture.

In my own special study, criminology—which arose naturally out of my detention in a California penitentiary—the inroads made by modern thought on ideas that reigned almost unquestioned for untold generations have impressed me greatly. This has been more particularly so since the publication in the *Cosmopolitan* magazine of the articles in which Harold Bolce has set out the existing conflict between theological orthodoxy and the doctrines taught from the scientific chairs of American universities. I am of the opinion that a corresponding investigation of the views on crime and criminals, held respectively by the old and modern schools, would show a conflict fully as intense and, it may be, even more important. I am anxious for that investigation, for it would help the cause of progress.

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The crime problem goes to the roots of individual and social life, since it not only shows us the workings of our economic and political system but also directs its finger unerringly to the point at which the machinery most conspicuously breaks down. It is the breaking of the weaker links that proves how worthless is the chain. We may be sure that Tolstoy understood this when he wrote "The Resurrection."

The distinction between the old and new schools lies precisely in the fact that the former considered only one factor in the problem—the crime, the outrage committed on the dignity of the state. The modern school, on the other hand, insists on two other factors as even more important: the criminal, and what made him so. This constitutes an enormous departure, pregnant with most vital consequences.

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Viewing only the outrage on the state the old school could think only of punitive revenge and repression.

Studying the criminal and the reasons for his being such, the new school found itself launched

on a voyage of sociological discovery, the end of which is by no means yet.

It became clear, whatever the truth may be as to the existence of "born" criminals, as indicated by the tables compiled by Lombroso, Ferri and others, that by far the larger class of criminals—and especially those convicted of minor crimes—is composed of the "occasionals," whose troubles are due more to external causes than to innate tendencies. Thus the study of economics and the various factors that make up the social environment becomes imperative on the adherent of the new school.

Since crime is a topic of never failing interest, always occupying much space in the daily papers, it follows that as the new school wins its way to the front the causes of crime will receive more and more attention. It is even conceivable that the growing influence of the new and scientific school may force the press to depart from its time-honored policy of dealing only with effects. This, it is needless to say, would be a veritable and far-reaching revolution.

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The new school has all the argument and, having for its object the discovery of facts, is always open for more.

The old school is not open to argument, but, buttressed by power and sheltered by the strong arm of politics, has the incalculable advantage of being in possession. Nevertheless concessions of enormous value have been wrung from it.

It still hangs, but by stealth. It still tortures, but behind the silence of the prison walls. Professing to believe in the power of its deterrents, it shrinks from all logical application of them, not daring to execute and punish in the open, as did our forefathers, who honestly thought that drastic punishments deterred.

When the new school forces the adoption of such measures as probation and the indeterminate sentence it wins far more than a victory for humanitarianism, and secures far more than recourse to a palliative. It establishes a principle of the first importance—that society's right to restrain the individual is based solely on the ground of social self-defense—the fundamental right of self-preservation.

The old school has as its tap-root the theological conception of sin having been committed by a freely working individual will, that could have chosen the better part and has merited not only punishment but the customary homily from the bench and the moralizings of the prison chaplain.

The new school is founded on the conviction that effect follows cause, and that crime-breeding conditions inevitably beget criminals.

It is my hope that the Prison Reform League, setting the facts on both sides impartially before the public, may give impetus to a literary movement that will generate substantial thought. And I repeat that the social machinery must be examined first where it has broken down most conspicuously; where the victims are most visible and the spectacle presented most pitiful.

There is but one living creature so helpless as the discharged convict—penniless, will-broken, and with every man's hand against him—and that is the unfortunate who is caged and at the mercy of his keeper's every whim. It is in his case that liberty and the other high-sounding phrases with which society cloaks its short-comings, become the most transparent mockery, and this special branch of sociology demands, therefore, the closest investigation.

GRIFFITH J. GRIFFITH.

NEWS NARRATIVE

To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article, on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Tuesday, September 21, 1909.

President Taft's Journey.

Before the Boston Chamber of Commerce on the 14th, upon the eve of his "13,000-mile swing around the circle" (p.867,) as the news dispatches call it, President Taft outlined its object. It is on the one hand to get a "more accurate impression as to the views of the people in the sections he visits," thereby making him "a wiser man and a better public officer;" and on the other "to explain to the people some of the difficulties of government and some of the problems for solution from the standpoint of the Executive and the legislator as distinguished from that of the honest but irresponsible critic." One of these problems is the monetary subject, respecting which the President's speech indicated a favorable attitude toward "some sort of arrangement for a central bank of issue which shall control the reserve and exercise a power to meet and control the casual stringency which from time to time will come in the circulating medium of the country and the

world." And in this connection he stated that the Monetary Commission, of which Senator Aldrich is chairman—

intend to institute a campaign of education in order to arouse public opinion to the necessity of a change in our monetary and banking systems, and to the advantages that will arise from placing some form of control over the money market and the reserve in the hands of an intelligent body of financiers responsible to the government.

Enlarging upon this statement the President further said:

I am told that Mr. Aldrich will "swing around the circle" in the present fall and will lecture in many of the cities of the middle West on the defects and needs of our monetary system. I cannot too strongly approve of this proposal. Mr. Aldrich, who is the leader of the Senate, and certainly one of the ablest statesmen in financial matters in either House, has been regarded with deep suspicion by many people, especially in the West. If, with his clearcut ideas and simple but effective style of speaking, he makes apparent to the Western people what I believe to be his earnest desire to aid the people and to crown his political career by the preparation and passage of a bill which shall give us a sound and safe monetary and banking system, it would be a long step toward removing the political obstacles to a proper solution of the question.

The President did not discuss the new tariff bill in his Boston speech, further than to say that it "has removed a disturbing element in business." He announced that "we are, I believe, unless all signs fail, on the eve of another great business expansion, an era of prosperity," and asserted that "it is already here in many branches of business." But he discussed none of the problems he alluded to.

The President's first stop in his "swing around the circle"—indeed his starting point, for the Boston speech was described as preliminary—was at Chicago on the 17th. Here his principal speech was made at Orchestra Hall under the auspices of the Hamilton Club. His subject was trade unionism, although no provision had been made by his hosts for any trade union representation in his reception. It was exclusively a business men's demonstration, except for the turn-out of the public school children. This feature was managed with remarkable skill by the architect of the Board of Education. In the course of his speech on trades unionism the President said:

I know there is an element among employers of labor and investors of capital which is utterly opposed to the organization of labor. I cannot sympathize with this element in the slightest degree. I think it is a wise course for laborers to unite to defend their interests. . . . I think the employer who declines to deal with organized labor and to recognize it as a proper element in the settlement of wage controversies is behind the times. There is not the slightest doubt that if labor had remained unorgan-