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ON

THE ELMIRA SYSTEM

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THE ELMIRA SYSTEM.

BY CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER.

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There are certain influences and conditions which go to make what we call progress in this world — that is, a better state of the human race — which are of universal application. They apply to men in the mass; and under them society moves forward, creating from age to age an improved social state. Inventions and the discovery of new applications of the laws and forces of nature contribute largely to this result. But, of all the forces that have been slowly transforming the world since the beginning of our era,— a brief era in comparison with civilizations before it,— the most important incomparably is Christianity. Its insistence upon the brotherhood of man, its recognition of the value, the duties, and the responsibility of the human soul, its clear statement of the relations between man and his Creator, are the principles upon which the whole of modern life rests, wherever modern life has improved its social, moral, and material conditions. Those States have most prospered in well-being where the spirit of Christianity has had the freest and most intelligent recognition. There we look for, and there we find, without any exception, the finest fruits of what we call civilization. This spirit is the underlying motive of modern life.

And yet neither the prevalence of this spirit, nor the forces which we reckon as causes and signs of our progress, can be said to have extinguished the evils which existed before they came into play. We see their effect in a general transformation; but in our progress there are details of misery which are alarmingly out of keeping with our boasted advance. Poverty assumes a more hideous aspect, perhaps in contrast with our materialistic achievements; and crime increases, or seems to increase, perhaps in contrast with our general enlightenment. Is the fault with Christianity or with science? or is it in our failure to apply the principles of

either to men as individual beings, in the problems that perplex and discourage us?

One of these problems is the treatment of criminals. In this paper I propose to consider it alone, with little reference to the causes that produce criminals. I am perfectly well aware that in our social evolution this subject is not isolated. The problem of crime is complicated with the quality of education, with labor and wages, with wealth and production, with hygiene, with poverty, with economic legislation. To some emphasis is laid upon the study of heredity and psycho-physical pre-possession, and with them it is mainly a question of the management of children. With others poverty and intemperance are the chief factors of crime. Inquisition in all these directions throws light upon the best methods of lessening crime and of dealing with the criminal. It does not need to be insisted on that all forms of social evolution are interdependent, and that in moving forward society cannot afford to have any weak places in its line. But, for the moment, I wish to direct your attention solely to the criminal as a more or less finished product, when his own conduct authorizes society to lay its hands on him for its own protection. We need not entangle ourselves with any theories as to the right of society to compel an individual into any certain line of conduct, as, for instance, to coerce him to be good. We deduce the right of society to coerce him to be law-abiding from its indisputed right to protect itself. I shall consider this problem wholly as an educational one, meaning, by education, discipline, development, training. And, in asking you to examine the Elmira system, I am asking you to consider a system under which, for the first time in history, the criminal shall be subjected to strictly scientific treatment, and where science does not come into conflict with humanitarianism or religion.

There would be no breaking the law, which is called crime, if men were in a normal condition; that is, if the body were sound, the intellect clear enough to discriminate between what is legal and what is illegal, and the moral sense and the will-power strong enough to enforce this discrimination. Men commit sin easily, and some will say naturally; but, in civilization, society is so arranged, so powerful are the checks of tradition, example, and public opinion, that the commission of crime, at first, requires an effort. In such a community as ours the general habit is to keep the law, as it is to tell the truth. The criminal and the liar are

exceptions. A man who is starving is not in a normal condition; and, if he breaks the law by stealing a loaf of bread, we do not, in reason, reckon him as guilty as the idle vagabond who never works and habitually steals his food. We make distinctions. Going further, we recognize the fact that men commit crimes under peculiar temptations, and only occasionally, that they have not got into the fixed habit of breaking the law. These are the occasional criminals. There are others who live only by breaking the law, who have a fixed habit of criminal and dishonorable life. These are habitual and professional criminals. Some have the fixed criminal habit before their first arrest for violation of the law. They have fixed their own status, before we can apply our very loose and unsatisfactory definition of the professional criminal as one who had been twice or three times convicted. Thus there are plenty of first offenders who imperatively need the discipline of recidivists.

Treating men in the mass, the law does not much discriminate. It deals with crime, and not with individuals, under our present unenlightened view of criminal law. It is what the politicians would call a sort of horizontal tariff on crime. The judge has some discretion as to the length of sentence, but little or none as to the psychological, physiological, or moral condition of the individual criminal. Everybody knows that, of two men convicted of the same crime, one should have a very different treatment from the other. But this is practically impossible under our unscientific and barbarian notion that the criminal law is for the punishment of the law-breaker, and not simply for his reformation and for the protection of society.

Take the protection of society first. What is protection for it? Nothing is real protection except permanent relief from the attacks on its lives and its property. If a man is in the habit of burning houses, is there any protection from him except locking him up where he cannot apply the torch? If a man's business is to enter your house in the night and steal the silver, and to protect himself from discovery by murdering its occupants; or if his occupation is to steal your horses, to forge your checks, to counterfeit your coin, to swindle tradespeople and hotels, — in a word, to live by breaking every moral and statute law, and incidentally to create dens of thieving and lechery in every city and town,— can society protect itself against such a marauder except by locking him up where he will be harmless? I do not mean locking him

up for a brief time, and then letting him loose, unchanged in habit and intention, to prosecute his warfare on society. There never was such folly as this. It is our recognized process of creating and solidifying our criminal class, and one may say of licensing crime by putting a sort of tax on it. The criminal pays his penalty of imprisonment, and then goes on with his business. And his business is incorporated into our general system of living. There is nothing else so astonishing in our civilization, nothing that fifty years from now will seem so absurd, as our present treatment of criminals. We separate from general society the person with small-pox and the lunatic until they are cured. We do this for the protection of society, and for their own benefit. Our treatment of the criminal is as unjust to him as it is to society, for it gives him almost no chance of being reformed. Our method is not only immoral and unchristian: it is — and this consideration will appeal to the voting majority when they understand it — the most expensive we could adopt. A large proportion of our taxes for the support of police, detectives, sheriffs' offices, lock-ups, and jails of detention and criminal courts, which incur the enormous expense of trying over and over again and sentencing the same people, are required simply on account of the criminal class, who are a constant terror to us, who are known to have declared war against society, and for watching whom we pay enormous sums. The actual damage these law-breakers do is only a small part of their cost to society. How little, for instance, is the plunder got by a gang of bank robbers compared to the sum paid for watching them when they are off duty, for their apprehension, trials, and periodic imprisonments! And we do this on the untenable theory that we cannot interfere with a man's personal liberty. Society is constituted on its right to interfere with a man's liberty to do wrong to his neighbor. There is no liberty to commit crime. The habitual criminal has forfeited all right to liberty, he has certainly forfeited the right to protection in his criminal life, and every law-breaker has for the time forfeited his right to liberty.

The statement of these propositions seems to me to need no further argument. Remember, I am speaking of the convicted criminal. What shall be done with him? I say without hesitation, and I say it quite as much for his benefit as for the security of society, that he should be shut up for an indefinite time, until the day comes when the criminal habit is weaker in him than the law-abiding habit. Would not this be a hardship,— a hardship,

say, in the first conviction for a felony? I think not. It is the most merciful thing that can be done with him. It takes him out of the line of the established process by which we manufacture hardened criminals. It gives him a chance to become a decent, law-abiding citizen. There is a stigma put upon him by the conviction. That is true and pitiful. But it is no worse, if he is sentenced indefinitely, and put under reformatory conditions, than if he is shoved into the criminal class on a short term. If he is an accidental criminal, and not yet in the criminal habit, he will work his way back to liberty in a comparatively short time. If he is confirmed in the criminal habit, it will take him longer to do so. The only possible test as to which class he belongs to is not a first or a second or a third conviction, but a trial of him in conditions favorable to his reform. Society meantime is protected from him in his abnormal state. And there is another consideration which is a strong argument for the indefinite sentence of every person convicted of a felony. Our prisons now are too little deterrent to the criminally inclined. Such persons look upon prisons as incidents possibly to be endured in their career. Nothing would more certainly deter a person from beginning a life of crime than the knowledge that to begin it was likely to end his proposed career, that he was not entering an avenue of adventure, but that he was marching straight into a confinement limited only by his reformation. The corollary of this, of course, is that every penitentiary must be a reformatory.

The distinction of the Elmira system is in the discovery and application of the value of the law of habit in the reformation of criminals. It is the law recognized in every educational process,—in physical training, in the development of the minds of idiots, in the drill of soldiers, in the education of the deaf and dumb and the blind, in every school from the kindergarten to the university. Physiology gives this account of it.

The phenomena of habit in living beings, says Mr. William James, are due to the plasticity — weak enough to yield to an influence, but strong enough not to yield all at once — of the organic materials of which their bodies are composed.

The brain matter is plastic. It is affected by the blood or through the sensory nerve roots. The nervous currents leave their traces in the paths they take. Any subsequent currents move in the line of the least resistance; that is, in the paths made by the former currents.

Naturally, a more permanent impression is made on the growing organism than on the adult.

Any sequence of mental habit or repetition tends to perpetuate itself. We are automatically prompted to think, feel, and do what we have been accustomed to think, feel, and do under like circumstances, without any consciously formed purpose or anticipation of results.

Every state of ideational consciousness which is either very strong or habitually repeated leaves an organic impression on the cerebrum, in virtue of which that same state may be repeated at a future time, in respondence to a suggestion fitted to excite it.

Our nervous system grows to the modes in which it has been exercised. We all know how much our life is simplified by the automatization of our members. A spinal cord without memory would simply be an idiotic spinal cord, says Dr. Maudsley.

The ethical implications of this law of habit are evident. Habit is second nature. It is two times nature, the Duke of Wellington said.

If we can apply this law to the treatment of criminals, it is evident that reform is not simply a cessation of criminal conduct: it involves a structural change. Nature will not have a vacuum. It is not enough to stop a bad habit: you must put a good one in its place. The solitary system was foredoomed to failure. It was never reasonable to suppose that the criminal simply in communion with himself could become better. His vicious mind works upon itself, in want of any other object. He is, in his depravity and ignorance, an exceedingly bad companion for himself. In nine cases out of ten — the exceptions are very rare in which a vicious mind, unassisted by external influences, can by reflection better itself — the man sinks into a sort of mental paralysis, or thinks and contrives himself into further depths of depravity. The congregate system, generally substituted for the solitary, is more humane and has more elements of vitality; but it made the mistake of supposing that putting a crowd of vicious persons in touch with each other, overlooked by keepers whose sole object was to keep them in decent order, would work any beneficial change in them. The congregate system, without classification and without the application of discipline to individuals for their educational development and the creation of new habits of life, was also bound to be the failure we see it is.

The Elmira system rests upon two simple propositions. The

first is that the object of imprisonment is not punishment, but the protection of society and the change of the criminal into a law-abiding citizen.

The second is that it is possible to change and create habits by coercive measures long enough applied to produce what physiologists call structural changes, physical and mental.

For the protection of society the imprisonment must be co-extensive with the criminal intention of the imprisoned. The term must necessarily vary with each individual case.

The formation of good habits in men whose systems are wholly warped into bad habits, and obstinately reluctant to change, can only be accomplished by coercion, which means simply behind all other means a physical force competent to compel obedience and enforce discipline. All law rests ultimately upon this force. Its use in the penitentiary should be not for punishment, not in vengeance, but for discipline, as it is or should be in the enforcement of parental authority in the family.

The Elmira system, therefore, contemplates a penitentiary of compulsory education. It differs from other institutions not in its educational theories, but in its feature of compulsion, rendered necessary by the material it has to deal with. Its pupils are all in an abnormal condition. Some of them yield obedience more readily than others; but there are a few — just as there are a few children — whose natures cannot be aroused to any effort for better habits except by the infliction of corporal pain. This is a brutal fact about a great many brutal people in this world, and some of them are found in the penitentiaries.

The discipline in the Elmira system necessarily divides itself into three branches, because its subjects are physically, intellectually, and morally warped.

The first is physical development. This involves good sanitary arrangements, wholesome food, the training of the body by gymnastic or military drill, by massage and Turkish baths in the case of the weak and diseased, and regular labor in the workshop,— labor fitted to the constitution of the subject. The workshop has, however, other uses than mere physical training. It is an intellectual stimulus, by arousing and fixing the attention, and by occupying the mind with other thoughts than its own vicious circle of reflection. It has the moral virtue of teaching application and patience. Incidentally also, in the varied occupations that must be engaged in in order to the best development of the individual

pupils, it teaches a trade or a profession, by which the criminal after discharge can gain an honest living. The penitentiary is, therefore, an industrial school.

The second is intellectual development. This is accomplished in the school-room by studies and lessons according to the capacity of the pupil. The disciplinary use of this is the invigoration of the mind and the consequent strengthening of the will-power, and the driving out from the mind of low and sordid ideas, and replacing them with others of a totally different stamp. In the case of criminals who are already well educated the school-room is still a necessary part of the discipline for all, and of the test of fitness for liberty. The notion that further to educate a criminal is only to increase his power of villany is not worth serious consideration. We might as well abandon our whole theory of intellectual education, for we may now be training rascals in our universities.

The third is moral development. This is attempted by the enforcement of certain minute rules of conduct and behavior, embracing particulars of dress, neatness, and bearing, exceedingly irksome to those who have never in their lives submitted themselves to any sort of obedience or order. This discipline has a distinct moral value, and tends to create a standard of conduct and an *esprit de corps* of manliness in the institution. It must of course be accompanied by a spirit of guidance and helpfulness, by insistence upon the preference of a moral to an immoral life, by nursing the power of discriminating between right and wrong, and by such religious help as can be given without sectarian bias.

There is an analogy in this threefold discipline, which affects the entire man, to that of West Point. The difference here, again, is in the material to work on, and in the fact that the inept cannot be "dropped" in the penitentiary as they are at West Point.

When we turn from the Elmira System — which, I think, we all agree is a convenient name for the method I have been outlining, and which the world will very likely call the Brockway system — to the Reformatory at Elmira, we find the most interesting, the most scientific, and the most hopeful treatment of the convicted criminals that has ever anywhere been tried. It conforms to sound theories, and its results have been good beyond all expectations. It was not, however, built upon a theory. Its inception was due to the genius and experience of Mr. Z. R. Brockway, who had had a long practical training in prison management in Albany and Detroit, and was profoundly acquainted with the nature of the

law-breaking class. I used the word "genius" advisedly, because it requires sane genius to apply known physical and moral laws to practical affairs. It is true that it was begun as an experiment, in the face of scepticism that always attends a new departure, and in opposition to prejudices that still cling to the old traditions of prison life and the radically false ideas about punishment and reformation. It has had a gradual and healthy growth for eighteen years, a development step by step, always on the original lines of what we now call the Elmira system, until it has attained its present magnificent proportions, and is to-day the most interesting educational institution in the world. There are being worked out many of the profoundest problems of sociology which claim the attention of scientific investigators. If I were asked by a foreigner to say what has been the most important contribution of the United States in this century to dealing with the abnormal excrescences of our civilization, I should point to the Elmira Reformatory. I fear that we scarcely begin to realize the value of this pioneer institution.

It is not possible within the limits of this paper to describe in any detail this Reformatory. Nor is it necessary. Its whole organization and management have been repeatedly set forth by experts and in popular publications. Its history and internal economy have been always open to the world. There has never been any concealment about it, nor anything covered up in it. Officials, whose duty it is to examine it, and students of penology and visitors interested in the subject, have had free access to study all the workings of the system there administered. There has been no concealment from any proper person of all the means and methods of enforcing discipline. Every act of this sort has been carefully recorded, and duly reported to the State. Every year the managers have issued a full and elaborate report, so that the internal history of the reformatory is better known, to all who care to read, than that of any other penal establishment in the country.

I will give a brief outline of the Reformatory for the benefit of those whose attention has never been called to it. Those sent there must be between the ages of sixteen and thirty, and on the first conviction of a felony. They may be detained there for the full term for which they could have been sentenced to a State prison. They may be released in one year. The inmates are divided into three grades, each having distinctions of lodgings,

dress, food, and privileges. The new comer is put into the second grade. He is carefully examined as to his qualities, physical, intellectual, and moral, and is then assigned to the labor for which he is best adapted, and to the school fitted to his acquirements, and is instructed in the rules of conduct. At that moment his threefold training, physical, mental, and moral, begins. He is strictly marked for performance in the school, in the shop, and in conduct; and, if he falls below the standard, he is degraded to the third rank. If he maintains the standard six months, he is promoted to the first grade; and, if he maintains it there for six months, he is a candidate for liberty on parole. This is granted by the board of trustees on an examination of him and his record, and only when a proper situation is found for him. There must be a satisfactory report monthly of his conduct for six months, upon which he is given unconditional liberty. If his conduct is not satisfactory at any time in the six months' probation, he can be recalled to the reformatory. This hope of liberty presents the strongest possible inducement to personal improvement. It would be in most cases sufficient if the sentence were strictly indeterminate. But, besides this, the whole atmosphere of the reformatory is hopeful, calculated to eradicate bad habits and form good habits, and stimulating to self-respect and manliness. To the most casual visitor the physical alertness and the hopeful mental attitude of the inmates are in strong contrast to conditions found in other prisons. Mind and body are kept wholesomely occupied, and little by little the new life has its effect upon the most intractable material. If an inmate is wholly obdurate and will not submit to the discipline, there is the physical force in reserve; and in nine cases out of ten a judicious application of the strap, the infliction of physical pain, has a most quickening effect upon the mental and moral processes. I regard this reserve of physical pain as an essential part of the Elmira system. If an inmate proves finally incorrigible, he can be transferred to a State prison.

There has lately been added to the discipline of the Reformatory a complete system of military drill. This has not only the most salutary effect, but proves an invaluable intellectual stimulus and a great aid to order and correct deportment. If any discipline of this sort is useful in an institution where the inmates are normal, it is still more useful where they are abnormal. The Reformatory, besides assuring to every inmate an elementary school education, instructs in thirty-two trades. The graduate, therefore, has an

occupation by which he can earn his living, a modicum of intelligence to distinguish right from wrong, and fixed habits of conduct likely to make him law-abiding.

The result of the comprehensive and philosophical treatment in this institution is that over eighty per cent. of the inmates become law-abiding citizens; that is, over eighty per cent. have behaved well after leaving the Reformatory, while under observation, which is usually for a year, and when they have passed out of sight have not come into notice again as criminals. This astonishing proportion of men whose life has been changed would doubtless be increased under indeterminate sentences.

This has been the uniform record of the Reformatory ever since it was got into good working order. It has been annually indorsed and commended by the New York State Board of Charities, whose duty it was to make a searching examination of its methods and administration. It has been approved by scientific penologists and by all the intelligent students of the principle upon which it is conducted. I cannot say that it has been approved by the criminals whom it has failed to reform, nor by all the sentimentalists who have set up as reformers.

As an experiment, it has been badly handicapped by the lack of the indeterminate sentence, which is an essential of the Elmira system. Also it has, owing to the failure of the New York legislature to provide the other reformatories authorized by law, been put to too severe a strain. It is overcrowded, having by several hundreds more inmates than one administration should be required to handle. It is possible also that the best administration of the Elmira system would be in a series of prison-schools, each of which should contain only one grade. This is only a suggestion. I can see strong practical objections against it, in the necessity of quick and frequent transfers from grade to grade, up and down, under one system of discipline, and the stimulus to the inmates of the sight of those who are favored, in consequence of good conduct, and the warning in sight of those whose bad conduct puts them in disgrace.

But when all allowances are made, and quite aside from any personal quality or consideration, it must be said that, if for any reason the work of the Elmira Reformatory were now to be defeated, enough has been done to demonstrate the unique and practical value of the Elmira system.

The Elmira Reformatory, after running for many years as the

most interesting object-lesson in penology and with the increasing approval of experts and of the general public, has lately been attacked. This attack is due to three causes: —

1. The hunger to make money and notoriety by exploiting a sensation.

2. The determination to bring the Reformatory into the control of the political machine, that it may be used as the State penitentiaries are used,— to give places and profits to partisan workers.

3. The sentimentalists, who are the most discouraging element in any robust, vital reformatory work.

As to the first two no comment is necessary. The motives are naked, and do not need any elucidation.

The sentimentalists generally are actuated by good motives. They desire to reform the wicked and make the world better. They are simply misled by excess of emotion and by ignorance of the fundamental bases of both religion and science. They fancy that there is a way of coaxing men to be good without discipline, of changing the habits of the bad without continual coercive pressure. They have a disease which is common in this country, and which may be scientifically described as moral-mushiness,— speaking pathologically, a fatty degeneration of the heart. They are generally approved by the criminal class, who want to be well treated, but do not want to change their habits. They have no conception that the true and divine altruism lies only in the enforcement of law and in the discipline of the human race. They are encouragers of lawlessness. They are the apologists and the intercessors for anarchists. For over thirty years in this country, from ten thousand pulpits and platforms, they have been preaching the gospel of moral-mush. They have incited discontent, they have stirred up hostile feelings between classes, they have talked always of rights, rights, rights, and very little of duties, they have taught that, whoever has a hardship, somebody else is responsible for it. Whether it is a crime or drunkenness or poverty or laziness, somebody is responsible, either society or some rich man,— a rich man who in nine cases out of ten in this country has worked his way by industry and thrift and ability up to a competence for himself and the many dependent on him. We see the results of this preaching and haranguing in this country to-day in the chaos of thought on ethical questions, in the frequent failure of popular suffrage to select either honest or capable men for rulers, in the great following of demagogues, and in the

frequent spasmodic efforts of the honest people to get control of their own affairs. Perhaps these sentimentalists thought all along they were preaching the gospel of love. They have been preaching the gospel of disorder.

In the field of penology and of charities the work of the sentimentalists has been as disastrous as elsewhere. They have doubtless initiated many noble charities, but they have rendered many of them ineffective by their sentimentalism. Nowhere have their efforts been more misdirected than in their dealings with convicted criminals. Even the public has come into a habit of speaking ironically of the Model Prison.

The point selected for the attack on the reformatory is alleged cruelty in the infliction of corporal punishment; but there is a wider attempt to discredit the institution with the public and to take its administration away from the general managers, on the ground that it is a place of arbitrary, tyrannical, and excessive discipline. The use of corporal punishment, when all other means failed, has never been concealed. As to specific instances of cruelty, I have seen no testimony yet, worthy of credence, considering its source, which would not probably have a different aspect under a full statement of the facts. Much of it has been shown to be manufactured. It is not difficult to obtain this sort of testimony from the inmates of prisons and reformatories. But I wish to say that, if investigation shall show that there have been excessive castigations and sudden blows, which no just person could defend, my confidence will not be shaken in the Elmira system, including its necessary use of force, nor in the Elmira Reformatory, nor in the fitness of Mr. Brockway to be at the head of it. He is human, he is liable to err; and, in view of his great purpose and his long tried character, I could forgive him — though I do not expect it will ever be necessary — a passionate moment. He is not by nature cruel, he is not brutal. On the contrary, he is eminently humane, and has a most sympathetic spirit; and he has the invaluable quality of arousing in others an enthusiasm for a better life. His ruling purpose, his anxiety day and night, is to benefit every criminal put into his charge and make him a law-abiding citizen.

I ask you for a moment to consider the purpose of the Elmira institution and the material it has to deal with. The purpose is a radical change in the thoughts, habits, and direction of men's lives. It is this more than anything else that makes it hateful to the

average criminal. It is not because he has passively to endure something, loss of liberty and severe regimen, but that he has to make an active effort to change all his habits. He expects occasional punishment in his career. What his whole nature revolts against is being reformed. He has never come in contact with any authority, any serious interference with the lawless habits of body and mind. Naturally, he rebels at taking an active campaign against himself. He rebels, and is much less tractable to ordinary discipline than the experienced occupant of a penitentiary, whose personal habits are not much interfered with, who accepts the jail routine, and who may be a model of good conduct in the hope of shortening his term of confinement and getting back to his life of adventure. The Elmira inmate has a much more difficult task. As I said, it is not to endure punishment, but to work out a reformation. Besides, with fiery and uncontrolled impulses, he has a feeble will. When he sees the right way, it is very difficult to keep in it. Some natures, when they stray, can be kept in this way, or repeatedly helped into it, by long-suffering kindness; others, only by severity. They have to learn that to spoil the rod is to spare the child.

Again, as to material, the inmates are sent there on a first conviction of a felony. It may not be the first offence: in the majority of cases, they are of depraved habits. It is the first conviction for a felony or crime of high grade, though it may have been preceded by many convictions and imprisonments for misdemeanor. Yes, criminals between the ages of sixteen and thirty are more easily influenced than older criminals; but they are in the full vigor of passion, of wilfulness, of the impulses of self-indulgence. They have not learned the submission that hardened criminals have learned. To merely control a thousand or fifteen hundred lusty, vicious men at this age is not easy work. To change their habits is a gigantic task. When I see what has been done at Elmira, I am lost in wonder.

If I had space, I should like to speak of the wider application of the Elmira system. It should be extended to all penitentiaries. It is so scientific, so economical, and so humane that I have no doubt it will be, when the public understands it. The idea is embraced in one phrase,— the indeterminate sentence of all felons with a view to their reformation. But the carrying out of it will require radical changes in administration. The head of an educational institution of this sort must be a man of high character.

There is no other place where character will be more influential. He must be an educated man, a man of executive ability and capable of enforcing discipline. His subordinates must be like him in degree. They must be pervaded with the spirit of the system. To reform diseased bodies and crooked minds is the work of experts, it is scientific work. Such an institution as I have in mind, and as Elmira is, affords an opportunity for the exercise of the highest talent, the best scholarship, the investigation by the most interested students of the laws of the human mind and body. To rectify the bodies, to develop and train the abnormal minds,— this is a glorious work. When we go at it seriously, we shall begin to deal adequately and intelligently with the refuse and slag of our civilization.

The attack upon the Elmira Reformatory is not altogether to be deplored. It is a sign that the work tells. This work has aroused the active opposition of the criminal class and of those who pander to it. It shows that we are moving in the right direction against an entrenched position of the enemy,— the enemy of orderly society, of law, of discipline. If we were having no effect, we should not be opposed. There is little opposition to the soft-shell institutions either of reform or religion. The work will go on, and go on all the more vigorously, owing to the clamor and detraction. It will rally to it the clear-sighted well-wishers of humanity. The fight will be a long one, and mainly an individual one. Our forefathers looked for an Armageddon, a field whereon the forces of good and evil were to meet for a final conflict. There will never be an Armageddon. The powers of evil will never risk all on a single fight. Nor is it in nature. For the conflict of good and evil is in every man's heart. But daily we get a little more light, and the area of darkness withdraws. Let us have courage.