

IN CHILI'S CAPITAL.

The Model Penitentiary Where Murderers May be Buried Alive.

Special Correspondence:

Santiago de Chile, Dec. 31, 1903.—One of the institutions of this far southern capital to which the citizens point with pride is the model penitentiary. It is an enormous structure of red brick, surrounded by a massive wall of the same, on top of which soldiers are continually pacing to and fro. Brick by the way, is a very rare building material in these parts, the houses being universally of stone or adobe, covered with gray plaster. The visitor hardly knows whether to be most impressed by the immensity of the penitentiary, which is nearly large enough to hold Santiago's entire population, its scrupulous cleanliness, or the dead silence that prevails, as unbroken as if not a living creature were within a hundred miles, though at present about two thousand human beings are inside the walls. As our little party filed in between a double row of glittering bayonets, the great iron gates closed with a crash of bolts and bars. First we were conducted into a large, well-furnished reception room, lined on all sides from ceiling to floor with thousands of photographs. Every prisoner must have his picture taken on entering this place, and aged, when he leaves, and these are put in cases on the walls, each labeled with its number. During his prison life the convict is known by that number only, and never hears his name.

THE ROGUES' GALLERY.

Gazing around this rogues' gallery, my attention was attracted by two fresh and handsome young faces, evidently those of husband and wife, and I asked the superintendent who they were. "I will soon tell you all about it," he said. "Taking down one of the big books in which the records are kept, he ran his finger down the pages till the number on the photograph was reached. 'This case,' he continued, 'was a rather interesting one. They were newly married, down Valdivia way; a couple who stood high socially, and of whom everybody thought well. Worst of money was their undoing. For a considerable amount of it the husband murdered an aged relative, and the wife assisted in hiding the corpse. They had funds enough to fight the law in all the courts, but after repeated trials he was sentenced to be shot, she to be imprisoned for life. Her husband's execution, and then to remain in prison ten years longer.' The sentence, so characteristically Chilean, was carried into effect, and the story may be clearly read in the photographs. Next to this youthful couple is a picture of the criminal taken on the day of his execution, the wild eyes and haggard face showing that he realized his doom; and beyond that is the face of the widow ten years later, a prematurely old woman, with the expression of one who has nothing to hope for.

THE FACE NO INDEX.

Another face was that of an innocent-looking, light-hearted schoolboy, apparently not more than seventeen years old. "Certainly this was never a criminal!" I said. "He was one of the worst I ever knew," replied the superintendent. "In a fit of rage he beat his father's head out, because the old man refused to let him ride a favorite horse, and deliberately murdered his mother and sister because they knew of his crime and might reveal it. He was shot in this prison nine years ago."

Truly, this gruesome art-gallery upsets one's ideas about the face being an index of character, eyes, the windows of the soul, and all that sort of thing, for the most hardened wretches of the low wear looks of baby innocence. There are a great many women in the collection, and we are told that the so-called gentler sex of South America commit a large proportion of the murders—jealousy being the moving cause.

SHOP SCENES.

We went to the work shop, through huge iron gates with ponderous locks and bars, each guarded by soldiers with loaded muskets, into an immense arched patio, or inner court-yard, surrounded by massive arches. Each arch, closed by another iron gate, and guarded by soldiers, is the entrance to a smaller yard, in the rear of which is a shop. Between these minor patios are high brick walls like those outside, and on the top of them watchful sentinels are forever pacing, so that no man can stir out of his place in any part of the grounds without being instantly covered by a gun barrel. There seems to be no possible chance for escape, and the superintendent said that during the 20 years he had been here not a single attempt has been made.

In the shops everybody was working silently and steadily, his eyes bent upon his task, not a whisper being permitted, or a moment's pause of a signal from the overseer of each department, every man rose to his feet, made a military salute and remained standing until permission was given to resume work. Among the hundreds of prisoners one sees few really bad faces—and most of those seem to have been made so by some carelessness of Dame Nature in cutting out their features. There were some with the mark of Cain—abnormal creatures, the mark of crime, and therefore, perhaps no more

responsible for their deeds than other lunatics. Doubtless the iron hand of environment—the force of circumstance—that none of us can altogether escape—led most of these into error. It is a question as to whether crime should be treated as a disease, a sort of mental or moral leprosy, and a cure sought for it, rather than a punishment. Certain it is that if the majority of Chilean rotos (the word literally translated meaning "ragged people") here used to designate the poorer class) were confined for a term of years in the Santiago penitentiary, their condition would be vastly bettered. They would be sure of sufficient food, clothes and shelter, which are very uncertain blessings in their present state; besides being compelled to keep tolerably clean for the first time in their lives, and made to work at something useful.

THRIFT ENCOURAGED.

In the penitentiary all are obliged to learn trades—blacksmithing, carpentering, shoemaking, etc. There is a school also where even the oldest and most densely ignorant are taught to read and write; and a chapel where all receive religious instruction. After a year or two here, the roto who came in ragged, dirty and worthless to a degree, may go forth "clothed and in his right mind," having formed new habits of neatness and industry, and with a resource against future want in the trade he has learned. Nor is this all. Those who never in their palmy days of freedom possessed a dollar that they did not steal, may actually have money laid up with which to begin life anew. Good conduct does not count here toward shortening one's term, but extra diligence in well-doing is paid for in money. The men are kept steadily at work; but by exerting themselves they may accomplish much more than the amount required, and for every extra dollar they are fairly paid. In the shop department, for example: The contractors, who pay the government so much per annum for working the prisoners, encourage the men to their best efforts by keeping a careful account of exactly how much each accomplishes every day. A stipulated sum is paid for so much work; and if a man doubles the amount, as many do, it is so much the better for all concerned. A workman easily makes from 30 to 50 cents a day, and the amount is placed to his credit. This money is not put into his hands, but a ticket representing that sum. If he fails to do a reasonable amount, or spoils material through carelessness, something is deducted from the money he has already earned, and he may be otherwise punished. Though strongly advised to hoard his funds until the day of release, he may spend it if he likes. The prison food is better and more abundant than most of them have been accustomed to outside; but on certain days market people are allowed to come in and sell tobacco, fruit, dulces, etc., and there is no law to prevent the men from spending all they can earn in this way. Once in three months each prisoner may have visitors, and then his relatives and friends, if he has any, flock to see him. Many of them are glad to have saved up a respectable sum to give the wife and children, or the aged parent, who perhaps have sadly missed their support. Said the superintendent: "If a prisoner's term is long, it is not uncommon for him to have credit for from \$200 to \$500, which is paid him in cash on the day of his discharge. This, with a good trade at his fingers' ends and the thrifty habits he has acquired, makes a new man of him; and if he gets into mischief again it is due to innate depravity. But when a man has been long accustomed to the quiet and order that reigns here, he has forgotten how to think for himself, and even his former name has become strange to him. When first turned adrift into the world, even with money in his pocket, he feels an overpowering sense of helplessness; and many come back and beg to be taken in again."

PRISONERS BURIED ALIVE.

But there is another side to the picture—one so dark and terrible that as we contemplated it the bright day seemed suddenly overcast, the sun ceased to shine and the birds to sing. In this splendid "model" building there are slimy, noisome cells where day and night never enters, in which human beings are literally buried alive. We requested to be shown one of these cells. The gentlemanly superintendent denied that there were any such, and showed us the interior of two or three twilight cells, which he said were the worst in the penitentiary and designed for those condemned to solitary confinement. But we knew better; and later, the judicious investment of \$1 induced a subordinate officer to give us a glimpse of what we came to see. Under the massive arches of the enormously thick walls, where perpetual twilight reigns even in the outside rooms, are inner cells, two feet wide by six feet long, destitute of a single article of furniture. Until recently these confined in them were walled in, the bricks being cemented in places over the living tomb. Now there is a thick iron door, which is securely nailed up, then fastened all around with huge clamps, exactly as vaults are closed in the Santa ago cemetery; and over all the great red seal of the government is placed—not to be removed until the man is dead or his sentence has expired. The tiny grated window is covered by several thicknesses of closely woven wire

netting, making dense darkness inside, so that the prisoner cannot tell night from day. There is no ventilation, except through this netting, and no opening whatever to the tomb. Low down, in the iron door close to the ground is a sliding panel; a foot long by three inches wide, arranged like a double drawer, so that food and water, enough to sustain life, may be slipped in on shallow pans and the refuse returned. Twice in 24 hours this panel is operated; and if the food remains untouched a certain number of days, it is known the man is dead; and only then can his door be opened unless his time has expired. If the food is not eaten for only two or three days no attention is paid to it, for the prisoner may be shamming.

Not the faintest sound nor glimmer of light penetrates those awful walls. In the same clothes he went in, unwashed, uncombed, without even a blanket or a handful of straw to lie on, he languishes in sickness, lives or dies, with no means of making his condition known to those outside. He may count the lagging hours, sleep, rave, curse, pray, long for death, dash his brains out, go mad if he likes—nobody knows it. He is dead to the world, and buried, though living. Six months is the usual sentence, and two years is the limit. They told us that but one man has ever been known to live a year, and the majority do not outlast the second month. Those that survive the six months are almost invariably driving idiots or dangerous maniacs. When the sentence has expired the door is always opened at night, because in his enfeebled condition after long darkness, the glare of day would be terrible, if not death. They expect to find the wretched slave blind, emaciated to the last degree, unable to stand, hair and beard grown long and white as snow, nails like talons and garments rotten with mold.

FANNIE B. WARD.

A MYSTERIOUS EXPLOSION.

Secret Service Men Investigating Case of Loaded Projectiles.

New York, Dec. 31.—Secret service agents are investigating a mysterious explosion which occurred in the Midvale steel works in Nicetown recently, news of which has just become public according to a Herald dispatch from Philadelphia. How the charge got into the shell is a mystery. By some persons it is believed to have been the work of conspirators who had in view the destruction of a battleship. The steel works recently shipped a lot of projectiles to Boston, where they were delivered to the government officials and accepted for use. Including in the lot were shells hollowed out so they could be charged with a high explosive. Some of them were found defective and were sent back to the works. Workmen set about to examine them carefully. One of the big shells required efforts to open it, and after a couple of expert workmen had given up the task it was decided to break it open. Hardly had the heavy hammer descended when the shell exploded. Fragments were scattered in all directions, yet the workmen near by were not killed or seriously injured. It was declared in Boston that the officials were positive the shell had not been loaded when it left their hands. The authorities in Washington were notified and secret service agents have since been working on the case.

American Breeders' Association.

St. Louis, Dec. 31.—A new association called the American Breeders' Association has been perfected at a meeting of prominent scientists here. It includes both breeders of plants and of animals and



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scientists who are interested in the study of heredity in plants and animals. Hon. James Wilson, secretary of agriculture, was elected president, and the following additional officers were chosen: Hon. H. Kerrick, of Bloomington, Ill., vice president; Prof. W. M. Hays, Minnesota Agricultural college, secretary; Prof. Oscar E. Birt, Kansas Agricultural experimental station, treasurer; Dr. H. J. Webber, United States department of agriculture, chairman animal section; Prof. N. B. Hanson, South Dakota Agricultural college, secretary plant section; Hon. Jno. Dryden, minister of agriculture of Ontario, chairman animal section; Prof. M. B. Mumford, Missouri Agricultural college, secretary animal section.

The constitution provides for a council of seven made up of all the officers named except the president. Dr. Webber was chosen chairman of the council, and Prof. Hays secretary and general executive officer.

Consumptive Police Barred.

New York, Dec. 31.—Resolutions have been adopted by the board of health of

this city that no member of the police or fire departments is to remain on duty when suffering from tuberculosis in its infectious stages. This action was the outcome of an investigation which disclosed the fact that 17 members of the police force are afflicted with the disease.

POISONED WITH CANDY.

Paris Green Put in Candy and Sent to Children's Party.

Ithaca, N. Y., Dec. 31.—Two children of Michael Casey, a wealthy retired business man, a boy of 10 and a girl of 13 years, are critically ill from eating candy believed to contain Paris green. The candy was in a box delivered at the Casey home by a messenger boy to whom it was given by a mysteriously veiled woman.

When the messenger delivered the package a party was being entertained by Casey, who is a widower. It was left unopened over night. In the morning the children divided its contents and were stricken after eating a few pieces.

Investigation showed that the chocolate covered creams and gum drops had been divided into the interior removed and filled with Paris green. The pieces had then been stuck together in such a manner that except by close examination the dividing would not be noticed.

The messenger said he answered a call from near the city hospital, and was met in front of that institute by a veiled woman, who handed the box with instructions to deliver it at the Casey home, saying it came from a nurse at the hospital whose name she mentioned and who was a friend of the Casey family. No trace of the purchaser can be found and the nurse is unable to throw any light on the affair.

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