Home of Industry
for
Discharged Prisoners

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for
Discharged Prisoners.

The criminal and his reformation has been a subject of discussion for ages past. After the very best care and treatment has been given a criminal during his confinement, the question arises: What shall become of him after his term expires and he leaves the prison? All who have given this subject any thought have generally agreed on this one point, namely that the only practical way to help a man as he comes out of prison is to
find employment for him and thus enable him to earn an honest living. But this has been the great difficulty to find employment for branded criminals.

Probably The Home of Industry for Discharged Prisoners has gone further towards solving this problem than any other institution of the present day. As far as I know it is the only institution in the city of Philadelphia that attempts to do anything in the way of finding employment for discharged prisoners. This institution really dates from the time it received its charter in 1887.
Before this time there was a home at 30th and Market streets which had a somewhat similar aim and was managed by the Pennsylvania Prison Society. This home however was not managed very successfully and was obliged to close its doors.

The following is an extract from the annual report which gives very briefly the object of the home. The Home of Industry was organized in 1869 by a few zealous friends to provide for discharged prisoners that they may prove their worthiness to be employed elsewhere by the character for industry.
and sobriety they may establish in this Home during the short period of their stay.

The Home now stands on a small piece of ground on the corner of 73rd Street and Paschal Avenue. At present they have accommodations for twenty-two men and as about six hundred men are discharged from the Eastern Penitentiary yearly one can realize the great need of larger and better accommodations. The Home has been filled over since the beginning and during the nine years of its existence it has admitted about six hundred men. During the past year they have
Admitted 92 men
Found employment for 36 "
Returned to their homes 29 "
Died 3 "
Dismissed for cause 4 "
Remaining in home 20 "
This shows very plainly the great success of this small institution.

On the first floor of the building is a reading room where services are held every Sunday. Besides this room, on the first floor is the kitchen, dining room, a wash room for the men and the Superintendent's office. About fifteen of the men sleep in two large rooms one on the second and the other on
the third floor, the rest of the men sleep in small rooms in other parts of the house. Adjoining this building is the work shop where about thirteen of the inmates are employed every day in making brooms. As there is only enough machinery to employ thirteen men, the remaining nine are kept occupied doing little odds and ends about the place and are consequently unable to do their full share of work. The superintendent stated that if he had more machinery the institution would be undoubtedly self supporting, and besides
would be more able to supply the demand for brooms which he is now unable to do under the present conditions. The men are required to work from seven in the morning until nine at night except in summer when they stop at five every afternoon. After the men are through work at the end of the day they are allowed to do as they please just so they return to the home by ten o'clock in a sober condition. This is one of the great aims of the home to make the men feel just as much like their fellow beings as possible, and to cast about them a healthy and home-like influence.
that they may forget this past as much as possible. Most of the men however spend the evenings right there at the home reading profitable literature or playing games of a wholesome character. Every Sunday services are held in the parlor led by a minister usually of a different denomination each time. The superintendent is not in sympathy with the belief that it is a good thing for the members of the home to take an active part in these services, nor does he wish them to stand up and make testimonies. On a recent Sunday a man stood up and told in every earnest way of his past
evil life; that very night the superintendent caught the man forcing an entrance through a window in the third story of the house. He thinks that in most cases when a man is willing to stand up before a company of other men and tell of all his past evil doing, he cannot have very much self respect; consequently he does not have so very much faith in these Recidivist Homes; now so numerous in all our large cities. The superintendent told me of a very interesting case which came up a short time ago. Six men were arrested near Darby for throwing a brakeman off a freight train, when
They were taken to the Police Station and searched each one was found to have in his possession a Testament, a list of Rescue Homes from Maine to Florida and a loaded revolver.

He says men frequently come there to the home and tell him that whenever they want a good meal or a place to spend the night, they go to a Rescue Homestead up in a meeting and say that they intend to reform and lead a better life and they will be received with open arms.

It is not the fundamental aim of this institution to make Christians out of the inmates but rather to fit them for
honest work that they may be a benefit to their community and not a continual burden and expense.

Frank H. Star the present superintendent is a most interesting man having spent twenty-seven years of his life in prison for various crimes. As he has since led a very different sort of a life he was given his present position about five years ago. He is therefore especially well adapted for the position as he knows so well the motives and feelings of such men. He firmly holds that a man does not become a criminal in a day or a week or possibly month, but that
it is an exceedingly gradual process in the majority of cases. In the broad way he believes a man is reformed by a very gradual process. Mr. Star told me of a young man who came downtown from Burlington to this city to get occupation. He only received about seven dollars a week so he was obliged to go to one of these very cheap lodging houses for board and was forced to associate with some very low characters. It was the custom at this house to take turns in going for a pair of beer, finally his turn came around. As he did not like to stand out of the custom alone he went for the beer.
Gradually in this way he began to lead a more and more careless life till he found himself living beyond his means. Finally he was tempted to steal a pair of shoes which he was in great need of, but was caught and arrested for this act and another small offense he was sentenced to two years in the Penitentiary.

When a man like this comes out of a cell for the first time in two years his mind is very apt to be more or less affected. The Superintendant says no one can imagine the sensation that comes over a prisoner as he at last hears the key turn which sets him free. Going out into the open sunshine
everything seems strange even
the church bells. Perhaps the
horse cars have been replaced
by trolleys during his confin-
ment. Imagine but surprise
on seeing the cars moving
apparently by themselves. The
was no man out at the house
who when he just arrived
was judge. Five minutes in
 rescuing his way into the

A man after serving a
long term in prison is almost
compelled to commit another
crime just as soon as he is
released unless someone
stretches out a helping hand
No one wishes to employ him;
what he did not know Jerim
before he went to prison; he has a very thorough knowledge of now. He will not stop to do what is the poor man to do. He turns over in his mind the different methods he has heard of obtaining food and clothing by unlawful means and to an exceptional man if he does not resort to one of them.

The Chaplain at the Eastern Penitentiary is kept informed of any vacancies at the Monte of Industry and just before the dismissal of a prisoner he advises him to go to this home provided there is room. Here he is made to feel as much as
possible like other men, to forget his past, and realize that he still has a chance to redeem himself and once more become a man among men. This can only be done gradually by changing the habits surrounding him, by giving him steady employment, and by keeping him out of temptation as much as possible without having him feel that he is restricted in any way. Gradually the man falls into industrious habits again and finally begins leading a sober and useful life.

I visited The Home.
of Industry one evening to see what the inmates were really like and was most agreeably surprised I imagined they would be a very rough and unsociable set of men but on the contrary they were very bright, pleasant and quite willing to converse. One or two especially appeared to be very well educated. They did not look as if they would be capable of committing the crimes for which some of them had spent many years in prison.

Crime is on the increase right here in our own city and from it people it has been proven
that it does not pay to show too much sympathy for this class of men. For just as long as they feel that when they come out of prison some one will be sure to start them out afresh with new clothes and a small sum of money they will never give up their old ways. But what such men do want in leaving prison is a place where they may go and work away from temptation having over them a conscientious man who is willing to help them in every way he can. The Home of Industry for
Discharged Prisoners offers this chance in its small way and I think it deserves the help and support of all our citizens who have the reformation of criminals at heart.