

Clarence S. Darrow sent us the text of a talk or address to the prisoners in the Chicago County Jail. Chicago County jail, by Mr. Darrow. We do not remember to have seen any comment on this somewhat remarkable utterance in any of the papers or magazines. There are some gems of thought in the talk that are worthy of reproduction, comment and thought—we are going to reproduce a few of them, the reader can think and comment on them to suit himself. We always read the preface to a book, here is his: "This address is a stenographic report of a talk made to the prisoners in the Chicago jail. Some of my good friends have insisted that while my theories are true, I should not have given them to the inmates of a jail.

"Realizing the force of the suggestion that the truth should not be spoken to all people, I have caused these remarks to be printed on rather good paper and in some-

what expensive form. In this way the truth does not become cheap and vulgar, and is only placed before those whose intelligence and affluence will prevent their being influenced by it." The sarcasm will appear more pointedly as the extracts are read. The initial paragraph is as follows: "If I looked at jails and crimes and prisoners in the way the ordinary person does, I should not speak on this subject to you. The reason I talk to you on the question of crime, its cause and cure, is because I do not in the least believe in crime. There is no such thing as a crime as the word is generally understood. I do not believe there is any sort of distinction between the real moral condition of the people in and out of jail. One is just as good as the other. The people can no more help being there than the people outside can avoid being outside. I do not believe that people are in jail because they deserve to be. They are in jail simply because they cannot avoid it on account of circumstances which are

entirely beyond their control and for which they are in no way responsible." We imagine the above was somewhat startling to some of the prisoners, if not all of them, and we imagine also that they all agreed with Mr. Darrow. Springing anything so radical as that on a lot of prisoners is, it seems to us, rather unkind because it begets in them false hopes—the theories may be true, which we doubt, but their realization is a trifle remote, it strikes us. Further on we find this: "A great many folks admit that many of the people in jail ought not to be there, and many who are outside ought to be in. I think none of them ought to be there. There ought to be no jails, and if it were not for the fact that the people on the outside are so grasping and heartless in their dealings with the people on the inside, there would be no such institutions as jails."

Theoretically, perhaps, most people will agree with Mr. Darrow that there ought not to be any jails—those who are in jails would probably give a unanimous verdict for such a condition of things, but so far as history records there never has been a time when jails or their equivalent were not necessary, in order to protect the right dealing persons from those who have no regard for the right. We understand, of course, that Mr. Darrow is a socialist and we presume there is in all he says a mental reservation that the things he advocates would be the natural run of things under socialism. Just how socialism would change the natural inclinations of human beings has never been explained to us, nor how quick it would act, if instantaneous, or if it would require the long developing functional moral growth of the race to attain to that state of being in which as a general thing human beings would be so prone to do right that jails would be unnecessary. In our far flights of optimism we have sometimes indulged the vision of such a far developed state of humanity—we must confess, however, that the vision seems for the most part far, very far, away.

Hitting some of the business tactics and conditions prevailing, Mr. Darrow says: "There may be some of you who would hold up a man on the street, if you did not happen to have something else to do, and

needed the money, but when I want to light my house or my office the gas company holds me up. They charge me a dollar for something that is worth twenty-five cents, and still all these people are good people; they are pillars of society and support the churches, and they are respectable. When I ride on street cars I am held up—I pay five cents for a ride that is worth two and a half cents, simply because a body of men have bribed the city council and legislatures, so that all the rest of us have to pay tribute to them. If I do not want to fall into the clutches of the gas trust and choose to burn oil instead of gas, then good Mr. Rockefeller holds me up, and he uses a certain portion of his money to build universities and support churches which are engaged in telling us how to be good. Some of you are here for obtaining property under false pretenses—yet I pick up a great Sunday paper and read the advertisements of a merchant prince—'Shirt waists for 39 cents, marked down from \$3.00.'" Guess there's point to all these observations.

Land owning comes in for a side-swipe from Mr. Darrow, as might be expected—we do not know if he owns any land or not, but like all the socialists we know we opine he is like the Irishman who owned two goats and believed in collective ownership of everything except goats.

In speaking about criminals, Mr. Darrow says that the word means nothing to him, he only uses it because it is handy. He says that "if a man had clothes in his clothes-press and beefsteak in his pantry, and money in a bank, he would not navigate around nights in houses where he knows nothing about the premises whatever. It always requires experience and education for this profession, and people who fit themselves for it are no more to blame than I am for being a lawyer." Mr. Darrow seems to be quite right about that, or at least the part of it relating to lawyers, for mercy knows there is not the slightest reason on earth for some men being lawyers, and if Mr. Darrow feels that way about himself we are perfectly willing to take his word for it.

There is much to think of in the following: "The more that is taken from the poor by the rich who have the chance to

take it, the more poor people there are who are compelled to resort to these means for a livelihood." Then he avers that "If every man, woman and child in the world had a chance to make a decent, fair, honest living, there would be no jails and no lawyers and no courts. There might be some persons here or there with some peculiar formation of brain, like Rockefeller, who would do these things simply to be doing them; but they would be very, very few indeed, and such should be sent to a hospital and treated, and not sent to jail; and they would entirely disappear in the second generation, or in the third at least."

Mr. Darrow thinks the above is not all theory and gives some examples in proof of it, but it seems to us the examples prove too much, owing, no doubt, to our lack of thought and education in that direction. For instance, he cites the fact that in the early times the English people used to put their criminals on a boat and send them to Australia. "When these criminals got there nobody else had come, they had the whole continent to run over, and so they could raise sheep and furnish their own meat, which is easier than stealing; these criminals then became decent people because they had a chance to live. They did not commit any crimes. They were just like the English people who sent them there, only better. And in the second generation the descendants of those criminals were as good and respectable a class of people as there was on the face of the earth, and then they began to build churches and jails themselves." To a man up a tree that would seem to knock the second generation theory in the head, but in further support of it he goes on to say that, "finally these descendants of the English aristocracy, who sent the people over to Australia, found out that they were getting rich, and so they went over to get possession of the earth as they always do, and they organized land syndicates and got control of the land and ores, and then they had just as many criminals in Australia as they did in

England. It was not because the world had grown bad; it was because the earth had been taken away from the people." It seems to be a never ending source of complaint, and we suppose hope, to people who think as Mr. Darrow does, that if everybody could be settled on a farm then the whole industrial future would be lovely and the goose would hang high; despite the fact that there are few people who want to be on farms who are not there, despite the fact that most people not on farms and many on farms would nearly as lief go to prison as to be on a farm or stay on one; despite the fact that all over this country there are abandoned farms; despite the fact that it is next to impossible for farmers to get help to do their farm work; despite the fact that few people not on farms, and not all of those on farms, have the knowledge or ambition to till the land as it should be tilled.

Eminent philanthropists, political economists, criminologists and sociologists have for long years given the subject of crime their best thought but the crop of criminals does not seem to diminish nor is the future outlook in that direction particularly encouraging. It may be that those men who have thought most on the subject have thought in the wrong direction, have been influenced by existing conditions, have not given due weight to the radical views expressed by Mr. Darrow, but we dare say that all over the land noble men and women are putting into the work their whole souls, their most self-abnegating endeavor. The subject is one, the consideration of which should reach and vibrate the most sympathetic chords in the human heart—vengeance is so natural where sympathy should abound, self-reliance and self-restraint, virtues which should begin at the mother's knee, are never begun at all and the lack of such training must be borne by the whole community. Certainly the juvenile court idea is in the right direction, and the probation idea also looks good to us.

