

THE SWEAT-BOX

Incredible Brutality of the Spokane Police -- Vivid Details

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

SPOKANE, Dec. 4.—Some of the boys recently released from the city jail report police brutality there that seems almost incredible. If it were not for the constant reiteration of substantially the same story on the part of dozens of men who went through the "Third Degree," one would be inclined to doubt that beings calling themselves human would ever torture prisoners as the I. W. W. street speakers are being tortured by the Spokane police.

One of the most devilish of these tortures, and one that apparently leaves no marks upon most of the prisoners, is the system of changing them from hot to cold cells, exposing them to all the suffering that such a change entails. Many of the harder men go through this ordeal and suffered, but the discomforts of freezing for the time being, but others break down under the treatment, and rather than let them die the police turn them out on the street to secure aid wherever they may.

Recently there was a wholesale sweating of prisoners in the hot cell. They were mostly men from Chicago, who turned out en masse for arrest the day after the arrest of Miss Flynn and others at the Hall meeting. So angry were the police with them for their method of showing their contempt for the police that they decided to give them a lesson. As a result 29 men were packed into the hot cell and sweated from 12 o'clock noon until 10 p. m. So close were the men packed that they were unable to take their coats off even though they were being stifled by the heat. This cell, known in police circles as "The Dungeon," is air tight when the sheet-iron door is closed, and is heated by steam. It has no ventilation whatsoever except when the door is open, so perhaps the condition of the air in this second "black hole," after 20 or 30 men have been confined in it for several hours, may be safely termed indescribable. The door would be kept shut until the cries of the men warned the guards that it must be opened or they would be stifled. So hot is this cell that in a very short time one's clothes are wet with perspiration. After the required period is served in this torture chamber the prisoners, in their weakened condition, are taken to cells which are exposed to cold drafts, and there they freeze until their clothes become dry and their bodies more or less accustomed to the great change in temperature. Needless to say, this has terrible effects on some of the men, and when they are fit cases for the hospital, the police turn them adrift. One of the Chicago boys passed through this ordeal, and after two days' stay in the jail he is a physical wreck. The sudden change of temperature acted upon his bowels in such a way as to produce a bloody flux, which so weakened him that he could hardly walk, though a strong man when he went in. Broken in health and almost in a dying condition, he was released and made to shift for himself.

Several men have been kept in this hot cell for the past ten days. Their condition can be better imagined than described. These men are active members of the I. W. W. and an attempt is being made to torture them to the point where their spirit will be crushed and be forced to take a stand against their fellow-workers who are being held for "Criminal Conspiracy." So hot is it in this cell that these men strip themselves of their clothing and go almost naked. So far they have bravely refused to hearken to any of the police bribes, and state they will die in the sweat-box rather than take the stand against the so-called "leaders" or go to work on the rock-pile.

To the credit of the I. W. W. it may be said that there has not been a single traitor developed in this fight, although many of the men were tortured almost to the point of death.

The city authorities are up against it. They never have dealt with such men as the I. W. W. is composed of. Heretofore they have been accustomed to see men wither before their "Third Degree" and do just as they bid them, but for the once they have failed. These men not only refuse to give evidence against their fellows, but also to work on the hated rock-pile. However, Chief Sullivan still has hopes, and in trying to realize them he will subject his helpless prisoners to the tortures of the damned if an outraged public sentiment doesn't stay him in his cowardly course.

Many prisoners are now being released from Fort Wright and the Franklin schoolhouse, as their time is up. They report a horrible state of affairs in these jails. At Franklin school scurvy is beginning to put in its appearance, and many of the men are suffering from boils and sore gums. Some suffer from loosened teeth and have been advised to chew tobacco, as that, being a vegetable, will alleviate their trouble.

A member of the board of health visited this bull-pen the other day and ordered that the filthy slop-bucket be removed, but after this worthy had departed a milk can was put in its place.

Last week a prominent state senator visited this place and inquired of the guard where were the sleeping quarters of the men, after he had been shown the vile place where the prisoners are kept. The guard apologized for the wretched quarters and stated that they were only temporary, and that they are going to furnish blankets for the prisoners.

In answer to a query from the senator as to how much bread is allowed the men, the guard drew on his imagination and stated that each was given a loaf per day. He was interrupted by "You are a damned liar! We get only half a loaf," which was shouted by one of the prisoners. IN REVENGE FOR THIS THE REGULAR RATION HAS BEEN REDUCED ALMOST A HALF, AND A FIVE-CENT LOAF OF BREAD NOW SERVES AS A MEAL FOR FIVE MEN. At the rate of two meals a day, this would make two cents a day for each man if the bread were bought at retail prices.

Cousins was convicted this morning by a farcical trial lasting about half an hour. The evidence was so extremely doubtful in character that even the servile Judge Stocker couldn't give him the limit, but let him off with four months' sentence.

The authorities are anxiously contemplating the suppression of the "Industrial Worker." Pugh knocks it on all occasions, and states that it should have been suppressed long ago.

THE PRISONERS OF SPOKANE

(Adapted from Byron.)

"Eternal spirit of the chainless mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty, thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The Heart which love of these alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned—
To fetters and the damp vault's dayless gloom—
Their class shall conquer with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame find wing on every wind.

Spokane! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod
Until their very steps have left a trace,
Worn as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Workingmen! May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from Tyranny to God!"



HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

(December 18, 1859, just half a century ago, Wendell Phillips spoke his great oration in Boston over the execution of John Brown at Charlestown, Va., December 2, 1859. We give a few sentences from that oration, which fit the present occasion in Spokane.—Editor.)

"When our Puritan fathers stood in London, under the corporation charter of King Charles, the question was: 'Have we a right to move to Massachusetts?'"

"The Lawyers said, 'No.'"

"The Fathers said, 'Yes, we will remove to Massachusetts and let law find the reason fifty years hence.'"

"They knew they had the substantial right. Their motto was not 'Law and Order;' it was 'Freedom and our Rights.'"

"Charles I. and James, in order to rule, were obliged to persecute. Under the guise of what seemed government they had hidden Tyranny. The bourgeois Puritans tore off the mask and said to the enlightened conscience and sleeping intellect of England, 'Behold, that is Despotism.'"

It was the first lesson. It was the text of the English Revolution. MEN STILL SLUMBERED IN SUBMISSION TO LAW. THEY TORE OFF THE SEMBLANCE OF LAW; THEY REVEALED DESPOTISM.

"Law and order' are only names for the halting ignorance of the last generation"—letters by which a dying class seeks to bind the Revolution which a new class ushers in.

DAILY SPOKANE DESPATCHES

(Specials to "The Workingmen's Paper.")

SPOKANE, Thursday, Dec. 2.—Capt. Burns raided the hall again last night and got eight small boys, members of the Newsboys Industrial Union. They are arrested under the statute on delinquents, which makes it a gross misdemeanor, punishable with one thousand dollars' fine or one year in county jail, or both, for any parent or any other to encourage or contribute to the delinquency of any child under seventeen.

A child is "delinquent" who "violates any law of this State or any city or town ordinance," or who "knowingly associates with immoral or disreputable persons."

Under this last clause it will be easy for the judge of the juvenile court to convict parents and associates of the children arrested.

The "Industrial Worker," just out, says Elisabeth Gurley Flynn (Mrs.

Jones) was sweated by brutal questioning of several policemen, notwithstanding her delicate condition. They refused for a while to let her see her attorney.

Wilson Convicted.

(Special despatch to "The Socialist.") SPOKANE, Friday, Dec. 3.—Editor Wilson, Substitute Editor Foote and Organizer Thompson were "tried" today for "conspiracy," convicted and sentenced to six months in jail.

These cases are all appealed and will never be convicted by a jury. There is no attempt to prove actual conspiracy; that is, agreement between two or more persons to commit a crime.

All the same, notwithstanding the appeal, the men are to be forced upon the chain gang immediately to work

out their sentences, just as if an appeal to a jury had not been taken.

Cousins Gets His.

(Special Despatch.) SPOKANE, Saturday, Dec. 4.—Cousins' trial occurred today. Nothing proved against him, but Justice Stocker gave him four months.

Go In Again.

SPOKANE, Sunday, Dec. 5.—Fifty men released today, having served their thirty days. They are haggard and starved; but announce their determination to go in again in a few days or as soon as they get renewed strength and health.

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