

**“CRUCIFIXIONS”  
IN THE  
TWENTIETH CENTURY**

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The Cases of Jacob Wipf and the three Hofer Brothers

**Religious Objectors to War**

Two of whom died from the effects of

**Military Atrocities in American Prisons**

Told on the hospital cot by Jacob Wipf,  
who prays with Christ: “Father, forgive  
them, for they know not what they do.”

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Carried to the outside world by an Army Officer

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# THE HOFERS' CASE

Fort Leavenworth, December, 1918.

The fellow was telling his story. His eyes—plaintive eyes—spoke eloquently of intense suffering and were fitting comrades to the tale he voiced. The story, indeed, came as a stale breath from the Inquisition—a smudge of medievalism hanging on through the centuries to shadow its insidious devilry upon our Twentieth Century—a hideous jest to taunt us moderns who boast of idealism and democracy.

As this bearded man with the beseeching eyes recounted his nearly unbelievable tale of religious persecution there seemed to spring from the trite words of his narrative a vitality of Will to Believe. I saw manifested there an indomitable spiritual courage to live to conviction and to permit no coercive interference with the still small voice of conscience. These were the virtues so evident in the man—qualities indeed which not only define the strength of any personal religion but which essentially characterize man's progress toward all spiritual freedom. Such were the virtues that authority's persecution had violated,—and, as my sympathy and admiration surged to the man, I suddenly felt twisted into some abhorrent nightmare of a past inquisition.

Unquestionably the story should be told—and retold; for, while it probably instances one of the worst of the present war's persecutions in America—it still typifies the spirit under which the war heretics had to suffer. Words, however, seem inadequate to tell the story as related to me by this C. O., for it is, in reality, written only in the indelible characters of his terrible sufferings and in the deaths of his comrades.

Jacob Wipf and the three Hofer brothers were members of the Hutterian sect. Staunch to their religious convictions, they protested against the forced use of their bodies in war. They were remanded by the authorities to the Alcatraz prison. This prison, built on a rock island of twelve acres, contains a typical Spanish dungeon or "Hole" as it is called in the vernacular of the prisoners. It is with this chamber of punishment that our story deals.

The usual rigors of confinement that military prisoners all endure—though evil enough in themselves—are nothing as compared with the tortures suffered by Wipf and his associates. They believed, with an intense conviction, that their duty to their God utterly precluded any submission to military command. Immediately, therefore, upon their entrance to the prison they refused to comply with any dictate of soldier authority. It must be remembered that this was no degenerate whim nor yet the stubbornness of criminals—it was the highest spiritual conviction of deeply religious men.

Upon refusing to work, they were sentenced to confinement in the "Hole," and they descended to this terror cell to suffer for five days under the most inconceivable conditions. The dungeon—a hideous reminder of past ignorance and cruelty—is located thirty feet below the base of the prison building and just at the level of the sea. The thick stone walls, standing through long years, have become saturated with moisture and water continually worked through the crumbling mortar joints and trickled on to the floor. The air of the place was heavy—and always damp and stale.

Into this "Hole" the Hutterian Brothers were thrown and, impotent before the uncompromising power of the officers, they could not reasonably anticipate help from any human agency. You cannot conceive the poignant isolation an individual feels behind the walls and restrictions of a military prison. A dull sodden impotence pervades one's mind and body—a deep seated horror of the bars, the guards and the oppressive rules (regulations). Realizing the injustice of his confinement and seeing his cherished American ideals of Freedom and of the right to Honest Opinion brutally ravished—there comes to the political prisoner a slow, throbbing spiritual pain. But add to this the terrors of a torture cell of the Alcatraz type and you know the acme of heinous persecution.

The four Hutterians were handcuffed by the wrists to an iron bar whose level barely allowed their feet to touch the floor. Guards stripped them of their Civilian clothing down to underwear. Blankets or covering of any kind were refused them and they lived in shivering fear of the cold and damp of the cell.

Beside them on the floor were laid soldier uniforms. The tenets of their church forbade the wearing of military garb. The sneering guards, miscalculating the determination of these prisoners, swore that soon they would be dressed up as "regular soldiers." Wipf's eyes shone triumphantly as he told me this incident.

"But," he said, "we had decided, To wear the uniform was not what God would have us do. It was a question of doing our religious duty, not one of living or dying"; then quietly: "and we never wore the uniform."

For a full thirty-six hours, these quiet heroes remained "strung up" as it is called. Not a bite of food of any sort was furnished them and but one glass of water. They suffered—chilled to the bone, nearly naked, hungering and thirsting—and with pain and fatigue torturing their every nerve. To add to their torments, guards came to them during this 36 hour period and beat them brutally with clubs. Yet never once did they think of accepting the easy way out by succumbing to the military will.

Finally, the inhumanity—as well as the futility—of such treatment was apparent even to the authorities and they released the Huttrians who were, by this time, in wretched condition.

For the rest of the five day period, they were exempt from this "hanging up" but the other features of the punishment remained in force. They were without clothing. The cell was damp and musty. They were allowed but a single glass of water each 24 hours and not a morsel of food for the full five days. The dungeon contained no bed and their rest was taken on the water-soaked floor. Washing and toilet facilities were entirely lacking and thus they were forced to live there close to the filth of their own excrement. Frequently the sentries came in to manhandle their victims.

Full of the horror and pain of it all, these four protestants to war gradually became physically weaker and weaker. They felt the "death by inches" close upon them. Sanity remained to them only by the sturdiest effort of will.

At last the authorities, fearing the consequences of their action, released Wipf and the Hofers from this ordeal. They emerged from the dungeon, broken in health, and barely managing to walk. Upon reaching the light and fresh air of the upper prison, they were found to have contracted scurvy. Their skin was covered with unsightly eruptions. The effects of this disease were still evident in Wipf's face, as I talked with him.

This completes the story of the actual dungeon experience of the Huttrians and, though they were yet exposed to many petty persecutions in the California prison, their lot was softened considerably.

The immediate sequel, however, is as hideous as the actual story. Shortly after their ordeal in the underground cell, the Huttrians were transferred to another military prison where most of the C. O.s. are at present in confinement. The change was from a temperate climate to one more rigorous and this was accentuated because the season was that of early winter.

With their advent to the DISCIPLINE of this other prison, the Huttrians found similar difficulties awaiting them. They again refused to submit to military duties, and as in their former place of imprisonment, they were sentenced to confinement in "Solitary." Conditions here were infinitely more favorable in respect to sanitation and the like. Still they were placed on a bread and water diet for fourteen days; "strung up" to the bars of their cell; and forced to sleep on the floor.

The consequences of such "disciplinary" treatment following so closely upon their former ordeal and combined with the sudden change from warm to cold weather are easily pictured. Cold draughts that swept across them as they slept on the floor soon took fatal effect on their weakened lungs. Within ten days two of them—two of the brothers—lay dead in the hospital. The immediate cause—the surgeon's report stated—was pneumonia!

The third brother—already in a precarious, though not serious physical condition—was granted an immediate release, to arrange for the journey home of his dead brothers. Jacob Wipf—physically the strongest of the four—stayed staunchly in "solitary" fighting down his general weakness and diminishing vitality, with never a thought of playing the coward.

Finally Wipf's physical strength became exhausted—and, as I write his story, he now lies in the prison hospital suffering the effects of the dungeon torments. I recall him as he spoke with me, patient and quiet,—though staunch in an unassuming heroism, he held neither malice nor hate against his oppressors. There was a gentle forgiveness for them. All that remained of his concern about his persecutions was a wonderment that our present system could thrive and that the social conscience could remain callous to such coercive brutalities.

This is the spirit of the man, and the message of his story. It is sufficiently startling to quicken the conscience of every American to shame that he should be even a remote party to such oppression. And similar sufferings were meted out to all the objectors to war, though in many instances the coercion was not carried to such brutal extremes as in the case of the Huttrians. But all suffered much the same—Christian and Jew—Socialist and Moralist;—a thousand of them, and as clean cut and quietly brave group of Americans as I have ever seen teamed to a common cause.

You who are caught quietly in the comfort of your library arm chair or the calm of your own fire-sides! You worshipers who sit softly in church and call upon the name of the Father! You workers and men of trade who are free to go and come as you will and to relax in the joy of your families! To all of you—Americans!—comes the story of Jacob Wipf and the Hofers who would not let their conscience die.

by Earle Humphreys

5373 Bellefield

Philadelphia

Penna.

“ . . . we should release to-morrow every conscientious objector. They are our bravest. It takes more courage to dare or to die for a crown of thorns than for a crown of laurel.

When **President Wilson** spoke at the funeral of the seventeen American sailors killed at Vera Cruz, he said: “I never was under fire, but I fancy there are some things just as hard to do as to go under fire. I fancy it is just as hard to do your duty when men are sneering at you as when they are shooting at you . . . The cheers of the moment are not what a man ought to think about, but the verdict of his conscience.”

# DESECRATION OF THE DEAD

BY

# AMERICAN “HUNS”

A narrative by David Hofer, which corroborates and amplifies “Crucifixions in the 20th Century,” though rendered without knowledge of the story told by Jacob Wipf.

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“—She eagerly looked in through her tears; but, alas! they had clad her husband’s body in the military uniform, which, during life, he had so valiantly refused to don, because it was objectionable to men of his religion.”

—David, who had been permitted to be at the death-bed of his brother, was again sent back to his chains in the solitary cell.—“All the next day I stood there and wept; but I could not even wipe away my tears, as my hands were manacled to the prison bars.”

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## Four Hutterish Mennonites in Military Confinement.

The following remarkable narrative is based on the account of a young Hutterish Mennonite, or Hutterian Brother, named David Hofer, who related these experiences after his release from military confinement, during which his two brothers, Joseph and Michael, had died in the prison under distressing circumstances. The truth of this heart-rending tale is vouched for by an independent account, recently published, as obtained from the fourth man of the group, who is still remaining in close confinement (February, 1919).

The attitude of the Hutterian Brotherhood with regard to participation in warfare is perhaps the most uncompromising of all the various branches of the Mennonite Church. Their treatment by the military authorities has therefore been unusually harsh.

When the four young men, three of whom were married, left their home in South Dakota for Camp Lewis, their troubles commenced on the way, on account of their beards. The other boys on the train amused themselves by jeering at the bearded objectors and even cutting their hair and beard with a clipper, to make them appear ridiculous when they would arrive at the training camp. They wept over these indignities, suffered at the very start, anticipating what might be in store for them later. This treatment of members of religious sects whose religion includes the wearing of the beard has been a common experience during the war. When they arrived at Camp Lewis they were asked to sign a card, promising obedience to all military commands. Being absolute objectors to war service on religious grounds, they refused to sign. They likewise refused to take up any line of military service in the camp. They were commanded to step into line and march along with the rest to the drill ground. This they also refused, and refused to put on the military uniform in place of the peculiar home-made garb which they were wearing like all Hutterian Mennonites. Hence they were put into the guard house in close confinement. The cursing and reviling that was heaped upon them by the guards was especially painful to them.

After two months in the guard house the four men were court-martialed and sentenced to 37 years, which, however, was reduced by the camp commander to 20 years. The place of confinement was to be the military prison on the island of Alcatraz in San Francisco bay. Chained together two and two they were sent there in charge of four armed lieutenants. By day the fetters on their ankles were unlocked, but never the handcuffs on their wrists. At night they had to lie flat on their backs, doubly chained together. Little sleep did they have the two nights of the trip, only moaning and weeping.

When they arrived at Alcatraz prison, they were forced to take off their outer clothing and ordered to put on the military uniform, which they again refused; whereupon they were taken to the dungeon and placed in solitary cells, down below, in darkness, filth and stench. The uniform was thrown down by their side and they were told: "There you will have to stay until you give up the ghost, if you do not yield;—like the case of the last four that we carried out of these cells yesterday." Thus they were left in their light underwear.

During the first four and a half days they received no food whatsoever, and only half a glass of water every twenty-four hours. During the night they had to sleep on the cold, wet concrete floor without any blankets. The next one and a half days they had to stand with their hands extended above their heads, crosswise, and were in this position manacled to the bars so high that they could barely reach the floor with their feet. The strain was such, that David, the discharged man who is now at home, says he still feels the effect in his sides. At times he tried to lessen the terrible pain in his arms by working the chamber pail nearer with one foot so as to be able, occasionally, to get up on the pail with his feet and thus ease the strain. The men were not placed near enough together to be able to speak with each other; but once David heard Jacob cry out: "Oh, have mercy, Almighty God!"

At the end of five days they were taken out of the "hole" and brought into the court-yard, where a number of other prisoners were standing. Some of them were touched with compassion at the pitiful sight of the sufferers, and one of them said with tears in his eyes: "Isn't it a shame to treat men like that?" For the men were covered with scurvy eruptions, were insect-bitten, and their arms swollen so badly that they could not get the sleeves of their jackets over them. They had also been beaten with clubs down in the dungeon, and Michael had once been beaten so brutally that he fell to the floor unconscious.

When they got out of the dungeon at noon on the fifth day, they did not yet get any food; not before evening, when they got their supper. Then they were taken back to their cells for close confinement by day and by night, not being allowed to speak with each other. Only on Sunday did they get one hour for exercise in the open air of the stockade, under continuous close guard. In this manner their confinement continued at the Alcatraz prison for four months. About November 24, 1918, they were transferred from Alcatraz Island to Ft. Leavenworth, chained together again, two and two, in charge of six armed sergeants.

The journey went down through Texas and lasted four days and five nights. They arrived at Leavenworth at 11 o'clock at night and were driven through the middle of the street, under much noise and prodding with bayonets, as if they were swine. Chained together at the wrists, carrying their satchels in one hand and their Bibles and an extra pair of shoes under the arm, they were hurried on, in a cruel manner, up the hill toward the military prison.

When they reached the gate they were covered with sweat, so that even their hair was wet,—and in this condition, in the raw winter air, they were again compelled to put off their own outer clothing, while the prison garb was being brought to them. It took two hours, till 1 o'clock at night, until they were taken into the prison, and by that time they were chilled to the bone. In the morning they were called at 5 o'clock and again had to stand and wait outside in the cold. Joseph and Michael Hofer broke down and had to be taken to the hospital, at once.

Jacob Wipf and David Hofer were sent to solitary confinement, because they refused to take up prison work under military control. They had to stretch their hands out through the bars, where they were manacled together, and thus they had to stand nine hours a day on a bread-and-water diet. This continued for fourteen days, after which they would get regular meals for fourteen days and so on alternately.

When Joseph and Michael Hofer became ill, Jacob Wipf sent a telegram home to the wives of the two sufferers, who took the next train at night, accompanied by a male friend, to go and see their husbands. Both had small children. To make matters worse the depot agent insisted that the telegram had come from Ft. Riley, not from Ft. Leavenworth, and sold them tickets to the wrong place. So they lost a day by going to Ft. Riley; and when they finally reached the military prison, at 11 o'clock in the evening, they found their husbands so near death that hardly a word could be spoken. When they came again early in the morning, Joseph was already dead and the body was in charge of the undertaker. He could not be seen any more, it was said; but his wife, Marie, pushed the guards aside, pressed on through various doors, until she reached the Colonel, where she pleaded in tears to be allowed to see her husband once more. She was conducted to the place where the corpse had already been prepared and laid in the casket. She eagerly looked in through her tears; but, alas! they had clad her husband's body in the military uniform, which, during life, he had so valiantly refused to don, because it was objectionable to men of his religion.

(What desecration of the dead; what taunt to the living! [Publisher's Note.]

Michael died a few days later and was fitted out in his civilian clothes at the special request of his father, who had meanwhile arrived.—When dying he stretched forth his hands and said: "Come, Lord Jesus, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

When the relatives had gone home with the dead, David, who had been permitted to be at the death-bed of his brother, Michael, was again sent back to his chains in the solitary cell. He says: "All the next day I stood there and wept; but I could not even wipe away my tears, as my hands were manacled to the prison bars." No one seemed to have any pity for him. The next morning, however, one of the guards was willing to go to the Colonel to ask a favor in behalf of David. He begged to be transferred to a cell where he would be nearer his friend Jacob and could at least see him, even though he be not allowed to speak to him. The guard took the message to the Colonel. In an hour he returned and told David to pack up his things, for he had been discharged. This, however, was too sudden for him, and he could not believe it. But the guard took him along to the Colonel who affirmed the statement and gave him his discharge papers. A request to go and take leave of his friend Jacob was not granted. So he went out through the gate into the outside world. Here he again hesitated, doubts arising, whether all this were reality, or only a dream. Thus he remained standing until a guard came along and asked him what he was waiting for. "They tell me, I'm discharged, and I can't be sure of it," he said. The guard replied: "You can be sure of that, for no one gets out of here who is not discharged." David then said, that he would have liked very much to say good-bye to his friend Jacob. The guard told him to write a few lines on paper, and he would bring the note to Jacob the same day, which the guard did, as could be seen from Jacob's next letter to his wife, in which he wrote: "Kathrine, just ask David: he will be able to tell you everything better than I can write it." From this it is plain, he already knew about David's release.

The piteous funerals of the two brothers and the sympathy shown by the whole Mennonite community was something indescribable. These young brethren having been away from home and their families for six months, always in close confinement, suffering tortures of soul and body; the effect of their return as corpses, is something that pen cannot describe. The sufferers have gone to their well-deserved rest.

On Dec. 6th the Secretary of War issued an order prohibiting further hand-cuffing of prisoners to iron bars, and other cruel corporal punishments. When, however, some of the Hutterish Brethren about five days later went to see Jacob in his solitary cell, he was still hand-cuffed to the bars for nine hours a day. He got his breakfast of bread and water at seven in the morning; at noon he was released from the bars for 30 minutes to eat his dinner of bread and water; and at 6:30 he was again released and given the same fare for supper. Although he still had to sleep on the concrete floor, he had four blankets now; but there were vermin (especially bed-bugs) without number. Jacob sent the following message home with his

friends: "I sometimes envy the three who have already been released from this misery. Then I think: Why is the Lord so hard on me? I have always endeavored to be faithful and industrious. I have given the Brotherhood little cause for worry. Why should I now have to suffer so much longer single-handed? But then again it is a source of joy for me, when I realize that the Lord considers me worthy to suffer for his sake. And I must concede that life here is like in a palace in comparison with our former experiences."

From this the reader can form a conception of the experiences of these men at Alcatraz prison. If standing hand-cuffed for nine hours a day, on a bread-and-water diet, and sleeping among vermin on a concrete floor, was like a palace by comparison, it is no wonder that Jacob finally felt that to be released by death would be preferable to a long continuation of life in that living grave of Alcatraz.

On December 12, pursuant to Secretary Baker's order above referred to, hand-cuffing to the bars was discontinued at the military prison. The solitary prisoners were also given planks on the floor to sleep on, which made it warmer for them at night than sleeping on the bare concrete floor. Further relief was given about New-Year, after the monster petition for the release of the C. O.s had been laid before the Secretary of War. About this time Jacob became ill and had to be removed to the hospital, whence his story, (which fully corroborates David's account) was first given to the outside world. Jacob was not included in the 113 conscientious objectors who were released and discharged from the Disciplinary Barracks at Ft. Leavenworth on January 27th in pursuance of an order of the Secretary of War dated December 2nd. (Jacob Wipf was released at last, April 13, 1919.)

Meanwhile most of the Hutterish Brethren have emigrated to Canada.

The case of these Hutterish Mennonites is one of peculiar severity; but hundreds of Mennonites and other non-resistants have suffered similar indignities and cruelties in the camp guard houses and military prisons. If anyone has the nerve to call these men "cowards," let him do so! At any rate they are living examples of what harmless religious people have to suffer in this enlightened day, because their views and convictions do not correspond with the rest.

Chicago, February, 1919.

They are slaves who will not choose  
hatred, scoffing and abuse  
rather than in silence shrink  
from the truth they needs must think;  
they are slaves who dare not be  
in the right with two or three.

Lowell.

#### A TESTIMONIAL:

Senator Norris of Nebraska said to me: "Lunde, the Mennonites are the best people on Earth; they are much better than you and I. There is a colony of them in my former judicial district, (I was a judge before I became a Senator) but I have never seen one of them before the bar, or known any of them to be entangled in litigation, though they deal with the outside world as you and I.—If everybody were as good as they, there would be no need of Courts and Prisons."

Theo. H. Lunde.

Reader! How many copies can you distribute?—No charge.

LETTERS  
FROM A  
POLITICAL PRISONER  
IN A  
MILITARY HOSPITAL  
U. S. A.

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DECEMBER  
1918

N. B. "THIS MUST BE LOOKED INTO AT ONCE".

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Fort Leavenworth, December 2, 1918.

Dear Father:

Today marks the end of another Conscientious Objector, who underwent Solitary here in the prison. I mentioned four C. O.s. who had been kept in Solitary for four days in Alcatraz, considered one of the worst prisons in the West. These C. O.s., Mennonites I think, (at least they are relatives of the Hofers, who were at Riley all summer) were hanged by the wrists so that only their toes touched the cold damp floor, which was thirty feet below the ground. They were deprived of their overclothing and were forced to live in the stench of their own excrement. After four days without food and under these horrible conditions they got scurvy and were sent here, to this prison. Here they refused to work for the Military, and consequently were put in Solitary. We got their story of torture "on the run," and today we heard Captain Chambers come into the Executive Office and hurriedly asked for permission for a Hofer at Riley to see his relative before he died. The parents of the first Hofer to die had just been here to bury their son about a week before. Two are now dead of the four relatives who were here. They have made the supreme sacrifice for liberty, and their deaths must not be in vain.

I wish that all the C. O.s. here would quit work in a body, as a protest. I won't gain followers by propaganda, but I, for one, cannot stay above ground while such conditions as these obtain.

The Colonel is still here from the U. S. Inspector's Office, and I understand he found his official report to Washington tampered with over night. There was quite a scene in the Executive Office, the result of which I cannot determine.

The Russians look worse every time I see them, as do some of the others. Protests from the outside cannot be too strong. I will do all I can here, but I am taking risks every day by writing these letters.

Two out of four at Alcatraz Prison;—what will the toll at Riley be?

Lovingly and anxiously,

Erling.

Fort Leavenworth, December 6, 1918.

Dear Father:

These are just a few notations which must be looked into at once.

1. I went on sick report at 9:30 Sunday, December 1st. because I had a sore throat. I was ordered swabbed out with iodine. This was done and thus was disposed of in a perfunctory way.

2. Monday, December 2nd, while at my desk I felt pretty dopy. I had been gargling my throat with salt water all day. I went on sick report at noon and asked the Sergeant in charge if I could see a doctor. His answer was: "What's the matter with you?" I told him; he looked at my throat and ordered it swabbed out with iodine; no temperature was taken his examination being most superficial.

3. I felt worse all afternoon and was tempted to go on sick report at night. On second thought I decided not to because I'd only strike the same Sergeant with the same result. I decided to wait until morning when the Doctor is on duty. Monday night I lay awake all night with a sore throat and a fever.

4. On sick report next morning, I asked that my temperature be taken. It proved to be 101/6, (by Lieutenant) and I was ordered into the hospital. While waiting in line for my turn, I attempted to rest myself by sitting on the window sill, but old friend Sergeant ordered us all to stand in a straight line, regardless. Such is the life of prisoners under the benevolent arm of democratic militarism.

5. I was taken to Ward 6, but it was full. I waited around for quite a while until the proper orderly in charge arrived. It was pretty painful standing around with a fever of 101/6, but such is a prisoner's lot here at Leavenworth.

6. Finally we were ordered upstairs to Ward 3. Here we had another wait standing up while some records were filled out. Finally I was assigned to a bed and told to get undressed. I did so in a little side room. As some one had spit on the floor I had to be careful. I asked for some pajamas. The attending prisoner pointed to some rags lying on the clothes hamper. The jacket had one sleeve in shreds and all but one button gone. The pants were split half way down one leg and had no string or button with which to fasten it to my body. I asked for another pair but he said that's all they had. He gave me a bathrobe cord which I managed to hold the rags together with until I got safely to bed. In bed, however, everything

came off the moment I moved, with the result that I had to keep a sharp lookout not to get uncovered and chilled.

7. As I lay in bed No. 15 waiting for the next move I was again shocked by the total absence of any sanitary precautions. Contrary to army regulations, our beds were in rows, head to head, instead of feet to head, etc. The fellow on my right sneezed in my face, and the fellow to my left coughed on me. It's a crime that such conditions are permitted. I understand these are Reserve Officers in charge here who are not familiar with military practice. Besides, the general neglect of prisoners is responsible, I guess.

8. Next a Sergeant came and took a culture of my throat.

9. Next, Lieutenant Christiansen came, looked at my throat, examined my chest and ordered me, bed and all, moved into Scarlet Fever Isolation Ward.

10. He prescribed plenty of milk and water.

11. At noon the orderly, (a prisoner and a nice patient chap, merely carrying out the orders of the Dietician,) served me with a bowl of mashed potatoes and string beans—but no milk. It looked funny as the Lieutenant had prescribed a liquid diet, but I thought he must know what he's doing, and so I ate most of the beans and some of the potatoes. Almost immediately my temperature started to go up, and continued soaring all afternoon. By supper time it was 102, or over. At supper time I was offered hash, rice, half slice of white bread and cocoa, without milk, and very little, if any, sugar. I told the orderly to take it away, and he replied: "I don't blame you." I had sense enough to know that greasy hash and rice were unfit for a person with over 102 temperature. I sipped a little of the cocoa but it was too bitter for my taste. Why patients can't get a little real milk when they have a big dairy farm run by the D. B. I can't understand. What would have happened to the poor unfortunate who, placed in my predicament, didn't know enough to refuse that solid food? That's how lives are snuffed out by the hundreds away from all their dear ones who have faith in the Government and really believe that their own are being cared for. Aren't these the very conditions that made the ravages of the flu so terrible here a short while ago? That's a horrible story I'll tell some other time. It's a tale of crowded hospital facilities, inefficient disinterested attendants and lack of proper medicines, hot water bags, enema bags, etc., etc.

12. I showed Captain Manning my pajamas and asked for a new pair, but he replied: "You ought to be glad you got any at all, for some patients here have none at all." On observation I saw that they at least had whole underwear which would stay on their bodies. I complained about the solid food and asked for milk.

13. At 8:30 I got my first bowl of milk. By this time the orderly was packing my head regularly with cold water packs, as my fever was going up to 104. I continued doing this for myself all night, as we had no rubber ice pack for use in this ward.

14. In the morning I was given cornflakes and milk, and creamed potatoes. I could hardly get it down my raw throat. I didn't touch the potatoes. I asked the orderly to order plain milk only, but he replied that he had to serve what the Dietician sent up.

15. I spoke for milk to Captain Manning and Lieutenant Christiansen as they came, one at a time, to see me, before noon.

16. At noon I was offered stewed peas and some other soft food. I said: "Take it away." The orderly brought me some soup but it had so many vegetables in it that I couldn't eat it, although I tried to strain a few spoonfuls before I gave up. Furthermore, it had too much pepper for a tender throat.

17. For supper I was offered some soft food and a bowl of milk. I told him to take away the soft food and enjoyed the bowl of milk.

18. After supper three of us received a bowl of fresh milk each.

19. For breakfast I received cornflakes with milk. I drained off the milk and used water to rinse most of the milk from the cornflakes and thus got a little milk for breakfast. My throat was too sore to eat the flakes.

I complained to the Captain, and ever since I've received my bowl of milk four times a day.

20. The night of December 4th, my fever went up, my stomach ached, and I got delirious. The orderly tried to give me an enema but the bag leaked. After ten or fifteen minutes scouting he got the only enema bag in the hospital and gave me a wash out. That relieved me a great deal. As the patient with the

ear ache was asleep the orderly borrowed his hot water bag and put it on my feet to try to make me sweat. It didn't help and so we returned the bag to the first patient before he awoke to the situation.

Here the question to be answered is—What became of the 79 enema and water bags which were in the storeroom a short while ago? And why is there only one enema bag for this hospital annex?

21. Two men suffering from ear ache for the past few days were without syringe treatment until today when the orderly, through his own personal acquaintance, borrowed a syringe from another ward.

And so the story goes. The tongue depressor which the doctors use on sick report three times a day never reaches more than half way into the disinfectant. When I had myself swabbed a while ago it was done by a swab which, after being applied to me, was put back in the iodine bottle to be applied to some other unsuspecting prisoner. Supposing a gonorrhoea or chancre patient had come before I. As near as I know, iodine isn't strong enough to kill these disease germs. Here a prisoner and a couple of hollow eyed privates administer to your wants as they see fit.

While my fever was so high it was only by the personal persistence of our orderly that I got ice to keep my pack cool enough.

I hate to think of getting out of this place only to be exposed to more disease and shipped right back. You're helpless here unless you have an outside job and an iron constitution that will stand all disease germs.

I don't know how you can use this information without reflex action on me since I want to get well and investigate the operations of the Dairy and Farm Colonies and the disposition of the products. If I didn't have these objects in view, with consequent benefit to all prisoners, I would say, go to it, and don't mind me. Get together with Stedman and Sandberg and see what can be done to clean out this nest of graft and disease where many innocent or misguided youths have to pay the price of corrupt inefficiency.

I survived so far, thanks to my orderly No. 14149 and my own common sense, but think of the poor young fellows who can't look after themselves.

Captain Manning and Lieutenant Christiansen are not on the inner circle of corrupt officers here at the D. B. as they are merely Reserve men, drawn from civilian life, knowing little about military practices. How to get the names and the dope on the nucleus is what has kept me thinking for over three weeks. Some day I hope we can pull off a real expose of this "hell hole." Meantime, may we be able, without showing our hands, to change conditions sufficiently to safeguard our health. This I'll do here by complaining to the Executive Officer, although then I always stand a chance of being hit from the back as a "squealing rat" by those whom my testimony hits.

I am thankful I had to come to this place and see for myself. About 20 feet opposite our door is the barred "nut" ward, where Abrahams, Buck, (Camp Meade) Hennessey, Block, Haugen and Stine are kept. The boys seem all right. I talked to Hennessey and he seemed better than I expected. They have beds and full diet. I guess his friend need not come out.

Well, Father, get together with the Radicals and Socialists in New York and Chicago and use the information according to your best judgment. Probably now's as good a time as any to put hands down and fight this bunch before some epidemic sets in and takes another toll of human lives here. Probably my complaints here would just get the usual military consideration. Read my reports and others to big mass meetings simultaneously in New York, Chicago, etc., and it'll do more good than individual protest. Getting me out of this hole would hardly help the other chaps who take it all without fighting back.

My fever is 100 today, with the result that I am able to write this after a fashion; but I must not delay getting this out.

Well, Father, give my love to all and tell the Radicals and Socialists that they can't get political prisoners out of here any too soon. Doubling up in the cells under these conditions is bound to mean some disastrous epidemic before the winter is over. We have 3000 and over now, and most of the cells are double decked already, and prisoners are still coming in.

I'll probably be confined here until Christmas so anything I do won't be before January.

Your loving son,

Reader! How many copies can you distribute?—No charge.

Erling.

N. B. — By your action you can make the millions think. Thinking millions will demand fair play and bring about the freedom of those who went to jail because they championed your cause.

Lest we forget: — they are in there for us; we are out here for them!

# MOANS

FROM THE

## MILITARY MACHINE

REFERRED TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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“Unless something is done for the Molokans in the “Hell-Hole”, they will die of slow starvation. — Something must be done for these poor fellows”.

“..... we fear, has mental trouble, and I would not be surprised if the beatings and the cruelty at Fort Riley, and the solitary confinement here have affected his mind”.

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DECEMBER

1918

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MANUFACTURERS PIANO HARDWARE  
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CHICAGO

# Revelations of Filth in our Military Prison Life

Fort Leavenworth, December 1, 1918.

Dear Father:

I understand from reliable sources that the four Russians were brought up before the Inspector General under guard this morning. They looked pale and emaciated. They have had nothing but corn flakes and canned milk since they came here in October. To begin with, they were offered bread and water, but, of course, could not eat the bread because their religion forbade eating any bread except that made according to their belief by members of their own faith.

These men have been in solitary confinement and isolation by 14 day periods since October, when the first two came here from Fort Riley. They have had to suffer all the privations of Solitary in a starving condition. They have had to stand chained to the bars nine hours a day, seven days a week. Only yesterday was the order given to omit the chaining of all prisoners on Saturday afternoons, Sundays and holidays.

When I saw them last, about two weeks ago, they were shivering in their overcoats, waiting for medical inspection. I heard that, on this occasion, they refused to undress and were ordered undressed by Captain Chambers. A prisoner offered to do the undressing, which he did very carefully, thus avoiding the cruelty which the sentry's attitude and language promised.

The beatings which two of them got when they first came have already been reported. The two others, as far as I know, have not been beaten up.

Unless something is done for these Molokans and the two at Riley, who are destined for this "hell-hole" they will die of slow starvation. Their predicament is most pitiable because their religious faith holds firm as rock. They left Russia in groups after fifty years of persecution and know what suffering is. They are not recent upstarts. If there ever was a flagrant violation of our Constitution against religious persecution it is here. Every day that these men, (to say nothing of the other Conscientious Objectors, in Solitary) are kept away from proper food and living conditions is a blot on our pretensions as a free nation. Something must be done for these poor fellows. I am risking fourteen days in Solitary in getting this information out, so please be careful how you reveal sources. Of course the Inspector is still here, and it may be advisable to wait a while, but I am sending on what information I have, so that you can be "loaded for the next shot."

A Conscientious Objector, by name of ..... was called today as a witness of the beatings which the two "hook and eye" Mennonites got, and I hope those who did the beating will get their just deserts. ("Hook and eye" refers to their buttonless clothing, as they use nothing which results from the slaughter of animals.) The C. O. however, almost risks his own life to tell this on his superior, who is head of the ..... Department here.

This procedure at the D. Barracks is but a repetition of what has been going on all over the country. Instead of responsible officers, (acting under strict orders from Secretary Baker) receiving Conscientious Objectors as they are moved from one point or jail to another, the work is left to privates, corporals or sergeants, with resultant brutalities, anxious parents at home, smuggled reports to Washington followed by the ever "white-washing" investigators, who, with devilish duplicity shake your hand, treat you nicely, ask carefully chosen questions, and then stab you in the back with a "white" report to Washington. This has been the history of every Conscientious Objector who has stuck by his guns and persistently refused to compromise his ideals.

Secretary Baker knew that the Riley boys would refuse to work when they arrived here, and should have made provision for this contingency by actually notifying Colonel Rice that he would be held to account for every hand laid on C. O.s. in this jail. The Administration has bungled the C. O. problem most miserably. Their words and deeds have been total strangers to each other.

Yesterday I went before Captain Blanchard, the Executive Officer, and handed him the enclosed memorandum. He was very pleasant and promised to take the matter up at once. (It refers to conditions of sweeping, airing, heating, and plumbing, including drinking, toilet and drainage facilities, accompanied by respectful remedial suggestions.)

However, in the meantime, it is well that you have full particulars regarding conditions here and I will tell you to use this information about sanitation in case changes are not made soon.

Please do not send copies of correspondence re C. O.s. because they are all kept from me and attached to my record in the Record Office where I am classed accordingly. I understand that (C. O.s. named) are in the "nut" ward, at the Hospital, together with four other C. O.s. whose names I have not been able to ascertain. I guess they are all right, and that the authorities are merely using that ward as an excuse to take them out of Solitary and put them on full rations. .... is the only man we fear has mental trouble. The beatings and cruelty he experienced at Riley almost drove him crazy, and I should not be

surprised if the solitary confinement here has affected his mind. It is a big risk for him to suffer any more, as he may be permanently incapacitated. This is only a fear on my part but I cannot refrain from expressing it. It might be well for someone of his family to visit him, and see for themselves just how much his mind has been affected. "Nut" discharges from this place are common, and possibly the authorities are using this method of sending certain C. O.s. out. As long as he is in the hospital I suppose he is O. K., but I fear he may be put back in Solitary again. I was down in the Solitary last Tuesday and saw the cells in which the first C. O.s. were put, namely the Russians and other C. O.s.

(Here follows a diagram with description of wooden partitions excluding light and air, board beds and screened ventilation.)

There is an additional ventilator up in the back wall of cell but if like most ventilators is of little value. This basement is on the ground floor and is kept fairly clean as near as I could judge from casual observation. The other wing is similarly located but has no wooden partitions. Here is where men are put the second two weeks.

The doors to which the men are handcuffed have a bar across the middle, (sketch) one hand is placed above, the other below, as shown in sketch. Those who are too tall are compelled to stand away from the bars and stoop over thus, (sketch) Franklin said that it surely did "get" his back. Whether these men will be put on a second two weeks chained to the doors is hard to tell. I heard that they were to be held in isolation until a general court martial would sit again. In the army one is never free from the threat of a general or summary court martial. Getts got a summary court martial for smuggling out a letter. He had the choice between two weeks on the rock pile and Solitary on bread and water. I understand he took the latter. Rose from Philadelphia is held for refusing to work and making threatening remarks. He is isolated awaiting a general court martial. He refused to accept military counsel the day he was brought up for trial, and so had to be held over for another sitting.

In our section and most of the others "doubling up" has been going on for the last few weeks. Double decked cots are placed in the locked cells on the upper tiers and extra beds are put in the galleries of basements and sub-basements, which creates a very dangerous situation. Communication from one floor to the other is open. This leaves about 80 men free to roam around in the section at night, for all sorts of devilry. As there are many who have bad records in civil life, you will not be surprised at the conditions which obtain here, where I have to sleep and spend my extra time. Dope fiends, burglars, auto thieves, and sex abusers are quite common. They are very nice to C. O.s. and will do anything for us, but just living with them is dangerous enough. Their filthy language and dirty stories from the lowest underworld are enough to drive a man crazy. One cannot read or think because of the continuous stream of filth. One night I woke up and saw (here follows the description of an intercourse impossible to describe in presentable language).

And where these "sexual perverters" make their ablutions 20 of us have to make our daily toilet.

You can easily see how the poor drainage, embodied in my above mentioned report, makes it impossible to completely drain out the dirty water and is such a danger to us. Putting clean conscientious objectors, especially the younger ones, into such a mire is an outrage. And every indication warrants the assumption that these nightly practices are of common occurrence, further proof of the contention being that the men talk about it all the time and leaves no doubt that they practice what is in their minds and mouths.

One evening before lights went out I went to the wash room and found a man doctoring himself. He told me he had gonorrhea—"clapp"—and was trying to get it cured before he got out. He washed himself in the bowl when he got through and right then and there I made up my mind not to wash there any more. I got permission from the room orderly to use his bowl. This fellow's medicine, etc., got all over the stool which we are supposed to use after him. He said the "dope" he used was a disinfectant, but, I, for one, will not take any more chances sitting on those stools. They have no seat which can be raised up, and the rim must be washed off with toilet paper before using. I did not mention the gonorrhea case to Capt. B. for that would mean that the prisoners would all "gang up on" me and do what was done to a prisoner, in July. He "squealed" and a gang beat him to death. Thirteen have just been found guilty of murder. I will find some way however to get the danger removed. It is easy to knock out a man here where the men run loose on two floors. While he sleeps they can jump him and get away before the two guards upstairs are the wiser. Many of the prisoners in my section think nothing of knocking a man out. That has been their means to an end in civil life.

One fellow who has been here all summer told me how, when he first came here, he saw six men holding a young fellow prisoner on the floor while one after the other (the rest is unprintable). This was done away with by putting these men upstairs in locked cells where there are no galleries. A couple "perverters" of a different type were also ferreted out and put by themselves.

I am recording these observations so that you may have some idea of the filthy, degrading atmosphere we Conscientious Objectors have been forced into, simply because we are idealists and will not commit murder under Government sanction.

After I have secured better sanitary conditions I am going to work for segregation of the C. O.s. in one section so that they will not be forced to live in the underworld. Good books and leisure time mean nothing to me here because of the loud swearing and filthy stories. I long for solitary confinement with its silence. Saturday afternoons and Sundays have been most trying until I got up here in the office. But even here there is much of the same thing when the bosses are absent.

The "perverters" are removed as soon as the military authorities find them out, but as new prisoners arrive daily from everywhere and authorities are generally slow in "finding out" much damage is done before precautions are taken. You can never prove anything on the officials here, yet conditions are almost intolerable, from the time I leave this office until I get back to it in the morning. Furthermore, if you are locked up in a cell with a partner you are just as likely to "draw" a bum for a cell mate as anything else. If not, you are still almost eaten alive by bed bugs. "Dope" and a gasoline torch are supplied to get the bugs out but no systematic and periodic fight is made on them by order of the officials, who surely must know that vermin thrive in a place like this. One C. O. was put in a cell which had just been vacated by some other prisoner. Unsuspectingly he went to bed but was literally eaten up before morning. A week of torture may elapse before he can get the "dope" and the cell cleaned out. The bugs live in the mortar cracks between bricks and are almost impossible to get at. I talked to a C. O. who had been in a federal penitentiary and he said that this place was a disgrace by comparison. There they have regular guards and civilian prison officers who are experienced men; here everything is military. Men, most of whom cannot speak English without an accent and have failed to pass overseas examinations, make up our guard and non-commissioned officers. Commissioned officers look after practically none of the details, hence we are victims of ignorance and brute force on all sides; and we cannot help ourselves either.

I am enclosing a week's menu which will show what we get week in and week out. There is no variation except, as you see, for Thanksgiving. If 47c is the ration allowance for 3 meals per day per man I am willing to wager that "somebody" around here makes 30c a day per man. With 3,000 men that means \$900.00 per day. This is not sufficient evidence to act on but it shows that this place MAY be one big graft.

For the FIRST MONTH we are here we are required to take exercises in the morning. They are from the regular army manual, but they are so inefficiently led by privates that a man nearly freezes to death these cold mornings. You are led through four variations slowly and then allowed to stand at rest. Then follow four more and another rest. Only when the Lieutenant comes around do the exercises become brisk and snappy.

It all goes to prove that militarism, or any institution which takes a man's freedom of action away from him, is a curse. Better have a man destroy himself a free man than force him to behave under threat of punishment. I have seen enough of this place to condemn all prisons. If a man is not bad when he comes here, he surely will be by the time he gets out. They call this a disciplinary B. but it is nothing more than a jail. Go through and inspect it with a party of officials when everything is set and lined up, and you might be lead, as Secretary Baker was, to state that it was an ideal institution of its kind, but come here as a prisoner and live in it, and you will learn the facts.

The dregs of the army are here, that's true, but all the political prisoners viz.: I. W. W., soldiers of German descent, accused of disloyalty, homesick soldiers, who deserted to get home to see a sick mother, etc., and the C. O.s., are a fine lot of men, who should never be exposed to these dangerous conditions.

I have had a sore throat off and on ever since I came here, due, no doubt, to the dust and dirt from sweeping, or from the drinking cups. I have had indigestion off and on too, because I have had to stay my appetite with an over amount of starchy food, namely w. bread, potatoes and beans. The gravy is so loaded with pepper that a man's insides are continually raw. I think if the full mess fund were used for the benefit of the PRISONERS much better food could be supplied. The lack of sweets is felt most keenly, the molasses they do give you is so thinned with hot water that it is just sweet enough to drink comfortably. Of course, we get plenty of "slum" and gravy, etc., etc. but quality is "nix." However, personally, I would not kick on the "grub" as there are other matters more vital. We can live and get fat on this grub and now that I am used to it I get along O. K. as can all the rest. Therefore, don't make any complaint about it unless I write further.

I have so much of the beautiful and big at home with all you dear ones to think about that I can rise above it all, but it is trying in the evening when you get back to your bunk to read a letter from home with all that is dear and precious to you.

I can always get along but I feel sorry for those among us who are young and not so able to throw off the effects of bad surroundings.

With thanks for all you have done for us, and for all the love you have shown during this period, I must close with all my love to my dear . . . . . whose noble example I will never forget as long as I live. Your gift to me can never be fully acknowledged.

Lovingly, your son

Reader! How many copies can you distribute?—No charge.

Erling.

Part I of this tract appeared in the  
Waspal Herald (June 23, 1923), 20: 266,  
as a reprint from The American Friend  
(Feb. 10, 1927). Author of the piece

is W.P. Kinnel. ~~It was~~ It was probably  
sent to the Dftt by C.L. Graham who  
was in the Swardhouse with Kinnel

---

*author W.P. Kissel*

*C.R. Guter was in this lunch*

## **From Out The Guardhouse**

**By One of the Twenty-one**

The first draft of this leaflet was written in the winter of 1919-20 shortly after the events described in the opening part. The author was then a graduate student in an eastern school and put the article aside until revised and published in the *American Friend* for February 10, 1927.

It is now reprinted (February, 1938) with a few changes, in the hope that it may be a call from the past to "carry on," come what may. Unlike the writer of an earlier leaflet in this series, "A Quaker Marine on Four Fronts," the author had a somewhat military background and was not brought up a Friend. In 1917, he was drawn to the Friends because of a deep conviction that the historic position of the Society of Friends on war is eternally right.

As he has learned more of the historic Quaker position on other matters such as the Inward Light; simple, democratic, genuine, quiet worship; the sacredness of personality; sacraments; and the measurement of a sinful social order by the standards set by Jesus' Way of Life, his conviction has been extended to these also. He wishes that he and all Friends everywhere might achieve these historic ideals more perfectly.

Copies of this leaflet may be obtained from

**Peace and Service Committee  
Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends  
Box 5, Earlham, Indiana**

**PRICES:**

10 for 10c                      100 for 60c  
50 for 35c                      (Stamps Accepted)

It was an excessively hot day in August, 1918. The scene was a guard room in the military guardhouse at Camp Pike, Arkansas, one of the great emergency camps for the concentration and training of troops during the World War. The guard room itself was twelve feet six inches wide and twenty-one feet long. It was clean, but contained no furniture whatever.

About noon, there was led into the room a group of twenty-one young Mennonites and Quakers. For them this was the climax to a period of over three weeks of exceedingly unpleasant experiences, weeks of testing of faith, of some physical suffering, but more mental anguish caused by the uncertainty of the future and the difficulty of determining from day to day, and at times from hour to hour, the proper course to pursue. This mental strain was caused further by the constant misinterpretation and slander born of ignorance and intolerance to which their high purposes were subjected. It was augmented too, by the usual lonesomeness, homesickness, and monotony of inactivity which, under the circumstances, were intensified a hundred fold. There had been hope during these weeks that their cases might be handled under the law and President Wilson's liberal rulings: hope that there would be opportunity given to appear before the President's Board of Inquiry, establish their sincerity in their opposition to engaging in war and the military machine in any capacity, and that they might then be granted the "farm furlough" or the "furlough for Reconstruction Work" in France under the American Friends Service Committee.\*

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\* The author is less certain than he once was that any such "furlough" scheme is an acceptable alternative to an out and out testimony against conscription itself.

But now no one knew how long the high barbed-wire fences surrounding the building would shut him off from the world of freedom, action, service, and clean moral living. No one could venture more than a guess as to how long the heavily guarded walls about the cell, with the heavy, padlocked, wooden door would stand between him and everything which seemed worth living for. To remain inactive, merely standing quietly, passively for a principle seemed almost futile, but the alternatives thus far presented had led straight into the war machine, immediately into something which revolted the conscience, and to an overwhelming sense of sin and depression.

The silence of the room was broken at first by the unspeakable curses, insults, and imprecations, which a mob of soldiers about the door heaped upon the twenty-one "C. Os." Even the criminal prisoners in other parts of the building, among whom were some very pitiable specimens of humanity, seemed not to possess sufficient vocabulary for the condemnation of these prisoners for conscience sake. As these sounds gradually died down, their place was partly taken by the measured tread of the guard who, carrying a loaded gun with bayonet attached, paced ceaselessly around the cell in a narrow lane formed by the heavy wire walls of the cell and the outside wooden walls of the building. Altogether, it was a very trying situation for a group of red-blooded young men who were eager to give their best services to a needy world.

Shortly after the group was locked in, a guard came to the door and gruffly commanded one of the boys to step out. Outside the door, but in plain sight and hearing of the others, he was asked if he wanted to take his medicine blindfolded or with his eyes open. He was led

away to no one knew what, and those behind sought to prepare themselves for whatever might come. Ill-treatment was to be expected, since all had had more or less of it in previous weeks, one, a Friend, having been placed in this same guardhouse and, the previous day, knocked senseless and placed in a dark cell.

In the midst of this situation, some one suggested that the group unite in a time of silent prayer. Very quickly the spirit of worship settled through the little band. There was no need for pipe organ, special music, or silver-tongued preacher to entertain or make them believe they were worshipping because of going through the forms. Each sought after God in spirit and truth and received a strengthening of purpose, a renewed inspiration to be loyal to ideals, and a feeling of courage with which to face any eventualities. Faced with temporal realities, each sought relief in eternal realities. There came as never before, a realization of the terribleness of the world's sins and what it means to suffer for these sins. Inside the wire walls of the cell, righteousness seemed to shine as a white light. Outside the blackness of sin seemed to make the very atmosphere impenetrable to the human eye.

Jesus must have had such feelings as this during his last days and hours. The crying need of mankind the world over for a new way of life was seen and felt in a never-to-be-forgotten way, and the Christ way stood out vividly as the only way. The shallowness and superficiality of so many things which formerly had seemed quite permissible, worthwhile, and indeed, quite necessary, now stood revealed. There came a new appreciation of the serious side of life, of the bigness of the task of tearing men loose from a blind worship of old institutions, from irrational,

emotional, uncritical prejudices and stereotypes, from ignorance and intolerance, and of reconstructing a wicked world on a Christ-like pattern. In silent answer to the shouts and mockery round about, came new resolves, a reconsecration of life to this great task. The determination grew to follow the path of duty to God and fellowmen throughout life as fearlessly and persistently as the guard followed his never ending path around the cell.

## II

It is some such spiritual experience as this that every Christian young and old should strive for today and continuously. To be shaken from our self-complacency and our preoccupation with the trivial, less essential things of life; to be rid of our smug, careless satisfaction with "things as they are" and to replace it with an enduring passion for "things as Christ would have them"; to be delivered from our indifference to the events about us far and near and to the direction in which the society of which we are a part is moving and to replace such indifference with a living, intelligently directed concern; to gain more knowledge and understanding of the needs of our remote and immediate world; to develop a new depth of personal consecration to the Way of Christ as a remedy for these needs and to become an active messenger for this Way—these are the things which challenge each of us today. These are the experiences which may be had not only by the twenty-one, but by all who wish to have them and will put forth the necessary effort, and make the necessary sacrifices.

The reputation for right living, the strengthening of the forces of righteousness in the world, were not accomplished by the early Christians, by the early Friends, nor by any others by means of an exclusive emphasis upon the less vital

things of life—fine clothes, dancing parties, movies, a mad race for wealth or what not. Nor does a reputation for doing great things for the world ever come from such an emphasis. Not that these things are necessarily wrong in themselves. The wrong comes in their over-emphasis, in the way they exclude the deeper things from our lives, in their inherent superficiality.

Many are the opportunities we lose. For example, when we entertain a party of our friends, we spend days at a time searching for games and other means of entertaining them. But we overlook the possibility of spending part of the time in consideration of the pressing vital things which should concern us more deeply than anything else because if they be not considered, they may rise up and destroy civilization. It is, of course, hardly necessary to say that every single thing we do need not be clouded with something dark and foreboding, for there are limits to all good things. But who would venture to assert that thus far, the human race has thought too much about its problems, has exercised too much of its time and energy in solving them, has applied social intelligence so continuously as to shut out legitimate pleasures and enjoyments. Obviously the opposite is the case.

Can it be that we must have the unpleasant experiences of the twenty-one before we realize the power of the forces of evil? Does it take such a shock to get us to see how imperatively we are being challenged to action by generations yet unborn? We each need to develop within ourselves the *capacity* for enjoying the deeper, more worth-while, more eternal things of life. "When I was a child, I talked like a child, felt like a child, reasoned like a child: when I became a man I put from me childish things."

No greater challenge, no heavier responsi-

bility, no wider opportunity ever came to any group of people than has come and is coming to Christians in general and Friends in particular. We have an illustrious past to live up to. We have a message of which men are in vital need. But we cannot live on the reputation of the past. The message will not spread itself. We cannot sit and congratulate ourselves on our goodness. Our task is a difficult one. It challenges the best that is in us. The crown of success will not come rolling up hill to meet us. We need always to remember that "not failure but low aim is crime" and never cease our efforts. Nothing short of a whole life, every day of it, devoted in whatever way we are best fitted, to the interests of the Kingdom of Heaven will answer the need of the world or satisfy the Divine expectations of us.

### III

The Society of Friends of the future will be just what we make it—no more, no less. What are we going to make of it? To what extent are we living up to our Friendly reputation? \* What excuse do we have for maintaining our corporate existence distinct from Methodists, Presbyterians or others? Are we content to be just another conventional "Church," or will we strive as did our founders to be a dynamic, revived first century "Society" or "Fellowship" with prophetic insight and genuineness which compels expression in exceptionally sacrificial living? What is our goal? With what things are we concerned—the little, trivial, transient things, or with building the Kingdom of Heaven, the Rule of God on earth which Jesus once intimated was worth giving up all one has for?

Our answer to these questions will be dem-

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\* See "They Call Themselves Friends" in *Readers Digest*, February, 1938.

onstrated to an expectant world quietly from day to day, perhaps without our realizing it, in a number of ways.

It will be demonstrated in the first place, by our individual, everyday lives, by the way we use our time—particularly our spare time, the words we speak or write, the thoughts we have, the way we live and walk with our fellowmen. Important also in this respect will be the "volume" of our spirit of tolerance, open-mindedness, and our eagerness to explore and experiment in new fields of thought coupled with the exercise of poise and self-control to give us stability and prevent our following naively after every wind that blows.

Secondly, our answer to these important questions will be demonstrated by our sensitiveness to the un-christian character of our social order—whether it is manifested in business, industrial, political or other aspects of our collective life. One of the acid tests of our Christ-likeness will be found in the depth of our concern about the cause and result relation between the profit system and evils such as unemployment, strife between capital and labor, and war; about the evils of military training, armament, imperialism, and attempts to glorify war and nationalism as necessary and right; about unjust treatment of criminals, lynching, racial discrimination, and a hundred other forms of social sin.

How many books, magazines, and pamphlets dealings with these matters have we read? How many have we told our friends about or bought and placed in their hands? *Our eagerness to study and to inform ourselves on these and other issues will be an excellent test of our determination and effectiveness.*

Thirdly, the activities and results of our

organized life as local, quarterly, yearly, and Five Years Meeting, and World Friends, will go far toward demonstrating our answer. What of our meetings for worship? Are they matters of form and ceremony, loaded with mere entertaining features, or with dead silence? Or do they indicate our appreciation and utilization of that live silence for which Friends are historically noted? Do they have a spiritual depth and reality, a freshness and vigor which comes from first-hand experience? Do they foster a "worship in spirit and truth" which transcends theological and doctrinal differences, disagreements over evolution, Biblical interpretation, or what not and which preserves us in spiritual unity on bigger things?

What of the results of our organized activities? When reports come in at quarterly or yearly meetings that "good progress has been made" do they really indicate that there has been careful, intelligent work done which has "shaken the world for ten miles around?" Do they mean, to be concrete, that the educative functions of the organization are operating so that there are frequent educational sermons and addresses on questions of local, national and international importance? Do they mean that the young people activities such as Sunday School, discussion groups and Christian Endeavor are concerned with great issues vital to their members both as individuals and as members of society? Do they mean that all committees are vastly more than just so many names on paper? Again, to be concrete, do these reports mean that "progress has been made" because, as a result of the organized activities of the various meetings, there are many individuals in the respective communities whose standards of conduct are higher, whose spiritual and intellectual horizon has been widened, whose better selves have been appealed to,

whose high resolves have been vitalized and strengthened and for whose future growth the meeting has a plan? Do the reports indicate that because of the year's work, there will be less immorality in the world; that there are more people who would not take an intoxicating drink if it were ever so cheap and plentiful; that the forces working toward another war will be more likely to fail; that there will be a better understanding of the race question? Are some of the results of the work of the Women's Missionary Society a better understanding of the need for appreciating the good in other religions and peoples, or of the way in which the Missionary movement needs to disentangle itself, if possible, from the arms of economic imperialism?

In short, is it taking all our energy to make the machinery run, or are we making genuine progress? Certainly before we can say that "good progress has been made" we must be sure that something very fundamental has happened to our social attitudes, that our individual consecration to the cause of right has increased, that our understanding of what is involved in the cause of right in this twentieth century has been greatly deepened; that we have a sense of solidarity which enables us to cooperate together not only in guardhouse experiences, but when faced with subtle and perhaps more deadly drugs to our ideals—liberty, popularity, and prosperity.

Finally, our answer to our original questions will be demonstrated by the positive, concrete service which we render, by the extent of our sacrifices for our ideals, by our support or failure to support the educational, service-committee, missionary and other activities of the Society of Friends and the variety of service and cooperation open to us in channels outside the Society, by the extent to which we are pioneers in new and controversial fields such as the economic, and discover ways to "take away the occasion" for war and other evils.

That each and every Friend choose as his or her supreme object in life a whole-hearted and complete loyalty to the things of the Kingdom of Heaven and then put forth an effort to support them worthy of the object—this is the great perpetual challenge to each of us.