

Prison Architecture.

C. W. Sprouse.

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Prison Architecture.

In discussing the subject of prison architecture I shall try first to follow the evolution of prisons from ancient times down to the present day; second to differentiate between the several prison systems; and third to discover the best form of prison architecture for our civilization.

I.

Evolutions of Prisons

The prison of today has come down to us by a process of evolution. The different types of prisons have been determined largely by the civilization in which they were produced; and in a smaller way, by the purpose for which they were intended. Prisons were originally used not for the confinement of transgressors of the law, but for enemies of the ruler.

1. History of prisons.

Early types of prisons antedating the Christian era were dungeons and caves. We read "Then took they Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon of Molchia, that was in the court of the prison; and they let down Jeremiah with cords, and in the dungeon there was no water but mire."

(2) The prisons of Greece and Rome were places of darkness, silence, and suffering, such as the Mamertine prison of Rome. This was a subterranean structure consisting of an irregular four sided room, thirty feet on its longest side and eighteen feet on its shorter side. The walls were of thick massive stones. Still lower down than this room was a circular well twenty feet in diameter and six feet in depth.

(3) Medieval prisons are well illustrated by the Tower of London. Here the enemies of the king were confined. It was built for security, without regard to health, separation, or

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The prisons of Greece and Rome were places of darkness, silence, and suffering, such as the Mamertine prison of Rome. This was a subterranean apartment consisting of a tunnel four sided rock, but the last on the lowest side and between that on the upper side. The walls were of rough hewn stone. Still lower down than this was a circular wall, and last in darkness and gloom in Rome.

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Medieval prisons were still illuminated by the light of the sun. The walls of the stone were painted, and built for security, without regard to health, ventilation, or

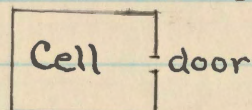
or reformation.

(4) Later English prisons.-In the latter part of the eighteenth century, John Howard found in the English jails "the confining of all sorts of prisoners together; debtors and felons, men and women, young beginners and old offenders. Few prisons of Prisons" separate men and women in the daytime".

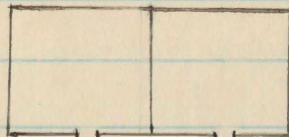
Vol. 8. P.8. One of the earliest state prisons in the United States was in Connecticut at Simsbury, in an old abandoned copper mine, in pens seventy feet below the ground.

2. Development of prison structure.

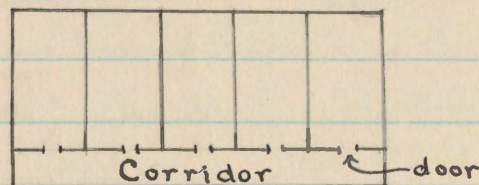
(1) The first prison was a single cell. Here the prisoner or prisoners lived, ate, slept; and if they worked at all, this was their workshop.



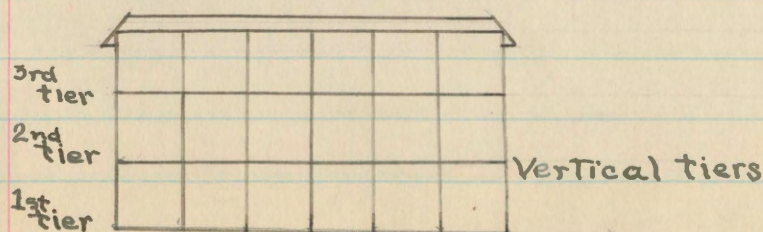
(2) When more room was needed two cells were used.



(3) Necessary additions would give the following plan, to which would be added a corridor running at right angles to the cell fronts or placed between the rows of cells.



(4) Such a series of cells were superimposed one upon another as the jail population increased.



on information.

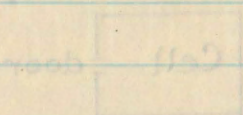
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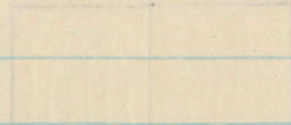
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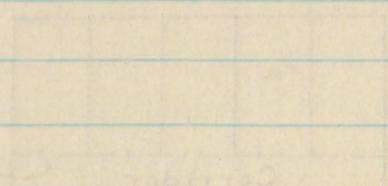
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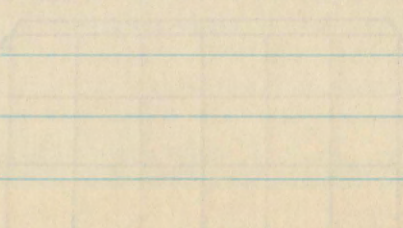
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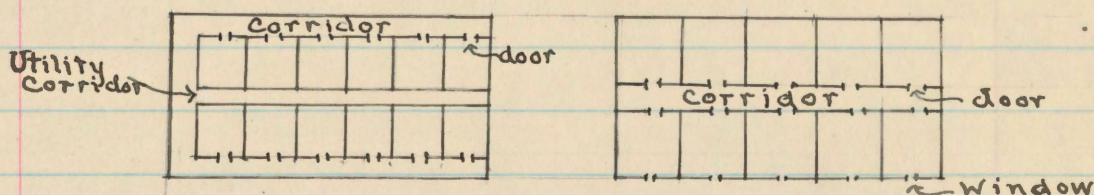


(4) Such a series of cells was subsequently one upon another as the cell population increased.



- (5) If the prison has a corridor it will be in the center or on the outside. If on the outside, it may be on one, two, three, or four sides. If the corridor is in the center the cells will have outside windows and the corridor will be lighted from the roof, or by one or two end windows. If the corridor is on the outside it will be lighted and the cells will not.

- A. A prison with rows of cells, back to back, corridor facing cells and building wall on outside of corridor. This is characteristic of most American prisons.



- B. Central corridor and cells on each side of corridor. The leading European prisons are constructed on this plan. The Hospital of St. Michael, Rome, is the oldest example of the outside block.

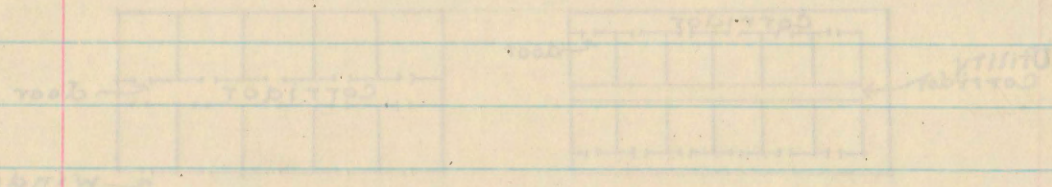
For almost one hundred years America has adopted the inside cell block for reasons of safety, economy of construction, and ease of supervision. The Continental and British countries have adopted the outside cell block, or Pennsylvania type, for reason of privacy, ventilation, and morality.

Americans argue that in the outside cell block there is a greater danger of escape, while the Europeans answer that escapes are extremely few if diligent supervision is maintained. The Americans assert that the inside cell admits more economical plumbing, as the pipes are run in a "Utility Corridor" between the blocks of the rows of cells. Their opponents contend that the difference in cost is not great, and that

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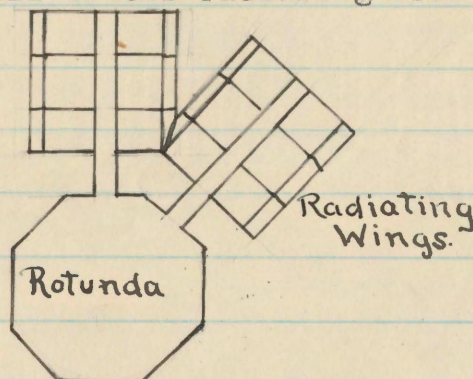
B. Central corridor and cells on each side of corridor. The leading European prisons are constructed on this plan. The Hospital of St. Michael, Rome, is the oldest example of the outside block.

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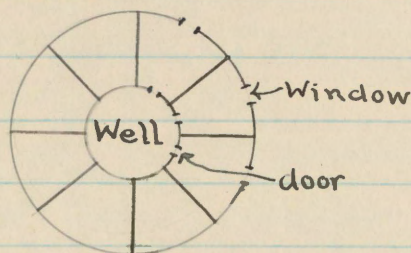
is that the outside cell block allows for a greater degree of security. Within the Pennsylvania system that is the answer to the question of safety. It is different and different in many respects. The American system is that the inside cell block is more economical in building, on the other side is a building that does not require the blocks or the rows of cells. The comparison is that the difference in cost is not great, and that

the ventilation is much better in the outside type. The Americans, however, hold that it is better to have ^esteel barred open front cell doors because of needed inspection, and supervision; and that discipline cannot be well maintained where prisoners have free communication across open corridors. Europeans argue that the prisoner deserves the privacy of a closed door, and that supervision can be accomplished through the use of inspectors peep holes in the center of each door.

- (6) Cell blocks radiating from central rotunda.



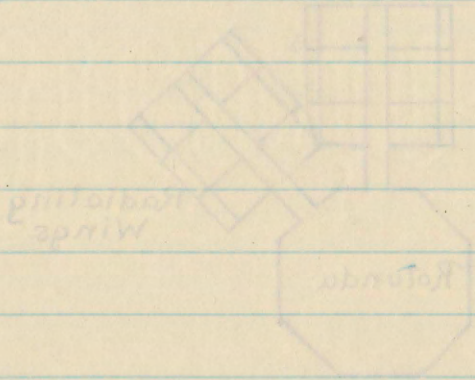
- (7) Round prisons.-The panopticon, a gigantic lantern lighted by a glass roof with cells next the outer wall, and facing the center. There is a place of inspection in the interior, so that the interior of each cell is at all times visible from a single point. The plan gives each cell an outside window, and the entire prison can be guarded by one man stationed at a point in the center.



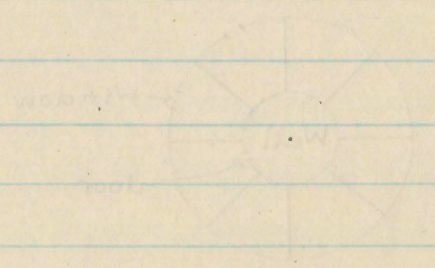
- (8) Auburn and Pennsylvania types contrasted.-The Pennsylvania system is the solitary form, in which the prisoner does not leave his cell; it is his home and his workshop. The

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(8) Square and rectangular types compared.-The British would prefer the solitary type, in which the prisoner does not leave his cell. It is the best and the cheapest. The

5.

Auburn type is the communion system where the prisoners have a common, workshop, dining hall, but with separate sleeping cells.

A. Advantages in the Pennsylvania type.

- a Easily governed.
- b Can discriminate between criminals in their treatment.
- c Absence of almost all occasion for disciplinary punishment.
- d Prisoner certain to demand work.
- e Good influence brought to bear is not counteracted by the influence of the rest of the prisoners.
- f On discharge he is not liable to be recognized.
- g Solitary reflection has a tendency to bring repentance for sins.
- h He is saved from evil communication.

B. Objections.

- a Cannot be delivered from the company of his own thoughts.
- b Can indulge in solitary vice.
- c Solitude influences body and mind.
- d Solitude is not complete as claimed.
- e Hard to give them physical exercise.
- f Communication not suppressed.

II. Classification of prisons.

In building a prison the first question to be asked is ,
"For what is the prison to be used?"

When an architect is to build a church it is not necessary that he should be a theologian; but he must know something of the form of worship followed by that particular denomination or sect, in order ^{that} the building may best meet their needs. So in building ^a prison we must ask what class of prisoners are to be confined here. A place of mere confinement is one thing,

Another type is the commoner state where the witnesses have
a common, workshop, distant hall, but with separate sleeping
cells.

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the prison is to be a place of punishment and

be confined here, a place of mere confinement is not

and a place of punishment is another, and ^aplace of education or reform is still another.

Five things are necessary in prisons in general:-

First,-Absolute security of the prisoners.

Second,-Economic management.

Third,-Health of inmates.

Fourth,-Convenience and ease of handling men.

Fifth,-Reformation of prisoners so that they will come out better and more useful men than when they went in.

In order that these ends may be attained it is necessary to have a division in the classes of prisoners. For many years China has had three divisions. (1). Great prisoners, those guilty of great crimes. (2). Inferior prisoners. (3). Police prisoners.

Plato likewise proposed three divisions. (1). Prisoners awaiting trial. (2). Those guilty of minor offenses. (3). Guilty of serious offenses against society.

For two thousand years there was no attempt to put this theory into practice.

The La Sante is the model prison of Paris, and provides for three classes of prisoners. (1). Prison~~s~~ for detention. (2). Prison~~s~~ for correction. (3). Convict prison~~s~~ proper. It is built in the form of a trapezium and forms two distinct prisons, built on two distinct plans, and designed for two distinct classes of prisoners. One part for the prisoners awaiting trial, is built on the cellular plan, where the prisoners do not see each other, and contains five hundred cells. The other is built for convicted prisoners sentenced to correctional imprisonment for terms not exceeding one year.

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alone. The other is built for sentenced prisoners employed in
occupational labor, and for inmates awaiting trial.

This one is on the associated plan, having common halls, common eating rooms, common workshops, and separate sleeping cells. It contains five hundred cells, each of which is twelve feet by six feet by nine feet high.

In America we have;-

1. Detention prisons.

(1) Lockups where police prisoners are taken when first arrested. In most American cities these places of detention are disgraceful places. Here in Chicago the cells in the Harrison Street police station are of the inside type. Each time that I have visited there I have seen from three to five prisoners in each cell. They are dark and unsanitary in appearance, with running water in each cell.

(2) The jails are places of detention where prisoners are awaiting trial. These too are usually of the inside cell type, and necessarily have its evils. There is opportunity for conversation, and those guilty of no crime are many times in close contact with hardened criminals. There should be outside cells with no possibility of communication or recognition in these institutions.

2. States prisons.-A state prison receives only felons. The best recognized types today is the outside cell block in triangular form or the lantern type as described

3. Reformatories are prisons with reformatory principles. The cottage system is beginning to be recognized as most valuable both for young prisoners and for adults. This system is a collection of cottages in connection with farm colonies. Each cottage being designed for about thirty eight men or woman as the case may be.

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a collection of cottages in connection with farm colonies.

Each cottage holds between ten and thirty adult men or

women as the case may be.

4. Cottage system for juvenile dependants or delinquents consists of a collection of cottages, containing a sitting room, dining room, kitchen, basement, play room or bath or gymnasium or all three, dormitories, matron's room, etc.

Special buildings are devoted to administration, laundry, hospital, chapel, assembly hall, shop, and power house. Certain buildings or cottages are used for disciplinary purposes. Such a cottage system offers individualization of treatment through greater classification, and through the supervision of house mothers and fathers.

III. Construction of the prison.-Here I desire to show the essential features essential in a modern state prison.

1. Choice of site.

A site must be chosen which offers excellent drainage. The soil must be of a gravelly or sandy nature; no clay or near strata of rock will do.

- (2) The water supply must be abundant, pure, and unfailing, because we have no more right to poison the water or air, which the prisoner uses, or cause to be poisoned, than we have to poison his food.

- (3) A good sewerage system is most essential to prevent disease.

- (4) The prison must be situated at a point near the center of population so as to be accessible to persons and supplies; and yet be far enough away so that the land will be cheap enough to permit of purchasing plenty of space.

2. The outer wall of the prison should be of stone. The style of the architecture need not be too attractive. There is a tendency in all prison construction to make it more

Cottage system for inmates is the best of all systems now in use. It is a collection of cottages, containing a kitchen, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, play room, bath or gymnasium, etc. Each cottage is a small house, with a room, etc. Special buildings are devoted to administration, laundry, hospital, chapel, assembly hall, shop, and power house. Certain buildings or cottages are used for disciplinary purposes. Such a cottage system offers individualization of treatment through greater classification, and through the supervision of house mothers and fathers.

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Construction of the prison.-Here I desire to show the

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2. The outer wall of the prison should be of masonry. The style of the architecture need not be too picturesque. There is a tendency in all prison construction to make it more

imposing and more beautiful than suited to prison purposes.

3. The cell house is a very important part of the prison. The outside cell block, as stated before, is the only type that should be used. It must be strong and durable. The outer walls should be of stone three feet thick, with an air space in the wall to prevent moisture from penetrating. The building should be absolutely fire proof. The roof is best made of slate laid on tile, and steep enough to insure good drainage. The cell itself should be of brick or stone, with nearly full steel^e front. Some favor boiler steel cells, but these are very expensive and permit of a great deal of noise. Perhaps the ideal cell would be of cement inside of which boiler plate had been placed. It would have the advantage of being fully germ proof, easily cleaned or disinfected, besides being very secure.

Running water with a wash bowl and toilet is a necessity in each cell of any modern prison. The lighting should be by electric or gas. The heating preferably by steam, because the entire prison can be heated with the exhaust steam from the boilers.

The ventilation of the cell house should be perfect. In some prisons fans for drawing the foul air of the cell room have been instituted. In others air shafts running up into towers have been installed, with a small flue connecting each cell.

The windows of the cell should be large enough to admit an abundant amount of sunlight, for next to the privation of life and before the privation of liberty, comes the privation of light. Nothing^{So} surely breaks the spirit and undermines the

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light. Recently several houses the entire end enclosed the

physical and mental health of the convict as lack of sunlight. The state has no right to take away a man's vitality or to shorten his life by any means other than a speedy death sentence. It undertakes to deprive a man of his liberty for some offense, and to reform him if possible; but that is all.

4. The work shop should be light, airy, and only one story where possible.
5. There are three systems of furnishing food; (1) In cells, (2) Where it is placed on tables, and each takes his share as he passes. (3) Dining room on family system. This last named system is preferable. The tables are arranged in rows so that the men all face the same way. They are about fourteen inches wide, and seat four men each, so as to allow a waiter to pass along and easily reach every man.
6. The kitchen should be a one story building so as to permit ventilation through the roof as well as by windows. It should contain no woodwork of any kind to furnish a hiding place for roaches, etc. The floor should be of tile or marble, with the walls of enameled brick.
7. Between the kitchen and the dining room should be the serving room, where bread is sliced, the food divided, and the dishes washed.
8. A good store room will be separate from the other buildings, while easily accessible from the kitchen and other departments. It must be well lighted, dry, and airy.
9. The laundry and bath rooms will be connected so as to have hot water, and as few live steam pipes as possible. Accessible to these should be a room for the distribution of clean clothing. Shower baths are the only ones of real value in such

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and. Shower baths are the only ones of real value in such

an institution; and each prisoner while bathing should have a separate compartment.

10. The hospital should consist of (1) a sick ward, (2) cells for those unable to work but not ill enough to be put in the sick ward. The regular cells should never be occupied in the day time. The prisoner should either be at work, in the punishment cell, or in the hospital cells or wards.

11. The apartments of the prison guards who remain all the time at the institution should be within the walls.

A great deal of the reformation of the prisoners might well begin with the reform of the prisons. The prisons of America can be greatly improved without fear of making them over-attractive. In prison construction the idea of reforming the prisoner is more and more finding its place.

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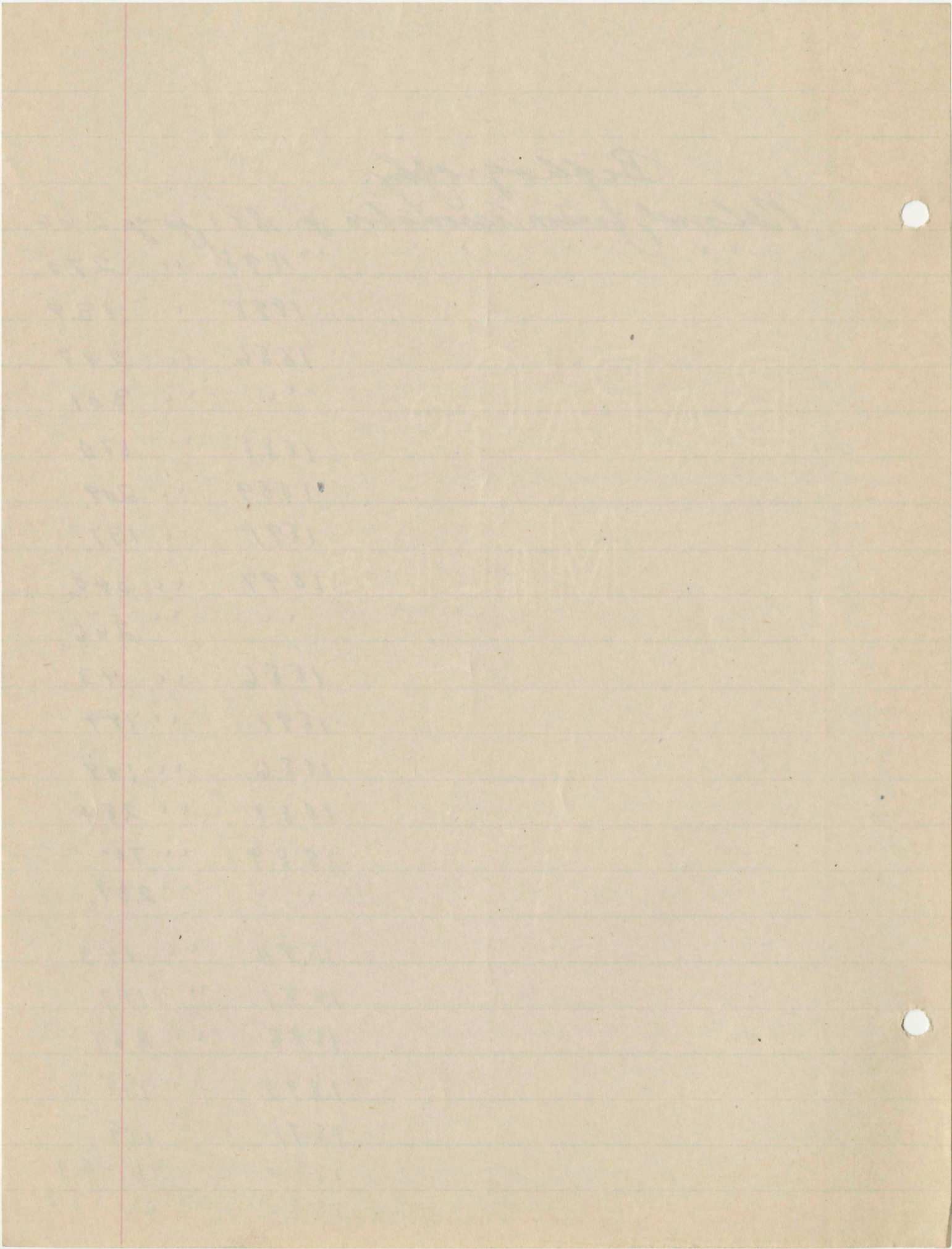
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11. The apartments of the prison guards who remain all the
time at the institution should be within the walls.

A great deal of the reformation of the prisoners might
well begin with the reform of the prisons. The prisons of
America can be greatly improved without fear of making them
over-attractive. In prison construction the idea of reforming
the prisoner is more and more finding its place.

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Furnishment and Reformation
of
Prisoners

[Faint, illegible handwriting on lined paper, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side. The text is mirrored across the horizontal lines.]