

# A PUBLIC SPIRIT

*George H. Atkinson's Written Legacy*

Transcribed and with a foreword by  
Donald J. Sevetson



BEE TREE

PACIFIC UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES  
Forest Grove, Oregon

A Public Spirit:  
George H. Atkinson's Written Legacy

Selected, transcribed, and introduced by Donald J. Sevetson

Published by Pacific University Libraries 2015

Foreword, chapter introductions, and notes copyright © Donald J. Sevetson 2015  
All rights reserved

ISBN 978-0-9884827-3-9

Pacific University Libraries  
2043 College Way  
Forest Grove, Oregon 97116

[www.pacificu.edu/libraries](http://www.pacificu.edu/libraries)

Published in the United States of America  
Set in Georgia

Cover title/background font Mrs Saint Delafield © 2011 Alejandro Paul,  
SIL Open Font License, Version 1.1



Bee Tree Books  
An imprint of the Pacific University Libraries

*Our treasure lies in the beehive of our knowledge. We are perpetually on the way  
thither, being by nature [...] honey gatherers of the mind.*

Friedrich Nietzsche

The “Bee Tree”, an iconic ivy-covered tree that stood on the Pacific University campus for many years, was already old and hollow when pioneer Tabitha Brown arrived in Oregon in 1846. Mrs. Brown started a home for orphans that would grow into Pacific University. According to the Forest Grove *News-Times*, the tree was “said to have housed a swarm of bees who furnished the little old lady with honey which she sold to buy provisions for her orphan children.”

## TWO

### **A Report on Prisons**

In 1865 the Atkinson family traveled to New England for a lengthy visit, leaving in April and returning in December. They sailed south on the Pacific, then by railroad across the Isthmus of Panama, sailing north on the Atlantic until reaching New York City. In addition to time spent with family in Vermont and Massachusetts, Atkinson attended a national meeting of Congregational churches in Boston and traveled west, as far as Moline, Illinois, for family visits and research on penitentiaries.

He had earlier accepted appointment as a Penitentiary Commissioner (one of three) of the State of Oregon. He understood that service as related to his work in education, since confinement provided opportunities for training and redirection. He visited seven penitentiaries: San Quentin, California; Charlestown, Massachusetts; Concord, New Hampshire; Auburn, New York; Columbus, Ohio; Michigan City, Indiana; and Joliet, Illinois. The three Midwestern visits occurred during a trip he made to see several siblings in and around Moline, Illinois.

The report on his visits was published in the collection of Oregon House and Senate journals for 1866. It was especially timely, since in 1864 the Legislature had appropriated funds to build a prison in Salem, replacing the earlier one located in Portland:

The prison, operated by the Oregon Department of Corrections, has occupied the Salem site since 1866, two years after the legislature appropriated funds to build the facility. (*Oregon Encyclopedia*)



## **Report on Visits to Eastern penitentiaries**

*Source:*  
*Oregon House and Senate Journals, 1866, Appendix, pp. 504-520*  
*Oregon Historical Society*



*Portland*  
*July 25, 1866*

Messrs. A.C.R. Shaw and J.H. Moores,  
Commissioners of Oregon Penitentiary:

Dear Sirs:

**M**y brief report in December last, of a visit to the prisons of several states, at your request, may be properly followed by one more minute and extensive.

The structure of prisons and their discipline have of late years received much attention in England and in the United States. The great improvements made are comparatively of modern date, and Americans have been among the foremost to study the penal system and to perfect their penitentiaries.

As an illustration, in the 25th report of the board of managers of the Massachusetts Prison Discipline Society in 1850, they say: "The important points, which have been considered in the proposed extension of the state prison, of a general character, are *convenience, classification, light, ventilation, cleansing, solitary confinement at night, employment, instruction, humanity, discipline, order, security against fire, extension.*"

These points were supposed to include all the interests of the public, and also of the prisoner. They include not only the results secured in the new structure at Charlestown, Mass., but also those which should be attained in all prisons old or new, and as such they may serve as an important guide in our inquiries and discussions. Noting them in their order, I first speak of the *convenience* of a prison. This pertains to *location* and *internal arrangement*.

1. Although the location of the Oregon penitentiary has been settled by vote of the people, it may be proper to remark that it compares in most respects favorably with the sites chosen in other states for

## REPORT ON PRISONS

these institutions. It has also the advantage of a stream of pure water for domestic and manufacturing purposes. It has a large area of land. Its vicinity to the capital, and to an intelligent, enterprising, moral and permanent population, and its nearness to a navigable river, favor both its discipline and its economical management. It is to be hoped that it will prove healthful, and that no reason will exist for a change of site.

The *internal* convenience of a prison depends upon a combination of advantages in its plan and structure, so that its operation can be conducted with system and thoroughness. The convict must be fed, clothed, and kept cleanly. But it was not convenient to do this, if the effort had been made, in the English prisons, where Howard found fifty or a hundred, or even two hundred prisoners in a single room, and where Mrs. Fry found three hundred women in two rooms. There they saw their friends, and kept their multitudes of children, and they had no other place for cooking, washing, eating and sleeping. It is not the most convenient to care for a dozen prisoners of all classes locked up in a single room, in which they sit, eat, converse, and sleep.

The time for such arrangements has passed. The modern penitentiary furnishes a cell for every convict. The room, though small, is sufficient for all his wants while in it. Two systems still prevail in taking meals—the old congregate system, in which all sit and eat together at tables with guards over them. This is the custom in the New York, Ohio and other western prisons. The other method, in which every convict takes his food to his own cell and eats it alone, prevails at Charlestown. While the convicts have their hour for meals, with doors barred, the guards and officers have the same hour, off duty, for their meals uninterrupted, and thus no time is lost in the establishment. To accomplish this, the kitchen, cell-rooms and guard-rooms must be conveniently and compactly arranged. To secure this, the prison at Charlestown begins with a central octagonal rotunda four stories high. The kitchen is in the basement, and being central, the food is passed through windows to the prisoners as they go from their shops to their rooms. From three sides of this octagon, wings extend for cell-rooms. From the fourth side the wing for the officers' quarters is built. Over the kitchen is

the guard-room, open through gratings on all sides. The four other narrower sides are used for long grated windows. Standing at this center a single guard can see all the prison areas, the yards, shops, and officers' rooms, by simply turning round, and can go to any part through a grated door and down an iron staircase.

The chapel is over the guard-room, and the hospital is designed to be above the chapel, away from the noise of machinery, both having iron stair-cases from the corridors along the cells of all the wings. This compact structure permits the officer to have the oversight of the entire prison, day and night, without exposure. It gives to every prisoner the same light and air which the officer enjoys. The other prisons visited, had usually a central building divided into several rooms, each commanding a view of only a part of the cells or areas from a single point, and that through a gated door or a concealed aperture. In them the culinary and heating departments are usually kept separate.

At Charlestown the cooking and heating apparatus are in the central kitchen, from which pipes, conveying steam or hot water, radiate to all the wings. The cell-rows are in the center of the wing, three, four, and five stories high, double with broad, cool areas around, extending to the walls, high as the ceiling. In the walls are high, broad windows, similar to those in the penitentiary in Portland, affording an abundance of light and air. The cell-rooms of the New York, New Hampshire, Ohio, Illinois and other prisons visited, were similar, though not united to a central rotunda. The old idea of cells along the walls, and slots in the walls to each cell to give light and air has for the most part been abandoned.

2. Security is the next point to be noticed. This was, originally, the chief idea of a prison. It seems always to have been a problem with governments what to do with criminals. How to keep them securely. In the earliest times they seem to have been thrust into slimy dungeons. Under Roman law, free citizens, if convicted, were reduced to slavery and committed to the care of a master, or compelled to labor in public works.

The English early resorted to the transportation of convicts to America and Australia. At one time, their prisoners were confined

## REPORT ON PRISONS

in old hulks in the Thames. At another, they were huddled into close rooms, debtors, thieves, murderers, young and old; healthy and diseased, in one mass, to pollute and be polluted.

But the chief reliance has been upon strong walls of stone and iron; suggested, probably, by the old feudal castles, which were used for such purposes. Security is sought in most of the prisons visited, by having a system of cells of stone or brick, with iron doors, which are entirely enclosed in a stone or brick building. The prison yards are enclosed by thick walls of stone or brick, from twenty to twenty-five feet high. In addition, armed guards are constantly stationed in towers on the walls. As much reliance, perhaps, is placed upon the vigilance and courage of the guards as upon the buildings.

3. The supervision of prisoners when in their cells is gained on the rotunda plan more thoroughly than on any other. The turnkey or sub-warden can see any movement or hear any sound from any cell without moving from his place, or he can pass in his *felt slippers* to any part of the area or corridors unobserved. His central position enables him to give instant alarm to officers in the rear or to watchmen on the walls.

4. It has been felt of late years, that prisoners ought to be classified. This was one of the reforms proposed by John Howard in England and on the continent. The warrants and official visitors of prisons, assent to its importance. It is an evil to put a man guilty of larceny in companionship with a murderer, or a youth with an old and hardened offender. But the contract system seeks for workmen and makes no distinction among them. All classes mingle together in the shop. The evil can be in part obviated by having a watchman in every shop, as at Charlestown, Auburn and Columbus, who allows no conversation between the prisoners.

5. Solitary confinement at night is deemed exceedingly important for the convicts as well as for all objects of justice. "If a man," says Mr. Buxton, "has the misfortune to be committed for examination to a London prison, guilty or innocent, he is locked up with perhaps a half dozen of the worst thieves, or at night he may find himself

in bed and in bodily contact between a robber and a murderer, or between a man with a foul disease on one side and one with an infectious disorder on the other." What was true there, has been true in every prison. The only remedy is a cell for every man, and to have every man in his room alone. This method assists the discipline, prevents corrupt communications and the concocting (of) plans for escape.

6. Employment of prisoners of all classes is essential to discipline and good order. In the earlier English and Scotch prisons convicts had nothing to do. Vulgar, profane and vicious conduct were the result. Then the tread mill was introduced, with no object but to compel work. Latterly, prisoners have been at once set upon some useful employment. The aim in Massachusetts is to give every one a trade, if he had not one before, so that he can earn his living, and also to discipline him to habits of labor, that he will earn it. The same general idea prevails in all our penitentiaries. To accomplish it large and airy work-shops are erected, various kinds of machinery are introduced, with good motive power, and the whole conducted by the state, or the shops are rented to contractors for periods of five or ten years, who furnish the machinery, and a definite number of men are furnished for the contractor's work, at prices varying from forty cents to one dollar a day. The wardens retained perfect control of the government of all the shops. All our late prisons have improved work-shops, in many cases they are two stories high. The convicts seem as earnest and skillful in their work as if they were free laborers. It gives them health, cheerfulness, and relieves the tediousness of their confinement.

7. Instruction has of late been found an important aid in prison discipline. At Charlestown no regular teacher is provided or regular times set apart for lessons, except chapel and Sabbath services. At Auburn and Columbus, teachers are paid to instruct the convicts after their daily tasks are done. Many who know not how to read or write have there learned. Libraries are provided for prisoners, and also writing materials, and lights are furnished until nine o'clock, P.M., so that they can improve themselves. The chaplain is usually the librarian. All letters to or from the convicts are first submitted to the warden or the chaplain for inspection. These means soften the

## REPORT ON PRISONS

hardened offender and operate to restore the wanderer. Especial reliance is now placed upon religious services. At Charlestown the convicts have a choir among themselves and a melodeon. The choir spend half an hour every day practicing tunes for the next morning service. It has been found that a very small per cent of discharged criminals are returned for a second term.

In those prisons which give the least attention to ordinary or religious instruction there is more natural distrust and more insubordination, and more temptation to cruelty. Officers find the benefit of these means. We are to remember that prisoners are men, and that many of them have been untaught. A chapel and schoolroom are an important part of the structure.

8. Humanity is made a distinct consideration in the structure and discipline of modern prisons. The tendency of prisons is to promote inhumanity. It requires great self-control on the part of keepers to guard the convicts, and yet refrain from tyranny, and at the same time give them due care. Prisoners are considered, and they usually are, bad men—frequently the worst characters in community. Entering their cells under the force and restraint of law, they constantly feel themselves cut off, outcasts from society—banished, abandoned, and degraded. They naturally seek to form a society of their own, hostile to that outside their prison. They as naturally cherish revenge, and having no way to reach the public, they often vent their feelings upon their keepers. They soon show their corrupt and vicious characters. They expose themselves, by their violence, passion, deception and baseness, to receive the same in return. Some jailers at last consider it unwise to show them any kindness or special attention. They confess that their own feelings of humanity are changed toward prisoners by contact with them, and they distrust all attempts to reform them, or to benefit them. The public always share, to some extent, in these feelings, especially those who attend much upon our courts and who become familiar with criminal life. Both the prison and the prisoner are avoided, the one as hopeless of good and the other of improvement.

But to carry out the humane ideas of Howard and other philanthropists, it is ESSENTIAL not only that the hospital be suitable

for the comfort and restoration of the sick, but that the physicians, the wardens, the guards, the watchmen and overseers, be humane, moral, self-controlled, as well as firm and courageous men. The Massachusetts and Ohio state prisons are good examples of the humane system as carried out in American prisons. It is often remarked that frequent changes of officers are injurious in this and other respects to the management of prisons. It has also been suggested that the appointed power be in the hands of the supreme court of the state, and that occasional visits of the judges to the prison might be highly useful.

9. *Light* is made a point of special importance in the structure of modern prisons. Light is found to be as necessary to health as food and exercise, and nowhere more than to persons confined in buildings. Nearly all the late prisons have long windows in both sides. The aim is to give the prisoner as much as the keeper enjoys. There are eight windows, each 22 x 8 feet in the external walls of the Charlestown prison, making the area around the cells almost as light as the open court. The cells have an open grated door of 6½ x 2½ feet dimensions. The sun shines in by day and the gas or oil lamps from the area at night. The prisons of other states have almost equal facilities for light.

At San Quentin, California, the buildings consist of a system of cells opening to the yard, without an enclosing prison. But the doors, being of iron plate, admit of less light than the grated doors in proper cell rooms. Besides, prisoners can have no light at night.

10. *Heat* is a more important consideration to prisoners than to those who have their freedom. It must be abundantly and steadily supplied or they will suffer. It is hardly less needed in our damp climate than in extremely cold ones. The method of heating at Charlestown is by means of pipes of steam or hot water extending round the area. In some other places stoves are still used. Furnaces are proposed in some places.

11. *Ventilation* is applied not only to the areas by means of long windows, and by apertures and gratings in the ceiling, but to every cell by a tube running to the top of the building, or by flues which extend to the top.

## REPORT ON PRISONS

12. *Water and cleansing* are deemed very important to the comfort and safety of our prisons. By means of pipes and faucets an abundant supply is furnished in all the wings, and convenient to every prisoner at Charlestown, and every one is required to wash himself daily, and to bathe once a week. The opportunity and means for personal cleanliness are furnished in other prisons visited, but not to the same extent or thoroughness. An abundant supply of pure cool water is found to be essential to the establishment and to the health of the inmates of such institutions, if possible, more than in any other. Many prisoners are naturally uncleanly, while the restraint upon liberty perhaps destroys any self-respect and habit of cleanliness more quickly than any other condition. Were they neglected, and allowed to do as they please, doubtless their condition in these respects would become intolerable. Such was the case in English and continental prisons before the time of reform.

13. *Discipline*, though entering into every feature of a prison, deserves a separate notice. The structure favors or hinders it. All penitentiaries should be designed to impress the prisoner with the idea that he is *securely confined*, and *that any attempt to escape will be useless*. This is the first element in his proper control. Broken walls, defective cells and careless guards set convicts on the watch to escape and defeat all discipline. He has lived uncontrolled. He has broken law, defied authority, despised government, trampled upon the rights of men, and claimed impunity in the reckless gratification of his own appetites and passions. For his own good and the public welfare he must *feel the absolute and complete restraint of his liberty*. For this the massive walls and iron gratings must take the place of the majesty of law which he has defied. Rejecting the one, he must feel the other.

A third element of his discipline is keeping regular hours for sleep, for work, for meals, and for the recreation of reading or writing or study, and for religious worship. A second means is the constant supervision of an officer day and night. This, in several of our best conducted penitentiaries, is to prevent all conversation between convicts.

A fourth means is the single cell for every one. Convicts rooming together destroy discipline. Cliques are formed in prison which plot

evil and involve newcomers, and cause much disturbance. A fifth means is punishment for refractory conduct. In some prisons, as at Michigan City, Ind., and San Quentin, Cal., a whip is used. In the latter, also chains and the dungeon.

In some prisons the shower bath and the iron collar are used. In others the solitary dark cell with only bread and water enough to support life, are the penalties for the rebellious. But the prisoner is allowed at Charlestown to come out at the moment he is willing to go to work and do his duty, and seldom does one stay in the 'solitary' twenty-four hours.

A sixth means of discipline is work, regular and steady, of some profitable and instructive kind. This is usually in shops, and the prison laborers seem like others in similar trades elsewhere. Work is now relied upon more than anything else to control and, if possible, to reform convicts.

A seventh means is the system of commutation for good behavior. In some prisons two days in a month are allowed, and these are increased to five days in long terms, so that a man sentenced for ten years may, by good conduct, get free in about eight years. But if he rebels, all his gains are liable to be lost. He is put upon his self-control. He forms a habit of it and of labor, and thus often is fitted to become a better citizen than ever before.

An eighth means of discipline is careful, attentive, experienced, humane, thoroughly temperate, well-trained keepers; not *brutish*, *passionate*, *violent*, *profane* and cruel men. More depends upon officers and guards than upon the prison itself.

A ninth means of discipline is some provision for discharged prisoners by which they can enter upon civil life again with hope of support and respectability. In Massachusetts, besides teaching the convict a trade, an agent is appointed by the state to see every convict before his discharge, inquire what he wishes to do, and then either send him to his home newly clad in citizen clothing free of charge, or to find a place for him to work at his trade, the employer only knowing his history, or to board him

## REPORT ON PRISONS

a week or two at a good place until he can find employment. Other states give discharged prisoners a few dollars and send them away without care. But the kindness shown him at this moment, when peculiarly exposed, is opportune, and it saves some a second fall. The hope of it imparts confidence to the mind of the convict that he has friends left, and it stimulates him to prove himself worthy of their regard.

14. The orderly arrangement of a prison ought to be simple, compact, complete and convenient for all the purposes of security, health, work, comfort and discipline. No prison has these points combined more fully than at Charlestown, though all have them to some extent.

15. For security against fire, the floors, walls, doors, galleries, stair cases, fastenings, grates, are iron, stone or brick, and there is nothing combustible in the structure except the window frames and the ceilings over the area of the prison at Charlestown, so that, although not absolutely fireproof, it is nearly so. The new prisons of the western states are made of stone, iron and brick and are nearly fireproof.

16. Extension is an important item in a prison in a new state. If it can be it ought to be done in harmony with an original plan, and without changing the mode of supervision. The central rotunda permits such extension by a wing on each of the four sides whenever wanted. The second wing will be as convenient and easily guarded as the first. On other plans the wings could be placed out of reach. The new buildings at San Quentin stand side by side away from the guard room. The plan of the prison ought to be a unit in itself, so complete and suggestive that all future additions will naturally grow out of it, as branches grow from a stock, and so that there will be no good reason to depart from it.

17. The comfort of the prison officers is an important element in the construction and provisions for a prison. It is coming to be understood that these officers ought to be gentlemen in the true sense of the term, intelligent, dignified, courteous, free from narrow prejudices, firm and kind, for they are to be entrusted with absolute

power over men, and over men who they will have some strong provocations to misuse and to injure. And if it becomes the state to choose such men as superintendents, wardens, sub-wardens, clerks, physicians, chaplains, teachers, guards and watchmen—men who will respect each other—it becomes the state to furnish them with good, comfortable, neat and tasteful quarters in the prison structure. They are sequestered from society; they endure a kind of imprisonment. At least one or more of them will have their family within. The head officer needs a room suitable to receive visitors. For this purpose one wing of the rotunda can project without the walls, and be equally convenient and safe.

Besides good quarters, these officials merit, if faithful, liberal salaries. They have great responsibilities. They are confined day and night to the same positions. They are subjected to insults and exposed to dangers from the vicious and reckless, who would murder them in an instant for the sake of escaping, and yet the utmost vigilance, prudence and courage are expected of them. The state which exacts so much of its servants for the public good, ought to regard them with a fair compensation, such as their standing and similar duties would elsewhere command.

18. The expenditure for a prison will be considered by every citizen. In order to a fair estimate of this subject, it is important to keep in mind the cost of crime before the prison is reached by the criminal. Consider the damage he has done to person and property—to the public peace and prosperity. Consider, also, the cost of courts, of officers, of trials. Consider, furthermore, the need of depriving him of his liberty, and the danger of his escape; and, above all, consider the means and the duty, if possible, of his reform. A single crime often costs, not only life, but thousands of dollars to community, and unless we subject the criminal to the most sure and wise imprisonment, we encourage crime and multiply losses and evils to an indefinite extent. In this view, if a suitable prison is expensive, still it ought to be built, not extravagantly, but thoroughly. The cost of the octagonal building and one wing, at Charlestown, Mass., with fixtures, was one hundred thousand dollars, fifteen years ago. The new prison at Joliet, Ill., had cost, a year ago, over seven hundred thousand dollars, and estimates were then made for expending one

## REPORT ON PRISONS

hundred and seventy-nine thousand dollars more upon it; and, possibly, when completed it will cost one million dollars. The new prison at Michigan City, Ind. will cost, as per estimate, from four to five hundred thousand dollars. The cost of the older prisons cannot now be ascertained. Much can be saved by the employment of the prisoners in making brick and in the construction of some portions of the edifice and walls.

19. *Convict* labor is a subject which will continually be discussed by officers of prisons and a portion of the outside public. The question is asked, whether the state should employ the convicts in its own workshops, and make the profits, or whether it will furnish shops and sell their labor at a given rate per day to contractors? The former method is the most troublesome; the latter is perhaps less remunerative. In the former, however, the state classifies and controls the convicts better for their discipline and welfare. In the latter case, contractors are apt to get an undue influence in the prison management. The former may be the best investment, but the latter yields the surest income. The contract system prevails in nearly all the prisons visited. It works well, if the prison officers are permanent, and are sustained in complete control of the shops and yards, so as to preserve the prison discipline; and provided, also, that the demands for workmen shall be kept subordinate to the objects of the prison itself. Contractors often nurse strong and skillful workmen, and crush the weak. It is money against discipline at one moment, and against humanity at another.

On the other hand, the labor of convicts, being very cheap, enables either the state or the contractor to compete with free labor, so as to drive the latter out of the market. The saddler and collars, and brick, perhaps, made at San Quentin, California, are beginning to control the San Francisco market, and to drive other men out of business. The same tendency appears with their boots and shoes and flannel shirts.

The furniture, brushes, whips, barrels and castings, made at Charlestown, Mass., have the same tendency in Boston, and it is only overruled by the greater extent of the market. The prison contractor enjoys a kind of monopoly, which largely compensates for all his risks.

*A Public Spirit*

In a few cases, prisons have become self-supporting by their convict labor. In other cases, the annual deficiency varies from \$10,000 to \$50,000.

20. The monthly income of the San Quentin prison is \$2,400, and the monthly expenditure about \$7,000.

All expenses of the Charlestown, Mass. Prison, in 1860, were	\$80,243.11
All receipts, mostly for labor	80,747.97
Being an excess of receipts	504.86
In 1855, their ordinary disbursements were	52,611.06
Ordinary receipts	40,915.15
Deficit	11,695.91
The income of the New Hampshire state prison at Concord, for 1863, was	12,417.60
Expenses for the same year	8,451.83
Gain to the state	3,965.77

In 1865, expenses exceeded receipts, \$471.68.

21. Prison statistics are now made to include all important facts concerning prisoners. For example, the Massachusetts tables give us the whole number received and the whole number discharged, ages of convicts, crimes, periods of sentence, states and countries of which they are natives, places of conviction, previous employments, expiration of sentences, life sentences, and the crimes, re-commitments, number of convicts each year and per month, and their daily rations of food. To keep such accounts and compile these statistics accurately in the larger prisons requires all the time of a clerk. The information is of more value than its cost.

## REPORT ON PRISONS

22. Prison clothing. This subject is awakening some discussion. The black and white striped cloth is still worn in nearly all prisons. Its value is to prevent escape, and to expose for easy detection the man who has escaped. An effort is made in Massachusetts and California to furnish prison clothing with less distinctive marks.

23. Apartments for females are usually within the same enclosure of walls, but in a separate building, and under the care of a matron. That at Columbus, Ohio, seems to be very well conducted, and to be a model for such a department.

24. Adornment of the grounds is now a noticeable feature of some of our best prisons. The yard is laid off with neat walks, grass plats, flower beds, and occasionally a fountain of water and a few trees. It is desirable, for both officials and prisoners, to have both shade trees and flowers in these grounds.

25. Insane prisoners form a peculiar class, for whom strong rooms have to be especially provided. In some cases they are sent to asylums, and re-committed after recovery, but the guardians of the insane generally object to receiving them.

26. The subject of unjust or inconsistent imprisonment is receiving the attention of gentlemen familiar with the details of prison life. It is found by officials in their acquaintance with prisoners that men guilty of the same crimes are committed for very different periods—as one man five years for stealing and another for fifteen years for exactly the same offense. When prisoners become aware of the facts—and they always do so—they feel the injustice and become more reckless. Others are found guilty of no crime, but merely unfortunate dupes of their associates. Such cases call for a careful discrimination in the discipline, and a more careful inspection by officers of the law.

27. The architecture of a prison with all its departments for security, labor, comfort and improvement, is a subject de-manding careful study and a close observation of the careful workings of prison discipline. Incomplete and unsuitable structures spring from imperfect plans and ideas. Among the foremost in the knowledge

*A Public Spirit*

of this subject, so far as I was able to ascertain, were the architects of the new prison buildings at Charlestown, Mass., and of the new jail at Boston.

Respectfully submitted,  
G.H. ATKINSON  
*Visitor for the commissioners of Oregon penitentiary.*

