GOD'S ACRE

MAYBE THERE is an acre—perhaps not more than half an acre, of serried rows of tent-like mounds of earth where those who, through the gates of death, have secured a "final release."

The history of these lives need not concern us. They were men of like passions with ourselves—appeared on the stage of life, played a part, and departed. Some wasted away through lingering illness till the great "leveler" gave relief from sorrow and suffering; some paid the penalty demanded by society and met an ignominious death on the scaffold; while others, with curses on their lips, died victims of tortures that marked early prison administrations; all young and old alike, sleep the last sleep in the prison grave-yard.

But Death—no, not Death, but Society, refuses to throw the mantle of charity over the memory of these misspent lives, and with few exceptions, denies them a name, even in death; consigning them to the grave with only the numbers, that in life they carried on their backs, to mark their last resting place. Not even a flower scatters perfume nor lends a gleam of color to the desolate spot; no tree to cast a friendly shade, nor leaves through which the winds may moan a requiem for the departed.

Forgotten? No! Ten thousand times, no! For many of these unfortunate lives were the seeds of promise that are springing up and are beginning to bear rich fruitage in the awakened social consciousness which, today, is working such transformation in prison management. Some of these men were victims of unjust and cruel conditions—some day we will crown them as martyrs.

OUR VIEW POINT

"IN MEN WHOM MEN CONDEMN AS ILL
I FIND SO MUCH OF GOODNESS STILL,
IN MEN WHOM MEN PRONOUNCE DIVINE
I FIND SO MUCH OF SIN AND BLOT
I HESITATE TO DRAW A LINE
BETWEEN THE TWO, WHERE GOD HAS NOT."

—JOAQUIN MILLER

Pity it is that so long we have neglected the duty we owe, to show decent respect to "God's Acre." The gentle rains and the warming sun have done their best to hide the scars, by coaxing into life rank weeds that towered above the number-marked graves. But these, too, have died, and now lie in tumbled heaps, as though trying to be consistent with the surroundings; pleading mutely for a better day when a blanket of green grass shall be spread over the forms that somebody loved, and a name be supplied to re-place the pitiful numbered markers; when trees and flowers shall bear witness that, though these, our brothers, are dead, they are not forgotten. A beginning has already been made by the Warden—a beginning that gives promise that it will not be long until the prison grave-yard loses all signs of neglect.

Somebody's boy lies buried there.
Somebody cares.