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THE HOUSE OF CORRECTION FOR BOYS IN THE HOSPICE OF SAINT MICHAEL IN ROME

THORSTEN SELLIN*

One of the most interesting chapters in the history of culture is that dealing with "man's treatment of man." It is not, in the main, a beautiful chapter. Too frequently its pages disclose a cruelty, which has not always been born of primitive conditions, but on the contrary seems to have reached its most refined development in modern times, at least so far as the punishment of criminals is concerned. There are, however, other pages in that chapter. They picture the dawn of a rising humanitarianism, conscious of the dignity of human life and expressing itself in penal treatment in an emphasis on correction instead of on mere punishment.

The factors which brought about this change from a punitive to a corrective point of view were undoubtedly numerous and complex. A powerful role was played by the growing revolt against absolutism in every walk of life and the emergence of the common man, who had hitherto had little or nothing to say about the laws under which he suffered for his errors. A prominent part was undoubtedly played by the Church, whether Catholic or Protestant, through its demand for a practical application of its teachings. To analyze all the factors would require a volume. Suffice it to say that, in the sixteenth century there arose a distinct movement to reform the offender instead of merely inflicting physical or mental suffering upon him. In this movement, which historically speaking reached one of its most important expressions in the penitentiary systems of the last century, the House of Correction in St. Michael's Hospice in Rome has filled a worthy place.

St. Michael's¹ was brought to the attention of the English-speaking world by the great prison reformer, John Howard. Others before him had admired its wise paternalism, but none had spoken with his authority or to such a great and widely dispersed audience. In his *The*

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¹Throughout I shall refer to the House of Correction for Boys as St. Michael's for short. Whenever the *Hospice* is discussed that word will be employed to avoid confusion.

*State of the Prisons in England and Wales with Preliminary Observations and an Account of Some Foreign Prisons and Hospitals*² he refers to his visit to Rome in 1778, in the following terms:

"The *Hospital of S. Michael* is a large and noble edifice. The back front is near three hundred yards long. It consists of several courts with buildings round them. In the apartments on three sides of one of the most spacious of these courts, are rooms for various manufactures and arts, in which boys who are orphans or destitute are educated and instructed. When I was there, the number was about two hundred, all learning trades according to their different abilities and genius. Some were educated for printers, some for book-binders, designers, smiths, carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, and barbers; and some for weavers and dyers a cloth manufacture being carried on here in all its branches. When the boys arrive at the age of twenty years, they are completely clothed, and a certain sum is given to set them up in the business they have learned. In the middle of the court is a noble fountain, and several inscriptions to the honour of the founders of this excellent institution."

"Adjoining to another court are apartments for the aged and infirm, in which were two hundred and sixty men, and two hundred and twenty-six women. Here they find a comfortable retreat, having clean rooms and a refectory. I conversed with some of them, and they appeared happy and thankful."

"Another part of the hospital is a *Prison* for boys or young men. Over the door is this inscription: CLEMENS XI. PONT. MAX. PERDITIS ADOLESCENTIBUS CORRIGENDIS INSTITUENDISQUE UT QUI INERTES OBERANT INTSRUCTI REIPUBLICAE SERVIANT. AN. SAL. MDCCIV. PONT. IV. *Pope Clement XI. For the correction and instruction of profligate youth: That they who when idle, were injurious, when instructed might be useful to the State. 1704.*"

"In the room is inscribed the following *admirable sentence*, in which the grand purpose of all civil policy relative to criminals is expressed. PARUM EST COERCERE IMPROBOS POENA NISI PROBOS EFFICIAS DISCIPLINA. *It is of little advantage to restrain the Bad by Punishment unless you render them Good by Discipline.*"

"Here were sixty boys spinning, and in the middle of the room an inscription hung up, SILENTIUM."

". . . In this hospital is a room also for women. On the outside is an inscription, expressing that it was erected by Clement XII. in 1735, for restraining the licentiousness and punishing the crimes of women."

Howard added to his above description, which says nothing about the *regime* of St. Michael's, two etchings, a side elevation and a floor plan. The "admirable sentence" he referred to so impressed him that he made it the motto for the later editions of his book. He revisited the institution in 1786, but gives little space to the experience. "In the noble Hospital of *San Michael* I passed two mornings and found

²Third ed. 492 pp. Warrington, 1784, pp. 113-114.

it sadly neglected by the cardinal and the inspectors, who never visit it."³

These brief notices became the basis for most of the later references to the work of St. Michael's. In 1833, George W. Smith, prominent member of the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons, issued *A defense of the system of solitary confinement of prisoners, etc.*, in which⁴ we find the following paragraphs:

"The Hospital of St. Michael (founded in Rome in 1718) was the first 'house of refuge' in Europe. Mere workhouses, in which the operatives were felons, had indeed been established in other countries; and although in a few of them instruction had been attempted, the corrupting intercourse which was permitted day and night; the mixture of all ages, ranks, and sexes, into one corrupting leavened mass of iniquity, rendered the consignment of a juvenile offender to these abodes of sin, a certain sentence of moral death. He who entered their gates a novice in guilt, accomplished his education in villainy; and leaving character, shame, independence, and every incentive to voluntary industry and virtue within their walls, departed an adept in crime, ignorant *only of his duties*, prepared to practice at the expense of society those lessons of vice which its folly had forced on his acquaintance, and almost compelled him to exercise as a profession when discharged. Such was the deplorable condition of these colleges of crime, as prisons have been too correctly denominated, when this noble institution of St. Michael was commenced; the foundations were laid on the firm basis of humanity and sound philosophy. The great evils of idleness were prevented by constant labor during the day; classification to a certain extent, and silence, as far as practicable in an assembly, were enforced; and separate dormitories, or night rooms, for each prisoner, provided: appropriate moral sentiments were inscribed in conspicuous tablets, for the continual inspection of the inmates; and above all, religious instruction was administered."

"The scourge was superseded by a discipline, mild, steady, vigilant, and unyielding."

To what extent this description is imaginary will appear later.

Frederick Howard Wines, in his *Punishment and Reformation*,⁵ gives to Pope Clement XI the honor of having inaugurated the penitentiary era of criminal jurisprudence by founding the Hospital of Saint Michael in 1704.

"The erection of this juvenile institution, therefore, is the landmark which divides two civilizations or two historical epochs. But Saint Michael's was not a prison pure and simple. It contained a department for two

³*An account of the principal lazarettes in Europe . . . ; together with further observations on some foreign prisons and hospitals . . .* 259 pp. Warrington, 1789, p. 58.

⁴Pp. 8-9.

⁵xii, 339 pp. T. Y. Crowell & Co., New York, 1895, pp. 121-122.

hundred orphan boys and other departments for aged and infirm men and women."

Similar versions of the origin and character of Saint Michael's have been offered by other writers on penology; many pay no attention whatever to it. All that is commonly known about St. Michael's is expressed in the quotations given. Some of it at least will, in the following pages, be shown to be either positively erroneous or at least grossly misleading.

* * *

The Apostolic Hospice of Saint Michael was not founded at any one time. On the contrary, it was a composite institution, which grew up piecemeal through consolidations and additions. Its origin goes back to some of the earliest attempts made in Rome to combat the increasing pauperism and the mendicity accompanying it. To its history, no fewer than six separate institutions made important contributions: the home for boys founded by Leonardo Ceruso, called *Il Letterato*, in 1582; the hospice for the poor, erected by Pope Sixtus V, in 1586-1588; the home for boys founded by Tomasso Odescalchi in 1684; the orphanage for girls and the home for the aged poor, founded by Pope Innocent XII in 1693; the house of correction for boys, founded by Pope Clement XI in 1703; and, the house of correction for women, founded by Pope Clement XII in 1735. A few brief paragraphs will suffice to indicate the nature of the contribution which most of these institutions made to the development of the Hospice.

Ceruso, we are told, was moved to compassion by the sight of the many poor orphan boys, who roamed the streets of the Eternal City, without care and in danger of moral shipwreck. His first efforts on their behalf took the form of alms. He, then, received permission to gather them into the Baldinotti palace, from where they were sent out to learn some useful trade in the shops of the city.⁶

As for the Sistine hospice, Cardinal Tosti writes that

"From the days of Pius IV and of Gregory XIII, poverty began to grow perceptibly and more and more occupied the thoughts of the high pontiffs. Sixtus V, aspiring to the sublime in the matter of charity appears to have wished to carry into effect during his time the precept given by God to Moses: *omnino indigens et mendicus non erit inter vos*. The magnificent Bull, *Quamvis infirma* of 1586 . . . contains the plan of this great pontiff for aiding and preventing indigency and for eliminating mendicity. For this purpose he erected, at his own expense and according to plans drawn by Cav. Domenico Fontana, the hospice for the poor near the Sistine

⁶Tosti, Antonio, *Relazione dell'origine e dei progressi dell'Ospizio Apostolico di S. Michele*. xx, 110, 95 pp. Rome, 1832, p. 4.

bridge . . . so that they were put there and maintained, with chapel, refectories, dormitories, gardens, furnishings and all other necessary arrangements for the separate accommodation of persons of both sexes. He established rules for it ordered its administration and endowed it richly with gifts and revenues as can be seen from the Bull mentioned and from the following one: *Postulat ratio pastoralis officii* of 1588.”⁷

Odescalchi was actuated by the same motives, which a century earlier had prompted Ceruso. Of his work, Querini says,

“Mons. Tomasso Odescalchi, dedicating himself to the help of the poor who gathered nights at Santa Galla, had observed with great sorrow that among those unfortunates were many boys, half abandoned, without known relatives, and destined, almost fatally, to a life of disorder and vagabondage. The zealous prelate began to gather them in some special rooms in the Refuge and later rented a house in Piazza Margana on May 8, 1684. The care of these boys who numbered thirty-eight was entrusted to the Fathers of the *Scuole Pie*, but when the number rapidly grew, the pious founder constructed a larger place near the garden of the Franciscans in Ripa . . .”

“At the Piazza Margana, the boys were daily sent to the shops of the city. In the new buildings, they found shops all ready for them and were no longer forced to leave the hospice in order to exercise themselves in the various trades, commonly called Roman. The inauguration of this new refuge took place on April 9, 1689, under Innocent XI, the pupils being transferred thither from the Piazza Margana.”⁸

The Odescalchi structure of 1689 was to become the first section of the great Apostolic Hospice, the plan of which was first conceived by Innocent XII, who set about reorganizing the Roman charities maintained by the Apostolic Chamber.

“He . . . conceived the sublime plan of consolidating all (existing institutions) into one body and organized them into one single hospice common both to invalids as well as to orphans of both sexes. D. Livio Odescalchi, who had received the orphanage of Saint Michael’s, then composed of thirty boys, in concession from Mons. Tomasso, was under obligation to enlarge it, but could not change its aim; otherwise he was willing to have the Pope succeed to it. Innocent XII, with his vast plan, then accepted responsibility for the institution promising to increase its capacity to three hundred.”

“Then, in the second year of his pontificate (1693) with a detailed Bull: *Ad exercitium pietatis* . . . he established the foundation, erection, and endowment of the above general hospice. He set aside the Lateran palace, the work of Domenico Fontana, for the old men, the old women, and the dependent girls, with the idea that the Sistine hospice be trans-

⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

⁸Querini, Quirino, *La beneficenza romana dagli antichi tempi fino ad oggi. Studio storico critico*. 504 pp. Rome, 1892, p. 311. The new building in Ripa was constructed on the design of Mathias de Rossi. See Féa, Charles, *Description de Rome* . . . publiée par Ange Bonelli, vol. 3, p. 83.

ferred thither. He maintained the Odescalchi hospice at St. Michael's for the dependent boys . . . suppressed the home founded by the *Letterato* and had its boys transferred to St. Michael's."⁹

The absorption of Ceruso's home by Odescalchi's hospice was the first step toward centralization. Pope Innocent's plan of uniting all the scattered charities into one was, however, not carried out by him. The component parts of the Apostolic Hospice, which he visualized, were still scattered throughout the city, when his counselor and friend, Albani, succeeded him on the throne under the name of Clement XI. The latter did his best to carry the scheme into execution.

"Observing that the number of invalids had increased in Saint Sixtus to such an extent that disorders had occurred, and considering that if the poor who were now gathered in three distinct places, Saint Sixtus, Saint Michael, and the Lateran palace, could be united in one place, it would bring advantages of easier supervision and of great economy, he entrusted to Cav. Carlo Fontana the design of a new building to be added, as he said, to the orphanage of Saint Michael for the purpose of receiving all the men and women from Saint Sixtus and the dependent girls from the Lateran palace. The design pleased the Pope and he ordered the three Cardinals . . . who composed the Board of Directors of the hospice, to have it executed . . . The new edifice was to have a church for the community . . . The building was put up and proved to be solid and majestic, but only the part reserved for the aged men and women from Saint Sixtus was built and it was not finished to receive the girls from the Lateran. In 1715, the building as well as the church were finished and it was probably that year the family from St. Sixtus was brought to its new home . . ."¹⁰

It was not until 1790, the year of John Howard's death, that Pius VI ordered the structure to be finished in accordance with the plan of Clement XI. The addition, built after the design of Niccolo Forti, was occupied in 1794 by the girls brought from the Lateran palace. The conglomerate structure then formed an edifice 334 meters long, 80 meters wide, and covering an area of 26720 square meters. In Tosti's time, there were 125 old men, and the same number of old women, 270 dependent girls, and 220 dependent boys in the institution.

No mention has been as yet made of those two additions to the Hospice which particularly interest the penologist, i. e., the correctional quarters for boys and women, founded in 1703 and in 1735 respectively. It is the former which has carried the name of the Hospice to distant lands, for its remarkable architecture and its interesting regime have both been admired as forward steps in penal treatment. Exactly when

⁹Tosti, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰*Ibid.* p. 13.

it was projected the writer has been unable to determine, but it was the *Motu proprio* of November 14, 1703, which gave it body. This document has considerable interest to the historical penologist and will therefore be given almost in full.¹¹

"It is every day observed how thefts and other crimes are committed, from malice which exceeds their years, by boys or youths under twenty, for which crimes they are, when they fall into the hands of justice, put into the prisons of our city of Rome. Although kept separated from the others in a place called the *Polledrara*, they nevertheless frequently fall into the same or worse enormities instead of coming out corrected and reformed. Already, at the beginning of our assumption of the pontificate, we thought of remedying this great evil by constructing a suitable place, contiguous to the hospice of St. Michael's in Ripa, to be called a house of correction. This has, in fact, been done, so that at present the building has been finished. It has sixty small rooms, distinct and separate from each other, all of them united in a vast hall, in the midst of which there is an altar for the celebration of Holy Mass, in addition to rooms for a sacerdote and guards or custodians. There is also an uncovered loggia and under the big room other large rooms have been built, which might serve as shops for the workers in the wool industry or be put to other uses, which may be found necessary or profitable for the said Hospice of St. Michael. Desiring, therefore, to put into operation the institution mentioned, *We command and ordain*, that all boys, or minors under twenty years of age, who from now on, on account of errors committed by them, shall be made prisoners by warrants from the courts of the Reverend Cardinal Vicar of the Governor of Rome, of the Auditor of the Chamber, of the Senator of Rome, and of any other judge or tribunal, shall instead of being conducted to the public prisons be sent to the said House of Correction, and the custodians and guards shall inscribe them and register them in the manner used in the public prisons. To the judges mentioned the right shall be reserved of examining them in the said House of correction and exercise all the privileges they may exercise in the public prisons and to retain them in custody unless the said judges shall otherwise order. And, because there are boys and youths, who are incorrigible and inobedient to parents and others, under whose guardianship they live, and who through an evil character show bad inclinations to vice, *We wish and ordain*, that they too be equally guarded, corrected and reformed in the said House of correction. To bring this about, their parents should turn to Us for an order to detain them in the said new House and to arrange about the monetary fee for their maintenance, payable by such parents, guardians, curators, or administrators to whom is given the power to detain or release them without special mandate or order from the court, since the institution will be recompensed for food and other expenses. In order that the prin-

¹¹In the author's copy of Tosti, *op. cit.*, a number of documents relative to the Hospice have been bound with the work proper. The translation of the *Motu proprio* has been made from one of them. Cerfberr has also made a French translation of it in his *Rapport . . . sur les prisons, maisons de correction et bagnes de l'Italie*. (82 pp. Impr. Royale, Paris, 1839.) It contains, however, numerous grave errors.

ciples of a Christian life, the rules of right living may be taught in this House of correction, *We ordain* that a sacerdotē be appointed by the Reverend Cardinal Protectors of the Hospice. He should not only celebrate the Mass every morning at the altar in the House of correction but should also teach all the boys and youths there detained the catechism, and instruct them in all matters which should be known by all good Christians, according to rules to be established by the Reverend Cardinal Protectors of the said Hospice of St. Michael. They should also appoint artisans or masters to teach some mechanical arts, in order that idleness may be driven away by industry and that they may learn in fact a new mode of decent living. *We also wish* that the said Hospice be charged with the task of furnishing from its own revenues to the prisoners or to those in custody necessary food and clothing, light and every other necessary thing, remembering, however, that they are kept there for punishment and mortification and that, consequently, the food should only be sufficient for their sustenance, in accordance with rules, which will be made to that effect and conforming to the above, unless a special congregation is held."

"To begin and to assure the execution of his good work and in order not to impose too much upon the above-mentioned charitable institution of St. Michael's, *We wish and ordain*, that for all which might be paid out at present and in the future in the form of salary to the sacerdotē, and to the guards, our Chamber should pay annually the sum of three hundred *scudi*, to be paid by order from the Treasurer-General drawn on our Depository, each six months in advance. At no time shall a higher sum be demanded, no matter how many times the officers or their salaries be increased. In order to give partial relief to the before mentioned hospice of St. Michael's, *We wish and ordain* that anything of utility which may be drawn from the labor of the prisoners or the ones in custody, as well as the fees paid by those who desire the correction of their sons or relatives, shall and should fall to the benefit of the Hospice as well as all alms given by the faithful for prisoners, excepting those, however, destined to increase their food allowance, which must be spent for that purpose entirely in addition to the food prescribed. At no time shall the officers of the hospice be constrained to render an account to others than to the Reverend Protectors of the same."

"In order to dissolve every difference of opinion which may arise between the courts which might send prisoners to the new House of correction and the above mentioned Reverend Cardinal Protectors, *We wish and ordain* that the jurisdiction and the power respectively to commit and to discharge persons convicted or in other manner made prisoners, as well as the power to determine the nature of the penitence, the mortification, or whatever punishment there be, shall and should belong to the same tribunals and judges, by whose order they shall be conducted thither, independently of the Reverend Cardinal Protectors, who should on no account interfere in this matter. On the other hand, with regard to the burden placed upon the Hospice by the necessity of furnishing food and clothing and anything else needed, *We wish* that the Reverend Cardinal Protectors shall have the arbitrary right to engage or discharge the sacerdotē and the guards, the artisans, or other masters of the mechanical arts, to increase or diminish their number, to assign them their salaries. With ref-

erence to everything dealing with the spiritual and economic care, the Reverend Cardinal Protectors are given the right to formulate all rules and constitutions, which are needed or are deemed by them necessary and opportune."

He finally maintained the supreme authority of his *motu proprio* over anything to the contrary, which might be ordered by judges, courts, officials of the public prisons or others.

The following ideas in the document just quoted stand out in relief. First, the realization that existing prisons lacked reformatory power over young offenders who should receive special care, since from their ranks the recidivists would otherwise be recruited. Second, the emphasis upon religious and moral instruction as necessary elements in the work of reformation. Third, the demand for manual training under the direction of skilled artisans, in order to give to the offender a trade at which he might later earn his livelihood. Fourth, the adoption of something similar to a "state-use" system of labor, the Apostolic state, its court, army, and navy, being made the consumer of the goods manufactured in the institution.

The establishment was promptly put into operation. In form the building was rectangular. It had been erected along Via San Michele and one of its ends joined with the Odiscalchi section of the Hospice. It resembled what became later known as a cell-block. (Plate I: A, and Plate II.) In size it was 42 by 15.55 meters. Along the side walls were three tiers of small cells, each measuring 2.67 by 2.22 meters. There were ten cells to the tier, thirty to the wall, sixty to the hall. Galleries gave access to the upper tiers. The ten-meter wide space running through the middle of the hall between the rows of cells was lighted by large windows and was to be used as a workshop. The altar mentioned in the *motu proprio* was placed in an alcove at one end of the hall and was generally hidden by large doors, which when thrown open virtually turned the entire hall into a chapel. (Plate II.) We have already noted from Howard's account the two inscriptions which adorned the building, one outside above the entrance, the other inside on the wall of the great hall.

The design of the structure must have proved very satisfactory, for when Cav. Alessandro Fuga¹² was commissioned to draw the plans for the women's house of correction, he in a measure imitated Fontana's hall. This new structure was built at right angles to the boys' house along the Piazza Portese. It had only 27 cells, divided on four tiers,

¹²In *I riformatori governativi italiani* (178 pp., Rome, 1907), p. 59, the architect's name is given as Fenga and on the next page is a photograph of the "Sala Fenga." Vasi da corleone, *infra*, gives his name as Ferdinando Fuga.

all of them along one wall of the building. The wall opposite was broken by six large windows and was sufficiently far away to permit the space so created to be used as a workroom. It was erected by Pope Clement XII, was put into operation in 1735, and was designed to receive women criminals and prostitutes. (Plate I:B.)

The accommodations for the delinquent women were evidently insufficient, for in 1760 it was found necessary to rent several nearby houses to take care of the overflow. In 1827, both the correctional departments were emptied of their inmates. The women were sent to the Diocletian Baths and the boys to a building close to the so-called New Prison in Via Giulia.¹³ In 1830, both houses were reconditioned for the women, who were brought back after their temporary absence. The prostitutes were now segregated in Fontana's hall, the criminal offenders being kept in Fuga's. After a few years, however, they were all returned to the Baths. Since that time the houses were put to varied uses. In 1849 they housed part of the troops of the command of Giuseppe Garibaldi. Later, until 1855 and again from 1860 to 1870, they served as prisons for political offenders. From 1855 to 1860 delinquent boys were sent there. To what use the buildings were put between 1870 and 1903, the writer does not know. The need for an additional training school for incorrigible boys caused the establishment to be so constituted by Royal decree of April 4, 1903 and on Feb. 19, 1904, the correctional department of St. Michael returned, in part, at least, to its primitive function.¹⁴

To the student of historical penology, the motives behind the foundation of St. Michael's and the *motu proprio* which gave form to the institution are, of course, important, but equally so is the regime which in practice was worked out and maintained in the house of correction. Beautiful theories sometimes have a way of translating themselves into ugly practice. Words constantly change the content of their meaning. When Pope Clement XI talked about discipline as a corrective method, did he by any chance mean something different from the discipline, which the modern penologist has in mind? Was the picture which Smith¹⁵ painted of the daily life at St. Michael's a photographic reproduction or the roseate product of an imaginative mind?

¹³The building was an old one, which had been altered. It contained forty-one cells of the same size as those in St. Michael's.

¹⁴*I riformatorii governativi italiani*, pp. 58-61.

¹⁵*Supra*.

The penologists themselves, unfortunately, do not throw any light on the question. John Howard's account was extremely brief and limited to certain more or less external characteristics, such as architecture, mottoes, etc. His journeys were made three-fourths of a century after the foundation of the correctional department. During such a long period many important changes would be likely to occur in any institution. Writers since Howard have been mostly interested in the historical facts concerning the institution's growth or have limited themselves to the outstanding facts in Howard's account.

It occurred to the writer, that perhaps the foreign travellers¹⁶ in Rome in the eighteenth century may have visited the House, and that from their observations some idea might be drawn as to its regime during the early decades of its history. A study of the travel literature for the period mentioned has not yielded much information, but what has been found may be of some value. The travelers were not sociologists, bent on the study of social institutions. Those who left records were either garrulous diarists, litterati, or students of the fine arts, with occasionally a scientist or a pilgrim. Rarely did one of them betake himself to the Via San Michele. One of these rare visitors was Father Labat. The account he gave of the house of correction is of utmost importance, for he visited it in the year 1709, only five years after its inception. It is perhaps fair to conclude that the regime at that period was as close to the original plan of the papal founder as it could ever become, particularly since Pope Clement was still alive and showing an active interest in the institution.

In the record of his voyage, Father Labat writes about the "house of correction for children who cause sorrow to their parents," saying,

¹⁶The biographers of Clement XI, whom the author has consulted, pay little attention to his charitable enterprises, being more interested in the political and religious history of his reign. De Lafiteau (*La vie de Clément XI, souverain pontife*. 2 vols. Padua, 1752) gives two and a half lines to St. Michael's. J. G. Buder (*Leben und Thaten des klugen und berühmten Papst Clementis des Eilfften*. 3 vols. Frankfurt, 1720) never even mentions it.

In Buder's first volume there is reproduced a collection of medals struck off in commemoration of various incidents in Clement's life. One of these (No. 23) represents on one side "Thro Heiligkeit im Rocchetto und Mütze" and bears the inscription *Clemens XI, Pontificatus Maximi Anno IIII*. On the other side is "a church in which, judging from appearance, Jews and others present are instructed in Christianity. Above is the inscription *ut ervantur a via mala*; that they may turn from the evil way." Buder believes that this medal refers to an event on March 12, 1704, when the Pope personally baptized a Jewish family from Leghorn (cf. Loevinson, E., *Judentauffen von Papst Klemens XI, 1704, in Eigener Person vollzogen*. Monats. f. Ges. u. Wiss. d. Judentums, 72:395-401, July-Aug., 1928; abstract No. 973 in Soc. Sci. Abstr., 1:151, Apr., 1929). The interior of the church which Buder mentions closely resembles, as a matter of fact, the interior of St. Michael's. This, the motto and the date suggest the possibility, at least, that this medal may have been struck off in commemoration of the establishment of the house of correction.

"There is no great recommendation needed to place in it those who are incorrigible. It suffices for the parent to bring it to the attention of the Vice-Governor of Rome and he will immediately issue an order to the chief of the guards (*Barigel*) to conduct them to this house where, without cost of a penny to their parents¹⁷ they are lodged, nourished, entertained, instructed and chastised in the most marvellous manner. If there were a similar (institution) in Paris, it would be pretty well filled, but those which there occupy themselves with the correction of youth are so costly that parents are unable to pay the high fees they demand."

"This house, for that matter, is founded only for children from ten to twelve years of age up to sixteen or eighteen¹⁸ after which period the incorrigibles are sent to the galleys, since enough cause has been found in their bad conduct to inflict upon them this infamous penalty."

"The house of correction for children is called St. Michael's in Ripa because it is under the protection of that archangel and is built near the great port on the Tiber called Ripa. One may rest assured that it is well built and strongly enough so as not to be forced open by its youthful inmates were they to entertain the idea of doing so. After passing through the lodgings of the superintendent and of his assistants, offices and other necessary rooms, one finds oneself in a very long room to which has been given the name of the 'galley.' It is divided in its entire length by an aisle five or six feet in width; the space between it and the walls are filled with benches, as in a galley, about four feet apart. There the children are seated, chained by one foot and there they are made to work, from morning till night. They spin cotton, knit stockings and caps or are occupied in similar tasks. Each has his task, which he must finish before night under pain of chastisement. They sleep separately in small brick cells, the doors of which open on narrow frame galleries attached to the walls of the room. In each cell there is a small grated window, a toilet, and a mattress with a cover. In the evening, after prayer, they are locked in these cells, having always their chains and rings about their ankles. They are made to rise with the dawn and are attached to the bench where they remain at work the whole day. The day is begun by prayer after which those who have deserved it, as a result of past mistakes, are whipped. Bread is then distributed for breakfast. During work they listen to pious readings. About eleven o'clock a great door is opened into the chapel and Mass is read, which must be heard kneeling. In the meanwhile, they sing some chants. After Mass follows dinner, which is composed only of bread, soup and vegetables or pasted meats, unless the charity of persons who visit them causes to be added thereto some meat or fish, which often happens. Afterwards, they are catechized, without detriment to their work, which goes on apace. They sup at six o'clock in the same manner in which they dined. They are not spared bread, water, or the whip and by these means youth is bridled, a difficult task before this institution was established. It is true that those who have once been here have not returned a second time, so well reformed have they been upon leaving. The parents withdraw them

¹⁷This is probably an error. See *motu proprio*.

¹⁸See *motu proprio*.

when they see fit. They only need to ask for an order from the Vice-Governor."

"When they are brought here their heads are shaved and their clothes removed. They are then given trousers of coarse linen and stockings, if it is winter. A shirt of similar cloth as the trousers is given them as well as a vest, a cloak of coarse material and a woolen cap. Thus equipped they are introduced into the 'galley' where they are usually greeted by those already there. While these compliments are being exchanged they are made to remove their cloak and are forced to lie down on a bench, stuffed with hair and covered with cloth, called *il Cavallo*, the Horse, which is placed in the middle of the court, that is, the aisle, which we have mentioned as running between the benches. Those who happen to sit on the two sides of the Horse seize the patient by his hands and feet holding him firmly, while the official in charge of the 'executions,' whips him with a *nerf de boeuf*, split bands, on his trousers, which on this occasion prove but a feeble defense for the patient though they preserve his pudor, for here, as well as in all schools, children are never undressed before being punished. After the 'execution' the superintendent of the house reads the child a paternal lecture, exhorts him to receive his punishments in a penitent spirit and with an ardent desire to change his life, promising him that as soon as he gives definite signs thereof, his parents will be notified in order that they may remove him. The exhortation finished, the guard puts a ring and a chain round his ankle and attaches him to the bench where he should work, usually next to one of the more intelligent boys, who is ordered to teach the newcomer the rules of the house, so that he does not fall into errors, which attract punishments. In this house are also placed those who have been condemned to the galleys before having reached the age prescribed by the law for such penalties and who have not received dispensation due to their age. Here they pass their novitiate after which they are sent to Civita-Vecchia.¹⁹ I have seen a few of them. It sometimes occurs that they reform in so excellent a manner that they are pardoned."²⁰

We learn several things from Father Labat's excellent account. Evidently, the discipline must have been severe, the labor constant and arduous. The religious instruction appears to have been of a most formal and therefore ineffective type. The "mechanical arts" referred to in the *motu proprio* are not mentioned unless spinning and knitting are to be thus designated. Most of the inmates appear to have been incorrigibles sent there by parents under the authority granted to them by the civil law. As to the Reverend Father's belief in the effectiveness of the corrective system employed, as shown by the fact that those who had once been there never came back, we need only to keep in mind that only those under twenty could be placed there and that the institution was only five years old when he visited it.

¹⁹At that time a Papal seaport near Rome, where the galleys were anchored.

²⁰Labat, J. B., *Voyages du P. Labat de l'ordre des F. F. Prescheurs, en Espagne et en Italie*, (8 vols. Paris, 1730) vol. 3, pp. 96-100.

There is considerable resemblance between John Howard and Father Labat in their attitude toward things observed and their manner of description. They were both matter of fact, little given to exorbitant praise, good observers. Rodocanachi thus characterizes the latter,

“Erstwhile filibusterer, great mathematician, architect and traveller, he lacked no quality needed to see things such as they were. That composure, that mild, perhaps a little learned, emotion, which seems so necessary to us, were to him unknown. He makes a complete inventory, methodical and unemotional, of the artistic riches, the antiquities and the manners he has seen.”²¹

In 1730, Johan Georg Keysler visited Rome. Whether he actually saw Saint Michael’s is difficult to tell. He probably did not, for he claims that it had room for one hundred and fifty persons. At any rate he must have become interested in the question of disciplinary punishment in use there. He said that,

“Upon failure of their weekly tasks, they (i. e. the boys) are put into a machine, where they undergo a discipline, being tied neck and heels. Formerly they used to be scourged with cords, till a lad expired under the punishment, since which accident rods have been made use of.”²²

The year after Howard’s first visit, Giuseppe Vai published a study of the Hospice. By that time the regime had undergone some very distinct changes. In chapter five of his book²³ he gives a good account, which pays particular attention to the criminal offenders there confined. After saying that the house was originally established for the correction of incorrigible boys, he adds that it

“also serves as a penalty for such youths who have committed crimes adjudged by all courts as worthy of commitment to the galleys, but who because of their age could not be subjected to that penalty. The Apostolic Chamber is obliged to contribute to their support only the bare necessities, in return for which their labor is utilized for the benefit of the hospice in the spinning of wool during all work-days . . . Around the ankle all of them carry a chain, which is attached to a beam and in that manner they remain, in order, in the large room in the middle of the prison. In the case of these boys it is necessary to observe minutely the rules imposed by the respective courts.”

“When their labor has been finished, they are one by one conducted by the guards to their cells, without ever a chance to communicate with

²¹Rodocanachi, E., *Les voyageurs français à Rome de Montaigne à Stendahl*. 26 pp. Pavia, 1910.

²²*Travels through Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, Switzerland, Italy and Lorraine*. Transl. from the 2nd ed. of the German. (4 vols. London, 1756-7.) Vol. 2, p. 130.

²³*Relazione del pio istituto di S. Michele a Ripa Grande eretto dalla santa memoria di PP Innocenzo XII*. 1xv pp. Rome, 1779.

those sent there for correction so that the latter may not receive any bad suggestions or learn some vice. These boys, then, who have been placed here merely to be reformed, keep their own clothes, are never allowed to leave their rooms until the time for their chastisement has elapsed. They are exempt from all labor, which is solely for those condemned by the courts, as a sign of which the latter are dressed in a woolen cloak, as used by the galley slaves, during the winter and in the summer they wear clothes of coarse black cloth, besides the necessary linen shirts, undergarments, socks, and mules, all of which the House provides."

"To all, the Fathers of the *Scuole Pie* are obliged to teach the Christian doctrine, give them pious and useful talks, confess them once a month, and administer the Holy Eucharist to them at Easter and in case of illness."

"Besides, a prudent and mature sacerdote, with the title of Prior, celebrates Holy Mass every morning and is their immediate superior. He has the power to prescribe, in accordance with his prudence, the nature and the measure of the chastisement on the occasion of some new infraction committed during the period of incarceration."

"For this, there are, in addition, three paid guards, both to inflict the punishments as well as force them to do all they are supposed to do."

"Their ordinary food consists of two and a half small loaves (*pagnotte*) a day, darker than those of the rest of the inmates (of the Hospice), half a *foglietta*²⁴ of wine daily, and every morning a soup with a dish of a quarter of a pound of meat during the *giorni grassi* and of salted meats during the *giorni magri*. Friday and Saturday evenings, New Year's eve and all of Lent, they only receive fruit, fresh or dried, depending on the season, to the amount of half a pound of fresh fruit per person and of dried fruit the same amount which is given to other groups (in the Hospice)."

Vai clearly shows that at the time of his writing, the system later popularized as the Auburn system was used for the young delinquents, saved from the galleys by virtue of their minority. They were compelled to work, wore a uniform garb and were completely segregated from the incorrigibles, who were in solitary confinement, day or night, without labor, the system later known as the Pennsylvania system. This condition must have existed when John Howard paid his visit there, although he does not mention it.²⁵

Here ends the testimony of some of those who during the first seventy-five years of its existence visited St. Michael's and gave an account of their experience. There must have been others, unknown to the writer. Perhaps some one, who has the interests of historical

²⁴About half a pint.

²⁵Cerfberr (*op. cit.*) presumably visited the institution in the later 1830-ies. He intimates that the same system of classification was maintained at that time, in spite of the fact that Saint Michael's was no longer occupied by juvenile delinquents(!). His statement is probably based on Vai's book, which he draws on for a great deal of his material.

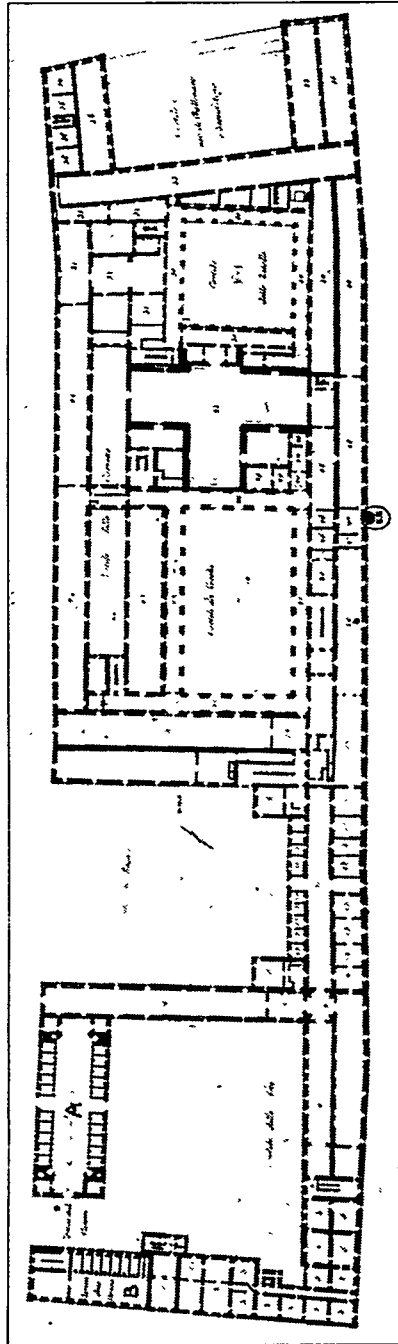


PLATE I.

Third Floor Plan of the Hospice of St. Michael, Rome.
 A. Sala Clementina. B. Sala Fenga.
 (From Tosti's Book)

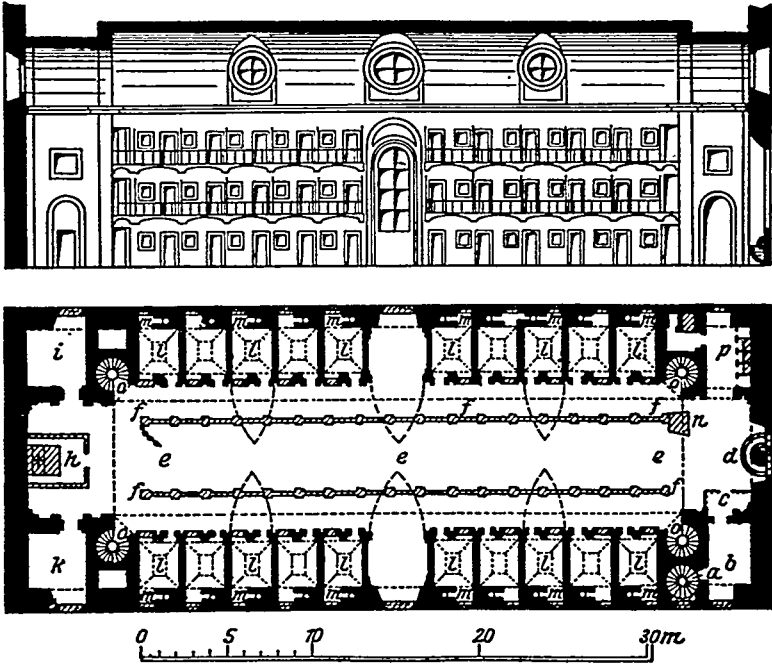


PLATE II.

(After von Holtzendorff's Handbuch des Gefängniswesens)



PLATE III.

Interior of the Sala Clementina, St. Michael's Hospice, Rome.
(Photograph secured through the courtesy of Cav. Uff. Carlo Terruzzi, Director)

penology at heart as well as access to the archives of the institution under discussion will fill the gaps and answer the questions the present discussion has left unanswered.

Answers to a couple of those questions will be suggested. For instance, what gave Pope Clement XI the idea of utilizing a cellular system in his program of reformatory treatment? Again, what role has his institution played in the evolution of the prison systems of the last century?

Several writers have proposed answers to the first question. Many of them hold that the cellular system quite naturally grew out of the Church discipline itself. This argument has been well put by Morichini.

"We have seen how religion gave birth to the organizations for the aid of prisoners. Within the Church itself there also existed other institutions, of a nature quite different, it is true, which if applied to prisoners should bring them that salutary medicine which the ancient philosophers sought. The penitent life of the cloistered, spent in small separate cells, contiguous to a small workshop for labor in silence and prayers, suggested the happy idea. These sainted men voluntarily treated themselves in this manner because they regarded themselves as culpable in the eyes of God. At that time, those who were guilty not only before God but before men could not be treated in like manner. That came with the transformation of the prison into a school of corrective education, which was to return the criminal to society, when he had served the penalty, an entirely different man from the one who had entered the prison."²⁶

Moreau-Christophe voices the same opinion.

"One should not be surprised to see penitentiary reform originate in the decrees of a Pope, for aside from the fact that in Italy, particularly Southern Italy, the cell system is in use in most public establishments, such as the Jesuit colleges, the convents are all constructed on a cellular plan so perfect that it is impossible not to copy them in erecting new prisons."²⁷

And Krauss,

"To no particular individual can we ascribe the invention of the (penitentiary) system. Rather is it out of the ecclesiastical spirit of penitence that it has developed and later found application in the secular prisons."²⁸

According to these writers, Pope Clement XI merely applied the monastic system of seclusion and penitence to common law offenders.

²⁶Morichini, D. Carlo Luigi, *Degli istituti di pubblica carità ed istruzione primaria e delle prigioni di Roma*. (2 vols. Rome, 1842.)

²⁷Moreau-Christophe, L. M., *Du problème de la misère et de sa solution chez les peuples anciens et modernes*. (3 vols. Paris, 1851), vol. 3, p. 38.

²⁸Krauss, F. A. K., *Im Kerker vor und nach Christus. Schatten und Licht aus dem profanen und kirchlichen Cultur und Rechtsleben Vorgänger Zeiten*. (380 pp. Mohr, Leipzig, 1895) p. 363. See also Sellin, Thorsten, (*Dom Jean Mabillon—a prison reformer of the seventeenth century.*) *Jour. of Crim. Law and Criminology* 17:581-602, Feb., 1927, for a discussion of monastic prisons.

Others have held that the idea was given to the Pope by some individual. Passerini, for instance, saw in his institution nothing but a direct imitation, in regime and in purpose, of the correctional department instituted in Florence by Filippo Franci about 1677, in the orphanage conducted by him.²⁹ This contention has not been definitely proved. Franci applied rigorous cellular confinement night and day to the juvenile delinquents in his care, but we have seen that this system was not in use in St. Michael's during its earliest years and therefore probably was not considered by the Pope. Coccapani's reference³⁰ to the influence directly or indirectly exercised by Franci on the Hospice of St. Michael's leads us to assume that his work was known in Rome but there is nothing as yet discovered to make us believe that this influence extended to the house of correction. If it actually played any role at all, it may have been in the establishment or the work of Odescalchi's orphanage, which formed the nucleus of St. Michael's Hospice. Franci, it seems, had many friends among the cardinals and may have known Albani. He died, however, before the latter assumed the pontificate.³¹

The claim that the great French scholar, the Benedictine Mabillon influenced the Pope in establishing St. Michael's and even furnished him plans for it, is apparently quite unfounded.³²

Since no one has as yet tried to establish the relationship which may have existed between the juvenile reformatories and the workhouses of Northern Europe and St. Michael's, we can merely say, in conclusion, that while the ecclesiastical origin of the penitentiary system seems well established, we do not know exactly what secondary influences determined Pope Clement XI to give his house of correction the form and the regime which characterized it. Perhaps the historian of the future will tell us.

What role has St. Michael's played in the evolution of the prison systems, which took form during the last century? Here again, there is a distinct division of opinion among those who have tried to evaluate

²⁹Passerini, Luigi, *Storia degli stabilimenti di beneficenza e d'istruzione elementare gratuita della città di Firenze*. (962 pp. Le Monnier, Florence, 1853) p. 626.

³⁰Quoted in Sellin, Thorsten, *Filippo Franci—a precursor of modern penology*. *Jour. of Crim. Law and Criminology* 17:104-112, May, 1926.

³¹For a discussion of Franci's work in greater detail see Sellin, *op. cit.*

³²Stroobant, L., *Le Rasphuis de Gand* . . . *Annales de la Soc. d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Gand* 3:191-307, 1900, p. 261. For a critical discussion of Mabillon's place in historical penology see Sellin, *supra*.

its work. Some see in it nothing but an important link in a long chain, which begins in the monastic prisons in the middle ages and passes through the workhouses of Northern Europe before it arrives at St. Michael's.

Others give to it the honor of being the first of its type. To Smith it was the "first 'house of refuge,'" to Wines the dividing line between the punitive and the penitentiary era of criminal jurisprudence. Tosti³³ saw in it "the beginning of a human treatment of prisoners." Cerfberr³⁴ agrees with this, while Krauss³⁵ believes that the application of the penitentiary system to worldly offenders "occurred without doubt for the first time under and through Pope Clement XI." To show its pioneer value, Cerfberr³⁶ also suggests that the design served as a model for the Milan house of correction, built in 1756 after plans by Croce, and that this institution in turn became the model for the workhouse at Ghent which many writers on penology regard as having had great influence on the American prison reform movement. Stroobant³⁷ is certain that the Ghent workhouse was influenced by St. Michael's, at least so far as its architecture was concerned. Morichini's³⁸ statement that St. Michael's was in reality one wing of Bentham's panopticon system and that Bentham borrowed his idea from it, demonstrates but one thing, the author's complete ignorance of Bentham's plans, which had nothing architecturally in common with St. Michael's except the use of the cell as the important unit in the lay-out.

It would then, perhaps, be prudent to formulate the answer to the question under discussion somewhat like this: The house of correction in conjunction with the Hospice of St. Michael was not the first of its kind, neither as to the motives which prompted its creation nor as to its regime.³⁹ Architecturally, however, it seems to have been unique, remaining so far some years. Even though it, consequently, does not appear to be such a great departure historically, it can, as a result of its influence upon prison architecture and its deep impression on John Howard, be regarded as an important factor in giving form to the

³³*Op. cit.*, p. 7.

³⁴*Op. cit.*, p. 5.

³⁵*Op. cit.*, p. 363; See also Noppel, C., *Jugendliche Rechtsbrecher unter der Herrschaft der Päpste*. Stimmen aus Maria-Laach 87:311-20, 1913-14.

³⁶*Op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

³⁷*Op. cit.*, p. 229.

³⁸*Op. cit.*, p. 286.

³⁹See Hippel, R. von, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Freiheitsstrafe*. Zeits. f. die ges. Strafrechtswiss. 18:419-494, 608-666, 1898.

institutional treatment of the offender, which received such a great impetus in the United States in the early part of the last century.⁴⁰

⁴⁰Two beautiful prints, one of the "Porto di Ripa Grande," showing the Hospice as seen from the Tiber, and another of the "Carceri per le Donne" seen from Piazza Portese, can be found in vol. 3, Plates 21 and 97, of Vasi da Corleone, Giuseppe, *Delle magnificenze di Roma antica e moderna*. 5 vols. Rome, 1754.

In Tosti's book will be found floor plans of the entire Hospice. Howard, as has already been mentioned, gives in his *State of Prisons* both a side-elevation and a floor plan of the house of correction for boys. The official publication, *I riformatori governativi italiani*, gives on pp. 58-60 photographs of the exterior of the old "Carceri per le Donne," and of the interior of the boys' and the women's houses of correction.