

in superintending the administration of the new statute will, in our opinion, be the possible abuse by counsel, from excess of zeal, of the right of cross-examining prisoners electing to give evidence on their own behalf. But from the admirable manner in which the judges have confirmed the right of "summing up" enjoyed by counsel for the prosecution under Denman's Act, within safe working limits, we have no fear of the result of the fresh test to which the Legislature is now submitting their firmness and capacity.

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*Prison Reform.*

Whether the flogging of prisoners in gaols for breaches of discipline is good policy or not is a question in regard to which experts may and do entertain very different opinions. But there will be little disposition in any quarter, we should think, to criticise adversely the provision of the new Prisons Act that such punishment shall only be inflicted in cases of mutiny and violence, and then after judicial inquiry by a Board of visiting justices, with a stipendiary magistrate to act with them if necessary, and after ratification of the sentence by the Secretary of State. This reform in the law will achieve several desirable ends. It will confine what is, under any circumstances, a brutal punishment to cases of real gravity and brutality; it will protect prisoners against the whims to which even visiting justices are subject; and it will secure that uniformity of practice in regard to prison floggings which has hitherto in England been conspicuous by its absence.

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*Inebriates Act.*

The Inebriates Act of 1898 marks a very distinct and important advance in the treatment of habitual drunkards.

The power given to courts to order the detention of habitual drunkards guilty of crime, in an inebriate reformatory for not more than three years, will go far to end the "Cakebread" class.

Crimes of alcoholic origin, too, will be probably considerably reduced. Alcoholic homicides, for example, are commonly the result of a prolonged course of alcoholic violence, and such cases, it may be hoped, will in future be arrested before attaining their full development.

The inebriate reformatories which the Act empowers the Secretary of State to establish, or which may be established by the councils of counties and boroughs, will need to be