

# POLLARD OF ST. LOUIS, A POLICE COURT SOLOMON

He Reforms Drunkards, Makes Homes Happy, Takes the Testimony of Animals Against Their Cruel Owners, and Has a Heart the Size of a Barn.



Judge William Jefferson Pollard

THAT the man was a brute was clear to the Judge. The prisoner had admitted beating his wife many times, and her blackened eyes bore mute witness to his latest attack. Neighbors of the wife testified to her sterling character and to the brutal treatment she had received for years at the hands of her husband.

"Six months in the workhouse at hard labor," announced the Judge. Then the wife began to cry and to plead for the man she had brought before the court.

"He is the sole support of my six children and myself," she said. "If you send him to jail, Judge, we will starve. I would rather take his beatings and have food for my little ones. Please, Judge, let him go."

Judge William Jefferson Pollard was in a quandary. He looked at the brutal face of the prisoner, and he gazed at the tearful wife. He picked up his pen and wrote a few lines on a sheet of paper.

"I have written here a pledge by which you promise to abstain completely from the use of intoxicating liquors for one year from date," said the Judge to the prisoner, "and you will report to me at my home two evenings each week, that I may judge whether or not you are keeping the pledge. If you sign this pledge I will withhold sentence upon you, but if you ever violate this pledge within the year, I will send a policeman after you and send you to the workhouse for six months."

The prisoner signed the pledge and left the courtroom with his wife. So was born the famous "Pollard Pledge Plan" that has swept around the world and made famous in every English speaking and many other countries, the name of a St. Louis police court judge. The man who had beaten his wife nine years ago when the pledge was created became a model citizen. He kept his word with the Judge, who was willing to give him a chance. And of the thousands of other men who have been given the same chance by this Judge who believes in giving the down-and-out man an opportunity over ninety per cent, have kept the faith.

It was this Pollard pledge created in a police court in St. Louis nine years ago that has been enacted into British law by an act of Parliament. And it is this pledge that is being agitated in Australia and New Zealand to-day. It was this pledge that was adopted into law by the Vermont Legislature and it is because of this pledge that Judge Pollard is now in Germany, where he is to be the guest of the Federated Temperance Societies at Augsburg, Bavaria, on September 30, a day that has been set aside as "Pollard Day."

The Dayton Street Police Court, as Judge Pollard's tribunal is called, is the oddest court room in the world, for it is here that a modern Solomon deals out justice—real justice—to the offenders against the minor laws of the city and State. Judge Pollard is a typical Missourian. In many ways he resembles the character of the "Mysterious Stranger," made famous as the Missouri type by the cartoonist McCutcheon.

That he is a typical Missourian is demonstrated by his desire to "be shown" in all matters that come before him for judgment. He does not always accept the word of the prisoner and his witnesses, he wants to see things for himself.

A driver had been brought before the Judge, charged with cruelty to animals in that he had been driving a galled mule. The prisoner had an expert witness in a veterinarian, who testified that the sore on the mule's back did not pain the animal in the least.

The Judge listened attentively to the long technical opinion, and then demanded to know where the mule was. He was informed that it was harnessed to a wagon on the street in front of the court building. The Judge ordered that court be adjourned for five minutes.

He took his cane and proceeded to the street. He approached the mule, and with the end of his cane touched the sore spot on the animal's back. The mule almost kicked the dashboard off the wagon. Once again the Judge touched the sore with his cane, and the frantic beast almost demolished the wagon with its kicking.

The Judge returned to the bench. The prisoner was called before him.

"With all due respect to the expert tes-

timony you have had introduced in your behalf to show that the sore on the mule's back does not pain him I will fine you \$50," announced the Judge. "I asked the mule if the sore hurt him, and he said it did."

If there is one class of offender that Judge Pollard dislikes it is the wife beater. Wife beaters would almost prefer banishment to the uttermost recesses of Siberia than face Judge Pollard. He is their Nemesis.

A short time ago there was brought before him a man charged with beating his wife. All the neighbors appeared in court as witnesses. The husband testified that his wife was everything that a wife should not be, that she neglected her household duties, that she was a poor mother to her children, and that she was immoral.

Then the neighbors were called. They said the woman was a model wife, that her house was one of the best kept ones in the neighborhood, and that she was a good woman in every way.

"Six months in the workhouse at hard labor," announced the Judge to the wife beater. The prisoner began to cry and plead for leniency. He promised never to mistreat his wife again.

"All right," said the Judge, "I will give you a chance on one condition, and that is that you do as I say. But bear in mind that I am not compelling you to do anything against your wishes. You can do as I am going to tell you or take a ride to the workhouse and busy yourself for six months."

The prisoner said he would gladly do anything the court might suggest.

"Then get down on your knees and clasp your hands as in prayer," said the Judge. The prisoner obeyed.

"Repeat after me these words," commanded the Judge when the prisoner had fallen upon his knees before the bench, "but remember that it is not compulsory." The prisoner nodded his head.

"I love my wife, Mary," began the Judge, and the prisoner repeated the words, "for she is the dearest and sweetest woman in all the world."

"For she is the dearest and sweetest woman in all the world," repeated the wife beater.

"And I am a liar, a sneak, and a dog to say aught against her character," said the Judge, and the wife beater repeated the words.

"I will treat her with the respect due a good woman and a noble wife," said the Judge, and the prisoner repeated the words.

"I will never abuse her again, but will love her and act as a good husband to her and a good father to my children, so help me God," said the Judge. The wife beater repeated the words.

"Now arise and leave this court, but first kiss your dear, sweet wife," announced the Judge. The wife beater approached the half-frightened woman and kissed her, and they left the courtroom arm in arm. Judge Pollard had a police officer bring him reports from time to time as to the conduct of the man, but they were all good ones. The wife beater had ceased to be a wife beater.

These are but some of the things that are almost daily occurrences in Judge Pollard's courtroom—the oddest courtroom in the world.

Judge Pollard is a humanitarian. He has not become hardened because of his daily contact for years with hardened specimens of humanity. The tears come to his eyes readily, and many a day he has wept as he listened to the heart stories of poor down-and-out claimants for justice before his bar.

Under the Pollard pledge plan first offenders are given an opportunity to reform. He believes that much good work can be accomplished in the Police Courts. It is here that the first offenders come, and if nothing is done to reform them they are liable to graduate into the higher courts, is the theory on which Pollard metes out justice.

Judge Pollard says that drink is the cause of most crimes, and that nearly every drunkard can be reformed. The

do, that it should be the workhouse or nothing.

Pollard paid no attention to the laughs and sneers; he wanted to see for himself. For nine years he has been seeing and what he has seen has been seen, by some of the greatest nations on earth. Great Britain saw fit to adopt his methods into law by act of Parliament, and now Germany bids him welcome as a man who has done something worth while.

"When a man signs one of my pledges there is no absolute guarantee that he will live up to every letter of it," says the Judge, "but that I do know, that if he violates it in the slightest he does it so carefully that no one is the loser because of it. I make my pledge signers report to me twice a week at my home, and I think I am able to judge whether a man has been drinking or not."

"Another thing, I have the policeman on the beat near the man's home keep an eye on him during the year of the pledge, and if ever it is violated I have Mr. Man brought before me and the suspended sentence of the court carried into effect. But I must say that there are

so few who fail to keep the pledge that they are not worth talking about."

Judge Pollard believes that there is some good in the great majority of men and he seeks that spark of goodness when the offenders are haled before him. A man has been arrested charged with disturbing the peace, breaking windows and making himself generally disagreeable. The Judge finds that the man was intoxicated. Then he reasons that drink was the cause of the trouble. Having discovered the cause of proceeds to remove it by administering his famous pledge.

Under similar circumstances most police court justices would levy a fine, tulleure to pay which would mean the rock pila. The Judge feels that it is a grievous matter to send a man to the workhouse for the first time. He realizes that the terrible disgrace may so work upon the man's mind that he will decide that he is hopeless and instead of coming out reformed he comes out determined to do "something worth while" the next time, and so he is graduated into the higher walks of crime.

"I would rather make my court a tribunal of reformation than of punishment."

"I would rather send a man back to his family and keep him sober than send him to prison."

Judge Pollard is a godfather in many a home saved through the reform of a drunken husband. The Judge is not a man of means. He is dependent altogether upon the salary he receives as police court judge, but he spends nearly every cent of it helping the down-and-out and minor offenders who come before him. The Judge does not give the pledge to everyone. He knows full well that it is useless to give the pledge to an old toper on the verge of delirium tremens. He thinks there should be an institution for such men.

"That sort of men need physicians, not jailors," says the Judge.

A short time ago a wife beater was haled before the Judge. But the wife pleaded that the brute he sent to the workhouse. She said if he were sent away that they would be put out of their house, not having sufficient funds to meet the rent man. The Judge looked the man over and saw him to be a hopeless brute. For such as he the pledge was not intended.

"I am going to send him to the workhouse for six months," he announced, and after the bailiff had removed the prisoner he called the weeping wife before him.

The Judge asked her how much her house cost her and what it took to feed her family. He found that they could get along on \$25 a month with what money she made washing.

"All right," said Pollard, "I'll pay your rent personally and see that you do not want, but that man goes to the workhouse. After he has broken rock for six months he may appreciate a good wife." So the judge paid the rent and other expenses out of his own pocket. But he is ever doing things like this.

Judge Pollard ever has time to listen to the stories of the prisoners arraigned before him. The slap-dash, thirty-days, next-case methods don't go with him. He wants to know why a man is brought before him and then he wants to find if there is any way to make him a better man.

"I believe," says Judge Pollard, "that the law assumes more majesty when it reforms and saves one sinner than when it punishes ninety and nine."

When Judge Pollard first evolved his pledge plan it was treated as a joke. Court officials, police officers, and all others who deal with the offender class laughed, sneered, and said it would never



The Pollard plan gives the first offender a chance. And with the moving cause of his troubles—drink—removed he settles down and becomes a decent citizen and then at the end of the pledge year if he resumes drinking it is in moderation. He learns the lesson of temperance.

Judge William Jeff Pollard, as he signs himself, is a bachelor. He has ever led an unselfish life. He did not marry because he had an aged mother to care for until a few years ago. It is the memory of this mother that is the guiding spirit of his life. It was she who instilled in him a love for all mankind and all womankind.

He has a heart as big as his body and his purse is ever open to any who need aid. He is trying to make his life worthwhile by pointing the way to his less fortunate brethren to be good citizens, good husbands and good fathers. He is a man of parts, a man of peace. He believes that there is good in all men and that the majority want to be good if they only know how. As a typical Missourian he is "showing them."

## MAILING LETTERS IN THE SEA



During those months in which vessels do not call at the island of St. Kilda, in the Outer Hebrides, letters are dispatched in the manner shown—that is to say, they are placed in a waterproof, buoyant case and cast upon the waters. Usually this remarkable mail-packet is picked up on the coast of Norway, to be forwarded later to the Foreign Office. Four packages out of six reach their destination.