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POPE VISITS PRISONERS.

Rome's Central Prison tasted the milk of human kindness and the true Christian spirit when Pope John the 23rd prayed at a temporary altar in the jail and blessed a congregation unique in modern papal experience. Thirteen hundred criminals were present at the Pontifical Benediction. "You could not come to me", said His Holiness, with touching simplicity, "so I have come to you". The presence of Pope John was a reminder that in the Greater's eyes the most hardened sinner is not lost, if he repent.

Convicts in the prison hospital were all spoken to as the Pope passed through the wards. Only a few hours ago they perhaps looked upon themselves as outcasts of society, beyond redemption, even when the day came for them to be set free. Now they felt that no man is beyond hope if he acts according to the Divine advice, "Go, and sin no more". In olden times it was the papal practice to make a Yuletide visit to the prison, and in reviving it Pope John has demonstrated that the church is not something remote but is a healing influence, in contact with life at all times.

Altogether the Pope spent seventy minutes in the prison. During the brief time since His coronation he has shown that he is a kindly, very human man. In that stern place of earthly correction Pope John left behind him feelings of hope among that erring flock.