PRISON DISCIPLINE.

BY

CAPTAIN MACONOCHIE, R.N., K.H.,

FORMERLY SUPERINTENDENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND.

LONDON:

T. HARRISON, 59, PALL MALL.

1856.
PREFACE.

On the 9th October last (1855), the Recorder of Birmingham, M. D. Hill, Esq., Q.C., in his Charge to the Grand Jury of that Borough entered at some length into the principles of Reformatory Prison Discipline, with reference also to those of the existing Ticket-of-leave System, and concluded in these words:—

"Those who desire to give full scope to their inquiries upon this interesting subject, to learn into how many ramifications reformatory science of necessity runs—how its difficulties are to be overcome—and how contending claims are to be adjusted—must consult the works of Captain Maconochie. The principle that the convict should be detained until by industry and good conduct he has earned his right to be free was first enunciated by Archbishop Whately; but it was developed into a system, and thus rendered capable of practical application, by Captain Maconochie."—Times, Oct. 10th, 1855.

The writer here referred to was much flattered by
this testimony; and anxious to facilitate the study recommended in it, has brought together in the annexed pages nearly all, he thinks, of the suggestions of general application that he has at various times offered on this important subject.

A. M.

London, February, 1856.


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this testimony; and anxious to facilitate the study recommended in it, has brought together in the annexed pages nearly all, he thinks, of the suggestions of general application that he has at various times offered on this important subject.


The Summary above referred to gave a condensed abstract of the representations and suggestions offered in the two Pamphlets specified. But their respective subjects being important, and each likely to occupy the attention of Parliament during its ensuing session, it is thought that some additional details, circulated in the same form and in nearly the same channels, may be useful.

I. The principle of the Mark System being the substitution of Task for Time sentences,—the several tasks being proposed, for convenience-sake, to be expressed in marks to be earned as wages by specific acts of exertion and other good conduct evinced in prison under regulations imposed by the Secretary of State,—the following is the form in which it is recommended that the required record of each prisoner's daily conduct shall be kept:

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<tr>
<th>Date of Prisoner's Number</th>
<th>Cr. Earnings</th>
<th>Dr. Forfeitures</th>
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<td>Employments</td>
<td>Indulgences</td>
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<td>Effect P.</td>
<td>Offences.</td>
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<td>Subscribers' Report</td>
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<td>Total Earned</td>
<td>Total Forfeited</td>
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<td>Balance</td>
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This table will be seen to be in the main divided into two sides, Cr. and Dr., or Earnings and Forfeitures, but prefaced by two which may be called personal columns,—the first, when the record is of one
prisoner only to contain the date of each day’s service, but when of more than one, to contain the Prison number, or other designation of each. The second, in all cases, to present the previous accumulation of the individual given, his starting point on each successive day, which it is expedient to keep habitually, and from day to day, in his view.

With one exception the figures in the Earnings Columns are taken from a scale of 5, 1 being the lowest figure expressing approval at all, but rising to 5. The one exception is in the column of effect produced: occasionally an extraordinary effort is desired, and when obtained, it should be expressed in the permanent record. It thus becomes a record of special willingness.

With this general explanation regarding all the Earnings Columns, the first will be seen to be headed Personal Deportment, and will express the degree of approval which this has elicited in each individual as regards his cleanliness, neatness, submissiveness, civility, obligingness, &c., and may also advantageously refer to the order in which he keeps his cell, clothes, bedding, &c.

The next three columns regard his employments. The first indicates, by capital letters as otherwise arranged in a table, the kind or kinds of employment in which he has been engaged; and to meet the case of the sick or infirm under the system, the Surgeon should have one of these (say S.) assigned to him, and be authorized to bestow Marks, in whole or in part the day’s effort of each individual, according as he is wholly or partially excused from his ordinary labour, and thereby testify his experience of his propriety of demeanour, punctuality, attention, obedience to his injunctions, usefulness in treating others, &c. This arrangement will be found particularly convenient in large penal stations, where many sick and invalid convicts are generally collected, always very troublesome, as believing themselves beyond the reach of ordinary punishment, and too frequently employing their leisure by hatching mischief for others to perform.

The next column indicates the diligence which the individual has shown in performing his labour, or rather the estimate formed of this by his Officer; and the third the degree of effect that he has thus produced. It is important to note both these points, and indeed the first chiefly, for diligence and assiduity will lead to proficiency, while the latter alone is no proof of immediate improvement at all; and noting chiefly the diligence shown tends also to equalize, in the competition for liberty, individuals of every degree of physical ability, for the youngest and feeblest may do his best, in the judgment of his superior, equally with the strongest, and thus be equally deserving of commendation.

The next two columns are the Chaplain’s and Schoolmaster’s reports, which should be made in a fractional form, the upper figures indicating the actual amount of instruction possessed, and the lower the assiduity and application shown in acquiring more. The value of the upper figure should thus gradually rise with an improving scholar; and to give precision to the report so made, each figure should express a precise amount of instruction possessed,—in the Schoolmaster’s report 0 denoting no knowledge of reading, 1 reading imperfectly, 2 reading well and writing imperfectly, 3 writing well and first rules of arithmetic, 4 book-keeping, proportion, and fractions, 5 a good education generally,—in the Chaplain’s, 0 denoting no knowledge whatever of religion, 1 knowing the Lord’s Prayer and primary Creeds, 2 the Ten Commandments and a fair perception of the general scheme of salvation, 3 texts on which our knowledge of the last is chiefly based, 4 a knowledge of the chief evidences of the truth of Revelation, on which great stress should be laid—and so on. The Chaplains may alter or transpose these as may seem to them best; but the principle is important, that each figure should convey a precise meaning.

The next column shews the total daily earnings of the man, either including in these only the lower or diligence figures of the Chaplain’s and Schoolmaster’s reports, or giving him an interest in his advance by reckoning the upper also, as may be thought best. The first is the more strictly just, but the last is possibly the more expedient.

The opposite, or Dr. side, next shews the deductions to be made, the first column being headed food. It is most strongly recommended that this be a charge, even if, as in the army, a fixed one; but a slight scope of improvement or deterioration, at the prisoner’s own option, and according as he is self-indulgent, or desires, of his own will, to live hard and be economical, is greatly more improving, would give an additional valuable test of his character, and with proper arrangements need give little additional trouble.

The next column is headed Indulgences, as stationery, postage stamps, visits from friends, extra allowance of light in the cell, loan of books, &c. These when granted at all in prisons are now given gratuitously; but it would be much better to increase their number, and charge for them. Temptations would be thus multiplied to expend.
marks, and prove and strengthen character by exhorting men voluntarily to refrain from them.

The next three columns indicate Punishments, the first shewing the nature of the offences committed, by capital letters as arranged, like the employments, in a Table for the purpose; and the second records the fines imposed, which should be generally low, but yet in fair proportion to the several degrees of offence, and always rigorously enforced. Through their means the day’s work may occasionally show a negative quantity, a falling back instead of advance towards liberation. But this is well. It recalls at the moment the inevitable consequence of misconduct, the prolongation of bondage imposed by it. The sentences to imprisonment require little explanation. In aggravated cases, especially of violence, or tending to insubordination, they may properly accompany a fine, or be used as a substitute for a part of it. But in an industrial community they should be used only very sparingly, and always be accompanied by a provision of labour to be performed in the cell. “Work,” “exertion,” “self-denial,” should be carefully impressed on prisoners as in every case indispensable to their liberation.

Marks should be allowed also on Sundays, but should then, if good conduct is maintained, be the average earned during the previous week. And the total of the deductions being compared each day with the earnings, the result, added to, or subtracted from, the previous accumulation, as the case may be, will constitute the starting point of the succeeding one. And so on till the sentence is completed.

It has been objected to this system, that it involves so much, and such continuous notation, that inferior Officers of average ability would be overwhelmed by it; but on examination this will be found a mistake. It requires punctuality and perseverance, nothing more. The only columns subject to much fluctuation, are those shewing employments and punishments; and an Officer having the charge of from twenty-five to thirty, or not many more prisoners (which is above the average in well-mounted prisons), is unfit for his place under any system if he cannot render a daily account of so much concerning them. And if oppressed, each day’s work may be rendered only the following day, which would also give time for any offences committed being adjudicated, and the corresponding forfeitures being entered, with the earnings.

The advantages, on the other hand, of the plan are many, and the new light which it is calculated to throw over the whole subject of punishment its author thinks is most interesting.

The substitution of task for time sentences would alone be invaluable. A task stimulates industry, exertion, self-denial, perseverance, a looking beyond present impulse to a distant contingent future, which all together constitute, and by sustained practice create, strength and stability in character; while a time sentence does just the reverse, inculcating in the first place mere submission, and thence supineness, but progressively evasion, deceit on a larger scale, self-indulgence in every form, prurienc act and thought, vicious recollections and anticipations, every thing, in a word, which may cheat time, which in a reformatory system men should be taught to regard as their greatest friend, but which, under this most unwise treatment, is made their chief, almost exclusive, enemy. (And truly when these necessary results of time sentences to punishment are considered, and at the same time the present universality of their infliction is regarded, the wonder seems to be, not that many once entered on a course of crime repeatedly relapse into it, but that any so entered, and who have once endured this penalty for it, especially if for any considerable time, should ever break away from it: nor do they, in truth,—they are always inferior moral agents afterwards than before, and their subsequent failures, when investigated, will always be found to exhibit the effects of this, their most unjust and inhuman punishment, as much, or more, than of their original dispositions. The bad portions of these, cunning in particular, will always be found aggravated, and the good in almost all cases overborne.)

(Even apart from these sad results of time sentences, on consideration it will be seen that time is almost the worst possible measure of punishment, the most unequal, consequently the most unjust, and always bearing heaviest on the best and most promising men. The young, thoughtless, single, reckless, profligate, care little, beyond feeling present inconvenience, for its loss; while the more advanced, the prudent, married, engaged in business, generally diligent and well-intentioned, however betrayed perhaps into a single offence, may be altogether ruined by it. There is no parity, nor even approach to it, in the infliction on each; and when the necessarily deteriorating consequences to both are further regarded, one is astonished that time, as a measure of punishment, should have even one supporter.)

In its rudest form, on the contrary, when measured by mere physical effort, the effects of a task are always beneficial. Time is necessarily expended in its performance, but it must be well employed, in acquiring character, and perhaps also knowledge and skill, instead
of being worse than wasted in acquiring and confirming bad habits. Apart from the industry and exertion which it necessarily and immediately calls into action, the sustained practice of these in a short time gives increased power, and almost necessarily a virtuous direction, to character. A laudable object being kept constantly in view, the individual becomes speedily enamoured of it, it fully occupies his time and thoughts, he turns with aversion from every thing else, and by thus keeping conflicting evil out, it the more readily admits concurring good counsel and purpose in. The moral improvement consequent on this is even extraordinary, and was most strikingly exemplified some years ago in the most disadvantageous circumstances, in the Van Dieman’s Land punishment road-parties, to which the sentences were changed from individual impositions for times fixed to collective tasks in the making and repair of the roads. The first result of this was a large increase in the amount of work performed on them, a proportional economy in maintaining them, an increase of fatigue daily incurred on them, whence a willingness to rest and sleep in the intervals of labour, instead of then, as previously, incessantly hatching mischief; and the issue was a total change in the whole moral aspect of these parties, formerly proverbial, even in Van Dieman’s Land, as nests of deepest villany, which the incessant use of the lash sought in vain to suppress, but which under this altered management speedily became, and have ever since continued, comparatively steady and industrious companies, in which grave offence and punishment have become almost entirely unknown. And a nearly similar result has been since obtained in parallel circumstances in Bermuda; and if such are the effects of even a rude form of task sentence, in which good conduct and reform are measured only by physical effect produced, how much more may not be anticipated from a system like that here proposed, in which so many other lessons than mere industry are sought to be directly taught, and so many other beneficial habits than mere exertion are proposed to be compelled.

Much of this superiority will be found to consist in the mere use of Marks as a measure of task, which it recommends. These may be awarded to any description of good conduct as well as industry, or forfeited for any form of misconduct as well as idleness. The minor virtues accordingly, as patience, civility, forbearance, self-denial, good temper, and the like, usually so little valued by rude tempers, but the neglect of which so often leads to violence, brutality, and at length even the worst offences, may thus be made subjects of specific encourage-
recurring perplexities; and if some of the difficulty in adequately preparing to encounter these is necessarily inherent in the circumstance of confinement, at least it would be much modified by the introduction of Marks as money within the allotted pale. By their means, prisoners might be charged for their food, lodging, indulgences, artificial light, superior accommodation, loan of books, sending and receiving of letters, &c., all at present granted, but arbitrarily, at the will of a Governor, and involving no specific sacrifice on their own part to obtain them. And a system of Marks would enable this to be indefinitely modified, especially if each separate scale of accommodation, diet, or indulgence had a definite price, and were granted solely at each prisoner's own request, and on his voluntary sacrifice of so many Marks, so much approach to liberty, to obtain them. By arrangements easy to be suggested, but the detail of which would be here out of place, this latitude of choice in the mode of living, extended to all, could be effected with scarcely any inconvenience to the attending officers whatever,—chiefly by requiring the prisoners to intimate each Monday morning what mode of diet they choose for the ensuing week. Other indulgences would require a more specific application; but also most easily arranged.

And among other objects which might be thus, but thus only, obtained, for Marks involving a postponement of liberation, the writer, strange as it may at first appear, earnestly recommends that wine and spirits be included. He would sell them very dear,—would earnestly recommend that they be entirely abstained from,—would point out that, besides the immediate prolongation of sentence that indulging in them would occasion, it would constitute a most unfavourable feature in their certificate of prison conduct on discharge,—in a word, he would use every moral means to prevent indulgence in them; and, in the circumstances, he does not think that much, if even any, would be habitually taken. But he attaches no value whatever to a compulsory privation of them; on the contrary, he is convinced, both by reason and observation, that, as at present enforced, for short periods especially, it is a direct injury and snare; and that most of the re-convictions, now so unhappily prevalent among minor criminals, and which gradually bear and harden them till they become confirmed sets and greater criminals, proceed directly from this unwise prohibition, this example in detail of the pernicious consequences of aiming at virtue by physical disabilities—

There is also another restriction imposed at present on all prisoners by regulation, frequently most injurious in its effect, and which the introduction of the Mark System would enable most advantageously to be modified, viz., that on frequency of intercourse, by letter or visit, with friends and relations outside. This is prevented altogether, unless at long intervals, generally three months, when the privilege comes to all in succession, of right, unless in cases of flagrant misconduct deserving, in the opinion of the Governor, its forfeiture as a punishment, but always without any special effort or sacrifice on the part of the prisoner to obtain it, and thus constituted, like a time sentence, bearing lightly on the inferior men, but pressing hard on the better and more promising. The careless, unnatural, profligate, care nothing for it; to many of them it is even a protection, as sparing them the knowledge of the distress and reproaches of those whom they have deeply injured, perhaps ruined, by their misconduct; while the thoughtful father, mother, husband, wife, brother, sister, those engaged in business, and anxious to give directions for its provisional conduct or other settlement, is deeply affected, perhaps irretrievably ruined, by it; and all are thus far injured by it, that they become partially forgotten by their more distant friends in these long intervals, and lose their earnest services on discharge to assist them in recovering the means of honest subsistence. In every way the arrangement is thus bad; and under the Mark System it could be most easily modified by imposing a graduated fine on every prisoner receiving letter or visit, at his own option entirely whether he will receive it or not. If he desire to write he will also have to pay in Marks for paper and postage-stamps, and his letters will, of course, always be subject to examination by the proper Officer. But beyond these checks on unnecessary communications, there should be none inside the prison on any; and only outside, on visits, one which the writer has often thought most desirable, but which does not now exist at all. This is a ticket from the local police, stating the name of the prisoner to whom the visit is wished to be paid, of the writer, his or her relationship, if any, and if of fair character, or at least not a known thief or associate with the prisoner in crime. This would be a most wholesome regulation.

The Mark System would thus bend the existing arrangements in any way, whether to increased severity or indulgence, provided it can thereby promote reform in the prisoners, which, its author has long thought, should be the almost exclusive object in secondary punishment. He is convinced that this being the known general object and result of its infliction by any way, would do more to check crime than any deterring example whatever. It would soften the feelings of the classes chiefly furnishing criminals, and confirm prosecutors in their
duty to charge them whenever detected far more than any exhortations addressed to either, and by making the administration of punishment at once benevolent and punctual, do more to make it successful in checking crime than all the severities that ever were devised.

And when prisons are thus made real penitentiaries, schools of penitence and reform, the military type in which so many visiting justices and governors now so much rejoice, should be sedulously excluded from them, and a clerical type rather substituted. Black coats should be the only uniform in them; and a change even in the classes of men from which their officers are usually selected would be also most desirable. Soldiers and sailors, whatever their grade or inherent character, can very rarely be actively and avowedly interested in the mere cause of reform; and even when they are, from want of early practice they too frequently scruple at speaking to prisoners as they should do about it. The writer's opinion is, that governors of prisoners should even form a class by themselves, in Government service exclusively, in which they should, when young, be thoroughly trained in all their duties, which are very various, serving first as deputy-governors, then as governors of small prisons, thence, according to their ascertained merits, chiefly tested by a small proportion of re-convictions to them, transferred to larger, and thence progressively become disposable for service in the same capacity in any part of the Queen's dominions. Thus alone would details in prison discipline be gradually perfected, and uniformity in its administration be also soon attained. The inferior assistants should be taken from the class usually supplying schoolmasters,—with a police force at the outer gate of each prison, ready to be called in should they be ever needed, (which would soon be scarcely ever,) and on whom should also devolve the duty of removing prisoners to and from trial, from which the **pernading** assistants inside should be exempt, as unsuitable to their higher character and duty.

Were this system, then, proposed to be established, it might be wise to introduce it gradually, and in the first instance even only permissively. For this purpose a short Act would suffice, legalizing task (Mark) sentences, with or without the accompaniment of a time sentence also, as might be deemed expedient by the judges and magistrates. The latter alternative (without) would be much the most desirable; but at all events a **maximum** time should never be imposed, for this would very much dull, and in some minds even destroy, the anxiety to earn and preserve marks as the only means of release; and the only advantage of imposing a **minimum** would be the prevention of abuse, which would soon never be thought of. In either case, the Secretary of State should be requested to frame the accompanying regulations, which need not in the beginning embrace all the points that have been here suggested, from some of which even dissent might be entertained; but at all events they should keep clearly in view the three elementary points,—task sentences, as much liberty of action accorded in prison as may be consistent with perfect order and regularity, and a careful and minute record from day to day of the manner in which each prisoner has used this liberty. Without these points the system would not be tried at all.

With such an Act passed, there cannot be a doubt that the system would soon find its way into the local, or, as they may be called in this sense, the elementary prisons, through which all criminals must pass in the commencement of their career in crime, and in which, accordingly, could they be met by a powerfully reformatory system like this, and thereby be turned from it, both they and the public would be spared the long subsequent years of crime and depredation to which both are now so commonly submitted. It would thus probably be deemed peculiarly applicable to the case of children, and a few examples of its success with them would speedily extend its application.

The case of criminal children has, indeed, recently excited much sympathy and attention on the part of the public, and many proposals have been made, and much expense been readily contemplated as deserving to be incurred, to erect reformatory schools and other establishments for their reception, either in lieu of prisons altogether, or supplementary to them. And certainly as long as time sentences continue to prevail in our prisons, and they are made schools of systematic demoralization, every enlightened and humane mind must cling to any proposal which may promise to exempt at least a portion of the young from this cruel and most unjust award. Yet when calmly considered, the principle of such reformatory schools will be found grievously defective; and if established, it seems scarcely possible that they should ultimately give satisfaction. They will introduce uncertainty into the administration of our criminal law: they will not always rescue the most hopeful individuals,—on the contrary, they may too often favour only the deepest and most plausible. By the impunity, and almost reward, that they will offer to juvenile offenders, they will increase the temptation held out by older to younger vagabonds to join them in crime. And in the best cases, they will so separate the chosen children from their natural protectors and occupa-
tions as to involve much responsibility on their projectors as to the
after fate of these, their éléves. Mark sentences to prison, calcu-
lated so as with good conduct to occupy six or eight months, according
to the degree of offence, but with bad as much longer as may be ne-
cessary to subdue to good, would be found far more effectual, gen-
erally shorter and more beneficial, consequently more benevolent, than
two years fixed in any school. And they would be no favour to one
more than another. With the system generalized all might have the
same.

As regards more advanced criminals, it is satisfactory to know
that already, in a crude and imperfect manner, the system is ap-
plicated at least to those training for tickets of leave, and it may be
presumed, though it is not so specified, serving under sentences to
penal servitude. The following are the words on this subject of
Colonel Jebb, Chairman of the Directors of Prisons, in a semi-official
letter that he has lately addressed to The Times newspaper in regard
to it:

"While on the subject I would beg leave to notice a point which
has incidentally arisen during the discussion.

The chaplains of the convict service have been blamed for recom-
mending the release of men who have in some instances shown them-
selves unworthy of it. This, however, is undeserved, as the selection
does not rest with them.

"Under the regulations the men who have conducted themselves
well are entitled to their release at the expiration of the minimum
period for which the sentence of transportation has been commuted.
With a view to establish their claim, or shew the grounds of detention
beyond that minimum period, regular records of conduct and industry
are kept by different and independent officers, and every convict is
made aware, from month to month, how much additional confinement
he has brought upon himself in consequence of his misconduct or
idleness.

"These records are in the nature of a debtor and creditor account,
and a moment's reflection will show how very difficult it would be to
afford encouragement to good conduct and industry, which are ascer-
tainable facts, if the chaplain could step in and by simply giving an
opinion that a man was unchanged in heart deprive him of any advan-
tage which might have accrued to him from persevering efforts in good
conduct. I wish it were possible to give greater weight to the opinions
of the chaplains on the religious state of the men, but the difficulties

are, I fear, insuperable, and a change in that direction would lead to
greater evils and more hypocrisy than might generally be anticipated."
(Times, Dec. 28, 1855.)

It will be easily seen from this quotation that the management
explained is based on the elementary principle that has been here
advocated—a principle proposed by the writer for the management of
the road parties in Van Diemen's Land in 1837, when they were in a
most frightfully demoralized state,—which was on that occasion re-
ferrred to the consideration of the Transportation Committee of the
House of Commons then sitting (1837-8), and recommended to be
tried in its Report, drawn up by the late Sir William Molesworth,
—which he was consequently authorized to exemplify, but with very
insufficient powers, and under a number of unnecessary concurring
difficulties, during four years (1840-44), on Norfolk Island,—which
was there, notwithstanding, eminently successful with him,*—which

* "Captain Macaroonie did more for the reformation of these unhappy
wretches, and amelioration of their physical circumstances, than the most san-
guine practical mind could beforehand have ventured to hope. It is greatly to be
regretted that his views were not carried out to their fullest extent, in the most
cordial spirit. My knowledge of the convict's character warrants my saying ex-
pressly that they offer the only approximation that has ever yet been made to a
correct penal theory."—Harris's Convicts and Settlers, p. 412; an interesting
work published in Knight's series, 1846-7.

The change produced was indeed most remarkable, and the details of the pro-
cess by which it was effected may even here deserve recapitulation. The men
previously locked up every night in a barrack in which they were lodged, fifty
and sixty together, in large dormitories, without lights, or any immediate superin-
tendence to prevent abuse, were gradually thinned out, and putted in the bush
near their field labours. The best men were taken first; and under the check of
the officers they were allowed to choose others as companions, when enabled to
accommodate them, on the condition that they became severally responsible them-
selves for their good conduct. A strong field police was at the same time formed—
prisoners, but with a considerable value attached to their situations, and who
under the immediate direction of the chief constable and police runner of the
Island, both free, behaved generally remarkably well. Gradually many men were
thus got out; they were the best, and their privileges being much coveted, others
behaved well to obtain them; they had all small gardens allotted them, on which
they were encouraged to grow vegetables, and rear pigs and poultry for their own
use, and for sale among the officers as they were able. They thus all speedily
acquired a little property, and with its possession acquired also an interest in its
rights. Theft became unpopular among them, and at last almost unknown. There
was every temptation to it, and even facility, yet it was abstained from. The
writer had himself a large garden in the midst of them, almost uninclosed, and
was thereafter, in a very rude form, but in like manner successfully, introduced into the road-parties in Van Dieman's Land in 1846, nine years after he first proposed it for them,—which has since, with similar consequences, been employed in Bermuda and Gibraltar,—which in 1847 was earnestly pressed on the attention of the Secretary of State for the management of the home parties at Portland and elsewhere,—was by him referred to a Committee of Inspectors, of which Colonel Jebb was Chairman, and by them definitively rejected, it was understood at the time, chiefly through his influence. It is well that he has since altered his opinion on this head so far; but it would have been better, both for his own reputation and the interest of the country, that it had been done somewhat more avowedly and

with a deep well in it of peculiarly fine water which all were allowed to draw at will: its borders were full of the finest fruits, pine-apples, bananas, grapes, melons, figs, guavas, and the like, yet nothing was ever taken; and the other officers' gardens were equally respected. At the same time the tale of Government work required was not abated, and the men were even seen sometimes to work at their little allotments by moonlight in order to do them justice. The scene was a remarkable proof of the power of mere arrangements to call out the favourable points in human nature even in the most unfavourable circumstances, and though some points may seem scarcely credible they can still be well attested; and their effect was not merely transitory. Two years after he left the Penal Colonies, the writer obtained returns of the conduct subsequently of these men both in New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land, which were remarkably favourable. And in a private letter written from Van Dieman's Land above four years afterwards (May 20, 1848), and which he still retains, are these words:

"The conduct of your Norfolk Island men generally has been most exemplary; they have shown that a reformation far greater than has been hitherto effected in any body of men by any system either before or after yours, has taken place in them. With scarcely an exception the whole are doing well, and some are in a respectable way of business, advancing fast to prosperity. They are a credit to the name they commonly bear, of Captain Macquarie's men."

It is a fundamental principle in the Mark System, on which indeed all its superstructure is raised, that if we would reform criminals, and really fit them to return to free life, we should subject them while yet in bondage, as far as possible, to the same checks and impulses as make men prudent, honest, industrious, and otherwise well-doing in society; avoiding at the same time, as far as may be, treating them as slaves, assured that with whatever slavish virtues we may thus endow them, as obedience, submission, and the like, there will always be a plentiful admixture of slavish vices too, cunning, falsehood, self-indulgence, subjection to external influence, generally temptation, and so forth. And if, in considering the management of Norfolk Island, this principle is thought to have been carried very far, it may still be kept in view in other circumstances, and though limited by them, be nearly, if not quite as successful.
can form no estimate of how they are likely to behave in it; he keeps them to the last as automatons in his own hands,—slaves, whose only duty is to work and to obey. He cannot even give them a specific character to carry with them from under his rule, for he has never proved them in any detail,—he can only draw inferences regarding them from the vaguest generalities.

And yet so powerful is the elementary principle of giving prisoners an interest in their industry and general good conduct, thereby giving them beneficial thoughts and habits, however imperfectly it may be otherwise directed and guided, that Colonel Jebb is enabled to give a really favourable account of the results of his system, however rude and imperfect it can be thus shewn to be. According to his figures, of 3,253 prisoners who have been discharged on tickets of leave since the commencement of the system, only 271, or a little over 3 per cent., have been re-convicted, which contrasts most favourably with the ordinary average of re-convictions among other prisoners, (rising throughout England and Wales to 33½ per cent., a full third of all discharged,) and satisfactorily shews that much of the clamour recently raised against this system is the offspring of pure prejudice. But notwithstanding this incontestable proof of the benefit, qualified as it may be by defective administration, of this mode of treating prisoners, Colonel Jebb in a recent letter, apparently equally official, states the astounding fact that those sentenced to penal servitude were to be removed from it, and made to serve their allotted time to the letter without any similar stimulus or encouragement. Can this possibly be his own advice, or can it have his sanction? Because his means are willfully imperfect of ascertaining the character and probable conduct of his men after discharge, does he shrink from the responsibility of selecting them at all, and prefer that of retaining them permanently under the worst possible system, rather than perfecting a good one? Or can the Government, already under the heavy responsibility of having systematically demoralized these men in their youth by successive time sentences, for they are probably nearly all old prisoners, desire now to complete the injury, incurring the still heavier one of returning them to the same Upas poison in their maturer years? It would seem impossible; and yet in these unreasonable days on prison discipline an earnest appeal against the evils of such a course may be required to check it,—the gratuitous evils, for the measure will not annihilate these men,—they will live on, and be at length discharged by course of law; and the only difference will be that to save Colonel Jebb the responsibility of selecting from them as they successively appear to be worthy, they will continue under a course of direct demoralization to the last, and be deprived of the measure of improvement which, spite of its defects, it appears from his returns that his system really imparts. Were the Mark system adopted, he would be equally free from responsibility, and the benefit would be inestimable. The men would come out in rotation as they severally earned their tale, necessarily and unavoidably improved under the process of acquiring it; and, apart from any certificate on discharge, the mere fact of their having successfully passed through such an ordeal would, when its details came to be thoroughly known, be in itself a recommendation.

But all prisoners passing under the Mark System should of right receive on their discharge specific certificates of conduct during the process, and have the importance of having this favourable document earnestly pressed on their attention while yet earning it. Its form should be first a description of the individual's person, to make its transfer to another more difficult; then a line, ruled as at the commencement of this paper, shewing the marks earned by him in such a time, with another line shewing the maximum that he might have earned in the same time, also his expenditure and of what consisting,—all in the same form; and lastly any observations or recommendation that the Governor, or Chaplain, or both, may please to add in explanation or confirmation of the conclusions to be drawn from the prefixed particulars. With such an attestation as this, a man may show his face any where, without fear of injury from being recognized afterwards as a discharged prisoner—the iron rod at present so frequently held over well-meaning but sensitive men, beginning again to hold up their heads and aspiring to regain respectability. For their sakes masks have been invented to wear in prison, and they have been sent to distances, and urgently advised to shroud themselves from observation, and otherwise avoid recognition; but it may be relied on that a man is always made intrinsically worse by being sent into the world with a lie in his mouth, and burdened with such a secret; and he will be far more essentially served by an attestation that, if he has early sinned he has worthily redeemed his character, and now manfully meets its consequences. In 99 cases out of 100, provided the recent character corresponds with the attested one, a recognition in such circumstances would rather redound to a man's advantage than in any way injure him. *

* An association of gentlemen has been recently formed, calling itself the Reformatory Union (meeting provisionally at the Office of the Philanthropic Society, Crown Court, Threadneedle Street), and pledges itself to promote the Reform of
When prisoners are now discharged, particularly if they have some distance to go, it is not unusual for them to ask, and if they have behaved moderately well, receive some small assistance to support them on their road, or otherwise serve them on first going out: and those who have been employed under Government receive by regulation a fixed portion of their (assumed) earnings while in prison, which, in the case of skilled workmen and men who have served long sentences (precisely those who have sinned originally under the least temptation and are necessarily the worst characters) amount often to considerable sums. But nothing can be more unwise than either arrangement. The first is alms-giving, and under the prevailing craving for strong drink consequent on its entire prohibition in gaol, goes almost universally to the nearest public house, and there paves the way to renewed debauchery, and thence crime; and the second, in like manner, scarcely ever comes to good. It has been earned by no specific previous exertion; it is a dole out of compulsory earnings; no self-denial has been specially called into action to obtain it; from the nature of things it is necessarily bestowed in largest measure on the most unworthy objects; and in France, where the system equally prevails, it has been even specially reported that the persons thus carrying off the largest sums are precisely those most certain to be reconvicted within a short subsequent period. Under the Mark system the whole of this might be easily and most advantageously altered. If a task is conjoined with a time sentence, all surplus Marks earned and preserved before the specified time elapses should be paid the prisoner in money, at the rate of (say) a penny per Mark, on his discharge, as a reward for his extra diligence and self-command; and if no time has been thus fixed, each prisoner on discharge should have the option of remaining, voluntarily, any time he pleases (not exceeding, perhaps, — months), conforming in every respect to the prison regulations, earning, expending, and, it may be, forfeiting his Marks, precisely as before, but entitled to go away when he pleases, and then to receive his accumulation in money on the same terms. In this way none need go quite destitute; all will have voluntarily laboured and refrained in order to accumulate what they have,—no clemency or other deteriorating taint will be upon it,—it will be their own of right, and being the first tangible fruits of their regenerated character, a blessing may be rationally expected to descend on it, to direct its application, quicken its produce, and almost ensure its reproduction.

About fifteen years ago, when the writer first became intimately cognizant of prisoners' lives and frequent courses, he was so much struck with the repeated convictions without immediate detection, of which many on Norfolk Island used even to boast, and with the hardening influence which these escapes exercised on their individual characters, and the encouragement which they gave to crime generally, that in one of his reports he suggested that men clearly proved to have been convicted a second time previously, before a Court of Criminal Record, (Assizes, Sessions, or other,) should receive a brand on some concealed part of his person, for which it should not be lawful to search before any prisoner's trial, but which, if discovered after conviction, should very materially aggravate his sentence. His idea was that the feet were well suited to the purpose, the right to indicate offences against the person, the left against property, the brand to be as little conspicuous as possible, between the toes for example, and the precise place indicating the gravity of offence. And though he does not desire now to press this, he yet still thinks it worth recording. It is not only no part of his system, but is even opposed to its fundamental principle, which is to elevate criminals above crime, and not merely deter them from its commission; yet as a subsidiary act, stamping especial disgrace on perseverance in it, slow to be imposed, but, after its infliction facilitating its subsequent detection, it is not, he thinks, without some moral interest too.

It has often occurred to him that the Mark system in its perfection would peculiarly apply to wife-beaters, habitual drunkards, and such other noxious small fry, whose crimes against the State would scarcely warrant the imposition of a long time sentence, yet who are little affected, and never cured, by a short one, their families almost alone suffering, either by their incarceration or discharge. Were they committed under heavy Mark sentences, with access to liquor for liberty, but for nothing else, either they would never come out, but remain for life where alone they can be kept out of mischief, or, if at length discharged, it would be only after such a course of voluntary abstinence as, combined with reluctance to incur another such penalty, would probably cure them for life of their infirmity. And
again, it would well suit murderers, and others for whom perpetual imprisonment was deemed fitting, yet reluctance was felt to impose such a hopeless sentence; an exorbitant Mark sentence, with its consequent obligation by exertion and good conduct to earn the means of comfortable maintenance and enjoyment, with the lurking hope which would never desert a man in such circumstances of at length, by undeviating exertion and good conduct, and consequent large accumulation, of obtaining at length a remission, would sustain the spirits, and keep the mind healthy far longer than any effort at mere resignation. Again, the system would peculiarly suit the case of prisoners awaiting trial; they will always have to work for their maintenance and indulgences, and any surplus that they may earn beyond, if acquitted, should be paid them in money at the usual rate, and if convicted, should go towards their sentence afterwards, whatever it might be. As regards minor criminals, it would especially suit children, the precocious prudence and self-command that it is calculated to inspire being precisely the lessons that, for the most part, they chiefly require. When they go out, the mere fact that they have passed through such a course will, as already noticed in regard to other prisoners, serve as a recommendation. It may be supplemented by a written certificate. They will be unable to boast, as so many reckless lads now frequently do, how sturdily and gamely they have undergone all that could be inflicted on them, for they must have submitted, not only to endure, but directly to act, under the impulses pressed on them. And to conclude, the precise period of their coming out not being known outside till the very last, while it will always be competent to Governors and Chaplains to summon relations and friends to meet and protect them, will make it impossible for their previous dissolute companions to congregate, as is now universally the case in large towns, similarly to receive, but to treat and ensnare them; and in the exemption from this alone a greater check on renewed petty offence will be imposed, than by almost any other minor precaution.

However viewed, then, the Mark system will be seen to be calculated to work socially and politically well; and the subject is not even now exhausted, though it must be here brought to a conclusion. Its influence on the community would go far beyond the personal interests of the prisoners under its immediate operation, important as these undoubtedly are. Its object is so exclusively benevolent, that it could not but soften the minds of all among whom it acted. It would elevate even the character of punishment, which, from being viewed mainly as a retributive, even if so framed (which it most certainly is not now) as to be ulteriorly a corrective agent, would be regarded, as thus modelled, an essentially moral and educational one. The very sight of it in operation would do good, and still more the daily reception into society through its means of improved and instructed, instead of utterly depraved and demoralized, discharged criminals. The mere facility with which it may be adopted is another recommendation. It may be worked in any prison, and combined with any form of imprisonment, separate or any other. The writer himself prefers, for long-sentenced men, the congregated. A period of very strict separation, to be measured also by a moderate task, may advantageously precede this; but, according to his experience, it is far more easy to influence a number together to good, than any individual by himself; and the competition among numbers will also carry each man farther in all practical virtue, than any amount of teaching or exhortation will carry one only. (It is as in an assault, in which the most cowardly will go emulously with others, where the bravest would not go alone; and a thousand similar cases might be cited.) The great use of separation in imprisonment is preliminarily to subdue; and it was thus a favourite while criminals were considered as wild beasts, and subjugation was almost the only object contemplated in their treatment. But the Mark system sets out on far higher principles, and has a far higher object. It assumes that all men, properly treated, are more or less corrigeible; studying their nature consequentiy, it seeks to treat them properly; it aims thus to make them good, not merely restrain them while bad; and much experience among the very worst convinces him that strictly administered, not slighted over as in the present management of the Government parties of men aspiring to obtain tickets of leave, it would overcome such again, as under a thousand unnecessary disadvantages it has done so before.

A single word may be advantageously added respecting the ticket of leave system, which has lately been so much, and in great measure causelessly, reproved. Its principle is excellent, and would act beneficially much extended. It provides a further security, besides good management in prison, against the danger of discharging, and thus re-absorbing great criminals among ourselves, by requiring them to be discharged partially at first, and only entirely after serving a further probation in free society before complete release. The principle is thus at once provident and defensive, not in any measure indulgent; and the prejudice against it is partly unfounded altogether, as is shewn by Colonel Jebb's returns—partly only justified by the defects of his administration.
And yet a word may be useful on the scale by which the writer thinks that time sentences should be converted into mark ones. He suggests this to be by allowing 3 for every column in the table expressing conduct and acquisition; and as there are either five or seven of these according as the chaplain and schoolmaster have one or two, 15 or 21 will be the daily required earnings. From these must be deducted six or seven necessarily for food and indulgences, leaving (say) 9 or 14 to go towards liberation. In the one case then 60 may properly express a week’s sentence, 260 a month’s, and 3,000 a year’s;—in the other the numbers will be 98, 400, and 4800. If offences are committed these must of course be redeemed either by subsequent increased exertion or self-denial, or go to prolong the detention, the above being in all cases the amounts of minimum required surplus.*

II. Among other agencies for the recovery of the prisoners on

* Three years ago the writer published an account, taken in great part from original official documents, of the Government prison of Valencia, in Spain; and more recently that of Munich, in Bavaria, has been similarly described by Mr. Combe of Edinburgh in The Times, and the Rev. Mr. Townshend in the last number of The Zoist. And as both these prisons have been eminently successful, and approach in some degree to their management to the principles of the Mark System, though very defective in details, a few words on them may not be here out of place.

Their respective governors are obviously benevolent, intelligent, and active men, full of good purpose, but not appearing to have either read, or thought, deeply on their subject. Their reasoning is thus frequently loose, and their machinery not seldom even opposed to it. They both acquiesce in time-sentences as an unavoidable evil; and have turned their attention to devising palliatives for their inherent evils, instead of at once entering a protest against their continuance. Some of these palliatives are at the same time most objectionable,—one at Munich is the issue, or non-issue, according to conduct, of beer, where there could not be a lower motive, or one more incapable of elevating,—though the acquisition of a power to purchase or refrain from beer, or other similar indulgences, with a suitable motive to refrain as proposed in the Mark System, by calling choice, thought, prudence, and self-denial under temptation, all into exercise, would be in the very highest degree at once elevating and improving. And in like manner at Munich the utmost importance is attached in words to obtaining voluntary effort from the men instead of mere obedience to influence el arte, as it is phrased; yet the practice is each morning to allot tasks, according to the judgment of the officers of what each man can do, and then rewarding, or the reverse, according as the several tasks are or are not completed. This, with the exception of the reward, and the substitution of punishment instead, is just the existing English system, and has been lately shown, under the influence of arbitrary will, and mistake as to the real powers of the men, to admit of any degree of tyranny. The Mark System imposes a general task, of which the exercise of

Norfolk Island, religious instruction and exhortation to them occupied much of the writer’s thoughts, and no little even of his personal time and exertion. Besides visiting almost daily the gaols and hospitals, supplying them with books and readers,—the latter, educated prisoners, mostly in arr, and unable to do any work besides this,—(and it was marvellous how much they improved both themselves and their companions by this exercise, occasionally extended also to the huts and wards,—he established adult schools, furnished these too with books and other materials; employed even the tutor in his own family occasionally to teach and preach in them; held monthly examinations of them, at which he in person distributed prizes; and in addition to all these efforts, every Sunday afternoon, for four years, after attending morning service with the prisoners on the settlement, he went regularly, attended by some of his family, to a distant station in the bush, where he read the evening service, with a sermon, for the benefit of the shepherds and others whose avocations made it difficult for them to attend punctually on the settlement. (He never felt the least apprehension on these occasions, or on any other of apparent laxity in guarding his charge; he felt that his avowed object and errand abundantly protected him; and besides, the physical strength of his government was accumulated in the military garrison, and other precautions taken on the settlement; by no possibility could these be surprised, or the island thus taken; and as to individual acts of violence, there was no motive or pretext for them, and they were thus never feared, nor ever occurred.) Further; during his command he built two churches in the settlement,—one Protestant, and the other Roman Catholic. Previous to his landing, though the island had been fifteen years a penal settlement, there was not even one; and the services had been read to the prisoners, frequently even by one of themselves, in a most slovenly and irregular manner, in barns and mess-rooms, as they could be cleared out.* His structures, more physical strength is but a portion, and leaves the daily progress through it entirely in each man’s choice.

Both prisons, then, have made an important step in the right way; but they are as far inferior to what the most ordinary prison in England would almost necessarily be made in the most ordinary hands under the Mark System, as they are now superior to the very best.

* About three years before, plans and estimates, he believes to the extent of nearly £4,000, were sent from the island to Sydney, for transmission home, for the erection of one church, a handsome and rather imposing building, proposed to be used by Protestants and Catholics on alternate Sundays,—a very bad plan, as desecrating the building for both, and otherwise creating jealousy and grudging,
though plain, were at least convenient, and were never used in any other way; and the moral benefit that accrued from making the religious observances thus decent, and in aspect at least reverential, was prodigious. He was assisted in all these efforts by a moderately strong clerical staff, consisting of two principal chaplains, Protestant and Roman Catholic, both able, zealous, and even eloquent men; and latterly also by two Catholic and one Protestant catechist,—the last appointed at his own special request. He must admit at the same time that the issue of these efforts was not on the whole satisfactory. The men were all, he believes, morally and socially improved; the tone of feeling, action, and still more of opinion among them was sensibly raised; vice of all kinds, as well as theft, became discomtenanced; epithets of reproach addressed to each other, which had been previously common, and never disputed, became subjects of quarrel and complaint; and evidence in all cases became much more easily obtained; there was no longer, as it were, a conspiracy among the men on all occasions to defeat the ends of justice. But it could not be thought, or said, that much of this proceeded from religious motives; on the contrary, very few could be considered as so impressed even in thought, and fewer still, avowedly, in difficult circumstances evinced self-denial under such impulse. The great majority listened with more or less respect to the exhortations addressed to them on this head in and out of church, but the effect was little apparent afterwards in their conduct; and there was a knot of them so little attentive even when listening that ten to a dozen of them were constantly under sentence to sit in conspicuous places in church, directly in the writer’s view, so as to compel them to order and apparent attention. For a time he imputed these differences in them to differ-

ences in individual character, and unquestionably this had some influence in it; but after a time he became sensible that they characterized classes of men rather than single individuals, and he was led thus to observe them more comprehensively.

He found the Irish Roman Catholics generally inclined to be devotional; and on requiring from the respective chaplains returns of those who paid attention to their religious observances, and in particular confessed and took sacrament, the numbers among them were many times greater than of men who could be considered of the same class among the Protestants. (Of communicants among the Protestants there were not above a score in all, and they were chiefly old men, and some of them, in the writer’s private opinion, of very doubtful character.) Next to the Catholics, strange to say, came the Jews. The writer had been early struck with the desolate moral state of these men on the island, under the ban and contempt of even the lowest of their companions, and proportionately sunk in vice and misconduct; and in casting about how to raise them as well as others, he resolved on an experiment in regard to them. Having ascertained precisely the number of holidays which in the event of their open profession it would be necessary to allow them, and obtained also for them the permission of the Chief Rabbi at Sydney to observe the Christian instead of the Jewish Sabbath, he sent for the requisite books and vestments, gave them a room in the settlement to use as a synagogue, appointed one of their number, an educated and very well conducted man, their Reader, and making him at the same time an overseer, gave him special charge both of their moral and religious conduct; and certainly never was moral experiment more successful. Two of them afterwards became overseers* through their general good conduct; their Reader has been long free, and when last heard of was respectably established in Sydney; and five years ago one was met in England, apparently in good estimation and circumstances, travelling for a small merchant. Had it been possible for the writer to give the same advantages to the Presbyterians, he thinks that they would have been equal, or probably superior, in this respect even to the Jews; but although he repeatedly asked for a Presbyterian, or Independent, chaplain, or catechist, he could not obtain one, and

* When a system of discipline is mild, rational, and reformatory, nothing conduces more to its success than employing those subject to it, even largely, in conducting it. They serve both as examples, and encouragement to all the others. But when, on the contrary, the system is arbitrary and tyrannical, nothing can be more injurious. They always exceed their recognized powers.
these people, professing that they could not follow, or understand, or relish the English Service, were generally immoveable under its exhortations, and fell back among the common herd of Anglican Protestants, rather injuring them, than swelling their numbers, by their religious dissent. With them they were nearly all of one character,—good, well-purposed men in the main,—hardy, industrious, prudent, intelligent, responding readily to the other means employed for their recovery, but very unimpressible by religious exhortation; and it was a class of them in particular, chiefly young Englishmen and only recently sent out, whom, as above stated, it was difficult to keep in perfect good order even in church. It was also among them that two extreme cases occurred not only in perfect accordance with the others, but which, as the writer then thought, and still thinks, satisfactorily explained them.

One was a man from Lancashire, the other from Southwark. The first had been early educated by a very pious, good mother, who died however, when he was only 9 years of age; and his father soon after marrying again, his home became uncomfortable, and at length he enlisted. He then became wild, progressively profligate, and at length in his 24th year was transported for having a stolen watch in his possession. He asserted that he did not know it was stolen, but admitted that he deserved his fate, for he ought in the circumstances to have suspected it, and his conduct and character were otherwise bad. He was much affected, however, by his sentence, and his early religious feelings being otherwise strongly awakened by exhortations addressed to him on the passage out, when he landed he scarcely required further exhortation to become perfectly subdued; and he was so free in his early declarations and professions, that the writer at first greatly suspected their sincerity. But his conduct continued perfectly in accordance with them; and at length on an epidemic dysentery breaking out, by which the hospitals were filled, and even many lives lost, among others he was appointed an extra-warder in one of the hospitals, and it was impossible then long to doubt his sincerity. His unwearied attention to the sick and dying, his counsels to both, and his diligence in even the most painful and disgusting duties in regard to them, all contributed to attest the truth of his professions; and when, some time afterwards, a man in gaol under sentence of death asked to be attended and read to by him, the chaplain concurring in the request, he behaved equally well there, and continued to do the same as long as he was on the island, a period of nearly 6 years.

The other case was the very man whom he was thus sent to attend in gaol; and a more painful and unhappy one can scarcely be conceived. Born, as already stated, in Southwark, and of respectable parentage there, he was educated—and secularly speaking, very well educated too—in a celebrated school in that borough, of which the principle is to read the Bible as a text-book, but "without note or comment," as it is called, but in other words, with only such comments as the boys suggest themselves. He read and wrote well; and his knowledge of the Bible was thus minute, and in a sort even critical. He quoted texts on every occasion, and compared them one with another, but always in scoff and derision,—pointing out (alleged) contradictions in them, being thus a most dangerous companion for the other men. He was transported when only 17 for burglary, and was only 22 when sent to Norfolk Island, after having incurred two sentences of death in N. S. Wales, and receiving a third on the island. The last was not for a very grave offence (an assault on an old man against whom he alleged, but could not prove, provocation), and he would scarcely have been so seriously tried for it but that a Commission from Sydney to try other offences was on the spot at the moment. When tried, however, and sentenced, his character in the colony was so extremely bad that it was supposed he would certainly be executed. He thought so himself, and was dreadfully frightened, and in his agony asked for the company and attendance of the other prisoner, who had by this time acquired the character almost of a home missionary among his companions. Yet, when the wretched man was at length reprieved under a commuted sentence, and consequently discharged among the others, the very next day the writer saw and heard of him as gay, and flash, and ribald as ever; and hearing of him four years afterwards he was still unaltered, and by this time quite blind through having scraped quick-time into his eyes to escape work.

From these anecdotes, then, to which more might be added, it appeared to the writer that some important lessons might be deduced, bearing both on Education and Prison Discipline. They illustrate the extreme importance, as regards recovery from crime, of extending as widely as possible among our population early devotional teaching, directed chiefly to stimulating conscientiousness, and instilling an early sense of personal responsibility. It did not appear of much importance with what specific code of theology this was combined provided it was instilled early, and thus, almost of necessity, dwelt more on the points on which nearly all agree, than on those on which some differ. In this case, however, the impression may have been overborne for a time under the influence of youthful levity, strong temptation, or other
adverse circumstance, it was easily renewed, especially if presented under the forms with which it was originally connected. But on the other hand, if youth (the season when the sentiments are most excitable and retain the impressions made on them with most tenacity) is once passed without any similar feelings being kindled, it seemed almost impossible to awaken them afterwards for the first time in mature years; and when the same precious season had been passed, either in treating, or allowing the Scriptures to be treated with disrespect, or in disregarding or forgetting them altogether, as is too often the case where secular and religious education are early separated, then all the phenomena readily appeared, evidenced in the unhappy man’s case last cited, and in the general disregard approaching even to distaste for all religious exhortation evinced by the great mass of the Anglican Protestants on Norfolk Island.

The inference in regard to these last was thus unavoidable, and the writer could wish even to press it. In early devotional training, and in its results, they were obviously inferior to all other denominations; and in framing a new and improved system of National Education, it would seem important to consider this specially. It would be best met perhaps by a liberal encouragement on the part of Government and the Legislature extended to infant schools of all denominations, embracing especially children between three and seven or eight years of age; and in the improved character that would be thus diffused among the population, (for such is the influence of children over their parents that improvement in the one speedily ascends to the other,) and the increased power gained by the Government in recovery from crime, and possibly also in restraining from it, abundant repayment, perhaps even in money, would speedily be obtained for the direct outlay. The plan would also extend widely the elementary knowledge on which a higher intellectual education may be afterwards based; it would diminish the objection that now exists to this being separated from religious instruction altogether, or this latter being given at different hours in the same school by different men,—a method which, on much observation among criminals, the writer considers pregnant with many evils, as fixing attention early on religious differences, impairing thereby the authority of religious teaching generally, and leading thus directly to infidelity. Moreover, by shewing Government thus anxious to rear a virtuous people, as well as an intellectual one, it would fix attention on this object, and thereby probably promote other means conducive to it; and by uniting all denominations in teaching elementary personal religion it would gradually lessen the keen, almost combative, interest that so many now take in points either purely dogmatic, or only disciplinary. Instead of promoting sectarian teaching it would thus gradually rather put it down; and if the pastors of the several congregations would also earnestly endeavour through the children to interest the parents in their lessons, the improvement generally would probably be even rapid. Much would be effected by the mere declaration of the object contemplated.

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