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THE
DANGEROUS AND PERISHING
CLASSES.

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BY REV. JOHN EDGAR, D.D.

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The Dangerous and Perishing Classes. By the Rev. John
Edgar, D.D.

THERE is a class around us—alas, how large!—for whom experience seems to say that no reformation morning will ever dawn. Their conscience has become seared, their heart is hard and brawny; they have made up their minds for ill; they have striven against conscience, and have prevailed; they have passed their eleventh hour; all the ordinary means of reformation, by Providence and grace, have been tried upon them, and have all been tried in vain.

But these are not the young, for they are the hopeful, the tearful, the pliant, the loving and accessible, the easily-persuaded and easily impressed, and comparatively pure. If good, O, how good! and if ill, who shall record their terrible history, descending from one fearful landing-place to another of more and more terrible guilt and misery, polluted and polluting, scourging the world as with the destroying angel's sword, and sowing, in each moment of their infamous lives, a deadly seed, to be reaped by unborn generations to remotest years.

Here, beyond all comparison, are the most interesting, important, and hopeful objects of our regard. On these, before it be too late, on their understandings and their hearts, let us bring, in faith and prayer, enlightening, purifying, and reforming influences.

If children are allowed to grow up in misery, subject from the cradle to want, wretchedness, and ill usage—if they are cut off from opportunities of learning religion—if they hear no word of kindness, experience no sympathy—if home and its endearments are to them unknown—if they are accustomed to witness exhibitions of cruelty, indecency, and brutality—what can be expected but a race of paupers and criminals?

“The country is wearied,” said Lord Ashley, “with pamphlets and speeches on gaol discipline, model prisons, and corrective processes; meanwhile crime advances at a rapid pace: many are discharged because they cannot be punished, and many become

worse by the very punishment they undergo. Punishment is disarmed of a large part of its terrors, because it can no longer appeal to any sense of shame; and all this, because we will obstinately persist in setting our own wilfulness against the experience of mankind and the wisdom of revelation, and believe that we can regenerate the hardened man, while we neglect the pliant child."

Young hearts are well fitted to receive impressions for good, but young hearts, if not swept away by the destroyer, will soon be old; and multitudes of them are learning fatal lessons in the dark abodes of neglected poverty.

It is the nature of everything to produce its kind. Neglect will produce alienation—harshness will lead to stubbornness. From a neglected population come the thousands who fill our hospitals, poor-houses, and gaols. They are trained to no useful trade; no feeling of honest self-dependence is cultivated; they are taught to look to their own resources for nothing which begging, and lying, and thieving, can supply.

We live in the midst of a juvenile population, destitute of counsel, care, teaching, except what is pernicious—many of them without any honest means of procuring a livelihood. When we think of them, in their holes and corners, and filthy hovels, in their desperate state of self-abandonment, and exposed to a thousand influences for ill, a distressing hopelessness comes over us—an impression that they are beyond the reach of human aid, and that, unless God work for them some miracle of grace, in thick darkness they must continue to live, in thick darkness at length they must die.

But the young generation are capable of better things; they might be trained to industry and virtue, instead of idleness and crime. The vice of childhood ripens into the crime of manhood. The boy, kicked to-day for trying to steal an apple from a stall, will probably mature into a hardened thief, and be at length transported from the felon's bar. The child sent out to whine falsehoods to excite compassion, will not be easily taught a respect for truth. To undermine the peace and security of states, there are no more effectual means than those which corrupt the morals of the young. The little creatures among whom we wade along the thronged holy-day streets, are fathers, teachers—examples of a coming generation. It is not more difficult to raise a generation of able men and beautiful women from a race of cripples, than to bring forth a high-minded, intellectual, moral population, from dens of idleness, ignorance, poverty, and crime. As well might the Dutch gardener expect, after having spent years in training his trees into most unnatural forms, to restore them to their native symmetry and beauty, as to take the human being, trained under evil influences till his character became fixed, and make him

what, by the noble nature which his Creator gave, he is fitted to be.

The work must begin with the pliant, hopeful young, else successive generations will sink lower and lower still in the gulf of ignorance, and crime, and misery; and the saying of Jeremy Taylor will be verified—"If the people die for want of knowledge, they who are set over them shall also die for want of charity."

SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION.

I confine myself to the perishing and dangerous classes, specially the young, and commence, by inquiring—*What is the true extent and real state of juvenile delinquency?*

ERRONEOUS VIEWS AND STATISTICS.

Unhappily, certain benevolent societies and individuals, in the warmth of their zeal for carrying out a favourite plan, have, in ignorance or carelessness, spread very erroneous views, and built systems on very erroneous statistics.

LONDON PROSTITUTES.

A deplorable illustration of this is furnished by the exaggerated representations published of the number of prostitutes in London.

Colquhoun, in a blundering statement on the police of London, published fifty years ago, calculated the prostitutes of the metropolis at 50,000, when its male population did not exceed 400,000. Making reductions, therefore, for the very old, the very young (not to speak of the married or the virtuous), here would be one prostitute in the proportion of every three or four males; and thus every third female in London would be earning the wages of wickedness. Yet, strange to say, Dr. Harris, in his *Great Teacher*, gives currency to these absurdities; and when London had increased to a million and a half, benevolent societies were publishing, and they still are publishing, the number of prostitutes as 80,000, though an official inquiry had decided that there were not above 7,000.

PRIZE-ESSAY.

I shall furnish another illustration immediately connected with my subject. A person, deeply impressed by the evils of intemperance, published his conviction, that the growing prevalence of juvenile depravity, and the inadequacy of the means employed to meet the evil, have long challenged inquiry. Intemperance he declares to be the monster evil of our country—the source, directly or indirectly, of the greater portion of juvenile depravity—and he offers £100 as a prize to the best essay on the subject.

Juvenile depravity having been thus declared to be on the in-

crease, and the various means employed to meet the evil having been pronounced inadequate, one essay of fifty-two is published as pre-eminent.

What are the lessons which it proposes to teach? As in duty bound by the £100 prize, it lays as its foundation that, while education, both of daily and Sunday schools, with other moral means, was increasing, from 1842 till 1846, juvenile depravity was increasing too; so that the flood of wickedness was rising and spreading in Christian Britain, in spite of all efforts to keep it down.

And on what proof does this awful announcement rest?—what, in fact, is the rock on which Mr. Worsley's whole £100 prize-essay, entitled "Juvenile Depravity," stands? Solely on the following arithmetical figures.

The following he states to be the proportion of crime committed by persons under 20, to the whole mass of crime in Britain, committed by persons of all ages, between the years 1842 and 1846:—

	1842.	1843.	1844.	1845.	1846.
Aged under 15, ~~~~~	5·3 ~~~	5·7 ~~~	6·0 ~~~	6·4 ~~~	6·5
Aged 15, and under 20, ~~~	22·0 ~~~	22·7 ~~~	23·3 ~~~	24·1 ~~~	24·5

Let us examine this solemn proof of an awful theory—that juvenile crime is increasing, and that all the means for preventing this are unavailing. It is a comparison of the quantity of juvenile crime with the quantity of adult crime, from 1842 till 1846; and it shows that, during these years, the proportion of juvenile crime increased from 27·3 per cent. to 31 per cent.

And may not every man see that the proportion between juvenile and adult crime might be increasing, while yet the whole amount of crime, both adult and juvenile, might be diminishing? This, in fact, was the case in the present instance; for the total amount of crime in 1842 was 30,788, while in 1846 it was only 24,517.

In 1842, the amount of juvenile crime was 8,432, while in 1846 it was 7,610. In addition to this, we must recollect that the population in 1846 was 5 per cent. greater than in 1842; hence, the number of juvenile offenders should have been 8,843, to maintain the proportion, whereas it was only 7,610, being 14 per cent. less. If we subtract from these numbers those for adult and juvenile crime in Middlesex, containing Loudon, we shall have a decrease of 20 per cent. of juvenile crime, instead of an increase, laid down by Mr. Worsley as the corner-stone of his whole theory.

So much for mere theory, without fact; so much for ignorance of statistics. The worthy man who gave the prize has lost his money, and he and his adjudicators have unwittingly become circulators of error.

NUMBER OF CRIMES AND CRIMINALS.

There is another source of deception against which we should guard. When we hear of the immense amount of property stolen in such places as Liverpool and London, and the number of cases brought before magistrates, we are tempted to form exaggerated notions of the number of criminals, and of the immorality of the community.

Three considerations should here be taken into account:— First, the number of convictions for crime is not alone to be relied on as an index of the general state of morality, but merely of the state of a distinct class in the community—the degraded and dangerous class. Secondly, the number of commitments is no certain test of the real number of criminals, because the same individual is committed many times.

The criminal population, says Mr. Hill, before the Lords in 1847, is much smaller than is imagined, in consequence of the very large number of offences which one habitual criminal commits. In Kinghorn, he says, containing a population of 1,500, there were nine thieves: and 20,000 separate offences against law had been committed by fourteen members of the families of three brothers.

It is stated in Mr. Neison's statistics of crime that, in the whole of England and Wales, the number of persons under fifteen years of age tried and convicted, only form about one-seventeenth of the total number of all ages.

SPECIES OF CRIME PREVALENT.

The third consideration to be kept in view is the character and species of crime committed.

Three-fourths of all the crime of the country is confined to offences against property, without violence, and more than nine-tenths of this is committed by persons of 16 years of age, and under.

A very considerable proportion of offences which our law punishes with fearful severity, are such as mere children are seduced to commit by others, or tempted in childish ignorance, or thoughtless of the terrible consequences.

Stealing knockers or abusing policemen is deemed a laughable frolic by a young scion of nobility; but if a poor child of eight or ten steals a toy lying temptingly exposed, he is shut up in the common prison, branded with infamy, robbed of self-respect, perhaps whipped like a slave; and, at all events, exposed to the pollution of the vilest society, and the acquaintance and seduction of the most destructive agents of ill.

To understand this subject fully, bear in mind that, independent of the amount of crime perpetrated by individuals perhaps only once arraigned at their country's bar, there is a distinct and

separate quantity, perpetrated by a peculiar and separated class, whose profession is crime. Within this class are included not only the professional thief and housebreaker, but the whole of the vagrant and dissolute, who now and again labour, and eke out subsistence by pilfering.

From the police reports of London, Manchester, and Hull, it appears that the proportion of offences committed by the vicious and dangerous classes is to the whole number of offences, 33 per cent. in London, 38 in Manchester, and 43 in Hull. We are safe in calculating that one-third of the crime of all our large towns is committed by these classes.

The proportion of convictions, over England and Wales, from 1839 to 1846, among vagrants and reputed thieves, was 35·4 per cent.

Taking for granted, then, that one-third of all town offences against law are committed by the criminal class, we can make an approach to the knowledge of the actual number of cases of crime.

The total population of the towns of England containing 14,000 and upwards, is above five millions, say one-third of the whole population.

The number of offences tried from 1839 to 1846 was, on an average, 27,120 annually. One third of these are 9,040, but as such crime is more frequent in large towns, call this number 10,500—that is to say 10,500 crimes cognisable by law are committed in the great towns of England—then one-third of this number would give 3,500 as the offences committed annually by the criminal class. Suppose 10 per cent. of crime to be committed by the criminal class in all the rest of the population, we have the alarming number of 5,162 offences committed each year by this one class, or 19 per cent. of the whole—that is, one-fifth part of all the crime of the country.

The statistics of crime in Ireland are strange and sad. With only one-third the population of England, Ireland had, in 1850, 33,326 committals, while England had 31,281. Of the 31,000 committed, 23,900 were convicted, while of Ireland's 33,000, only 17,108 were convicted. Of these 1,858 were sentenced to transportation, and 17 to death. In 1848, we had nearly 40,000 committals, about 3,000 sentenced to transportation, and 60 to death. Compare with these statistics the fact that, in 1841, 53 per cent. of our whole population could neither read nor write, Parliament think right to maintain among us 25,000 soldiers and 13,000 police to keep us in order.

This class cost the community each year, for police and prisons, and the administration of law, not less than £500,000. But what is that sum in comparison with what that same class steal and destroy; and how small a matter are both together,

in comparison with the incalculable moral evil of having such a class in the very heart of the community, in contact with our servants, our children, poisoning, and polluting, and exercising a thousand evil influences on all the best interests of the community.

AGE OF CRIMINALS.

The next consideration respecting the individuals of this class to which I call attention, is their *age*.

2,894 persons were sentenced to be transported in 1846, of whom 299 were under 17. Mr. Neison has shown, in the *Statistical Journal* for October 1846, that about 64 per cent. of all criminal offences in England and Wales are committed by persons from 15 years of age to 30.

At the Middlesex Sessions, in 1847, Sergeant Adams drew the attention of the Grand Jury to the fact, that twenty-four of the offenders on his list did not each exceed 12 years of age; and that, in one year, summary convictions had taken place in 1,600 cases, on children between the ages of 7 and 15.

"I have sometimes cases tried before me," says Sergeant Adams, "for stealing penny tarts, oranges, two or three apples, and articles of that kind. In one case, a child of 9 years of age, wholly unknown to the police, was tried before me for taking a little toy hammer, value a penny, from a basketful at a shop door."

There are generally, in the prison at Tothill Fields, 600 convicts, one-third of them being of the age of 16 and under. In March 1847, there were 10 under 8; 36 of 8, 9, 10; one-third of the whole, throughout the year, being females. One poor child had been committed, under 6, an object of wretchedness and misery. Two boys, one of 7, the other of 8, were sent to Millbank prison, under sentence of seven years transportation. "In 1844," says Captain Groves, "I received 31 transports under 12, 75 from 12 to 14, and 233 from 14 to 17." Of 8,405 convicted in Dublin, from 1842 till 1850, 3,288 were under 20 years of age.

MEANS USED WITH CRIMINALS.

"What can be done with this little child?" said a judge, when a creature of 7 years of age, and two feet ten inches in height, was found guilty of picking pockets. "It would be ruin to send him to prison. Am I to change my nature, and steel my feelings against the claims and helpless condition of so small a creature? What can be done with this child?"

This question of the judge is one of momentous importance, one connected with the very best interests of individuals, and of the whole community,

PUNISHMENTS.

The melancholy answer which the legislature of our country gives to the question is chiefly expressed in one word—*punish*.

The general subject of the punishment of juvenile offenders is not my subject now; but I shall furnish a few facts to enable all to judge whether our dependence for prevention or reformation is to be placed on the penalties of law.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENTS.

With the question of the propriety of capital punishments, in regard to criminals themselves, I have now no concern; but a fact or two may cast light on their character as means of reform.

“On approaching Newgate prison, on a Sunday,” says Mr. Gilpin, “previous to the day fixed for the execution of a female, I was astonished to find that, even at that early hour, not quite seven o’clock, many had collected to insure good places for seeing the spectacle of to-morrow. A large number of these were young people, almost children, but old in profligacy. These intended to remain all night in the street for the morning show. I spoke to several, and it was evident that they all looked to the hanging as they would to a prize-fight or a bull-bait, only that the hanging was far more attractive and exciting. The lewd, obscene, and filthy conversation of these young expectants of the moral lesson about to be taught them by a Christian government, would have convinced me,” says Mr. Gilpin, “that, were we desirous of promoting, instead of checking, the demoralisation of our people, we could not adopt a better means than public executions.”

Mr. Roberts, of Bristol, who, for many years, visited criminals under sentence of death, says, that of 167 whom he thus visited, 165 had attended previous executions. It is well known to the police, that pickpockets, and depredators of all kinds, expect a rich harvest at public executions; and public-houses, on such occasions, are filled.

These facts do not certainly prove much for the reformatory character of the hangman’s trade.

CORRECTIVE PUNISHMENTS.

Let us next inquire what hope of reformation may be derived from more lenient punishments.

One of these is *imprisonment*. Mr. Smith, governor of Edinburgh gaol, states, that he considers short imprisonment of young offenders to have the most mischievous effects possible; it inure them to imprisonment by slow degrees, till it becomes no punishment at all. The fact that a boy has been imprisoned, goes far to ruin him for life.

Sixty-two out of every hundred are sentenced to not more than twenty days, twenty-one out of each hundred to no more than ten days, and about two and a-half per cent. to no more than five days.

A single individual has been known to be imprisoned 110 times in fifteen years, the sentences ranging from five to sixty days.

"I think," says Sergeant Adams, "as to children (confining the term to children from 7 to 12), prison discipline is incompatible with their reform."

"I am confident," says the Rev. Mr. Russell, "that, in the great majority of cases, the juvenile delinquent is rendered much worse, and much more dangerous to society, by imprisonment. I have visited prisons where children were brought in for the first time, and have seen them, overwhelmed with fear and distress, clinging, with instinctive dread, even to the officer who brought them; and I have seen those very children, three or four days afterwards, laughing and playing in the prison-yard with other convicts; and I felt that the dread of a prison was gone from those children for ever.

"Imprisonment," says Lord Cockburn, "has very seldom, if ever, reclaimed juvenile offenders. The case of a truly reformed thief, whether old or young, who has defied two or three convictions, is a phenomenon of very rare occurrence indeed."

"When a boy is imprisoned for three or five days," says a chaplain of Liverpool gaol, "it loses all its terror—he leaves the prison more callous than when he entered it.

Of the impotency of imprisonment to effect reform, a melancholy illustration is furnished by the prisons of Scotland, in the case of females. The per-centage of female prisoners in all the prisons of Scotland, is nearly one-half; of juvenile female prisoners, under 17, between one-fifth and one-sixth; but the per-centage of recommitments of juvenile female prisoners is greater by one-half than that of males.

WHIPPING.

Another form of punishment which the law inflicts on juvenile offenders is whipping. What hope of reformation does this offer? The system is thus concisely expressed by a boy of fourteen, whose mother was dead, and whose drunken father had deserted him:—

"Sent," says he, "to Giltspur Street prison; was fed on bread and water; instructed every day by the chaplain and schoolmaster; felt anxious to do better; behaved well in prison; well flogged the morning I left; back bruised, but not quite bleeding; then turned into the street, ragged, barefooted, friendless, home less, penniless."

Most of the judges examined before the Committee of the House of Lords express themselves favourable to corporal punishment ; and Sir Peter Laurie, in his evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons, in 1850, says—" If there was a whipping-post at every police-station in the metropolis, I am sure it would have a most beneficial effect. I am quite satisfied," he says, " that nothing would deter juvenile offenders so much as corporal punishment."

This is one side of the picture, let us look at the other.

" Whipping," says a Lord Justice-Clerk of Scotland, " is not now resorted to in Scotland. To whip and dismiss a boy, I believe, would be utterly useless. He would be immediately surrounded by his associates, consoled with drink, and only hardened and confirmed."

" Whipping, I have no doubt, would often be salutary," says Lord Cockburn, " but it is attended with two risks, which it is difficult to avoid—one is, the danger, especially in obscure places, of undetected cruelty ; the other, that, where the infliction fails to amend, it makes the culprit a greater blackguard than he was."

" I have never," says the Rev. Mr. Field, chaplain of Reading gaol, " I have never seen any reclaimed by corporal punishment. I believe it has a hardening effect."

Few persons are better qualified to judge on such a subject than the Rev. Mr. Clay, of Preston, and here is his testimony :—" For twenty years, boys, convicted of a first crime, were sentenced to be whipped, the punishment being intended to deter them from repetitions of their offences, and the hundreds of other boys who heard the sentences passed, from venturing at all on evil courses. But the example failed in both respects. When the sentence of transportation followed a second offence, even this necessary severity failed to operate as a deterring example ; and boys crowded into prison, as if emulous of the base notoriety which a sentence of transportation conferred. In the last two years in which whipping was used, 71 boys were tried, and 29 transported. In the two years before 1849, when there was no whipping, 41 boys were tried, and only 4 were sentenced to be transported."

Mr. Hill, Recorder of Birmingham, thus expresses his own opinion, and that of his father, after long experience in the school of Hazlewood :—" The deterring effect of corporal punishment is merely temporary, and it has a hardening effect. I certainly," says he, " have never awarded it, and I do not think I ever shall."

To illustrate the course of criminality in connexion with the penalties of law, let us take a case. In 1850, Robert Walsh, son to a poor blind man, was committed to Bath gaol seven days for

begging, at the age of 7, and utterly uneducated. Again he appeared for the same offence and punishment, three days after his discharge, and a third time in the following year. The fourth time he comes, not for begging, but for stealing. In the winter of the same year, he is sent to prison two months for a garden robbery. The sixth time, he is sent to prison for stealing a cocoa-nut, and the seventh, as a vagrant. The eighth time, he is sentenced, as a rogue and vagabond, to three months' imprisonment. The ninth committal is for felony; and now it is seen that his prison life has made him bold and insolent. He bounds into the dock, casts his eyes around the court, and, with a nod, sets his head erect, and says, "Not guilty." Would you not say, when considering such a case, as Mr. Pearson said, in 1847, to the Lords' Committee:—"I earnestly press on your Lordships that a child should not be subjected to criminal punishment for petty offences, when, from its ignorance and destitution, arising from parental neglect, it is out of its power to know, or, even knowing, to obey the law?"

The testimony of the Committee of the Lords, in 1847, is surely sufficient, in regard to the hope of reformation associated with the imprisonment of the young. It is this:—"That the contamination of gaols, as gaols are usually managed, may often prove fatal, and must always be hurtful, to boys committed for a first offence; and that thus, for a very trifling act, they may become trained to the worst of crimes, is clear enough. But the evidence gives a frightful picture of the evils which are thus produced."

TRANSPORTATION.

The last system to which I shall refer is transportation, that we may see what hope it supplies of reform.

Look, for illustration, to Norfolk Island. "In the large prison of Norfolk Island," says Dr. Wilson, "there were 800 men—500 old prisoners, and 300 fresh men from England; some of these were young lads who had never shaved. They were shut up together each night, from eight till five next morning, without any superintendence. From what I have seen of the system of transportation," says he, "as it now works, I certainly do not consider it, looking at it morally, a mode of punishment lawful for a Christian nation knowingly to inflict; nor do I think that any amount of necessity of deterring crime will justify the continuance of such a punishment as that at present administered." Hear, in confirmation of this, the evidence of one of these wretched convicts himself:—

"The men," says he, "were in an island by themselves, under sentence, with nothing before them but misery, and they cared nothing about their lives. I have seen so many murders, that I

do not know which you refer to. I have seen men cut up, in barracks, just as you would cut up meat. I have seen 21 men hanged in a fortnight in New South Wales: they were hanged for little or nothing. Those horrible murders were committed in Moreton Bay. The men were pressed with hard labour, and heavily ironed, and very badly clothed and treated. The system was rather too severe, and they killed individuals along-side of them when they were in this state. They were in a state of frenzy."

Can anything be more horribly revolting, anything farther removed from all means and all possibility of reform?—yet hear the testimony of Captain Groves, governor of Millbank prison, to which prisoners sentenced to transportation are sent. "In 1844," says he, "I received 31 transports under 12 years of age, 75 from 12 to 14, 233 from 14 to 17; making a total of 339 under 17, out of 3,669 who had passed through my hands." In the course of three years, he received, under sentence of transportation, 1,271 mere children.

IGNORANCE A CAUSE OF CRIME.

Let us, in the next place, turn our attention to the *causes* of crime. That there is an intimate connexion between ignorance and crime is evident.

According to the Report of the Inspector of Prisons for 1846, of 25,008 prisoners, 7,831 could neither read nor write, and only 2,150 could read and write well.

From a table by Mr. Neison, calculated for 1842-3-4, it appears that, of about 70,000 criminals, 21,000 could neither read nor write, and only 308 had received a superior education. The Rev. Mr. Clay, chaplain of Preston gaol, says, "that in three years he has had charge of 1,733 men and boys, and 387 women and girls, altogether unable to read; with 1,301 men and boys, and 287 women and girls, who knew not the name of the reigning sovereign; with 1,290 men and boys, and 293 women and girls, so incapable of receiving moral and religious instruction, that to speak to them of virtue or vice, iniquity or holiness, was to speak to them in an unknown tongue; with 1,120 men and boys, and 257 women and girls, so destitute of the merest rudiments of Christian knowledge, so untaught in religious forms and practices, that they knew nothing even of the name of Jesus, and could not utter a prayer."

Of the 1,211 persons in Dublin convicted of crime, in 1847, 682 could neither read nor write, 22 could read and write well, and only 2 had received a superior education. Of 57,546 criminals in Ireland, in 1848 and 1849, 34,309 could neither read nor write. Of 8,405 convicted in Dublin, from 1842 till 1850, 4,686 could neither read nor write, while only 19 had received a superior education.

Mr. Clay speaks on an experience of 25 years, when he says, before the Lords' Committee, in 1847, that the cases of extreme ignorance among the juvenile and adult prisoners is 43 or 45 per cent. Of 1,383 prisoners in Preston, he says that 37 per cent. were ignorant of the Saviour's name, and unable to repeat the Lord's Prayer; that 12 per cent. of them could not count 100; that not one of them all was familiar with the Scriptures, or well instructed; while 44 per cent. had read, or heard read, books about Dick Turpin and Jack Sheppard."

"In 1846," says Rev. John Field, of Reading gaol, "of 631 prisoners, only 3 had received a superior education, 236 could not read, 204 were ignorant of the Saviour's name, and could not repeat the Lord's Prayer—2 only of the whole were familiar with the Scriptures, and had been well instructed in religion. A greater number of them had received some measure of instruction; yet, so wretchedly defective had been the character of their education, that, for restraining vice, or directing in the practice of duty, it had been altogether inadequate. The ear and tongue had learned words, but the mind had received no ideas or impressions.

Such facts establish an undeniable connexion between ignorance and crime; this, however, is far from the true philosophy and true Christianity of the case.

EDUCATION.

"What can be done with this little child?" said the good judge, when a creature 7 years of age, and two feet ten inches high, was found guilty of picking pockets. "It would be ruin to send him to prison. What can be done with this child?"

There is a large class who have a ready answer for the Judge, in one word—*Educate*.

"The one idea," says Mr. Flint, "of such writers as Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Symons, is, that ignorance is the efficient cause of crime; and, as crime has increased at a greatly accelerated speed from 1836 to 1843, the conclusion was leaped to, that ignorance was also increasing, and in the same ratio. Variations were acknowledged to have been shown, oscillations in different years; but these were accounted for on the poetic philosophy that, though the wave of ignorance and crime has its occasional recoil, it is only to advance again with augmented force."

With all respect to high names by whom this figure has been used, it is mere nonsense. How could the intelligence of the community rise and fall like a wave in the course of a year?—how could it either rise or fall suddenly? The intelligence of a nation is the aggregate amount of the intelligence of the individuals who constitute it; and surely that cannot move up and down, and down and up, from year to year, as it is notorious that the whole amount of a nation's crime often does.

The two great tests by which those who attach overwhelming importance to education judge of public morals, are the marriage-marks, and the numbers unable to read and write.

It is easy to show that these are no true index of the general state of morality ; in fact, they merely indicate the proportion of the operative class to all other classes ; and it is only necessary to look to the number of marriage-marks and of criminals in different places, to be convinced that there must be other causes at work in fostering crime than inability to read and write.

It is sufficient to put the three following counties in juxtaposition, to destroy all reliance on marriage-marks alone as indications of morality :—

	Marks.	Crime in proportion to 100,000 in the population.
Gloucester,	71	213
Derby,	129	85
Sussex,	69	137

Middlesex has fewest marriage marks, yet calculations, extending over forty-five years, show it to be the most criminal county in England. In 1841, 73 per cent., and in 1845, 76 per cent. of all the crime in the kingdom consisted of simple larcenies and embezzlements. It is easy, therefore, to understand how the overwhelming proportion of cases of crime occur in such places as London, Birmingham, Liverpool.

SOURCES OF DECEPTION.

The returns of persons unable to read and write, made by officers connected with prisons, are not to be depended on as certainly indicating the state of education. Juvenile thieves know that they are objects of compassion, and that ignorance is deemed the mother of their crime. When asked, therefore, "Can you read or write?" the ready answer is, "No." They then seem to improve wonderfully in gaol, but, when caught again, they have the same answer.

We would be still more exposed to deception, did we imagine that the criminality of juvenile offenders arises from their having never been at school—never having received what is commonly called education.

Mr. Pearson, in his evidence before the Lords, says that he spent much time in conversing with many hundreds of prisoners, separately and together, and the conviction produced on his mind was in entire accordance with the experience of Mr. Cotton, Ordinary of Newgate, that the juvenile delinquents, as a class, are not destitute of education, but that, on the contrary, a very large portion of them have received a considerable degree of instruction.

A governor of the Edinburgh prison says, "that of 170 juve-

nile prisoners who were examined on admission, it was ascertained that 121 had been connected with Sabbath-schools."

Rev. Mr. Wright, in his tract, "Common Sense," says:—"A respectable teacher of a Sabbath-school, near London, made inquiry respecting the first 100 children who had been scholars in his school. Of 65 of them, whose case he ascertained, 38 had become drunkards." "A list of 8 Sabbath-school teachers," says he, "was lately placed in my hands, 7 of whom had become drunkards."

Mr. Smith, governor of Edinburgh gaol, says, "that the number of his prisoners in 1846, who could neither read nor write, was 317 out of 4,513, 292 could read well, 85 could read and write well, and 3 had received a superior education. The number of commitments of those who can read well is much greater than of those who cannot read at all."

Parkhurst prison, in the Isle of Wight, was established for juvenile prisoners sentenced to transportation, with a view of reforming them. For admission, a boy must be 14, four feet six inches high, and of a character so depraved that he would be transported if Parkhurst did not exist.

Captain Hall, its governor, says, that the great majority of the boys sent there are uneducated; the proportion of those who can read and write with tolerable readiness is but small, and the proportion who have any understanding of what they read is small indeed. Yet it is a remarkable fact, that of between 1,100 and 1,200 boys received into Parkhurst, from 1838 to 1847, only 36 had never been at school. But though 96 or 97 per cent. were at school, they learned little or nothing—they were truants. The census of 1841 shows that 33 per cent. in Ulster, 38 in Leinster, 52 in Munster, and 64 in Connaught, could neither read nor write. Of 33,326 committals in 1850, in Ireland, 5,260 were in Ulster. Of 23 executions in Ireland, in 1849 and 1850, only 2 were in Ulster.

I have thus brought forward a mass of statistical facts apparently contradictory, yet really harmonious; one showing that the criminal class are uneducated, the other, that they have received instruction.

CRIME NOT INCREASING.

In connexion with this, there is one pleasing, hopeful fact, that crime is not increasing. Among the general population, ignorance and vice are not on the increase.

"It is very satisfactory to find," says Mr. Clay, as quoted by Mr. Hill, Inspector of Prisons, "that, notwithstanding there is still so much ignorance and drunkenness in the country, though much less than formerly, and notwithstanding there remain many causes of crime, I am of opinion, founded on many years'

observation, that the amount of crime, in this part of the country at least, has diminished; and I am satisfied that the same holds good in almost every part of Great Britain; and that scarcely any greater mistake exists than the prevailing idea that there is more crime in the country than formerly.

A superintendent of police for five and a half years, at Manchester, states that, during that time, there has been a considerable decrease in crime, and a marked general improvement in the orderly conduct of the people.

An important principle we must carry with us is, that the intelligence and morality of the people do not depend simply on the mere proportion of persons able to read and write. Education, in its widest sense, embraces all that forms men's opinions, extends their sphere of observation and experiment; and in a free country, with a free press, there is an infinity of causes always at work far more powerful in giving real education than mere teaching from the schoolmaster's desk. It is an admitted fact, that there was, from 1821 to 1845, a great retardation in the progress of crime. Now, if we place in juxtaposition the number of scholars at school and the number of criminals, it will be impossible to refuse the natural inference.

In 1803, there was one scholar for every seventeen and a half of the population, and, in 1846, one for every eight and a half.

From 1801 to 1821, there was an increase in crime of 112 per cent., while, from 1831 to 1845, there was only an increase of 6·9 per cent.

It would be foolish for us, however, to suppose that the total absence or bad quality of education engenders the criminal class—if by education we understand the best scholastic instruction given to the working-classes. How absurd to suppose that, because little crime prevails among the class who send their children to school, therefore to the school their morality is owed. Are we to leave out of account the holy influences of the domestic hearth and household, the example of parents and associates, and, in the greater number of instances, spiritual religious teaching? Mere teaching of the school will never secure those influences, which are by far the highest and the best.

READING AND WRITING NOT EDUCATION.

Mere reading and writing and intellectual training, such as the school provides, are not the essence of education. The living voice, the personal example, oral and traditional knowledge, the power of observation of men and things, the power of reflection, are independent of the mere knowledge of reading and writing, and they have made, and they can make, many a noble character, and many a noble people; and even when scholastic training

is at its best, the education which the boy and the man gets out of school has far more to do with the formation of his mind and character than what he gets in it.

We have abundant means of proving, from reference to the higher classes, that the mere education of the school or college is not sufficient to extinguish crime. Among those educated in the halls of Oxford and Cambridge, and the classic schools of Eton and Harrow, is seduction unpractised? Do they furnish no supplies to the gamblers of the turf and the betting-room? Is the public purse, or the purse of the private tradesman, never touched except by plebeian hands?

It is only, says Mr. Fletcher, in his essay on the "Moral Statistics of England and Wales," a careful upbringing of the young, far higher than can be tested by the lowest attainments in reading and writing, that is alone blessed to the good end of righteous living in Christian hope. The conclusion, he says, is therefore irresistible, that education is not only essential to the security of modern society, but that such education should be solid, useful, and, above all, Christian, in supersedence of much that is given by the weakest of the day-schools, and attempted by the most secular of the Sunday-schools. "I am of opinion," says Mr. Justice Cresswell, "that good education, including infant training, as well as sound religious and moral instruction, will do more to lessen the prevalence of crime than any mode of dealing with convicts that can be devised."

"Our best hopes," says Baron Alderson, "rest on a good and religious course of education for the people."

If we would carry out with effect the genuine education of the young, there must be on our minds a deep, lively impression of the immortality of the human soul, the universal parental government of God, and the equal value in His sight of the least poor perishing creature with the richest and noblest of our race. We must feel even a reverence blended with that intense pity which can never be separated from love for these poor children, co-heirs with ourselves of an eternal existence, and be able to discern, under the most degraded exterior of each, one for whom Christ died. Love must be the ruling sentiment of all who influence and guide the young. There is one great instinct in every human breast—a weary longing for kindness from our fellow-men, and delight in finding it.

We want teachers, says the *Ipswich Express*, who will take on their shoulders a heavy burden, and will, for the sake of their Saviour, deem it light, who will not grudge the time and the expenditure of their strength, or the sacrifice of their comfort, who will feel the responsibility of the work as much as if it rested entirely on themselves, and who will be anxious to be at their post at the appointed times, as though the whole machinery would stop if

they were not present: teachers whose hearts are bathed in Divine love, and who, in the spirit of Christ, will set about the work of Christ, who will not count their comforts, conveniences, aye, even their lives dear to them, for sake of their work; and who, after they have done all, will feel and say—We are unprofitable servants, we have done what it was our duty to do.

Children should always be so treated as to excite and cherish in their minds true self-respect—a high sense of the duty which each owes to himself as an immortal being.

They have been despised, treated with no respect, and they feel none. Let them be treated with true Christian politeness. Their rags will disappear before those who treat them as young immortals; and a frank, easy, a truly polite and respectful demeanour, will be their return. Let the child be made to feel that all the discipline to which he is subjected emanates from love, and even the most severe will not alienate him from the teacher who enforces it, but rather bind him to him.

“Few can conceive,” says the Rev. Mr. Clay, “the softening effect on a separated prisoner, when, in speaking the Word in season, an encouraging hand is laid on his shoulder.”

PREVENTION AND CURE :—THE TRUTH IN LOVE.

I have now shown something of the character and extent of the ignorance and crime, at least in its juvenile department, on which we are bound to cast enlightening reforming influence.

I have shown that, for the purpose of striving against this huge evil, there is a huge machinery connected with the legislature of our country, in its magistracy, police, its prisons, its transportations, its capital convictions.

This is, indeed, in all respects, a huge machinery. The county rates and cost of prosecutions in England and Wales, the expense of the metropolitan police, the prison at Pentonville, and convict establishments, amount to nearly two millions sterling every year. Every convict costs from £100 to £150; the annual cost of each prisoner is about £30; and thus it is easy to see what 78,000 prisoners passing each year through our gaols cost. Every child rescued from evil, and converted into a sober, industrious, honest citizen, is a clear saving to the country of from £300 to £500.

This is, however, only a partial view of what crime costs the public, and of the number of schools and pulpits, and all agencies for good, which might be maintained with what crime destroys.

Sergeant Adams presented to the Committee of the Lords a list of 530 prisoners, of 16 years of age and under, committed in 1846, showing that, by the value of property they stole, the cost of their prosecution and of their maintenance in prison, they were a burden to the public of much above £4,000.

Even this, however, gives only a partial view, for we have evidence to prove, in the case of eight individuals, all of the same family connexion, that between what they stole, and the expense to which they subjected the country, their cost to the community was not less than £13,000.

The facts which I have adduced are not calculated to exalt highly imprisonment, whipping, transportation, hanging, as means of effecting permanent and extensive reform. Their iron may enter into the soul, they may subdue and crush, and shut out from opportunity of doing extensive ill, but certainly they do not, like God's Word, give light, and, in no proper sense of the term, do they make wise the simple. They are not effective as a system of cure, and as a system of prevention they have little power.

There is a system, however, which has for many years been growing more extensive and more effective, the system of daily and Sunday schools, extending education in the ragged-schools to the most degraded and neglected classes; and it has been seen that cotemporary with these, and co-extensive with these, there has been a march of reformation. Juvenile crime has diminished as juvenile education has increased. The entrance of God's Word has given light, it has made wise the simple.

An exception to this great truth seems to have risen before us in the multitude of prisoners who had attended both daily and Sabbath schools, and yet had not been kept from crime. The exception, however, is only apparent—they had been at school, but they had not learned; they had been irregular and inattentive, or their time of attendance had been short, or the system of instruction employed on them was defective and bad.

If we examine them, we may find that they can read, but on closer inquiry, we discern that they do not understand the meaning. Perhaps they may reply, like one prisoner, "Sir, they never taught me any meaning." We may find, perhaps, that they can write and read fluently, and not only possess a considerable amount of information, but a remarkable acuteness and maturity of mind, such as are common among young criminals; but still they are lamentably deficient in what constitutes the very essence of good education; they are destitute of the knowledge which sanctifies, they have not been trained to honesty, truth, and holiness, they are not under the influence of those motives which constrain to the love and service of God, to justice, kindness, and faithfulness to man.

All these exceptions, therefore, however numerous, only strengthen the great principle and law, that the entrance of God's Word gives light. Carry out the system fully, and there is no uncertainty whatever as to the result. Teach the truth, the whole truth of God; teach it by precept, teach it by example; let the daily schoolmaster teach it, the teacher of the Sunday-school

teach it; let the father and mother, in the loved circle of home, teach it; let the minister of the Gospel from the pulpit teach it, in demonstration of the Spirit and power; let evangelical truth be proclaimed from the pulpit and the press; let evangelical truth form the sentiment and influence the lives of those who are the lights and guides of the people; and let the holy Word of God be everywhere circulated, everywhere elevated as the standard of faith and of duty; let the Word of the Lord have thus free course and be glorified; and then, beyond all doubt and all fear, improved legislation, enlarged knowledge, increasing purity and love, regenerated public opinion and practice, with a steady decrease in the number of the dangerous and perishing classes, will bear triumphant testimony to the glorious truth, that the entrance of God's Word gives light.

One of the most pleasing and hopeful proofs, in our day, of the power which Divine truth exercises over the human mind, is in the advancing reformation of the system of treating even the most degraded criminals. Mr. Greig, for example, states that nine-tenths of all convicts sent forth from Millbank prison can read and write; while of 284, embarked from it in 1843, 188 could neither read nor write. No wonder that the work of reformation should prosper under such a man, when he thus declares his views and wishes. "The system I desire to see in operation here can only effectually be kept up by the teacher, who, impressed with his own inefficiency, goes mildly and noiselessly to his duty, with a prayerful heart, and looks up to the teacher sent from God for help to carry it on. He must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves."

Strange as it appears, God's Word is giving light even in the prison-house of Norfolk Island, though till lately it seemed as hopeless as the grave of the convict sleeping near it, who, at the age of eighty-three, was transported to Botany Bay, and thence to Norfolk Island, for the term of his natural life, at the age of 103. A writer, in a number of the *Household Words*, says:—"From the boundary of the settlement there runs a well-trodden pathway to the cemetery, which is inclosed on three sides by tear-dropping hedges of manchineel, and on the fourth by a restless mourner, the vexed sea. The climate is healthy, but the graves are numerous and new." So he well may say, for in that land of cruelty, sorrow, and crime, many a rugged way of vice found a sad and sudden end, where no mother, wife, or sister, ever followed a bier, and no tear from woman's tender eye fell upon the lonely grave.

But, through the noble Christian energy of Captain Maconochie, even in Norfolk Island, the entrance of God's Word gives light; and in the very place where, a few years since, men planned

murders for the mere purpose of getting a temporary relief by being sent to New South Wales as witnesses ; in the very place where sentries had orders to fire into the dark, crowded prison, in case of disturbance : now, by the power of God's Word, by the infusion of its spirit, there are comparative liberty, good order, peace ; the whole state and circumstances of the convicts are changed, and not a few of them have furnished delightful evidence of genuine reformation.

One of the most interesting and remarkable illustrations of the force of truth is furnished by a volume which should be in every one's hands, entitled, *The Convict Ship, and England's Exiles.**

This paper will not have been read in vain, if it induce any one to set a higher value on the eternal truth of God, as heaven's own honoured means of restraining from vice, and restoring to virtue—if it prompt any to use with more earnestness, faith, and hope, the truth in love, as a means of reformation.

However great our talents, wealth, or fame, let us bear a kind and tender heart to the neglected poor, and

“ Whene'er thou meetest a human form,
Less favoured than thine own,
Remember 'tis thy neighbour worm,
Thy brother or thy son.”

* This volume contains a simple, humble narrative of the exertions of Dr. Browning for the spiritual good of convicts, in ten voyages, when he acted as a surgeon-superintendent, having had, in different ships, 2,420 convicts under his charge. On board the ship “ Earl Grey,” he received, from different hulks and prisons, 264 men, 188 of whom could not read, and only one of whom could not read at the close of the voyage, while 115 of them gave credible evidence, during the voyage, of having given their hearts to God. 220 convicts embarked with him on board the “ Theresa,” 156 of whom, during the voyage, dedicated themselves to the service of Christ ; while of 212, whom he superintended in the “ Hashemy,” 151 made, during the voyage, a credible profession of Christianity. 698 of those under his care were convicts of the most horribly savage and hardened character, whom he was removing from Norfolk Island. Such men are almost uniformly cross-ironed, and often chained to the deck. Dr. Browning was warned on no account to trust his life among them ; there were among them deep grudges, long cherished in revengeful hearts ; and the blood of murder was expected to flow from several devoted victims in the darkness of the ship's prison. But rancorous feeling subsided, vindictive purposes were forgotten, hatred seemed superseded by brotherly love, rude and barbarous language gave place to courteous politeness, and all were a happy family. And how were such wonderful changes effected ? Let Dr. Browning himself tell. “ As experience grew,” says he, “ and practical Christianity was from the beginning relied on, punishment of any kind became less and less called for ; and during my three last voyages, not only were no lashes inflicted, but not an iron was used, nor a convict placed in confinement under a sentry.” “ The foregoing record,” says he, at the close of his most interesting volume, “ exhibits nothing more than the happy effects which the instruction of the Scriptures is calculated to produce, and which has been promised to the believing and prayerful teaching of the Word. To God be all the glory ; the Gospel of his well-beloved Son, and gracious answers to believing prayers have been the means. All is of Christ.”

Minister, teacher, parent, remember that your duty towards each individual of the rising generation is, not to teach, but to train. Teaching is the mere impression of principles, training is the formation of character. There was a blind man at Stirling who could repeat every word of the Bible, and yet he neither knew nor felt its meaning. He had been taught, not trained, instructed, but not educated. Your business is to train immortal minds, your duty is to educate for eternity. To educate thus, it is necessary, not that you should possess merely knowledge, for "knowledge is proud because he knows so much," you must possess the genuine wisdom which the entrance of God's Word imparts, for—

"Wisdom is humble that he knows no more."

In such wisdom, and such humility, you will treat the poorest beggar's child as a gentleman; you will show him that you respect the noble being who was formed in the image of God—the immortal being, who will live and love when our sun and our stars are no more; and though required, as enlighteners of a dark world, and reformers of a world horridly depraved, to give light to eyes which have been long dark, and life to hearts which have been long dead, to curb passions which have been long unbridled, upturn errors which have been long decrooted, and, in one word, to make both hearts and character new, yet, never despair; with love in our hearts, and truth on our tongues, we go forth to certain victory. The means are God's, the spirit in which they are used is God's, and in His own time, and His own way, He will complete His own work, and advance His own glory; "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; So shall God's Word be that goeth out of His mouth: it shall not return unto Him void; but it shall accomplish that which He pleases, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto He sent it."