

STATISTICS
TO
ILLUSTRATE THE CONNEXION
BETWEEN
IGNORANCE AND CRIME:

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE
DUBLIN STATISTICAL SOCIETY,

ON MONDAY, 16TH FEBRUARY, 1852.

BY JAMES HAUGHTON, ESQ.

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THIS society was established in November, 1847, for the purpose of promoting the study of Statistical and Economical Science. The meetings are held on the third Monday in each month, from November till June, inclusive, at 8, P. M. The business is transacted by members reading written communications on subjects of Statistical and Economical Science. No communication is read unless two members of the council certify that they consider it in accordance with the rules and objects of the society. The reading of each paper, unless by express permission of the council previously obtained, is limited to *half an hour*.

Applications for leave to read papers should be made to the secretaries at least a *week* previously to the meeting.

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The subscription to the society is one pound entrance, and *ten shillings* per annum.

Statistics to illustrate the Connection between Ignorance and Crime —
By James Haughton, Esq.

GENTLEMEN,

I purpose, on the present occasion, to bring before the Society some facts in relation to education, that I have obtained from a few authentic documents which have come under my notice. From these it will appear that there is a striking coincidence between the crimes which are committed in our country, and the ignorance which too generally prevails among our population. If it would be unwise, from such premises, to arrive at the conclusion that ignorance—or the absence of intellectual cultivation—is the main cause of crime in Ireland; it will, at least, be seen that a large proportion of our criminal offenders are unacquainted with the rudiments of school education; and that even of those who have made any progress in such knowledge, the small amount they have arrived at is designated by the terms, “could read and write,” or “could read and write imperfectly.” The numbers who could “read and write well,” and who had received “a superior education,” comprise but a very small proportion of our criminal offenders; so small, that we may fairly exclude them from our consideration of the question. Indeed, as “the exception is said to prove the rule,” in this case we might not unreasonably assume that, if care were taken to impart to all our population the benefits of a superior education, our criminal calendar would be light indeed. However, I do not mean to pledge myself, nor the Dublin Statistical Society, to that opinion; my object is simply to lay before you the few facts I have obtained on this interesting subject, with a view to attracting your attention to it, so that the wisest conclusions which thoughtfulness on the subject may enable us to arrive at, shall be generally diffused throughout the community. For I hold that our labors here will prove of little practical value if we do not make them, through the means of our influence on society, subservient to the public good.

We must, in the first instance, endeavour to arrive at truth ourselves, then make it the rule of our own action, and afterwards press it zealously upon the minds of others, so that it may ultimately govern the conduct of all.

To illustrate this point a little more familiarly, and to give you my views upon it more definitely, let us suppose that this Society has arrived at the conclusion that life and property would be more secure, and that happiness and comfort would be more generally diffused, if the ignorance which so widely prevails were superseded by a universal diffusion of knowledge; then it will be our

duty to impart knowledge of the highest attainable character to all classes of our fellow-men.

My remarks, so far, have reference to the criminal offenders against society, and my statistics are all taken from that class. It is too well known that the moral as well as the criminal law are often violated by highly educated men; these offenders must be met by other and higher influences than mere school education are able to effect. So that we could not justly conclude that, if all our people had obtained that degree of intellectual training designated in the Police Reports "a superior education," criminal offences would be altogether unknown; yet the facts I am now to lay before you would seem to afford good grounds for the supposition that they would be greatly lessened; and, in this way, great social advantages secured to us all; and, in an economic point of view, a large saving in the public expenditure effected. The punishment of criminals is a very expensive affair, and what is of much more importance, we have not been yet able by our punishments, to devise any effectual means for the prevention of crime, or the reclaiming of offenders. I apprehend that an expenditure, by our Government, of any amount of money which might be needed for carrying into effect the universal education of the people, of the most liberal character, would prove in the end a wise economy of the public resources.

The antiquated idea, that learning for the masses is either useless or injurious, finds a place in the present day in but few intelligent minds. But society has to take the next important step, and that is, to arrive at the conclusion, that taxation for the purpose of education would prove highly advantageous in a pecuniary as well as in a social sense.

The following statistics are taken from "Tables showing the number of criminal offenders committed for trial, or bailed for appearance at the assizes and sessions, in each county in Ireland, in the years 1848 and 1849."

For 1848—Males	-	-	-	-	-	28,765
„ Females	-	-	-	-	-	9,757
						<hr/>
Total	-	-	-	-	-	38,522

Of these, 6,819 could read and write; 4,404 could read only; 16,275 could neither read nor write; and of the remaining 10,952, their instruction was not ascertained.

For 1849—Males	-	-	-	-	-	31,340
„ Females	-	-	-	-	-	10,649
						<hr/>
Total	-	-	-	-	-	41,989

Of these, 7,419 could read and write; 4,523 could read only; 18,034 could neither read nor write; and of the remaining 12,013, their instruction was not ascertained.

It does not appear from these Tables, whether any of the offenders had obtained a superior education, such as is alluded to in the returns of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, (to be noticed presently)

as no attention seems to have been paid to that point in other parts of Ireland.

Thus, in the general tables for 1848 and 1849, it will be observed, that the amount of school instruction received by a large number of offenders throughout the country has not been ascertained. It is to be regretted that any omission of so interesting and important an inquiry should appear in the tables, as the same care that has been given to the subject in Dublin would have supplied this defect in other quarters.

These tables show that in two years 80,511 persons of both sexes (many of them under twelve years of age) were taken up in Ireland for various offences; and that of these, 14,310 could read and write; 8,927 could read only; 34,309 could neither read nor write; and of 22,965, the degree of instruction could not be ascertained.

These criminal returns exhibit a lamentable amount of ignorance of even the rudiments of education among our general population—among those of our people who need all the aids which intellectual, moral, and religious instruction could afford them, in order to enable them to resist the temptations to which they are peculiarly liable. It will also be found that a larger amount of ignorance prevails amongst our rural than our metropolitan population, who are taken up for criminal offences.

It seems evident from the foregoing returns, which comprise the returns of the country at large, that crime and ignorance bear an intimate relation to each other; that even the limited amount of education implied in knowing how to read and write, tends to guard men against the commission of crime; and that few or none who receive a good education are found in the open violation of the laws.

We may hence infer that it would be greatly beneficial to society if all our people had the advantages of a good intellectual education. How much the more advantageous would it not be, if they had their moral and religious sentiments duly cultivated also.

I now proceed to give you extracts from “Statistical Returns of the Dublin Metropolitan Police:”—

	Could neither read nor write.	Could read only or read and write imperfectly	Could read and write well	Had received a superior education	Under 20 years of age	Tried and convicted
1842	650	407	25	2	468	1084
1843	439	323	32	3	295	797
1844	458	340	24	1	359	823
1845	399	311	18	1	256	729
1846	569	423	24	5	400	1021
1847	682	505	22	2	496	1211
1848	579	448	35	5	385	1067
1849	507	369	17	0	364	923
1850	403	328	19	0	265	750
Total	4686	3484	216	19	3288	8405

It will thus be seen that in Dublin, as well as in all other parts of the country, a large proportion of our criminal offenders, is taken from the uneducated classes of society. It is true that a large proportion of our people are still uneducated; so that, as I have before stated, it would perhaps be a hasty inference to conclude that ignorance is the main source of crime. Want of employment, and the destitution arising from that source, are, no doubt, the causes of much of the criminality which is unhappily found amongst us. But then the question arises, is not a great deal of this want of employment attributable to the ignorance of our people, who do not know how to bring out the latent vigour of their minds, or to apply their physical powers advantageously?

In the absence of industrial skill and knowledge, and of intellectual acquirements for their application, capital seeks investment where these essentials are to be found. Many able men have devoted much thought to, and written well on, the condition of Ireland, and in their writings will be found frequent allusions to the want of industrial knowledge of our people, and to the miserable condition of their existence. Among these may be mentioned Sir Robert Kane, Mr Jonathan Pim, and Professor Hancock. The necessary limits of this paper prevent my giving extracts in proof hereof from the published works of the two first named gentlemen, "The Industrial Resources of Ireland," and "The Condition and Prospects of Ireland."

I agree with Professor Hancock in the conclusion he arrives at, in his work on "The Impediments to the Prosperity of Ireland," that want of industrial knowledge is not the *main* cause of our backwardness in agriculture. But I think it evident that it is one of the causes which would, ere this, have to be removed out of our way, if we had been placed under good circumstances in other respects. And where manufactures are concerned, a considerable amount of industrial knowledge seems essential to success. In this quality, I imagine our people are very deficient; we have industrial skill and intelligence of a high order, but they are very limited in extent, compared with what is necessary to make us a prosperous nation.

It is frequently alleged that the poverty of the people is the great cause of the ignorance of the people. I apprehend we should be nearer the truth by the reversal of this maxim—by putting it thus, that their ignorance is the cause of their poverty. To remedy or remove this ignorance, we must place knowledge in its stead; and that end will be attained as soon as we can convince our people, that they will be all the happier by devoting some portion of their time and their money to the cultivation of their mental powers.

At a meeting held in Aberdeen on the 27th of October, 1851, for the purpose of raising funds to build churches, in order to prevent the alarming growth of crime arising from growing ignorance and increasing intemperance, (cause producing effect in this case with fearful rapidity) Lord Aberdeen stated as follows:—

"I shall not probably be thought guilty of exaggeration, or

blinded by national partiality, if I say that Scotland, for a long series of years, has been eminently distinguished among the nations of Europe for the moral, religious, and intellectual culture of its people. This has been generally, and indeed universally admitted; but can we say that this is the case at the present moment? I greatly fear that at this moment we are truly living on our former reputation. It is true that the population of the country has of late greatly increased, and with it there has been a great increase in our material wealth and prosperity; but I grieve to say that the increase of crime has been greatly beyond the proportion of increased population. I find that in the last twenty years the increase of crime has been six or seven times in an increased ratio to the population. I do not think that the increase of crime is to be met effectually by severe laws or punishments. The remedy must be sought for elsewhere. Again, I may observe, that with respect to the condition of the people, I recollect, in the course of last session of parliament, a noble friend of mine making a statement in the House of Lords, which at the time appeared to me utterly incredible. The Duke of Argyle stated, that in Scotland alone the amount of ardent spirits annually consumed was seven millions of gallons, thereby allowing more than three gallons for every man, woman, and child in the kingdom. Doubts being expressed with respect to that statement, reference was made to official documents, when it was proved that my noble friend was perfectly correct."

The decline of intellectual culture, referred to by Lord Aberdeen, may be easily accounted for by his other statements. The growing desire for intoxicating drinks has weakened the desire which existed for the acquisition of knowledge; and where that desire still exists, the increasing consumption of strong drink has lessened the ability to obtain it, by diverting into other channels that portion of the earnings of the people which would otherwise be applicable to mental improvement. Social improvement is thus interfered with in many ways. Ignorance grows apace; like weeds in the uncultivated soil, it soon usurps the place which was once better occupied; and vice and crime are the unfailing consequences.

I have obtained the official returns of the annual consumption of whiskey and of malt in each of the three kingdoms during the ten years ending with the year 1850, from which we may reasonably infer that, in all parts of the United Kingdom, the drinking customs of society absorb such an amount of the productive labours of the people, as to render it much more difficult than it would otherwise be, to raise the funds needful to extend to all classes of the people the advantages and the blessings of a liberal education; of such an education as would enlarge the minds of all, remove difficulties out of the progress of true civilization, and give stability to the free institutions of our country.

These returns are as follows, I do not give them as absolute proof

of the positions I have laid down; but I think reflecting men will acknowledge that great and serious evils must arise from such a waste of our national resources as these figures indicate.

In America, where this subject is engaging the best intellects of the land, the great truth is dawning upon men's minds, that national prosperity and the use of intoxicating drinks are incompatible; that the latter must be got rid of before the former can be secured. To my mind the proposition seems incontrovertible.

Consumption of whiskey in the United Kingdom in the following years:—

	England.		Scotland.		Ireland.
	Proof gallons.		Proof gallons.		Proof gallons.
1841.....	8,166,985	...	5,989,905	...	6,485,443
1842.....	7,956,054	...	5,595,186	...	5,290,650
1843.....	7,724,051	...	5,593,798	...	5,546,483
1844.....	8,234,440	...	5,922,948	...	6,451,137
1845.....	9,076,381	...	6,441,011	...	7,605,196
1846.....	9,179,530	...	6,975,091	...	7,952,076
1847.....	8,409,165	...	6,193,249	...	6,037,383
1848.....	8,531,327	...	6,548,190	...	7,072,933
1849.....	9,053,676	...	6,935,003	...	6,973,333
1850.....	9,331,512	...	7,122,987	...	7,408,086

The quantity of malt charged with duty is as follows:—

In England, 1841	30,956,394
" 1845	30,508,840
" 1850	34,423,789
In Scotland, 1841	4,058,249
" 1845	4,353,038
" 1850	4,639,159
In Ireland, 1841	1,149,692
" 1845	1,684,112
" 1850	1,682,102

The foregoing are taken from an Inland Revenue Excise return. They speak for themselves of ignorance and crime in abundance, and need no further comment from me.

In the *United Service Journal* for December, 1851, in an essay entitled, "More Observations on Crime and Punishment, by a Medical Staff Officer," I find the following statement, given on the authority of Mr. Alison:—

"It was then supposed education would prove the means of extinguishing crime, and was resorted to accordingly. Alas, after a trial extending to 25 years, it also has proved a failure. "In Scotland, the educated criminals are about four times the uneducated; in England they are double; and in Ireland they are nearly equal' Nor does it appear to have been more successful in other countries "

I have no means at hand of testing the truth of the foregoing as regards Scotland and England; but so far as it relates to Ireland, the statistics I have given, taken from official returns, prove its utter fallacy. It is a pity that writers of eminence should give publicity to statements so completely at variance with facts, as to cast a reasonable doubt on all their written statistics. Statistics to be valuable must be true, or, at all events, if it be impossible to arrive at perfect accuracy, great care should be taken in their collection, as they are a material element in enabling us to arrive at right principles of action.

I find also in the same essay, and given on the same authority, that "in France, with an efficient police, there is of serious crimes only 1 in 6,700 souls; whilst in England and Scotland, where the police is more defective, though not one in twenty of the crimes committed are detected, they are 1 in 514." This astounding difference is attributed to the relaxation of our criminal laws. I apprehend the criminal laws in France are less severe than ours. Would it not be more rational and a juster conclusion to arrive at, that in France the people are educated and sober, while in Great Britain the people are generally ignorant, and often maddened by intoxicating drinks?

This "Medical Staff Officer," in his reflections upon the causes of crime, has never once seemed to imagine that our drinking customs had anything whatever to do with crime, and yet he gives a striking quotation on the subject of Justice Therry's address to the jury, on opening the first circuit court at Brisbane, Moreton Bay, May 13th, 1850, in which Address that learned judge says, "In reply to the question, What is the cause of crime? the answer is, that intoxication is the hot bed from which crime springs. Directly or indirectly, all crime is traceable to it, the exceptions being so few as to establish the general rule." And he goes further into some particulars to establish the truth of this general proposition.

Want is, probably, the direct instigator to crime in many cases; but want itself is the result, or the product of ignorance. Ignorance or the absence of literary and moral education, springs in great measure from intemperance; because intemperance, in order to satisfy its cravings, demands all those spare resources which would, or might, if used otherwise, tend to the acquisition of knowledge.

Hence it is the interest of society to abolish all customs which lead to drunkenness, as drunkenness is a chief promoter of crime, not only by its direct influence, but because it is a great impediment to the progress of education.

I find in the December number of the *Bristol Temperance Herald*, an article on the "Impediments in the way of Education," from which I make the following extracts, as illustrative of the view of the case which I have just adverted to.

"It may be urged that ignorance is the parent of vice, and that poverty deprives children of education. Both assertions must be

taken, if taken at all, with very considerable qualifications, and in our judgment free schools would not meet the difficulty.

“ We have urged again and again, that parental neglect, or the intemperance of parents, are the main producing causes of juvenile depravity. The school may be opened, and the diligent and anxious teacher may extend his invitation, but how is he to proceed, if the father or mother will not relinquish the small earnings of the child in order that it may attend school, or if the parents do not feel the desirableness of securing education for their children. Supposing, again, that the children attend school, but return day by day to a home rendered miserable by the intemperance of one or both parents, the lessons are lost, as the home influences will always be stronger than those of the school. In order to have a fair field for the operation of our educational establishments, we must break down the habits of the people, those habits of self-indulgence which are obstructions in the way of all progress.

“ We return to this subject at this time, because we find that in the last report of the Council of the Board of Education, this view is borne out by the statements of many of the inspectors. They tell us that the wealth or poverty of certain districts, that the large or small earnings of the working classes, have really little to do with the numbers attending school, or with the duration of attendance; those receiving the lowest wages often doing the most for the education of their children. They complain greatly of the want of co-operation of parents. Mr. Mosely says, “To the success of the school, the first condition is the ready, cordial co-operation of the parents of the children. In recording my belief that this co-operation is in a great measure wanting, I am but giving expression to an opinion entertained by all those persons interested in education with whom I have conversed.” Mr. Kennedy says, ‘The condition of the employed of the poor themselves in factory districts, presents perhaps the greatest difficulty in the way of education, and one which it will be arduous to surmount. These are, the impediments arising from the social state and habits of the parents. They work hard, but they also drink hard. They earn good wages, but they also spend them, and acquire no property. This proletarian condition, this living from hand to mouth, always generates the greatest carelessness and neglect of duty. *To-morrow* is a word which has no place in their vocabulary. From this results a bad regime, which causes the education of the children to be wholly neglected. Mr. Symons said in 1847, in relation to the Monmouthshire population: ‘The children gain from 2s. 6d. to 10s. per week, and the parents almost universally regard this as a sufficient reason for keeping them from school, and it is rarely that they resist the temptation. Unfortunately, they seldom apply the wages thus earned to any means of improvement, but solely to the fund for sensual and animal pleasures.’ He then goes on to say, that a lady at one of the ironworks

informed him, 'that, finding a promising girl removed from school to pick coal at the pit's mouth, for which she could earn only 2s. 6d., or 3s. a week, the lady went to the parents to expostulate. The man declared he could not afford to spare the girl's wages—and this he said *whilst pouring rum into his tea*. This is a very small fact, but it depicts a habit.' Many equally striking instances might be quoted from the various reports, if space would permit. Perhaps there is no worse feature of our drinking system than this, that many of our working men, who are earning sufficient to keep their families in comfort, and the mother at her proper place, taking care of her home and her children,—are spending nearly all they earn at the public house, rendering it necessary that both mother and child should toil.

"We have evidence in many of our police reports, that the prosperity of several large towns has been attended with an increase of offences traceable to drinking houses and to drink. We are admonished by these facts to believe that the success of our schools does not depend so much on their being cheap and abundant, as upon the spirit we can awaken in our people, and the desire we can create in them to secure its blessings for their children. We have observed that wherever men become members of temperance societies, they almost universally seek to improve their homes, to clothe themselves decently, and to send their children to school. We have little hope that the school will invite, while the gin-shop and public-house spread their attractions to the workman. Unless he conquers his appetite for drink, we have no faith that he will care about his home or the school. As ardent friends of education, we desire to see the pathway opened—the threshold cleared of the obstructions that crowd around it. We have no fear that when we can get all classes to see how mighty a hindrance our drinking habits have become to all education and improvement, and to assist in removing the facilities for drinking, that we shall soon after trace the effects upon the character of the population. Above all are we anxious that no effort should be thrown away, but that while we are labouring to establish schools, we should at the same time endeavor to overturn the impediments which stand in the way of their success. We believe that temperance societies, by teaching men to be sober, are among the best educational instrumentalities of the present day."

I may add, that a general adoption of their principles would at once place sufficient funds in the hands of the people, and at the disposal of government, to carry forward the most liberal system of education.

I would gladly refer, at some length, to the admirable means adopted for putting an end to our national ignorance, through the exertions of our "Commissioners of National Education," and through the means of other educational establishments of a public and private nature, so extensively spread over the country; but my paper has already extended to such a length that I am prevented

from doing more than alluding to this interesting topic. Hundreds of thousands of children are now receiving the blessings of education in Ireland; and a perusal of the reports of the National Education Board will satisfy any enquirer that much pains is being taken to improve the quality of that education by rendering the teachers more and more efficient for performance of their duties.

The high value attached to education in the United States of America may be estimated on reading the following extract from a speech made by Mr. Raymond, one of the representatives of the City of New York:—

“I am proud, sir, to be able to stand here to-day, and say that the City of New York offers a *free* education to every child within her limits. She has erected about 200 houses for school purposes, with all the appliances of scientific and mechanical invention; she employs the best teachers whose services can be procured; she purchases books, stationery, everything required in such schools; and then, sir, she throws the doors wide open to the free admission of every child within her borders. There is not a child in the darkest street or the narrowest lane, or the most crowded court of that densely crowded city—no matter how destitute he may be—there is not one so poor and friendless that he may not walk up to the door of the best school house in that great city, and demand the very best education which its wealth can procure. Nor does she stop there, sir. She has organised eighteen evening schools, and provided teachers for them; in which children and adults, whose necessities oblige them to labour during the day, may attend during the evening and receive the rudiments of education. Nay, more, she has organised and established a free academy, where any child whose faculties and industry qualify him therefor, may receive, under able and accomplished teachers, and with all the aids and appliances which money can command, an education equal to that afforded in the best of your colleges throughout the State. And thus, sir, does New York provide for those into whose hands her destiny is committed. The tax-payers there, onerous as is the tax imposed upon them, make no complaint that their property is taken from them for the use of others without their consent, or that they are compelled to educate children not their own. They feel that they are parts of the society in which they live; that they hold their positions in subordination to that society; and that their interests as well as their duty compels them to aid in the education of all its children.”

This is a beautiful and eloquent passage; it only lacks one thing to commend it to our highest admiration. That one thing is, it is not *literally* true. The speaker, in obedience to the odious public opinion by which he was surrounded, limited his remarks to the *white* population of New York; for he well knew that those schools, upon which he pronounced so glowing an eulogium, rigidly excluded from within their walls its numerous colored population. What a

pity and shame it is that the American people, — otherwise so enlightened a nation, — should stigmatize themselves before the civilised nations of the world, by their barbarous and unjust hatred of their colored brethren? But while we must condemn them without measure for their crimes in this regard, let us take example by their wise liberality in relation to the education of their general population, and their prudent anxiety to rear up future generations in their rapidly growing empire, whose minds will be untainted by the vices which spring from ignorance, and which are unhappily in our country and in our day cause of such serious alarm for the safety of our institutions.

From the last Census Report of the United States, recently submitted to Congress, I take the following extract:—

“The replies have been for the most part prompt and satisfactory. It has been necessary in only three cases, to require enforcement to the Act of Congress for refusal to reply to the interrogations of assistants. In only one case was it necessary to inflict costs. These facts speak loudly in favour of the general intelligence of our people, and their deference to the laws; and prove that, as liberty and intelligence are diffused, these investigations, made for the benefit of the people, cease to be considered inquisitorial, or deter individuals from contributing to the stock of knowledge which must be of benefit to all.”

Does not such a fact as this, prove how highly advantageous to us also would be the general diffusion of knowledge?

Hitherto, the actions of men too generally appear to have been governed more by folly than by wisdom. Is it too hopeful an expectation to indulge, that principles the reverse of past experience may, at no distant day, regulate the conduct of mankind? I am a believer in human progress; and I expect this society is sowing good seed, which will yet ripen, and produce much fruit that will be useful to our country, displacing the bitter harvest of crime by the sweet influences of a constantly advancing civilisation.

It has been objected that this paper, which purports to be Statistics of Crime in connection with Ignorance, enlarges too much on the subject of Intemperance; my apology is, that I find it impossible to disconnect these evils, they are so closely intertwined. In my opinion the drinking customs of society are the true source of the greater part of our social evils; and I do not doubt that at some future period, be it near or remote, in the progress of civilization, this great truth will be acknowledged and *acted on* by every benevolent man.