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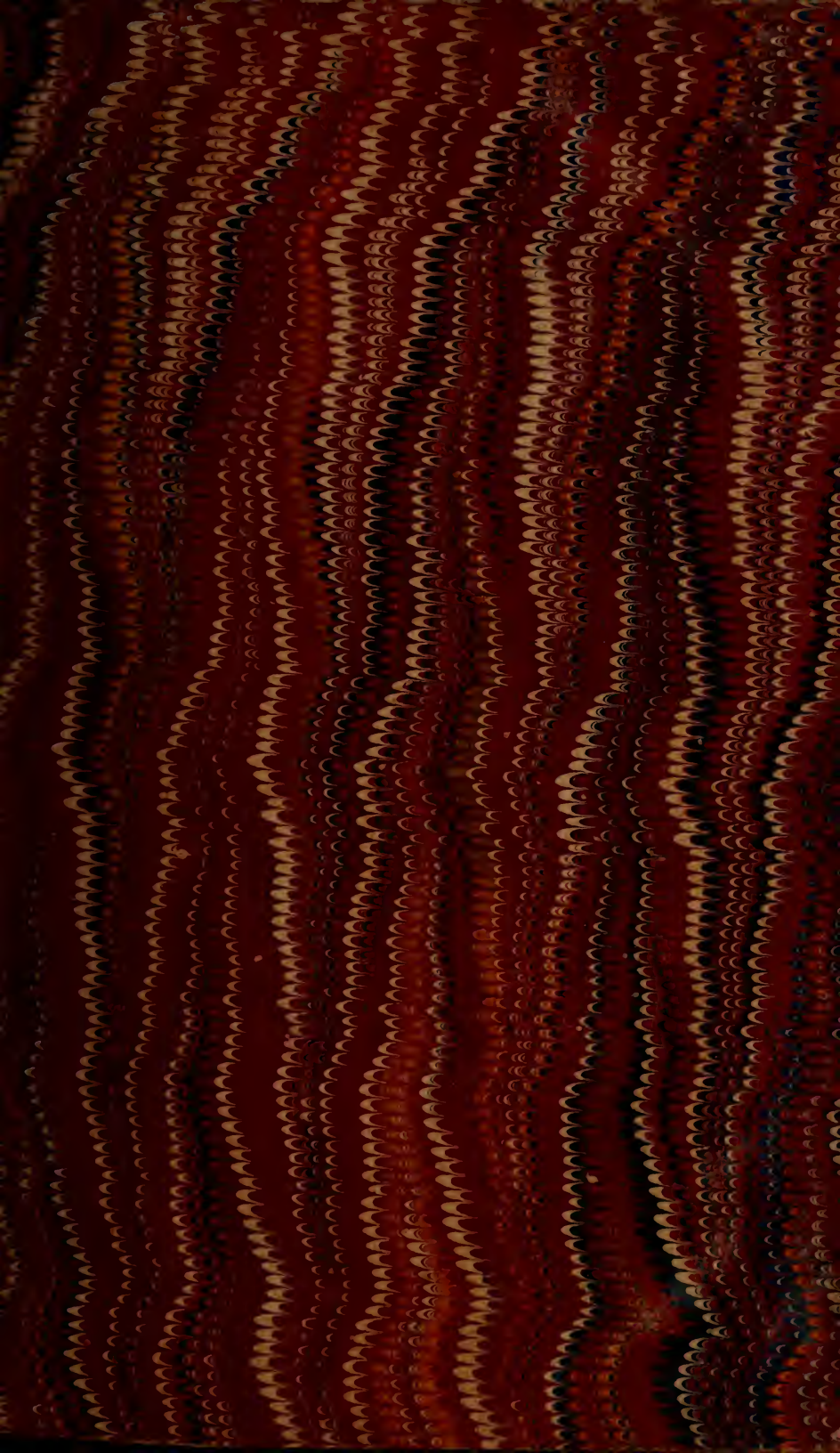
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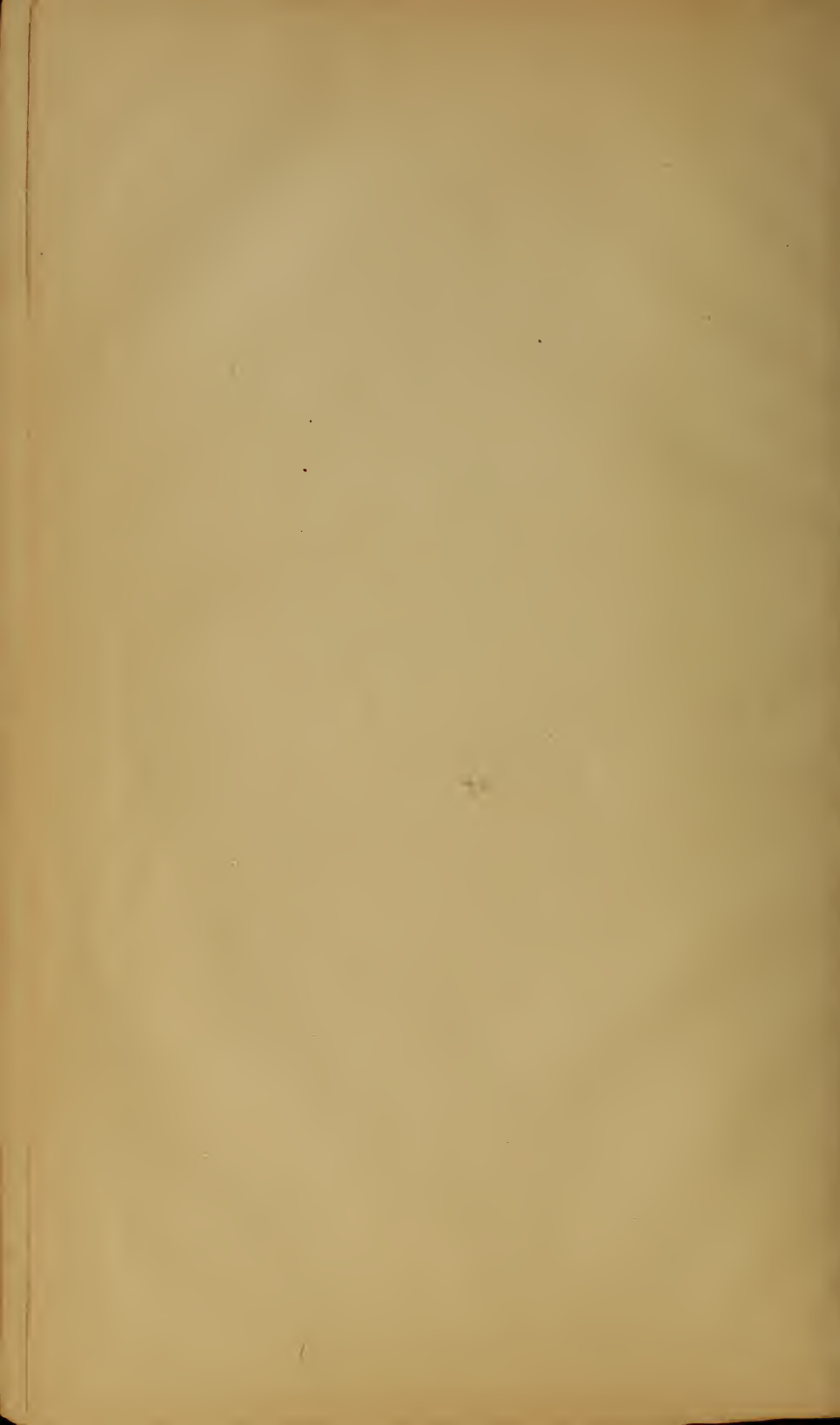
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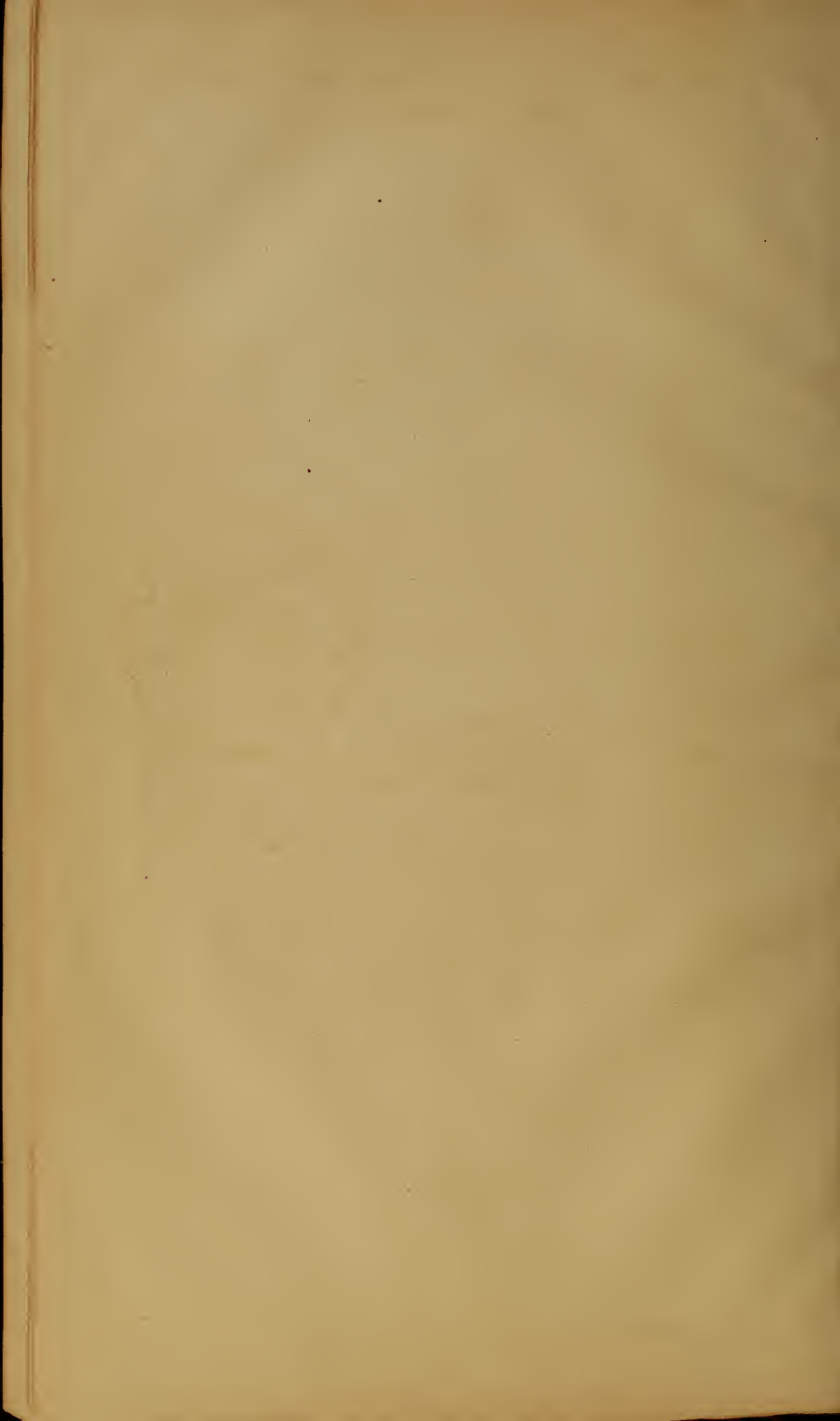












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Francis Lieber & Soc: Coll

REMARKS

ON

THE RELATION

BETWEEN

EDUCATION AND CRIME,

IN A

LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT REV. WILLIAM WHITE, D. D.

President of the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons



BY FRANCIS LIEBER, L. L. D.

MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

SOME OBSERVATIONS BY N. H. JULIUS, M. D.

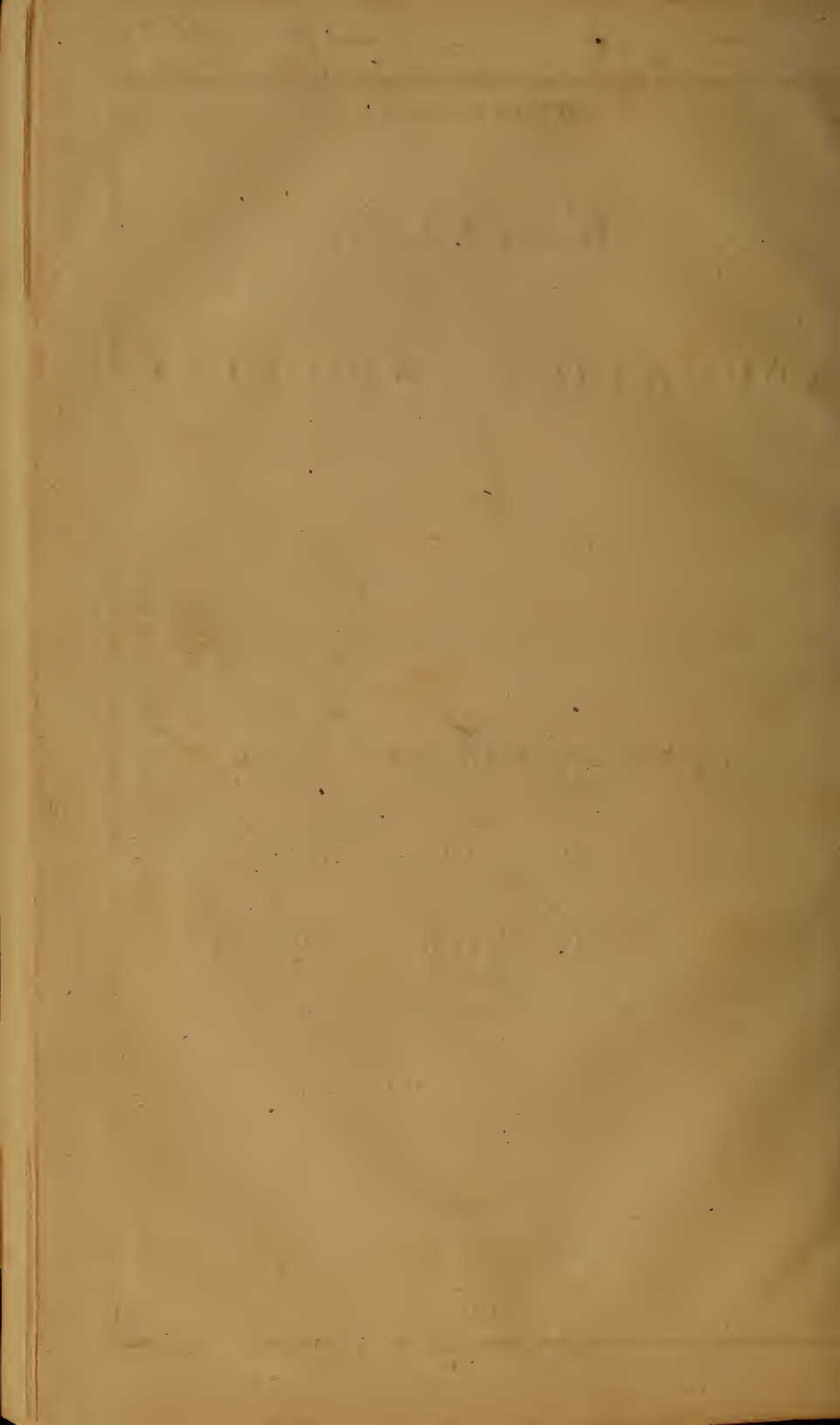
OF HAMBURG,

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PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE SOCIETY

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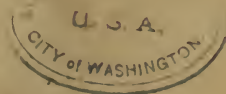
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REMARKS

ON THE

RELATION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND CRIME.

RIGHT REVEREND SIR,

The office which you hold as the President of our Society, and the active interest which you have taken for a long series of years, in all matters connected with the improvement of prisons and punishment, as well as public instruction, have induced me to address to you the following remarks on a subject of vital importance to society. I am well aware that they touch upon a few points only, of this vast and grave subject, and that even these few points have not been as fully discussed, as a thorough and systematic inquiry would demand; yet I feel assured that you will receive them with that interest, which we grant even to the weakest effort, if calculated to shed some light upon a great subject, and with that indulgence, for which a sincere desire to add our mite to a good cause, may always hope at the hands of true wisdom and long experience.

In the British House of Lords as well as Commons, it has been stated that education is far from causing a decrease of crime, and the United States have been adduced as instances of this pretended fact. In one case it has been asserted, that official information had been obtained from the city of New York, which would amply prove it. On the other hand, some remarks of Messrs. de Beaumont and de Tocqueville, contained in their work on the Penitentiary System in the United States, on the apparent increase of crime in the State of Connecticut, have been referred to, as equally confirming the statement, which, if true, would disappoint the promoters of public instruction, in one of their fondest hopes.

It appeared to me that, though many individuals would be inclined to dismiss these assertions without further consideration, since long experience has convinced them of a different result, it would nevertheless be desirable that a convincing statement to the contrary should be given to the public, both here and in Europe, if we are at all able to do so. The assertions are serious; the consequences which their truth would involve, of an alarming character; the impression which they might produce, very obnoxious in an age, when, in many countries, greater efforts are making to establish general education, than at any previous period, and when, on the other hand, the results at which some of the most distinguished and acute statistical writers have arrived, apparently corroborate the above unfavorable remarks. I was in hopes that some

writer, more fitted for the task, and more at leisure than myself, would offer his observations upon this subject, and have, therefore, delayed giving my views until now, though, in the mean time, I did not remain idle as to the collection of materials, should the task eventually fall upon me. As no one as yet has given, as far as I know, his views, I venture to lay mine before you, requesting you, however, at the same time, not to consider the following remarks as intended to form a treatise on the important question before us. A labor of this kind would require more leisure than I can possibly command. All I have proposed to myself is, to offer some general views, which may present the various points, constituting the subject which occupies our attention, with greater clearness, and a few statistical facts of high authority to show, as I believe I shall be able to do, the fallacy of the cited statements.*

The difference of opinion respecting the effect of education upon the decrease of crime, is owing, in my opinion, in no slight degree, to a vagueness of expression, so common whenever a subject of great importance begins to attract general attention. * Even to words, apparently of very simple import, a different meaning is attached, by different individuals; or the ideas which they are intended to convey, are indistinct. Thus, I doubt very much whether many writers connect a perfectly clear and definite idea with an expression so simple, as that of decrease or increase of crime. The terms, education, instruction, knowledge, and several others, are used still more vaguely, and not unfrequently, in utter confusion. In order, therefore, to proceed with any degree of clearness, it will be proper to discern between knowledge, instruction, education and civilization.

By instruction, we understand the imparting of knowledge; but I may be permitted to use the term for brevity sake, in the subsequent lines, for public instruction, or the imparting of knowledge in schools; and, more especially, in schools which are established according to some general system, and strive to diffuse knowledge among those classes which are least able to procure instruction by private means. Education has a much more comprehensive meaning, and designates the cultivation of the moral, mental and physical faculties of the young; it includes, therefore, instruction. By civilization, I understand the cultivation of all our powers, and endowments, and whatever results from this cultivation, as well as the cultivation of all those ideas which have any connexion with man's existence, as a member of civil society, or as a social being in general, and the adorning of his mind.

According to this definition, I take it for granted, that man was destined for civilization. If there be any who deny this position, who, perhaps, pretend with some writers of the last century, that man is happiest and purest, in a state of absence of civilization, I do not consider

* Some highly interesting facts relating to the subject in question, with reference to foreign nations, are contained in the late numbers of the *Annals of Penitentiaries, &c.*, by Dr. N. H. Julius, a gentleman, whose praiseworthy zeal and great ability in the promotion of sound prison discipline, and institutions of a charitable character, are well known to all who have occupied themselves with the improvement of prisons. He is now in this country, sent by the Prussian government, to inspect our penitentiaries, and was unanimously requested, at a meeting of our Society, to add a note to the present remarks, on the relation between education and crime in Prussia.

this the place to refute their opinion. An inquiry of the kind would lead us to a philosophical investigation into the first principles of human society, and the elements of the human mind itself.

If man were not destined to remain for ever stationary in a savage state, or, which amounts to the same thing, to live for ever without society, he was destined to move on from one generation to another, to acquire, to discover, and to add experience to experience. A medium between the two states cannot be imagined. Man must either be inactive, or once the impetus given, he must move on from one change to another. His destiny is civilization, and civilization is his truly natural state, because in it alone he develops that nature which God has given to his mind. Let us suppose, however, this were not the case; nothing essential would be altered, with regard to the whole European race, since we find it already in this state of progress from knowledge to knowledge, from acquirement to acquirement, and from discovery to discovery; and surely there can be no person, who pretends to say, that a retrograde movement up to the first simplicity be possible! Even if we disagree as to the final effects of civilization, in regard to man's happiness or virtue; with us it would be now too late for any thing else but the progress toward farther perfection.

An author of the last century, who has given to the public several treatises of the soundest character, gravely discusses in one of his papers the question, whether it be wise to promote the improvement of roads, and internal communications of all kinds, and actually comes to the conclusion, that it is wiser for a government not to make the roads too easy. As one of his reasons, he states that the same roads which serve for a brisk internal intercourse, will also serve the enemy, in times of war, as an easier means of conquest. Now, this seems to me, precisely a case in point. Even if all the objections against good and many roads had been founded, a ruler would, nevertheless, have acted very unwise ly and in a way that must have become very injurious to his country, had he neglected to promote internal communication. Whatever may be the accidental or secondary results of civilization, it seems to me, that no choice is left any longer to the European race.

The first question now, which offers itself in the course of our inquiry is, does civilization promote crime?

That civilization itself, as defined above, cannot be said to promote crime, seems clear; yet I am not desirous of weighing words, and willingly admit that an increased number of crimes will generally be connected, with a state of increased civilization, simply because civilization multiplies, with every advancing step, the opportunities for the application of man's activity, and therefore, the opportunities for its abuse. It multiplies the desires and wants of man; which is in fact one of the most desirable effects of civilization; but along with them, it multiplies disappointment, and will always, with some individuals, create the desire of gratifying these wants by any means, whether honest or dishonest.

When men live upon the simplest food which nature offers, without the assistance of human activity, and dress in a style of corresponding simplicity, very few wants, and consequently few disappointments—few

desires, and consequently few wicked desires can exist.* The crimes which an Esquimaux can possibly commit, can be but few in number: on the other hand, what would have become of mankind without the art of writing? Each generation would have remained in insulated barbarity, and a gradual development of morals could hardly have taken place. Where would we be without a system of credit? Nations never could have become united by commercial intercourse, commerce would have remained in its slow and confined incipient stage; knowledge would not have extended far beyond the limited theatre of human activity, as we find it in antiquity. Yet, without the art of writing, and without the modern system of commercial credit, mankind would have been spared two of the most numerous classes of crime—fraud and forgery. We all know that private property forms one of the surest foundations and most indispensable elements of civilization: yet without private property we should be freed from a very great number of crimes now committed. No weed grows on a barren rock indeed, but no grain either.

There are various other causes why the number of crimes is increased with advancing civilization. One of the most numerous divisions of crime, in all reports, to whatever nation of the European race they may relate, is *Burglary*; but burglary can be committed frequently in those countries only, the inhabitants of which feel comparatively secure. A castle of the middle ages could not be easily robbed; and a Turk hides his treasures under the ground, or carries them in his belt, and sleeps with them. Burglary, therefore, is perhaps not very frequent in that country, but should we be justified in concluding from this fact, that the Turks, as a people, are more moral or less prone to crime than ourselves?

The mere absence of crime, therefore, is neither a proof of a state of morality—for it may originate from very inauspicious causes—nor is the increase of crime of itself a proof of increased degeneracy.

If I have granted that civilization multiplies the opportunities of crime, (in a moral way, as, undoubtedly, it increases physically the variety of diseases, though not mortality,) it will be admitted on the other hand, that, generally speaking, a universal attention to public instruction is the result of a general progress of civilization, which seldom fails to cause, at the same time, two things: first, as I have already stated, multiplied opportunity for crime, and, secondly, an improved state of the administration of justice, as well as of the police which detects the deviations from the law. I believe it would be difficult to imagine a government which watches with great zeal over public instruction, and promotes it throughout the country, without directing a proportionate attention to the other branches of administration. Thus it happens that very frequently the introduction of a general school system is accompanied by an increased number of convictions in the courts of justice; and observers of this bare fact, who do not penetrate into the true causes of this phenomenon, conclude from the frequent appearing together of improved school systems, and an increased number

* Among others, Archbishop Whately, has treated of the supposed morality of uncivilized tribes, in his *Introductory Lectures on Political Economy*. (London, 1831,) with that calm and impartial reflection which pervades the whole work.

of convictions, that one is the cause of the other, or that, at all events, the former does not effect a decrease of crime. But in order to ascertain the true effect of universal instruction, we must guard ourselves against rash conclusions, and take for examples, countries of a large extent, in which universal instruction has been established for a series of years, such as Prussia, rather than those in which no thorough effect can as yet be expected, or which are so small that casual occurrences, entirely foreign to the amount of criminality in the community, may essentially disturb the usual proportion of crime and population.

It is evident that education, as defined above, cannot possibly promote crime; except a man be so bold as to assert that man's nature is so thoroughly bad, that in whatever way it be cultivated, if cultivated at all, it shoots forth the germs of its seeds of corruption—a view which would be repugnant to our most sacred conceptions of the goodness as well as wisdom of our Creator.

But the question is, whether universal instruction is conducive to a decrease of crime. What is meant by public instruction? I believe, if used without further designation, we understand, by the expressions of "universal education," or "public instruction," most frequently the universal instruction in the various elementary branches of knowledge, or, to speak with more precision, reading, writing, arithmetic, a fair knowledge of our vernacular tongue, geography, and some knowledge of history—together with the principles of religion and morality.

That domestic education—the rearing of the young in sound morality, the fear of God, and with the all-important example of virtue in their parents before their eyes—is of vital importance to every society, and can never be supplanted by any general school system, however wisely it may be contrived, appears to me so evident, that it is unnecessary to dwell upon this point. Suppose, however, domestic education in general, or with large classes, to be bad, and thus not only to continue from generation to generation, but, as there is nowhere a mental or moral standing still, to grow worse and worse, how shall we begin to correct so dangerous a state of things? The school would naturally be one of the readiest means gradually to introduce a better one. If the moral domestic education be not bad, instruction is not less necessary. I do not treat here of the general necessity of the knowledge of reading and writing, which our religion makes as indispensable as our state of industry and politics, but merely of the effect of general instruction upon crime, or, in other words, its moral effect.

Knowledge in itself is neither good nor bad; it has no moral character of its own, and in the translation of the work of Messrs. de Beaumont and Tocqueville, which I have already mentioned, I have said: "In this sense, knowledge is, in itself, in most cases, neither good nor bad; arithmetic will assist a defaulter, as much as an industrious man who works for his family, as a knife may serve the murderer, as well as him who cuts a piece of bread with it for a crippled beggar; just as the sun lends his light to crime as to virtue." But if we come to speak of public instruction, knowledge does not retain so entirely an indifferent character.

It has been often remarked, that instruction, without the careful cultivation of the heart and religious instruction, leads to moral mischief,

rather than to good effects. This is undoubtedly true, but in practice the remark applies more, I believe, to schools of a higher character than to what is called a general or popular school system. Times have existed, when the religious cultivation of the heart—I do not only speak of religious instruction—was greatly neglected in schools where the sciences were taught with peculiar success. But this disproportion does not so often exist in elementary schools, such as are established by a general school system, for all the classes in less favored situations. I believe there is hardly a school, even the meanest, in which the child does not receive some moral instruction, were it but in a secondary way. A teacher cannot help enforcing some moral rules, by way of keeping order in his school-room; nor can the lessons which the children have to read and to learn, remain without instilling some moral precepts into the mind, or disposing it better for the reception of moral and religious views. Secondly, there is in all knowledge, even the most indifferent as to moral effect, for instance arithmetic, a softening power, which renders the mind more pliable; and however inferior it may be in itself, it forms one more link which connects the individual with the society in which he lives. But the more we can cultivate this feeling of our being linked to a society of moral beings and to a nation, which is not of to-day, and in which we have to perform our duties as every one else, and the more we can prevent the future growth of a feeling of separation from society, or, with which, in fact, this feeling often ends in its natural progress, of opposition to the rest of society, the more we shall also prevent the various acts of selfishness, of absorbing egotism—of crime. It is for this reason, among others, that the instruction in our political duties ought to form a branch of instruction in all schools. Let us teach and convince every one that he forms an integrant part of the community, upon the faithful performance of whose duties its welfare partially depends, and we shall increase his self-esteem, and thereby afford him one of the best preservatives against crime.

Thirdly, there are no individuals more exposed to crime, than the ignorant, in a civilized community; or, in other words, those individuals who are touched by the wants and desires of civilization, or by the effects of general refinement, without being actually within the bosom of civilization.

It is on this latter point, that I greatly rest my opinion of the necessity of universal education with the European race. Civilization exists with us; we cannot stop it, even were we desirous of doing so; and the outward effects of civilization without knowledge, is the greatest bane that can befall any class or individual. Ignorance without civilization is no peculiar source of crime; ignorance with civilization, is an abounding source of crime; both, because it lessens the means of subsistence, and lowers the individual in the general and his own esteem—it severs him from the instructed and educated. Instances are afforded to us in the lowest, most ignorant, and destitute classes in all large cities, or in some frontier tribes, who receive certain views and notions of civilization, and yet live without education and instruction.

We have arrived at a state of things in which no individual, who

cannot read, is actually, in most respects, excluded from the great sphere of civilization, which was not always the case, for instance, in antiquity; and whoever is thus excluded from the general course of civilization, is more exposed to misery, and more liable to be drawn into the snares of crime, than others, who, as I have stated, are more firmly linked to society, upon whom shame, therefore, has a greater power, and who find it easier to gain a livelihood in an honest way.

That there are educated people among the convicts of all countries, is a fact which does in no degree invalidate what I have said. I even allow that some have become criminals, who, without a certain knowledge, would not have committed the crime which brought them to ruin. So have persons of a more acute sense of shame, or of a more generous heart than others, sometimes become criminals, while, without these livelier feelings, they would have given the law no opportunity of punishing them.

The best preservatives against crime will always be a well trained mind, early application, and industrious habits, together with good example. There is, I believe, no person who has had an opportunity of various and thorough observation of criminals, who will not agree with me on this point, and it is easy to judge how much a sound school education contributes to a regular training of the youthful mind.

That a universal school system ought never to be wanting in a proper instruction in morals and the cultivation of religious feelings, as well as in instruction in political virtue and morality, is as true as that no system of general education will produce all the good effects which it ought to produce, without proper care being taken for the education of teachers. These are truths acknowledged in those countries where public instruction has most prospered. But there are so many subjects of high interest connected with public instruction, that I should exceed the limits within which I must confine these observations, were I even but briefly to touch upon them.

All I have stated so far is as yet but general assertion, however plausible it may appear. How are we then to test its truth? By comparing the proportion between crime and population, since public instruction has been established in a given country, to that which before existed? I have already shown the fallacy of this test in most cases; and I must extend my remark. The increase of crime, or in other words, the increase of indictments, (because most generally, some crime has been committed by some one, where there is an indictment) is unfitted to serve as test of the increased criminality of a community, if we are not enabled, by a number of concurrent statements, to judge more precisely of the case. Sometimes the police has become more vigilant, sometimes the laws have been made more proportionate to the crime, and the judges are more willing to convict; sometimes a great influx of destitute persons has taken place, at others public attention has been roused, and directed to certain crimes until then neglected; an army may have been disbanded; a winter have been peculiarly severe, a famine may have existed, money transactions may have offered new opportunities, &c., in short, a number of causes, some of which are continually exercising their influence upon mankind, may have existed,

without the least connexion with public instruction; nay, the latter may have continued to exercise its beneficial influence during the whole time that crime was increasing, and may actually have prevented it from still greater increase.

It has been stated in the British House of Commons, as I remarked above, that official information had been obtained, showing that public instruction in the state of New York, had by no means realized the hopes of the public, as to its influence upon the decrease of crime, and that in the city of New York, crime had rapidly increased. I neither know how true the statement was, as to its being obtained from an official person, nor whether the fact is true, as to the increase of crime in the city of New York. With regard to the state, it is not true, if dependence can be placed upon official documents. But I consider it very possible that crime has of late increased in the city of New York, for various reasons: First, New York is fast increasing, and has to bear with the advantages of large cities, also their evils, among which the frequency of certain crimes always will be found. Secondly, the more New York is enlarged, the more activity of all kinds is there, and consequently, the opportunity for a number of crimes, especially as she is a large seaport, to which always a number of homeless adventurers will resort. Thirdly, its rapid intercourse with Europe has much increased, and with it the importation of a class of criminals who, according to their skill and finesse, may be termed a superior class. Fourthly, there has been of late, such an unprecedented influx of destitute emigrants and actual paupers, from foreign countries, that they alone would easily account for a great increase of vagrancy and crime. The report* by a committee, appointed by the city corporation, for the purpose of inquiring into this serious subject, exposes frightful abuses of the facility with which emigrants may, according to the present laws, settle among us, whether willing and able to support themselves or not. The almshouses have been filled with foreign paupers, and it can be easily imagined how many, either driven by want, or already trained in vice and crime, do not proceed to the almshouse, but to the penitentiaries.

The remark of Messrs. de Beaumont and de Tocqueville, which has been referred to on the floor of the British Parliament, as corroborating the fact, that universal instruction does not tend to decrease the number of crimes, is made by those gentlemen, in a passage of their work, in which they speak of the increase of crime in the State of Connecticut—a State which has fostered general education with at least as much zeal as any other State in the Union.

I have given some explanatory notes of this fact so startling, at first glance, in my translation of the valuable work of those gentlemen, and will only add here, that according to a letter sent me by Mr. Pilsbury, warden of the Connecticut State prison, convictions have diminished considerably of late in that State. When the two French commissioners were here, the prison discipline of Connecticut had just been amended, or, rather, entirely re-fashioned, and juries as well as judges were much more willing to let the law take its full and unchecked course, than before this reformation of the State prison, when, in fact, the pri-

* It is dated Sept. 29, 1834. Document No. 20.

soners were in a deplorable situation. Since the commissioners, however, were here, no essential change, either of the law or prison discipline, has taken place, to my knowledge, and a decrease of convictions, would authorize us to conclude, at any rate, that crime has not gone on increasing in that State.

Whether crime in our Union, has in general, of late, increased or not, I am not able to say. If impressions in matters of this kind were worth any thing, I would say, that my impression is, that certain crimes, more especially murder, have either increased, or it has become more common with editors of newspapers to mention the details of every murder, in whatever quarter of the Union it may have been committed. Wherever the truth may lie, certain it is that this ready reception of accounts of atrocious deeds, is pernicious in a great many respects.—It satisfies one of the worst cravings of the human mind, and affects it in turn, in the same way in which physical stimulants and exciting liquors satisfy, and, in turn, ruin the body; it has a tendency to render the reader callous, and it has a positive and evil effect upon criminally disposed persons. The power of imitation is incalculable, universal, and often operates by imperceptible degrees. Our newspapers ought, certainly, not to be silent on the various crimes, which are committed, for it is equally important that the true state of things be known, but it strikes me, that it would be both beneficial to the people at large, and becoming to the vocation of editors, were they to state but the simple facts of atrocious crimes, and leave their detailed accounts to those papers which avowedly collect the statements of misdeeds, and appear stamped on their very face in a way, which makes every honorable reader flee them. It would be certainly a wise measure if the editors of some of our most respectable papers would set the example, and agree to abstain in future from publishing detailed accounts of barbarous crimes.

One of the most active causes in producing crime in our country, is intemperance. An immense majority of all murders are either committed during intoxication, or in consequence of quarrels or misery brought on by intemperance. And if crimes of an atrocious nature have increased of late, it will probably be found, by minute inquiry, that it is in a great measure owing to the increase of intemperance, which some years ago took place, and which is now showing its melancholy effects on the intemperate themselves, as well as on those who, in the mean time, have grown up with such pernicious examples before them.

Though this Letter be not the precise place for the following remark, I nevertheless cannot refrain from making it, since it seems to me of the greatest importance that universal attention be directed to the subject; namely, the immoderate use of opium in various shapes, chiefly by way of laudanum, in families, and especially with infants, without the advice of proper physicians. My inquiries into the subject have led me to the conviction, that innumerable parents create in their children that diseased craving for stimulants, which, with so many individuals, ends in open and violent intemperance, and with many more, in a constant use of ardent spirits, not much less injurious in its consequence. The united efforts of medical gentlemen, as of all those who

are in the habit of instructing the people on important points, might produce a great change toward the better.*

Intemperance, however, which on all hands is admitted as the most fruitful source of crime in our country—and should there be any one who doubts it, let him look at the convincing statements in the letters which I shall append to these lines—will be certainly counteracted in a degree by universally spread education, for the reasons already mentioned; namely, because it trains and regulates the mind, connects the individual with stronger links to society, informs him in regard to his duties toward the Creator, the society he lives in, and toward himself and his family, and assists in producing self-respect.

The facts which have lately appeared from the inquiries instituted in England as to the extent and consequences of intemperance in that country, the statements collected by Mr. Caspar, as to intemperance in Prussia, and many details given to the public by Mr. Quetelet, with regard to intemperance in France, show that the remark I have just made is also applicable to those countries.

But is there no test, then, by which we may ascertain whether universal education tends to prevent crime, or whether ignorance promotes it? It seems to me that there is a means by which we may solve this question to the satisfaction of every fair inquirer, namely, by ascertaining the degree of education which every convict has obtained. If we should find, that in a country in which few individuals grow up without some school instruction, an immense majority of convicts are men who have not received a fair school education, if thus ignorance almost always accompanies crime, and if, at the same time, it is easy to account for a connexion between the two, on general and simple grounds, drawn from the nature of our mind and of human society in general, I think we are authorized to conclude that there actually does exist a necessary connexion between the two, and that by diffusing knowledge of a moral and scientific character, we may hope for a decrease of crime, and be assured that though crime may in reality or apparently have increased for some reason, it would have increased still more without general education.

The greatest circumspection, indeed, is necessary, in drawing conclusions from statistical statements. Many opinions, apparently founded in reality, have currently been believed for many years, and, in the end, been found to be erroneous. But if, as I have stated, repeated facts agree with the conclusions at which we would arrive in the most cautious way of reasoning by analogy, and on principles which are always considered to hold—and if, in particular, our conclusions are corroborated by those individuals, who, before all others, have a sound and practical knowledge of criminals, it would seem that we may adopt the result, thus arrived at, as truth. There is no warden or superintendent of any penitentiary of note, with which I am acquainted, who does not consider want of education, and ignorance, as some of the most active agents in producing crime; and if there be any subject connected with education, or any affairs of human society, respecting which the know-

* Some more remarks on the same subject may be found in a work which I lately edited: *Letters to a Gentleman in Germany*: Philadelphia, 1834, on page 324 and sequ.

ledge of practical men is more indispensable, or reasoning on which, without ample knowledge of facts, is more gratuitous, that subject is prison discipline, and the true character of convicts. But, as will be seen from the following letters, there is but one opinion among these gentlemen.

When I first saw the statements to which I have alluded at the beginning of this letter, I directed a series of queries to the wardens of our most prominent penitentiaries, and received from nearly all of them the readiest answers, not, indeed, always, on all of my questions. This would have taken, in some cases, too much time, yet the statements with which the gentlemen favored me are quite sufficient to prove, that not only education, but instruction, even in the most elementary knowledge, is very deficient in most convicts.

Some of my queries tended to ascertain other facts, and some of the statements of those gentlemen touch upon statistics of the highest interest, besides the points in question, so that I have finally concluded to give their whole letters, of which I am convinced every one will approve. The more statistics we can possibly collect respecting crimes and criminals, the causes of the first, and the social stations of the latter, the better it is.

The Rev. Mr. Dwight, to whom I directed a similar series of inquiries, with regard to the Massachusetts State Prison in Charlestown, received my letter when setting out for a journey, but wrote me,—“This report (the ninth of the Boston Prison Discipline Society) contains much information touching the point proposed in your letter, and enables me more effectually to contribute to the object of your inquiry than any other document in my possession, or that I can at present obtain,” &c. This report has not yet reached me, and I am, therefore, obliged to refer to it, without offering any extracts.* From another quarter, I received no answer.

As Mr. Wood, the warden of our Eastern Penitentiary, has given the answer on a number of my queries, in his last report on the penitentiary under his charge, to the Board of Inspectors, I shall give an extract from that quarter.

As to the three other letters, I repeat, they are too valuable not to be given without curtailment. They prove once more the facts, that—

1. Deficient education, early loss of parents, and consequent neglect, are some of the most fruitful sources of crime.
2. That few convicts have ever learned a regular trade, and, if they were bound to any apprenticeship, they have abandoned it, before the time had lawfully expired.
3. That school education is, with most convicts, very deficient, or entirely wanting.
4. That intemperance, very often the consequence of loose education, is a most appalling source of crime.
5. That by preventing intemperance, and by promoting education, we are authorized to believe that we shall prevent crime, in a considerable degree.

* Since the above was written, I have received the Ninth Report of the Boston Prison Society, but it contains little referring particularly to the matter before us.

The following documents would serve yet for a variety of important reflections, e. g. the paramount importance of instructing the convict in some trade, and either the folly or great mistake of some who are desirous to oppose this most necessary part of all prison discipline; and the interesting communication of the Rev. Mr. Smith, chaplain of Auburn State Prison, would furnish the material for some comparisons of a very instructive nature, with some statements in Mr. Guerry's *Essai sur la Statistique Morale de la France*; Paris, 1833—a work of great merit; but I must necessarily abstain from it, not to deviate from the nature of this letter.

I shall add to Mr. Wiltse's letter, a statement, which he kindly communicated to me about a year ago, and which I appended to my introduction to a Constitution and Plan of Education for Girard College for Orphans, as showing how many convicts have lost their parents in their early years.

Before I conclude these remarks, I will only observe as an explanation of the following, that if it is stated of a convict, that he reads and writes, but has no common good school education, his acquirements often amount to little more than the knowledge of spelling, or the skill of *making out* the sound of the words, without the capability of finding out the sense of a phrase—and the skill to write his name. With regard to our inquiry, all below a common English school education, ought to be classed together.

It would have been desirable to know what number of foreigners are among the various classes, enumerated in the following statements, but this information is not essential as to our inquiry, as convicts, who are natives of foreign countries, belong nearly without an exception, to the least educated of the whole number. From very interesting statements in the statistical appendix to the work of Messrs. Beaumont and Tocqueville, the proportions of foreigners among convicts in America, to natives, will be found, and it is therefore easy to ascertain how many uneducated Americans still remain among the number of convicts.

I am,

Right Rev. Sir,

Your obedient and respectful servant,

FRANCIS LIEBER.

Philadelphia, November, 1834.

OBSERVATIONS

BY DR. JULIUS.

HAVING had the privilege, during my stay in the city of Philadelphia, to assist at a meeting of the members of the Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons, where the preceding Letter of Dr. Lieber on the Relation between Education and Crime, was read, I was requested to state what I thought to be the result of the school system of Prussia, in reference to this interesting question. I shall refer, therefore, as shortly as possible, the few conclusions I have thought myself competent to deduce from an uninterrupted observation of the number of crimes, as well as of the state of education in most of the countries of Europe and America, during ten years, without claiming for what I have to say, a greater authority than the observations of a single individual, spending the largest part of his time in an inland continental capital, may entitle him.

The well known—and, since Mr. Cousin published his interesting Report—far-famed Prussian system of National Education, went properly into practice in the year 1819, and has three fundamental principles and supporting pillars.

First, the erection of seminaries or schools for teachers in the elementary schools, of which Prussia, with a population equal to that of the United States, has now forty-three, of the Protestant and Catholic denominations, furnishing annually from eight to nine hundred teachers, well informed and trained during three years, for their future avocation.

Secondly, the legal obligation of parents, guardians, &c. to send children under their care, if they are not instructed by qualified teachers* at home, or in authorized private schools, to the public schools, from the first day of their seventh to the last day of their fourteenth year.

Thirdly, the foundation of the whole system on a religious and moral basis, so that the first or the two first hours of each day are devoted entirely to a regular course of religious instruction, teaching, besides the reading of the scriptures, (for the Catholics, histories taken from the Bible,) all the duties of man towards his Creator, the constituted authorities, and his fellow creatures, as they are inculcated by the gospel.

These general regulations on education have been gradually augmented and strengthened by the Prussian Minister of Public Instruction, with a particular care for the reformation of juvenile offenders. In this way, since the year 1820, twenty-eight institutions for juvenile delinquents, or neglected children, *none* of them larger than for sixty boys

* The legal qualification of a teacher consists in his having passed different examinations, the last by the Consistory Court of the province where he intends to settle.

or girls, have been established and supported by voluntary subscriptions, in different parts of the kingdom, under the especial protection of the above-mentioned minister. Since 1828, the board of the same minister has collected from all the tribunals and courts of law in the kingdom, regular returns of all the indictments brought before them, against boys or girls, not older than seventeen years. The numbers furnished by these official returns, and the proportion of this kind of indictments in each year, to the general population of the monarchy, are the following:

Juvenile Indictments.	1828	1829	1830	1831
Until 11 years accomplished	81	74	72	94
From 11 to 17 years	671	517	544	638
Whole number of committed children	752	591	616	732
Uninstructed children	80	54	60	56
Children not yet having taken the communion*	469	410	357	431
Proportion to the whole population	1:16924	1:21524	1:21167	1:17460

The first fact resulting from this table is, that under the Prussian school system, a simultaneous *increase* of the population of three per cent., (from 12,700,000 to 13,000,000) and a *decrease* of indictments against children, of three per cent. has taken place. This cheering fact, connected with the remarkable circumstance, that the indictments against children below eleven years, who had enjoyed the blessings of the system only during four years, have *increased*, (from 81 to 94) when a large *decrease* of the indictments against children of more than eleven years, (from 671 to 638) took place, which were able to reap the full benefit of a religious and moral education, seems to prove undeniably that the effects of the system have been good and beneficial.

Another remarkable fact resulting from these Prussian returns, is, that the smallest numbers of juvenile delinquencies occurred in the least instructed entirely agricultural provinces of Pomerania and Posen, (the first Protestant, the last Catholic,) and the largest numbers in the best instructed but also most industrious and manufacturing provinces, those of Saxony and the Rhenish countries, whose commercial and manufacturing districts surpass even the capital in this kind of transgressions.

Trying to elucidate the circumstance just mentioned, I must state that the crimes for which the children were committed in those parts of the kingdom, where their number was small, have been generally of a more heinous character (arson, &c.) than in the provinces with more indictments, but principally for fraud or larceny. Similar observations relating to the whole number of criminals, and to the kind of crime, can be made in the Austrian monarchy, which contains very heterogeneous and widely different masses of population.

The order in which the proportion of the number of every kind of indictments to the population, has increased during the five years of 1824,

* In Germany, the first communion, called the *confirmation*, as well among the Protestants as with the Catholics, is held as necessary for every adult person as baptism, to allow him to join in any act celebrated by the Church, as marriage, taking the Lord's Supper, &c.

1825, 1826, 1827 and 1828, was in seven provinces of Austria, the following:—

Provinces.	Population.	Indictments to Inhabitants.
Moravia and Silesia,	German and Slavonian,	1 to 1707
Austria Proper,	German,	1 to 1676
Bohemia,	Slavonian and German,	1 to 1428
Galicia,	Polish,	1 to 1382
Interior Austria,	German, Slavonian & Italian,	1 to 609
Tyrol and Vorarlberg,	German and Italian,	1 to 322
Dalmatia,	Slavonian,	1 to 138

The decreasing proportion of children visiting the schools, among one thousand able to attend, was in the same provinces in the years 1824, 1825, and 1828, the following:—

Provinces.	From 1000 Children went to School.
Austria Proper,	948
Tyrol and Vorarlberg,	945
Moravia and Silesia.	919
Bohemia,	906
Dalmatia,	649
Interior Austria,	443
Galicia,	115

In comparing these two tables, I find the increase of crime with a decrease of education nearly agreeing in Austria proper, in Moravia, Silesia, Bohemia, in Interior Austria, and even in Dalmatia, where the numbers are too small to furnish a fair and accurate judgment. But on the reverse, the Tyrolese, one of the noblest and bravest races of the world, sending nineteen-twentieths of their children to school, give more occupation to Austrian judges, than all the other provinces of the empire, except Dalmatia—the common asylum of fugitives from lawless Turkey, and Galicia, whose Polish inhabitants, shunning, like their brethren in Prussia, popular instruction, send only the ninth part of their children to school, and furnish at the same time by far less criminals than Interior Austria, Tyrol or Dalmatia.*

In relating these facts, which are probably much less contradictory than we might judge at first glance, I cannot help saying, after having stated my belief, that besides the influence of instruction there are many more elements which contribute to the increase or decrease of crime, (one of the principal of which is the pursuit in life) that more than any thing seems to depend upon the manner of elementary instruction, whether it be a mere mechanical one in reading, writing, arithmetic, and some geographical and historical knowledge, confining the highest information to the reading of the scriptures, and to committing biblical verses to memory, or whether it is one resting on a religious and moral foundation, where all other knowledge imparted to the child, finds its test and its confirmation.

This opinion, though it diminishes in value the test of the information

* The great amount of crime in Tyrol, may be, perhaps, accounted for, by the character of the Tyrolese, who, like most mountaineers, prefer, in their spirit of independence, to revenge a wrong, rather than to go to law, and by the circumstance, that a very great number of the male population of Tyrol annually travel into foreign countries as pedlars, with goods manufactured at home.—LIEBER.

of convicts, which ought to be compared with what we have not, an accurate knowledge how many of the present adult population of any country in the world have been instructed or educated, is not new. It has been maintained and even promulgated, in all parts of the world, by candid and benevolent statesmen and philanthropists.

In this country, we find Governor Wolcott saying as early as in 1826, in his message to the legislature of Massachusetts: "As high mental attainments afford no adequate security against moral debasement, it appears to be indispensably necessary that we should unite with our neighbours, and with all virtuous men of the present age, in maintaining our share in the great conflict which is prosecuting, of virtue against vice."*

Even eight years earlier, *John Falk*, the same who founded in 1813, the first House of Reform for juvenile offenders, said in a petition to the Chambers of the Grand Duchy of Weimar: "Of what use or advantage to the commonwealth are rogues that know how to read, to write or to cypher? They are only the more dangerous. The acquirements mechanically imparted to such men, can serve only as so many master keys put into their hands to break into the sanctuary of humanity."

To close these remarks by a similar statement from Great Britain, the connecting link between the experience of the eastern and of the western continent, I subjoin the following passage of an eminent medical writer:

"There is no one characteristic of the present age more remarkable than its inclination to undervalue all moral education. The wonders which have been effected by the mechanical inventions of Watt, Arkwright, (Fulton,) &c., seem almost to have overturned the common sense of the times, and every power is stretched to its utmost, to render the rising generation not a moral, but a mechanical race. This is certainly exactly the reverse of what ought to take place, inasmuch as the happiness of men depends far more upon the proper control of their internal feelings, than their external circumstances; far more upon a mind 'void of offence' than upon the highest intellectual acquirements. Neither can there be a greater mistake than the supposition, that knowledge is always in itself beneficial. It is indeed a tremendous engine of good or evil. With him whose mind is directed aright, it is an instrument of advantage to himself and to the world; but with him whose moral feelings are not decidedly virtuous, it is but an additional and terrible weapon of ill."†

N. H. JULIUS.

Philadelphia, 20th January, 1855.

* First Report of the Managers of the Society for the Improvement of Prison Discipline. Boston, Second Edition, page 83.

† London Medical Repository.—New Series. Vol. iii. p. 337.

APPENDIX.

I.

*Extract of the Warden's Report, to the Board of Inspectors of the Eastern Penitentiary, (in Pennsylvania,) in 1834.**

“In my last annual report, I alluded to the want of common school learning, which prevailed so generally among convicts. On a more minute examination of this subject, I find that of the whole number received into this penitentiary, from the opening, viz: two hundred and nineteen, that forty-two could neither read nor write, fifty-nine could read, but not write, and one hundred and eighteen could read and write: of the latter class, one had been educated at a university, one had a good English education, and is a tolerable Latin and French scholar, one understands English, Dutch and Hebrew; besides these, there are not more than seven who have had a good education, and not more than two others who could read and write tolerably, leaving ninety-eight who could read or write indifferently, many of these, as well as most of those who could read only, were not able to read a sentence without spelling many of the words. It is not only in their elementary education that these have been neglected in their youth, but also in another respect, namely, their ignorance of trades and occupations to qualify them for useful citizens. On an investigation of this point, I find that out of the whole number (219) only thirty were regularly bound and served out their apprenticeship, sixteen remained during their minority with their parents, thirty-eight were apprenticed, but left their masters under various pretences, most of them ran away, and gave as a reason, the severity with which they were treated; the want of food, clothing, &c.; two of them declare that their masters first taught them to steal; eight were slaves until twenty-one or twenty-eight years of age, and one hundred and twenty-one never were apprenticed, but were either hired by their friends or themselves, and lived in this unsettled way during their minority.

“There are among mankind some who have been liberally educated, and carefully superintended during their youth, who nevertheless become abandoned, and we see others without these advantages, rise to the first stations in society, yet the disproportion is great. I therefore believe, that had the two hundred and nineteen convicts above mentioned received a suitable education, both moral and physical, and been placed with good masters until twenty-one years of age to learn some practical business, where they would be taught industry, economy, and morality, instead of spending their youth as they have, that few of them would ever have been the inmates of a prison. All philanthropists agree, that the best mode of preventing crime, is properly to educate youth.”⁵

* By Samuel R. Wood, Esq.

II.

Letter of Mr. Wiltse, Agent of Sing-Sing State Prison.

STATE PRISON, }
Mount Pleasant, Aug. 27, 1834. }

MY DEAR SIR,

In reply to your favor of 22d inst., I hand you enclosed such statements as I have been able to collect.

Whatever may be the fact in other countries, there can be but little doubt but education, and early application to some kind of business, would have a powerful tendency to decrease crime. From my long intimacy with criminals, I have found that a large majority of convictions may be traced to the formation of bad habits in *early life*, from a total neglect on the part of their parents, or guardians, in giving them education, and confining their attention to some regular, systematic business.

I am, very respectfully,

Yours,

ROB. WILTSE.

TO DR. F. LIEBER.

N. B.—You will observe that but 50 out of 842, have received any thing like an education.

R. W.

There are at present 842 prisoners.

170 prisoners cannot read nor write.

34 “ have never been at school of any kind.

85 “ know how to read, but not to write.

510 “ know how to read and write, but a large proportion of this number very imperfectly.

42 “ received a good common English education.

8 “ went through a college.

485 have been habitual drunkards; about one-third of the above number actually committed their respective crimes when *intoxicated*.

The other queries about the apprenticeships I cannot answer correctly, without going to each man in the prison; at present, my time will not permit me to do it.

R. W.

Addition from page 149 of A Constitution and Plan of Education for Girard College for Orphans, Philadelphia, 1834.

“As it is a question of great interest to the criminalist and moralist, to know how many convicts have lost their parents at an early age, I begged Mr. Wiltse, the agent of the Sing-Sing Penitentiary, to answer certain queries, which he promptly did, with that kindness with which he has always afforded me information respecting the state prison under his superintendence. There are about 800 convicts in Sing-Sing. Some few of them

were unable to say when they had lost their parents; of whom, therefore, many must be supposed to have lost them early; of the others,

48 lost their parents before they were five years old:

72 " after they were five years old, and before they were fourteen years old:

41 " after they were fourteen years old, and before they were eighteen years old.

161 lost their parents before they had arrived at their eighteenth year, which makes one-fifth of all the prisoners. If we add to them, those who were unable to give an account of themselves, we may say that nearly one-fourth of all convicts lost their parents before they were eighteen years old. Of these, probably the greater part, say three-quarters, therefore nearly one-fifth of the whole number, fell into vice in consequence of their forlorn situation—of having become orphans at an early age."

III.

Letter of Rev. Mr. Smith, Chaplain of Auburn State Prison.

STATE PRISON, }
Auburn, September 12, 1834. }

DEAR SIR,

The agent and keeper has just received, through Governor Marcy, your communication, making certain inquiries respecting the former character of the convicts in this prison, as it regards their education, habits, &c.; and as my sphere of duties has led me to be more familiar than he is with the subject, he requests me to furnish the answer, which I most cheerfully do.

Some of the questions, however, I cannot answer at all, and few, if any, of the others, in *precisely the form in which they are proposed*, without interrogating, separately, six or seven hundred convicts, which, with my limited opportunities of intercourse with them, would necessarily delay this reply for months.

I must therefore beg you to accept, as the best reply which I can at present give to your interrogatories, the following statements, (taken from minutes which I have at hand) from which you will, I hope, be able to glean the *substance* of the information sought, on most of the points of inquiry. The statements which follow relate to the 670 convicts (twenty-eight of whom are females) in prison on the first ult.

CRIMES.

Education—Five Classes.	Murder.	Manslaughter.	Assault and Battery to Kill.	Rape.	Assault & Battery to Rape.	Perjury.	Robbery.	Arson.	Forgery.	Passing Counterfeit Money.	Burglary.	Incest.	Sodomy.	Bigamy.	Grand Larceny.	Petit Larceny, 2d offence.	Breaking Jail.	Total.
Of Collegiate Education,									2						1			3
Of Academical do.									3						5			8
Of Common do.	1	6	7	1	4	4	4	2	41	21	24	3	1	1	70	13		1204
Of Very poor do.	3	4	12	2	4	4	3	4	25	23	33	1	1	105	37	5		267
Without any do.		4	12	8	4	4	6	6	3	8	26	1	1	66	35	4		188
Total,	4	14	31	11	12	12	13	12	74	52	83	5	2	3	247	85	10	670

CRIMES.

Habits—in respect to the use of Spirituous Liquors.	Murder.	Manslaughter.	Assault and Battery to Kill.	Rape.	Assault & Battery to Rape.	Perjury.	Robbery.	Arson.	Forgery.	Passing Counterfeit Money.	Burglary.	Incest.	Sodomy.	Bigamy.	Grand Larceny.	Petit Larceny, 2d offence.	Breaking Jail.	Total.
Excessively Intemperate,	3	9	16	5	8	5	7	4	22	9	35	3	1		87	37	7	258
Moderately Intemperate,	1	5	11	5	4	6	3	6	20	24	28	2	1	2	95	29	3	245
Intemperate,	4	14	27	10	12	11	10	10	42	33	63	5	2		182	66	10	503
Temperate Drinkers,			4	1		1	3	2	31	19	17			1	61	19		159
Total Abstinent,									1		3				4			8
Total,	4	14	31	11	12	12	13	12	74	52	83	5	2	3	247	85	10	670

Under the influence of spirituous liquors at the time of committing their crimes	402
Had intemperate parents	257
Lost or left parents before 21 years of age	397
do do 17 do	262
do do 14 do	121
do do 10 do	58
Had been in Sabbath school previous to conviction	19
Had been habitual daily readers of the Bible	25
Had committed the Decalogue to memory	74
Had been strict observers of the Sabbath	11
Married	352
Lost wives by death, previous to conviction	31
Left wives previous to conviction	86
	—117
Living with wives when arrested	235

Unmarried	318
Lost or left wives previous to conviction	117
	<hr/>
Living <i>without</i> wives when arrested	435
Children of the married convicts	953

REMARKS.

Under the head "Education," my fifth class answers to your first—"Do know neither to write nor to read." It embraces not those only who did not know the alphabet, but all those who could not read in the New Testament, when they came to prison.

My fourth class answers, with little variation, to your second—"Know how to read, but not to write." Some of them could write very poorly, but few of them more than their own names.

My third class embraces some of each of your third, fourth and fifth—"Know to read and write"—"Know to read, write, and cast accounts"—"Received a good common English education"—but consists chiefly of your fourth. There are very few in it who can be said to have "received a *good* common English education."

The other classes are sufficiently explained by the terms used.

Regretting, extremely, that I am unable to answer your inquiries more definitely,

I am, my dear Sir,
Most respectfully your's,

B. C. SMITH,
Chaplain of Auburn State Prison.

Dr. Francis Lieber.

IV.

Letter of Mr. Pilsbury, Warden of Connecticut State Prison.

STATE PRISON,
Wethersfield, Sept. 23, 1834. }

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 12th inst. came duly to hand, and is cheerfully replied to as soon as answers to your questions could be obtained. If the following statements should somewhat more than cover the ground embraced in your inquiries, I doubt not, that your interest in the subject, will cause you to give them a welcome reception.

The whole number of convicts in the Connecticut State Prison is 180. No convict here has ever received either a college, or classical education; nor has any one of such education ever been an inmate of this prison. The Chaplain, who, from 1827 to 1850, was acquainted with nearly 1000 convicts, in the Mount Pleasant State prison, at Sing Sing, N. Y., and with many other convicts in the prisons in Philadelphia, Baltimore and Auburn, has never known a liberally educated convict in prison.

The proportion of 8 in 100 of convicts when they came to prison, could read, write and cypher.

The proportion of 46 in 100	"	could read and write.
" 32 in 100	"	could read only.
" 22 in 100	"	could neither read nor write.
" 72 in 100	"	never learnt any trade.
" 24 in 100	"	began to learn, or learned trades which they did not follow.
" 4 in 100	"	have followed regular trades.

The proportion of 44 in 100 of convicts, committed their crimes while under excitement, caused by the use of ardent spirits.

There is no convict here who, before his conviction, could read and write, and who was of temperate habits, and followed a regular trade.

Of the convicts here, who could read and write, and were temperate, there are

Of those who could read, write, and followed a trade, there are	2 in 100
“ who are owners of real estate,	4 in 100
“ who are owners of real estate, and were temperate,	6 in 100
“ who are owners of real estate, and unmarried,	2 in 100
“ who have never been married,	0
“ who were married, and followed a trade,	64 in 100
“ who were married, followed a trade, and were temperate,	4 in 100
“ who acknowledged themselves to have been habitual drunkards,	0
“ not natives of Connecticut,	75 in 100
“ deprived of their parents, before they were 10 years old,	40 in 100
“ deprived of their parents, before they were 15 years old,	32 in 100
“ those who are colored are	15 in 100
	*25 in 100

The maximum inclination to crime appears to be at the age of 25.

From 1790 to 1834, there were 1113 instances in which individuals were sentenced to the State prison for the commission of crime. These crimes may be ranged under the three following heads in these proportions, viz:

Violence, 190. *Theft*, 716. *Fraud*, 207.

Upon an average, each criminal cost the State for his apprehension and conviction, \$75, and the average term of time that each was sentenced to remain in confinement, (abating 45 sentences for life) has been 3 years.

Since the prison has been established in this place, some seven or eight years ago, the number of convicts has considerably increased, and hence, the French commissioners, and English gentlemen may have naturally inferred, that there must have been an increase of crime in equal proportion. But the truth of this matter seems to lie here. As soon as the new prison was built, the criminal code was revised, and alterations made so as to punish a larger number of offences with confinement in the State Prison. Besides, because the discipline of the prison was thought to have a strong tendency to reform those, who came under its influence, and as such economy was used, as to make the labor of the convicts more than meet the expenses of the whole establishment, the courts in the different counties, were more than ever before inclined to sentence individuals to the State prison for the same offences. For some time past there has been a very manifest decrease in this State in the instances both of crime and convictions. Ever since last January, there has been a diminution of at least 20 in the number of convicts.

Viewing with high satisfaction the deep interest which you evince in that department, where my labors have for many years centered,

I am Sir,

with sentiments of sincere regard, yours, &c.

A. PILSBURY,

Warden of Connecticut State Prison.

pr. G. Barrett.

To Dr. F. Lieber, }
Philad. }

* In the State blacks are to the whites as 3 to 100.



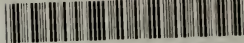








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