

Among the serfs of Russia, if crime is not entirely unknown it is at least but seldom heard of, and why is the reason? It is because the people of that country are so utterly degraded; brought by oppression so near to the brute creation, that they are incapable of conceiving anything, but what may be instigated by their own brutal passions; in short they have neither the sense to contrive, nor the judgment to execute, a deliberately matured plot. They are mere machines in the hands of their superiors, who dispose of their lives and property at pleasure. If we turn our attention for a few seconds to the past century, and take a brief review of the partition of Poland among the despots of Eastern Europe, we shall see how serfdom, headed by ambition, destroyed liberty for ever from almost the only continental country that possessed it; Poland that land of patriots! that land where under a judicious and enlightened Government liberty had kindled and flourished, was doomed to be overran by barbarians who invaded it simultaneously from every side, destroyed its happiness for ever, and eradicated its very name from the map of Europe. This wholesale robbery, this unprovoked aggression, was committed by a class of men the lowest in the order of intellectual capacity; they were the machines of ambitious despots, and committed a deed at which, had they been enlightened, their better natures would have shuddered.

"Oh bloodiest picture in the book of time,
Sarmatia fell! unwept, without a crime."

Thus we see, that although an uneducated community may not have the mind to mature, and commit, *ordinary* and *individual* crime; yet the degraded state of their intellect renders them fit machines to serve ambition, and ready tools for aggression and wrong; you may also perceive from what I have endeavoured to explain, that there are two ways by which ordinary atrocity may be expunged from a nation, viz. by *education*; and *non-education*; which method it is the province of an enlightened government to adopt, I shall leave to your own decision; merely observing, that if I have failed in my attempt to make it clear to you, that a sound and liberal education is *absolutely* necessary for the well being, nay! for the very existence of civilized society, I can only attribute my failure to my own inexperience, and not to the weakness of the position I have taken.

I will now proceed to show, that education is *necessary* for the proper development of man's natural powers, for giving him moral courage, and for making him form his opinions with correctness and rapidity. A single glance, and a momentary consideration, will suffice, in my opinion, to establish the first part of this assertion; and in order to give you a concise yet sufficient view, I will at once proceed to illustration. It will be a great advantage to the argument I am going to use, that the inhabitants of this country and of this place have a daily opportunity of seeing those people, who