

which the ordinary inmates of our gaols dread so much as "solitary confinement," none which exercises so beneficial and powerful a moral influence on the prisoner's mind, especially if accompanied for, at least, part of the sentence with enforced idleness, for "idleness in solitude leads to repentance, idleness in company leads to vice." Solitary confinement is now regarded in truth as the basis of every sound system of prison discipline. Whatever diversity of opinion there may still be as to the propriety of rigidly enforcing "solitary confinement" for *long periods in penitentiaries*, all writers are agreed that for the short-sentenced prisoners of our common gaols "solitary confinement" during the whole term of the sentence is not only unobjectionable and practicable, but that it is the wisest and the best system.

"Solitary confinement" is, however, unquestionably a much more severe punishment than "hard labor," and therefore in England even, where "hard labor" is really enforced in the strictest way by means of "tread-wheels," "cranks," or "shot-drill," ten days' "solitary confinement" is considered as fully equivalent to thirty days' imprisonment with "hard labor." In this country, therefore, where the "hard labor" is entirely imaginary, if "solitary confinement" were substituted for it, the sentences should at the same time be considerably reduced, probably to one-third of their present length.

Let us recapitulate briefly, the advantages which would be gained by thus substituting "solitary confinement" for "hard labor," supposing the sentence of imprisonment to be at the same time reduced to one-third its present length.

First. The punishment would be more formidable to the prisoners, and its deterrent influence consequently much greater. Something would thus be done to render our gaols what hitherto they have not been, "*a terror to evil-doers.*"

Secondly. The moral influence on the minds of the prisoners could hardly fail to be salutary.

Thirdly. Above and before all, it would effectually check the system of corruption and demoralization which must go on in any gaols where prisoners, however well classified, are permitted to associate freely with one another. Our gaols would thus cease to be, as they