

Correspondence.

JUDGE MARSHALL'S LETTERS.

(Continued from Address of the 9th inst.)

On Crime in general, and Juvenile Crime and Depravity.

Whatever view we take of these subjects, especially the latter, whether in reference to present consequences, or future prospects and results, they are, undoubtedly, the most deeply injurious of all the manifold evils which deface and afflict society. Like every other form and source of evil, crime diffuses its debasing and deadly influences and effects, in every direction, and throughout all the relations and interests of life. Every species of it, from such offences as are of the most heinous and malignant description, down to those of inferior turpitude, always, either partially corrupts, or utterly destroys the moral feelings, and the character, and influence for usefulness, of the individual by whom it is committed, and unavoidably subjects him to a variety of temporal afflictions; so true it is, that even in this life, by the arrangements of an infinitely wise as well as merciful Providence, a just retribution, in one or a variety of forms, is made to attend, or follow, every violation of the eternal principles of truth and righteousness. Again, the crime of the individual is always more or less afflictive, and generally otherwise injurious, to those with whom he stands connected by family and kindred ties, as well as by various other associations, feelings, and interests. And, further, the perpetration of every criminal act, is an injury to society at large, through the influence of the evil example; and, in many instances, by the disturbance of the peace of the community, the weakening of public security and confidence, the expenses necessarily attending the apprehension, prosecution, and punishment of criminal offenders; whereby, in the way of taxation, the industrious, the peaceable and virtuous, are made to suffer for the acts of the idle, the depraved, and guilty,—as well as in various other respects, which will readily be suggested.

It is a melancholy truth, that notwithstanding the means and agencies of religious, moral, and benevolent descriptions, have been greatly multiplied in the United Kingdom, since the beginning of the present century, yet crime, in general, has in the same countries, in a far greater proportion, and even rapidly, increased during the same period, and particularly female and juvenile crime and depravity, within recent years, down to the present time. This alarming fact, of the increase of crime, has been publicly and repeatedly declared, by the highest Judges, as well as many of the judicial and other legal functionaries, in various parts of the Kingdom. There is, indeed, the most palpable proof, that such is the saddening truth on the subject, in the great increase of the number of criminal offenders, apprehended and convicted, far beyond the proportionate increase of population. These afflictive circumstances in the social condition of the Kingdom, especially the increase of female and juvenile crime, and depravity, are, in every view they present, most ominous of future national calamity and danger; and, therefore, all the truly patriotic and benevolent, should be aroused and stimulated to increased exertions, for the suppression and removal of the causes through which they are produced and extended.

In proceeding to something like a detailed exposition of the evils, here intended to be treated of, the extent of crime in general, throughout the Kingdom, may first, be appropriately given, as made apparent from a variety of sources and proofs; and then, the subject of juvenile crime, and depravity, in their several principal forms, will, as they unhappily demand, require a special examination and exposure. Some few opportunities were afforded me, of becoming personally informed, as to the prevalence and extent of crime in certain parts of Great Britain, and some of their results will now be appropriately offered. In the year 1848, being in the town of Coventry, containing a population of only about 30,000, in the small county of Warwick,—I ascertained, that the assizes were then being held there, and on repairing to the judicial halls, I found that three Judges, of the highest Courts in the Kingdom, were sitting at the same time, on

separate tribunals, for the trials of causes, the chief proportion of which, I believe, were of criminal descriptions. I may here remark, that Coventry is not the shire or county town, but Warwick, where the principal assizes for the county are held. During the hour or two which I spent in the Court, chiefly in the principal one, in which Lord Chief Justice Wilde was presiding, the Grand Jury presented about a score or upwards of indictments, and towards the close of the sitting for the day, I saw the dock as closely filled, as seemed at all possible, with prisoners for arraignment, all of whom, most probably, had been charged by indictments presented on the same day. A large proportion of them were youthful persons. In the same year, at one of the assizes for Derby, which also is comparatively but a small county, and of limited population, one of the Judges declared, that there were more criminal cases before the Court, than had ever previously been known. Being in the town of Stafford, which contains only about 10 or 12 thousand inhabitants, and the county itself, being but of moderate population,—I observed that the prison buildings, in the town, were very extensive, and, on enquiry was informed, that they covered about four acres, and that an average of about 500 persons were generally confined in them, the principal proportion of whom were under criminal charges. In a report by one of the Judges of Assize, to the Secretary of State, for the Home Department, made in the year 1849, as given in one of the leading public Journals, it is stated, that during the three years immediately preceding, crime, in Yorkshire, had increased about *thirteen per cent.* over previous years; and the Report stated, that to all appearance, it was still further increased, during that year of 1849. Similar statements as to the increase of crime, were made in the same year of 1849, by the Coroner of Bolton, in Lancashire, who publicly declared, in his official capacity, that in the seven years from 1832, to 1839, there had been, in all, 47,455 summary convictions, in Bolton, for various offences; but that in the seven succeeding years, down to 1846, they amounted to 64,899, being an increase of 7,444 over the number in the seven preceding years. He further stated, that there had been an increase of such convictions, of *5½ per cent.* in 1848, over the number in 1847; and that in 1849, crimes were still on the increase.

In a Report made in the year 1849, by an authorized public Commissioner, for enquiring into the social condition of the working classes in the town of Hull, is the following clause—"On reference to the annual criminal returns, compiled by the superintendent of police in Hull,—and with copies of which since their first issue in 1836, I have been favoured by that public officer,—I find, that from the 1st of January 1836, to the 30th December 1848, no less than 32,755 persons were taken into custody, within the borough, the number in the latter, being more than double that of the former year, viz.—3,700 and 1,809 respectively. The same returns furnish some other very startling facts. In 1836, the number of persons committed for trial, was 64; in 1848 it was 217; the number convicted and sentenced in 1836, was 54; in 1848 it was 156. Here, then, is evidence of a most alarming increase of crime. Nor must the increase be imputed to the lighter classes of offences. Twelve years ago, the number of persons charged with drunkenness was 981, and in 1848—thanks to the Temperance Societies—the number had decreased to 616. I am aware that the gross return of prisoners for 1848 was largely augmented, by an extraordinary influx of vagrants; but still any one who will take the trouble to contrast the earlier and later criminal returns for the borough, will see, that not only are more offences committed, but that they are of a worse character." In the "Age and its Architects," is the following statement—"A few years since, it was found in Glasgow, that while population was advancing about *seventy per cent.*, serious crime had increased *five hundred per cent.*; while, over the whole country, crime had increased, in twenty-four years, more than *thirty fold.*"

On this point, of the extent of crime in the Kingdom, the following facts are given, and remarks made, in a Work, on which full reliance may be placed—"From the First Report of the Constabulary Force

Commissioners, it appears, that the number of commitments to prison, for all manner of offences, in England and Wales, (including the cases summarily disposed of, and those sent for trial,) exceeds 100,000 annually; but as this number only relates to the cases of punishment, or of prosecution; it will be obvious, that it gives no idea of the actual amount of crime perpetrated; for every one must know, from experience, that considerably more crimes are committed than are brought under the notice of the law. From the report above referred to, for example, we learn, that in the thirty-three years, ending 1837, not less than 275,175 forged notes, for various sums, were presented at the Bank of England, being on the average, 8338 annually; while the number of convictions for offering and forging the same, with every other species of forgery, was only 1677, or 50 annually; being one conviction for every 165 crimes of the above description that were committed! It further appears from the same report, that of one hundred felonies committed within the Sleford Union, in one year, *nineteen* only were prosecuted. In another place it was stated to the Commissioners, that not a *fifth* part of the crimes that were committed were made public, which seems to be accounted for, by the dread that people are under in the rural districts, lest further depredations should be committed upon their property, out of revenge for informing. The Commissioners mention the case of a farmer having had one of his horses stabbed, because he had merely accused a man of stealing a pig. The effect of this upon the farmers, is, say they, that if they see or catch a thief at his depredations, they dare not, in many instances, proceed against him. Hence, it will be seen that the actual amount of crime must be appalling. 'The Constabulary Force Commissioners' have estimated it at *six hundred thousand* crimes, annually; but a little reflection upon the nature of their own report must convince every one, that that number *doubled*, it would be far nearer, and not at all beyond the truth; for one of the prisoners, whose confessions they have given, specifies not less than *thirty* crimes, without intimating that number to include the whole which he and a companion committed in one excursion, without being at all brought to justice. Another prisoner states in the same report,—I supported myself partly by labour, and partly by crime, for many years, and, again, he says—'*twenty-two* years elapsed, from my entering upon a course of crime, to the period of my first apprehension.' In the same prison were two others, whose criminal career had proceeded for *upwards of twenty years*; two, *twenty-four*, *twelve*, *six*, *ten*, and so on, without a single interference of the law, the average duration of each prisoner's career of depredation, before his first imprisonment, being in the above jail, *five years*; and in the metropolis about *two years and a half*. If we calculate, then, on *twelve hundred thousand*, as the aggregate of crimes committed in England and Wales, we think we shall be within the bounds of truth."

Obituary Notices.

For the Wesleyan.

We have had several deaths lately on the Bridgetown Circuit, notices of which I will thank you to give in your paper.

1. The first is that of Mr. JOHN KENT, who died suddenly having left the Chapel at four o'clock, P. M., and at eleven was dead; but though thus suddenly called he was found prepared. He had been a member of our Church for some years.

2. The second is Mrs. DORCAS A. CLARK, the beloved wife of Mr. John Clark. She experienced religion about a year since, and after having been married to her now disconsolate husband nearly six months, she happily fell asleep in Jesus, leaving a blessed assurance behind that she has gone to be with her Lord.

3. The third is the late Mrs. EXPERIENCE DELONG, relict of the late Simon Delong of Hanly Mountains, in the 91st year of her age, *fifty-seven* of which she had been a most consistent member of the Wesleyan Church. She had been confined to her bed principally for the last four years with great bodily infirmity; but her mind was perfectly calm and collected; when at last, death came, he found her ready. When one of her daughters informed her that she was dying, her reply was—"praise the Lord,"—and then added, "I have fought the good fight," &c., &c., desiring that her funeral sermon might be

preached from that passage, a request which was complied with. A large congregation of her relations and friends listened with deep attention, and we hope with profit. Sister Delong had long been in the habit of entertaining the Methodist Ministers at her house. Among those whom she often spoke of were Rev. Messrs. Black, John and James Mann, Wm. Sutcliffe, Bennet, Knowlan, and several of the elder preachers now in these Districts have shared in the hospitality of that kind family. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

Bridgetown, March, 25th.

A. McNair.

4. Died on the 17th ult., at Weymouth, in the County of Digby, after a protracted illness, ELIZABETH, the beloved wife of Robert Harkinson Esqr., leaving a husband and ten children to mourn the loss of an affectionate wife and mother; also a large circle of friends who deeply lament the rent thus made in their society; but they mourn not as those without hope.

Our beloved sister had been a member of the Methodist Society during the space of six years; and by her life and conversation adorned the doctrine of God her Saviour. Some years previously to uniting with the people of God, she experienced the consolation of religion under the ministry of the Rev. F. Bent, and, as soon as practicable after the formation of the Society at Weymouth, she cast in her lot among the people of her choice—rejoicing that, through their instrumentality, she had been brought out of darkness into the glorious light and liberty of the Gospel. While health continued, no trivial matters were allowed to interfere with her attendance on the public means of grace; and rarely, if ever, was she absent from the house of God, thus testifying by her example as well as experience, that she gloried in the Cross of her Redeemer. To those who live contiguous to temples made with hands, where they may, at stated times, attend on the ministry of the Word of Truth without inconvenience, there is no great amount of self-denial required; but, in her case, being remotely situated from the house of God, the sacrifice of domestic comfort and personal toil, shows the deep interest she took in the services of the sanctuary, and that from her heart she could say—"This people shall be my people, and their God my God." It may be said with truth—she was one of the excellent of the earth; the law of kindness dwelt on her lips, and her truly Christian and benevolent disposition greatly endeared her to all the flock of Christ.

In the inscrutable arrangement of a gracious, but mysterious providence, she was prevented, by the loss of speech, from testifying her hope in the atonement; yet that hope was "like an anchor cast within the veil—sure and steadfast."

About twelve months prior to her death, our sister was prostrated from comparative good health, by an attack of paralysis, from which time she lost the power of speech, and never afterwards recovered. During some days preceding her dissolution, she lay in a state of insensibility, having suffered much from frequent convulsions, thus exemplifying that "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," and that the way to the Kingdom is through "much tribulation." But, while our beloved sister was called to pass through the "furnace of affliction"—deprived of the power of speech, and unable to speak of the comforts of religion—there can be no doubt but she felt that God was near to cheer her with His presence, and that, had she been able to articulate, she would have testified of her resignation to her sorrowing family and friends in the language of the Apostle—"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

W. P.

Weymouth, 2d April, 1851.

5. Died in Cornwallis, on the 28th December, AMELIA, daughter of the late Rev. William Elder, of Cape Breton, in the 36th year of her age. A large circle of relatives and friends will deeply deplore the premature departure of this amiable, talented and deservedly esteemed young lady. For some months a rapidly wasting consumption plainly indicated her lamented dissolution. Miss Elder was among the first to anticipate an early death as the certain issue; and she now directed the whole of her well cultivated mind to a preparation to meet the last enemy in the triumph of faith. Though it afforded Miss E. much pleasure to refer to an early period of her life for her first religious impressions and enjoyments, and she could turn with satisfaction to other periods when she enjoyed profitable communion with God, even amidst life's unsatisfying pastimes, yet nothing but the present assurance of a Saviour's love could afford the peace she desired, and a daily supply of spiritual food could alone satisfy her soul's hungering after righteousness. In the latter part of her illness especially, Miss E. enjoyed a calm and peaceful assurance of a happy immortality, and with that perfect "love which casteth out fear" awaited her Lord's coming. She died as all Christians desire to die, as a poor sinner resting on the Saviour. "Tell my friends," said she "that I die a monument of grace, a poor sinner, but Jesus died for sinners. He is all my trust." Miss E. was a young lady whose talents and education well qualified her to fill a large sphere of usefulness and influence; hence, in her death, society has sustained an irreparable loss.—Communicated.