

They constructed underground cells and shut up unfortunate offenders in them, without light, without work, without books, and without instruction. Of course death and suicide resulted to many of the victims. And then a revulsion against all, even necessary, prison separation took place in the popular mind, which had continued in America to this day, and which was increased by Charles Dickens's absurd fictions in his "American Notes." The special prisoner for whom Dickens's "heart bled" (who had previously incited to a riot in an association prison) lived 42 years afterwards, surviving the novelist fourteen years, and finally he came back voluntarily to the same Philadelphia "separate" (not solitary) prison, begging to be allowed to finish his life there, as in an asylum, amongst his old friends, the officers. This strange request was granted. Belgium and Great Britain had adopted the "separate" as distinguished from the rigidly "solitary" system, at least in a great degree, and for most of the ordinary offenders, and with excellent results. Such separation was or always should be merely from evil companionship. Chaplains, schoolmasters, warders, magistrates, and others often visited the prisoner, whose hands were occupied with industry; he had exercise books, and could earn various privileges by good behaviour. Such separation facilitated reflection and religious instruction. It prevented riots and escapes. It baffled contagious epidemics. It afforded opportunities for modes of labour which (unlike the prison workshops with machinery) interfered as little as possible with outside industry. Although even the prisoner had an inalienable right of individual labour-competition to a moderate extent, and although this "separate system" was costly at first, it was ultimately most economical both by its diminution of crime, and by its enabling shorter sentences to be substituted, with more, both of reformation and deterrence, instead of long periods of associated criminal detention. It should not in general extend over more than a year or two at the utmost. But with these limits and common care excellent health was usually maintained. All first-committed prisoners should be placed in gaols containing no re-convicted criminals. More visitation of prisoners by suitable persons (especially of female prisoners by ladies) was desirable. All imprisonments of young children should be abolished. Every beggar and vagrant should be dealt with either for relief or detention. Procurators Fiscal, or district public prosecutors, should be appointed throughout England and Wales.