

OUR CRIMINAL TREATMENT AND PRISON PUNISHMENTS.

nal labour" during the first three months of every sentence of hard labour (the minimum period now required), with the proviso that industry and good conduct have been duly recorded in favour of the prisoner. Misconduct and idleness will thus entail on the criminal a longer period of "penal labour," which can be regulated and systematized by the justices. The industrious will have a strong and well-defined motive power to exertion placed before them, and a classification, which time will improve, and such as is now carried out in several gaols, will become the imperative result in all prisons. By these means, uniformity in carrying out sentences will be promoted, the treatment of shorter sentenced prisoners will be more nearly assimilated to those in the convict establishments, and the intentions of the Government be more clearly defined, and more satisfactorily developed.

I fear we cannot be sanguine as to the reformatory influences on criminals whose sentences do not exceed three months, for there is not sufficient time to bring them to bear. I believe, however, that by increasing the period of strict separation from fourteen days, which is now freely used under the 34th clause, sch. 1, to *one month with a very low diet for sentences of one month and under*, very beneficial results would accrue, morally and financially. It will be remembered by some present that, with others, I advocated this point during the passage of the Bill through Parliament; but it was considered advisable in the first instance to try the fourteen days. Granting that periods of three months' imprisonment cannot well be reformatory, it would certainly be desirable to pass at once from one month of sharp treatment, as advised, to periods exceeding three months, and when we consider the amazing number of re-convictions with short sentences to which the Liverpool magistrates have called special attention, we can realize the advantage of cumulative sentences which they advise.

Very little was said in the Congress about the treatment of criminals beyond the walls of the prison, but to us this subject has been all-important for many years. We were long since compelled to realize that prison discipline was but a part of this great question, although so

interwoven with our external treatment of criminals, as in a great measure to be regulated by it. This is in part illustrated by our prison training, preparing criminals for employment on liberation, and by legislation in aid of discharged prisoners societies (25 & 26 Vict. c. 44), of which there are already upwards of thirty. There are many of us here who will remember that in our various discussions on prison discipline, and in our recommendations for the adoption of certain principles which were at last acceded to, we felt it to be our duty also to urge the adoption of police supervision, and of more stringent measures with regard to "habitual criminals." The Police Supervision Act, 1864, the Habitual Criminal Act, 1869, and the Prevention of Crime Act, 1871, show with what success a success which has been very amply confirmed by the statements of the Home Secretary in Parliament on the 20th of February last, in introducing amendments of great value in the details of the Prevention of Crime Act, 1871.

At the commencement of my paper I have strongly urged the necessity of exercising great caution in accepting new theories on this important subject, until they have been tested by thorough examination. In this recommendation I am only asking for the same measure which was (I think rightly), meted to myself. Notwithstanding I had practical results to adduce, I was, in advocating improvements in prison discipline, police supervision, &c., in some of the large towns in England, invariably subjected to a very severe examination. There are several here who will also recollect the long and searching examination to which I was subjected by the Law Amendment Society before it supported my views. The adoption by the Legislature of stringent measures for the "prevention of crime" gives to our information with regard to criminals a value not yet possessed by any other country.

Germany has introduced a supervision by the police, based upon the system now in force in the United Kingdom. A perusal of the instructions for carrying it out evince a care and consideration of the subject by the minister, which does him much honour and his government considerable credit. It is, I submit, a satisfactory testimony to our own pro-