

FROM THE GOVERNOR OF THE JAIL OF THE UNITED COUNTIES OF YORK AND PEEL.

In reply to a Circular from the Education Office, requesting me to furnish you with a report for 1858 of the operation and effect of the Library established in the Jail by your Department, I beg leave to say that, so far as the effects produced are concerned, I have nothing to add to my former report, *videlicet*: That the attention of the Prisoners being engaged while reading has produced a greater amount of order and decorum amongst them. The description of Books chiefly enquired for by the inmates of the Jail are those of a didactic, Historical, Biographical and light literary character. Works of a purely Religious nature are rarely sought for. I would here suggest to the Department of Public Instruction for Upper Canada, with all due deference, that hereafter care should be taken, in the choice of Books for Jail Libraries, to avoid the selection of so many Volumes of small size as has been the case with those on "Practical Life" in the Library for the Jail of these united Counties, for when the Books are so small and so numerous it is almost impossible to take proper care of them. Another reason, too, I have found to operate against their usefulness, and that is, no matter how entertaining or instructive its pages may be, the adults do not like the idea of reading a small Book. A good selection of duodecimas and octavos, interspersed with a few of smaller size, I am of opinion, is best suited for Jail Libraries. Our Library consists of a very large number of small Books, with a few of those which I think are of a size most suitable.

TORONTO, January, 1858.

GEORGE L. ALLEN, *Governor.*

FROM THE GOVERNOR OF THE OXFORD COUNTY JAIL.

I had the honour to receive your Communication desiring me to furnish a report of the operation and effect of the Prison Library established in the Jail of this County for 1858. In reply, I am happy to bear testimony to the general usefulness of the Library in its effects upon the behaviour of the Prisoners, as exemplified in the daily routine of this Jail. In a rural County like Oxford, the class of Prisoners usually committed is for crimes that necessitate their being confined for an average of from one to three months, and, as they usually become tired after the first few days of the monotonous life they are compelled to lead, Books are applied for, and the day Rooms are generally occupied by some of them reading to the others aloud. Although the first object they may have in view is merely amusement, nevertheless I am well convinced there must be future benefits derived by some who have never had the desire, or opportunity, to read. The books generally called for are History and Biography, Josephus being a general favourite, as well as the Histories of the native Countries of the Prisoners. The lives and labours of John Howard and Mrs. Fry are much read, but strictly Religious works, of which there are few in the Library, are seldom desired, which may be accounted for by the fact of Tracts being distributed every Sunday, of which the Prisoners have the use during the week. I think they are more useful than larger works, because they are more easily read, and the subjects of them, being more familiar and oftener changed, render them better suited to the capacities of the Prisoners, and, therefore, more easily comprehended. As I before observed, the benefits derived from a Prison Library are at once apparent in the behaviour of the Prisoners, as it diverts the mind of the morose and vindictive from contemplating and cultivating feelings of revenge and hatred to those who have sent them to prison; and for the thoughtless and reckless it, at least, causes them to behave better while confined, which circumstance alone has a tendency to strengthen the moral feelings, by accustoming them to self-control, may awaken in them a sense of the duty they owe to their fellow-men and to society when they obtain their freedom. There is every reason to believe that the use of the Library is calculated to prevent crime and vice from becoming more confirmed in the Criminal, because in this Jail—and, I have no doubt, in many others—where there can scarcely be any proper classification of Prisoners, it may be imagined