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## *SHOULD CAPITAL PUNISHMENT BE ABOLISHED?*

How to punish crime, and, at the same time, reform the criminal, is a problem demanding the most earnest consideration by the statesman, the philanthropist, and the social reformer. Towards the solution of this problem some progress has been made, but, so far, with very trifling results. What has chiefly been accomplished is the arousing of public interest in this important question which has caused the abolition of the death penalty for all minor offences, and of the abuses which so long disgraced the treatment of criminals, whether awaiting trial, or after conviction. In fact, we are now in danger of going to the other extreme, and allowing sentiment to usurp the place of justice.

This error is almost as bad as the first; for if, instead of treating the criminal with such harshness and severity as only to have the effect of hardening his heart and confirming his evil propensities, we lead him to think lightly of his crime, and to fancy himself a victim to oppression, we are as far as ever from arriving at the end in view. What we should strive for is, of course, while punishing the criminal for his offence, not at the same time to condemn him as well to infamy for the rest of his life, and so leave him little recourse but continuance in crime. Our object should be to take care to open a door by which he may, after punishment, enter upon a new career—not of crime, but of good conduct. We should give him a ray of hope, not the blackness of despair, and hold out a hand to help, not to crush down.

To effect this the penalty must be justly proportioned to the offence; it must be certain, and be strictly carried out; no mere sentimentality must be permitted to interfere with, or mitigate it, at the same time it must not be aggravated by unkindly