

average of 20,361 in local prisons in 1876 to 13,383 in 1893. This, however, is more apparent than real, and can be largely accounted for in various ways ; but still the most conservative authorities seem to agree that there has been a reduction in crime of about 25 per cent., without counting the increase of population, and this is very satisfactory, and especially in view of the fact that in all other countries there has been a steady increase of crime and no reduction.

Compared with the English system, our greatest deficiency is in our county jails, and no efficiency in administration can remedy it to any large extent so long as we keep our prisoners awaiting trial in association in a common hall, with all the corrupting influences that such association permits.

Our county jails, with old and young, innocent and guilty, old offenders with new beginners, forced into association for days and weeks and often months, are compulsory schools of crime, and so long as they remain, there can be no large reduction in the rising tide of crime. Our jail system, it is true, came from England, but it is the system of a hundred years ago, which John Howard revolutionized. In England every prisoner, from the time he enters the prison van at the police station until his conviction and transfer to a convict prison, is entirely separated from every other prisoner, and sees no one but the prison officials and his legal adviser.

Our first and paramount duty is to revolutionize our county jails. We might as well attempt to drain a pestilential pool with an inlet larger than the outlet as to expect a reduction of crime under existing conditions.

ON THE CONTINENT.

The Royal Prussian prison has about 500 prisoners. They work in their cells under the separate system. The industries are numerous, among which are : Shoemaking, tailoring, weaving, making brushes, corsets, paper sacks, and machine knitting.

At Dusseldorf the separate system prevails and prisoners work in their cells.

In Holland, all prisons are cellular.

Belgium is the only country in the world in which the system of absolute separation of prisoners of all grades and terms of sentence is in operation. In all prisons except Ghent the prisoner never leaves his cell save for chapel or exercise ; at the former he is in a separate box or compartment, the latter he takes alone in a narrow yard. His life, however, is not one of absolute solitude. He is visited frequently by his warders and schoolmasters and trade instructors ; the chaplain, the governor, and the doctor also break the monotony of his life. According to the Belgian view of the case, he lives in association with the prison staff, not with his fellow-criminals.