

Captain Maconochie's argument for the necessity of a change is founded on the admitted fact, that the example of severe suffering on the conviction of crime, has not hitherto been found effective in preventing its recurrence. He maintains that the sole and direct object of secondary punishments should be the reformation of the individual culprit, or at all events his subjugation, and his training to self-command, by the latter of which he may give satisfactory proof that he deserves a restoration to his privileges in society. He does not proscribe punishment, but on the contrary believes it indispensable to induce penitence and submission; he regards it as necessary as a deterring example, and not for a vindictive end.

An entire reform, or a self-control tantamount to it, can, in his opinion, be obtained only by specific punishments for the past, and by a training for the future. To effect this latter he proposes to group prisoners together in associations, made to resemble those of common life as closely as possible, subdividing them into small parties or families, as may be agreed on among themselves, with common interest; that they shall receive wages in the form of marks of commendation, which they may exchange at will for immediate gratifications, but of which a fixed accumulation should be required before receiving freedom. He thus hopes to prepare them for society in society, giving them a field for the exercise and cultivation of social virtues, as well as for the voluntary restraint of vices.

Captain Maconochie deems the union of punishment for the past, with training for the future, as totally incompatible with each other, and, therefore, thinks that the former must in all cases precede the latter, and be effectual of itself. He argues, that success in medical treatment by beginning to administer restoratives before the disease is eradicated, might as well be expected as reform while punishment is undergone; and that it is just, as necessary to prepare for society in society, as to train man by a preliminary education to the useful employments of life; that it seems idle to expect that mere theoretical instruction, however strongly enforced by short but severe suffering, should be sufficient to enable persons advanced in life to guide their future conduct, as it would be to hope to teach a trade, or any other practical employment, by abstract rules; and that moral lessons, to be taught profitably, require a field of progressive experimental application just as much as engineering.

On these elementary principles Captain Maconochie founds his plan of convict management, to which he applies the name of "Social System," and trusts for its success to the application of moral force in the place of physical coercion. He considers that hitherto the reform