

for it is not the body alone that is to be kept captive, but the will also; and the more care that is taken to guard the former, the less can the latter be attended to.

The peculiar trait in the Social System is, that after punishment every culprit's lot would be in his own hands. His companions would be of his own choice, and the length of his detention and comfort would depend upon the conduct of himself and his associates.

In seeking the reformation of the culprit, the mutual action of companions on each other would be resorted to, and this would be productive of great advantages. No system could be more just; and its language to the criminal would be,—“Having made you pay the penalty for your crime, I now retain you until you are qualified to meet the requisitions of society on your return to it, that you may not fail as you have before done.”

The results of this system could not but be far different from the plans in present use, which have reference only to crime and retribution, and may be considered useless in promoting reformation. I understood that Sir George Gipps had already partially and successfully adopted the Social System with the convicts in government employ, by associating them in bands of ten to twenty, and letting them work on the public roads. Some of them were pointed out to me, and in point of appearance were as orderly and cheerful as any free labourers. I was informed that they do more work than when watched by overseers or soldiers.

I saw, however, many iron-gangs, but was informed that they were composed of individuals who had committed offences in the colony. After the commission of several crimes in the colony, they are again transported, to Norfolk Island, where Captain Maconochie is stationed; and it may well excite surprise if he should succeed in reforming these double-refined villains.

Many circumstances have been told me, by those who are well acquainted with the facts, that such is their detestation of Norfolk Island, and their horror of remaining there, that convicts have drawn lots to commit crimes, and even murder, in order to be sent back to Sydney for trial.\*

Captain Maconochie's system is looked upon by many as Utopian, and it has excited no little astonishment that any one should conceive the idea of affording to criminals the refined amusements of society, or that books, music, &c., should be furnished them.

I have given this short sketch of the Social System in order to show

\* It is the intention of the government to erect on Norfolk Island a penitentiary, on the plan of that at Sing Sing, in the State of New York. The estimated cost was £200,000.