

*John Howard. An Essay.**

The name of John Howard stands alone in history as the pre-eminent type of disinterested benevolence, and the tendency of his work has been universally accepted as having less admixture of evil than perhaps that of any other man. Respect and admiration have been lavished upon him without measure; whether by those whose sympathies were naturally with the objects of his commiseration, or by those who simply desired to emulate his singlemindedness and active humanity. There is this peculiarity in his wide reputation, namely, that the *criminal* as well as the unfortunate have a direct interest in applauding his beneficence; while the good cannot but admire his devotion to the cause of the helpless, and his straightforward simple method. It would be too much to say that he *preceded* as well as excelled all other labourers in his special field, or that without him prison reform would never have been achieved, or would have been even indefinitely postponed; for a Parliamentary Committee had reported fully on the subject 70 years before, and Mr. Popham was Howard's immediate predecessor in introducing some important practical legislative improvements. But it is indisputable that Howard awakened an enthusiasm on the subject without which it is impossible to say how far those improvements could have been carried; and further—that he was the principal means of the complete exposure of the frightful abuses and defects of prison management which were then so prevalent. The expansion of his indomitable labours to nearly every corner of Europe, while it established England's pre-eminence in the stupidity as well as cruelty of its maladministration, furnished him not only with ample proofs that these evils were almost equalled in some foreign countries, but with many examples and patterns (for instance, in Holland and Switzerland), which he copied and laboured to introduce generally; and added such weight and volume to the public opinion, which he created or converted to his views, that there is no similar movement which has been more widely, energetically, and persistently sustained.

* As it is often very profitable to have the routine of thought disturbed by the presentation of a subject in an entirely new view, we publish this original essay, which has come to us from Australia, without endorsing the author's views or his estimate of Howard; in justice to whose memory we have thought it right to append, as notes, the brief comments of one who is singularly qualified by study of Howard's life and character to give a just opinion concerning both.

One stain only has been attempted to be cast upon his memory—namely, his asserted severity to his son. Even this, however, has been confidently and triumphantly denied. Possibly, few believed it; and of those, probably a majority—judging by the fact that his son's ultimate insanity ensued upon a brief career of unbridled dissipation—believe that Howard really erred, if at all, on the side of leniency. In any case, the purity of his motives cannot be impugned; and if a difference in his conduct towards his son might have produced different results, society at large—whose advantage engrossed his care to the prejudice of his parental character—would have felt itself ungrateful had it questioned the propriety of his devoted service; as it would certainly have been unwise to repress any exhibition of that social feeling which it is really so important to cultivate and so difficult to arouse.

But his son was born in 1765, and Howard from that time was rarely at home. He resumed his travels abroad at once, partly to fill the void in his mind caused by his wife's loss, and partly—for the same reason which had made him a traveller from his youth—to improve his health, and his knowledge of men and things. His special career commenced in 1773 only, when he was forty-seven years of age, upon his appointment as Sheriff of Bedford. Thenceforward he appears to have suffered nothing to interfere with the prosecution of his peculiar mission. Any severity which he may have practised towards his son can scarcely be supposed to have been sufficiently continuous to affect the lad's mental constitution permanently. Even the charge of neglect seems scarcely consistent with the facts recorded, that no expense was spared in his son's education, and that considerable care appears to have been manifested in the selection of those persons to whom it was confided. So far, indeed, as the causes of young Howard's excesses and insanity are traceable to the conduct of his father, it would seem quite as probable that they arose from the excess of care with which it was attempted to guard him from contamination. It is not unusual for only sons to be brought up in a singular manner, nor is it at all uncommon for persons of like rigidly ascetical principles to imagine that virtue is tarnished by the mere knowledge of vice. Thousands of young persons have in this manner been kept in such utter ignorance of the ordinary temptations of the world that they have never had opportunities of exercising their judgment and discrimination as to the consequences of good

or evil conduct. The only theoretical motives to virtue and deterrents from vice with which they have ever been acquainted are of so eminently unpractical a kind, that they are instinctively prevented from even endeavouring to apply them when occasions proper for testing them arise. Not being even forewarned, they are anything but forearmed. It is quite overlooked that, in the moral struggles of a rational being, knowledge is power; and that moral education is far more a matter of exercise than of inculcation.

Whether young Howard's moral collapse ensued more or less from causes herein indicated, must remain now a matter rather of speculation; though the general circumstances of his youth seem to favour the supposition of their applicability. Many features in the singular, though eminently practical, character of his father, suggest that it might have had a deeper origin in inherited temperament and mental constitution. His father notoriously suffered much from bad health, and most in youth. He had an apparently morbid love of travelling. That he was remarkably impulsive; that is, that he was very susceptible to certain impulses, which were liable to engross his nature, and so to affect his history to a startling degree—is abundantly proved. His first marriage, from a sentiment of gratitude; his attempted journey to Lisbon after the desolating earthquake of 1755; his curious compact with his second wife to the effect that in all cases of difference of opinion his voice should rule; the curious fact that though his sympathies must doubtless have been strongly engaged in favour of prisoners, while he himself was suffering as a prisoner in France, yet his concentrated energy was not actively aroused in their behalf until he was actually 47 years old, 18 years after;* the manner in which he thenceforward devoted his whole time and strength unrestingly to objects in which his interest was awakened so late in life; and still more, perhaps, the subsequent diversion of his attention from prison discipline, which for years wholly engrossed him, to the investigation of the plague and quarantine systems;† all these things indicate a mental constitution liable to be overwhelmingly affected by casual circumstances, and yet capable of responding with its entire energy to an

* The fact that Howard, after obtaining exact information respecting his fellow prisoners in France, procured their release, is overlooked.

† The obvious explanation that quite early in his prison inquiries Howard became profoundly interested in the Gaol Fever and Confluent Small-pox, and curiously unwholesome state of our prisons, is ignored.

impulse thus casually awakened, to a complete disregard of every other. He apparently inherited a strongly ascetical instinct, itself indicative of great enthusiastic capabilities, and of a tendency to run to extremes in action as well as in speculation. It does not appear further than as a general impression derived from a perusal of his life, that wealth had been long the condition of his family. It has been advanced by psychologists of repute that the acquisition of unwonted wealth in a family has a tendency to produce mental aberration; and though this as a concomitant cause can *now*—in defect of more precise information—be no more than a matter of indirect inference, it corresponds so far with fact and probability, that it should not be lightly excluded from consideration.* Very high authorities can be quoted to the effect that singularity and extraordinary energetic action are in themselves abnormal, and indicate a condition liable to, if not indeed involving, actual aberration more or less. It has also been said by an expert that by means of such the great advances in civilisation are achieved.

My object, however, is to point out the most important lessons which it strikes me are to be learnt from the history of Howard, and without which it would scarcely be worth while to discuss points which must now be too obscure to serve as matters of very profitable speculation.

No one could be further than I am from impugning the perfect purity of John Howard's motives. But I demur altogether to the propriety of judging any man by his motives, and for two ample reasons. In the first place his motives cannot be known with any degree of certainty; and in the second place, the most evil acts might be excused by real or alleged purity of intention; and though no one consistently judges his neighbours by their intentions or alleged motives, still the principle is so far assumed as valid, that the utmost confusion obtains in ordinary judgments of right and wrong. Hence my desire to place the matter in a rational and proper light.

It is very generally recognised that it is both rash and uncharitable to impute evil motives, and very properly so; on the ground of the utter uncertainty as to the motives assumed. But this being the case it should be obvious that the uncer-

* Howard was always the object of a most liberal expenditure at the hands of his father, and was accustomed from childhood to the display of wealth. The father's wealth was the result of industry in trade, so that he was not the victim of wealth unexpectedly obtained.

tainty, and therefore the rashness, must be as great with respect to good motives; and that judgment of good actions by motives, on whatever grounds assumed, should be exactly as open to suspicion, or rather must be as little reliable, as that of any evil actions. The uncertainty in the imputation of motives—the imminent risk of falsity of conclusion, from the lack of reliable data, when judging men by their supposed motives—can be the only rational ground of objection; for there can surely be no impropriety whatever in imputing true motives, could they only be certainly known to be there alone.

It may be contended that a man is certainly aware of his own motives, if he can be trusted to state them accurately. There is nothing I should have more confidence in contesting. Not only will men in general unhesitatingly refuse to admit as reliable any one man's account of his own motives for any particular act, but I believe they will on consideration admit that though the opinions of others of his act are necessarily liable to be utterly mistaken (which is proved in most cases by the fact that they will differ about them to any conceivable extent), yet that those opinions are in general far more probably correct not only than the man's account to others of his own motives, but even than his account to himself. There is, in fact, nothing about which men are so likely to be deceived as the motives which really cause their own actions. For instance, most men will at once adduce rational or social motives for their own acts, and also rational or what are termed self-regarding ones for those of others; whereas no position is more impregnable than that in which it is affirmed that men do not, as a rule, act in obedience to deliberate reason, but rather to habit or instinct. The two motives doubtless ordinarily coincide, and the conflict does not then appear; but where they do conflict, habit carries the day with but little assistance from circumstance. A person habituated to virtue will not do a vicious act, unless the pressure of circumstances be overwhelming. When rational conviction adds its weight to that of habit, the pressure of circumstances may be reduced to a minimum. So criminal habits, which are nearly always both inherited and confirmed and supported by circumstances of strong temptation, can never be eradicated; though while circumstances are modified, so as to reduce temptation to a minimum, the criminal tendency will remain latent; and if evil temptations and associations can be permanently prevented it is weakened, and there may be room to hope that moral habits may be not only generated but confirmed. When,

however, habit is confirmed and assisted by organic degeneration, as in the case of victims of drunkenness, it is notorious that the strongest rational conviction of certain evil results—nay, even experience of them—is insufficient, as a rule, to stay it. There is something analogous in physics. Sir W. Thomson and Helmholtz are said to have found that, under certain conditions, “if motion of the kind called rotational is once set up in a fluid, the portion of the fluid to which this motion is communicated, *retains for ever*, during all its wanderings through the fluid mass the character of the motion thus impressed upon it.” (See “Nature,” 23 Jan., 1873, page 220.) This appears to me a perfect illustration, not only of the persistence of force, but also an explanation of the force of habit. Habit—hereditary or acquired—is thus the general spring of human action. In fact, virtue that is not habitual, is not virtue, nor does an isolated evil act constitute vice. To be either virtuous or vicious, a man’s acts must be not only habitual but characteristic. Character is a word of ambiguous interpretation; but either meaning is significant of the drift of my argument. It implies either that inherent constitution of a man, in virtue of which his acts are of a certain forecalculable quality, and in accordance with which therefore he cannot but act; or, otherwise, his reputation in society, which is determined necessarily solely by results, and not by his motives or intentions. The word character has really no meaning on any other theory, and is diametrically inconsistent with that of free volitions as an element of moral action; habits being, as a rule, formed and consolidated before the maturity or the application of the rational judgment. It is because I feel that most of man’s errors—personal and social—arise from his being habitually ruled by feeling instead of his rational judgment, that I undertake to write this paper. Not that I hope thereby to effect a reform. But I know that every little helps, and I think it right to contribute my mite towards a result which will surely come. And not that I mean to assert that my real motive in writing is that I think it right to do so. I am aware that my writing is the product of my circumstances and temperament. If I say—woe is me if I preach not this gospel; I mean that it would be essentially woe to me were I to do otherwise. But I also know that any action produces effects, however small, and that I am now but one of a numerous class which is working towards the same end. Every—ever so—little really helps.

Howard’s motives could not have been purer. But how

know I that?*

Admitting that his conscious motives may have been concealed, and that his real motives—the causes of his conduct—may have been, and probably were, vastly different from those of which he was conscious? Simply because I know and am persuaded that no man is impure or unclean by reason of the motives that determine and produce his conduct. If one be pure, wise, and useful, and another impure, foolish, and mischievous, each is so by reason of a chain of causes of which a few links only can be discovered by the careful exercise of the highest faculty of man—*Reason upon his experience*. And this can be consistently denied only by denying also the existence of a chain of causation—of the relations, in fact, of cause and effect. It should be clear that all desire good by whatever means they propose to attain to it. That is their one universal motive. Ignorance and prejudice distort and disguise it, and frequently cruel circumstance reduces the prospect of it to a hard choice between closely balanced evils. And when in such conditions the wise shall scarcely be saved, where shall the inheritor of folly and vice appear? There is no fact more evident than the infinite variety and disparities of human capacities of every kind. It would be as rational to deny the diversity of their conditions. Yet the assertion of the freedom of the will is equivalent to a denial of any difference whatever in their physical and mental constitution, in their knowledge, and in their circumstances.

There is no man—no criminal in Newgate—who would not, if he could, be perfectly wise and virtuous. But he cannot. There is no virtue which I would not possess and practice, *if I could*, and I am certain that my reader—be he whom he may—can say, and truly say, the same of himself. Yet we fall far short of our desires—of our will. There is proof extant that Howard himself was as far behind his standard and aspirations as either of us fall short of ours.† What ground then can we have for judging differently of our neighbours, or of Howard's son? None. And if it thus appears the depth of uncharitableness to judge them differently, I know that that uncharitableness arises solely from prejudice and error almost universally inherited, and

* In all this discourse about motive, no notice is taken of Howard's repeated statements in his letters to private friends, and in his diaries, that his motive was a sense of duty, and love of Christ. Whatever the real bearing of this fact on the author's argument, he should have noticed it.

† Only inasmuch as he took for his standard the ideal of Christ and religious obligation.

originally a necessary product of superficial observation and impulsive action; and that to blame those who exhibit it would be an error equally wild. Let us not therefore judge one another any more; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

We know that heredity does not necessarily affect every successive generation observably; that atavism may exempt at least one occasionally in the series from what will inevitably reappear. It is therefore not certain that the defects of young Howard were derived direct from either of his immediate parents. Still his father exhibited characteristics which, with slight modification by circumstances, might be expected to produce such aberration in his offspring, if not in himself. There can be little doubt that to many persons Howard himself appeared scarcely sane. It may be that apparently slight differences in their experiences might have reversed the characters of Howard and his son. They were of one stock, with the addition in the son's case of the cross of the blood of Henrietta Leeds, whose idiosyncrasy there is no known reason to suppose was essentially calculated to change it.* The son's capabilities for evil as well as good were certainly inherited, whether from his father or not; for it may be even more confidently asserted that what comes out in the flesh was bred in the bone—than the converse, which is almost a truism, and is certainly trite. And his desires, there is no reason to suppose, were worse, though his associations, habits, and perhaps tendencies were different. His attitude was doubtless accurately described by Paul; the good that he would—he did not; and the evil that he would not—that he did. The same language was precisely as applicable to his father, judging by the records of his private diary.

Now it will be readily conceded that so far as a man does inherit irrepressible impulses to act in this or that manner, he deserves no praise for obeying them, any more than he deserves praise for being six feet high or red-haired. He cannot help himself if he would; for whether he would or not, must depend upon his impulses, inherited or otherwise caused. It is also obvious that Howard's actions were not performed against his inclination or will, and that for him to

* The early death of Henrietta Leeds, Howard's second wife, from what was most probably consumption, is a fact which no writer on the Psychology of Howard ought to overlook.

have acted otherwise would have been disagreeable and painful to him. He was very wealthy and his own master; and he obeyed his instinct, whencesoever derived, and indulged his peculiar hobby to the top of his bent. Though he spent tens of thousands in travelling about Europe fulfilling his inclination, which coincided with what he thought his duty, he was far from impoverishing himself;* and he does not appear to have denied himself anything which was really a pleasure to him, or to have subjected himself to anything which was not capable of being made subservient to his favourite objects, and therefore to him a source of enjoyment. Yet the main ground of the praise lavished upon him is his self-sacrifice and disinterestedness! He certainly lacked as much as Zaccheus. Nay, he sacrificed everything—even his son—to his particular hobby, and devoted himself to that alone which his peculiar nature made him feel pleasure in doing.† Was not his son actually more entitled to credit for self-sacrifice? For HE did sacrifice his health, his reason, his life, and of course his wealth. He literally and unequivocally sacrificed himself, and for a most inadequate object. The elder Howard achieved a reputation which the whole world envies. Empresses solicited his company in vain. Emperors he kept standing for hours in deference to his unbending humour.‡ He died in old age, wealthy, respected, mourned, and almost adored by all Europe, the good and the bad, from the sovereign on his throne to the felon in the dungeon.§ Contrast with this his son's miserable end. I hold that, accurately speaking, young Howard far more than his father practised self-sacrifice; and that to say that the father was *disinterested* in devoting himself to the objects in which he felt most *interest*, is a simple contradiction in terms. I say this advisedly, and am quite prepared to accept the logical consequence, that self-sacrifice, so far as real, is essentially what it was in young Howard's case—VICE; and that virtue—including such as Howard's—is none the less virtue, because it is, like his son's vice, though voluntary (that is, done with consent, pleasure, and will, and the

* A letter to Samuel Whitbread, in which Howard speaks of selling Cardington, shows that this statement is inexact.

† Inconsistent with a previous statement, and not true. Howard's treatment of his son can be blamed only by those (if any exist) who deem it the duty of a widowed father to live under the same roof with an only son, and keep him in perpetual tutelage.

‡ This is new to me.

§ A most imperfect and misleading account of Howard's death.

prospect of good as motive), performed with as little real option or choice, as are the dictates of the blindest instinct. Thus they personally are worthy of neither blame nor praise. But I think it even more incumbent on us to estimate carefully the value of their work by the results, and to mark strongly our approbation or disapprobation of their conduct. We are enabled to do this with the greater freedom and force, while attributing their conduct not to them but to circumstances; we can condemn or approve their acts without blaming or even praising them. Men are attempted to be judged by their motives, which in my view are all equally good, and in the popular view cannot possibly be known; their work, by the results, which are generally very different from those which they have in contemplation. But thus wisdom can be really charitable, and freely forgive them, for they know not what they do!

I hold that with motives—supposed good or bad—we have nothing to do. They cannot possibly be distinguished with even approximate certainty; and if they could they would be found so inextricably interwoven with ancient heredity and distantly converging circumstances that nothing could be more senseless than to praise or blame the active or passive instrument of their fruition; or to imagine that he could possibly have acted otherwise without reversing the past history of the universe, and substituting a fresh chain of causation from all eternity. Men are but the seeds of time; and if one bears ample fruit, and like Newton interprets nature, and another like Napoleon sends thousands to destruction, while a third, like Howard, abolishes cruel abuses, each does his part at the expense of his neighbours; as the one acorn which fructifies absorbs nutriment from thousands of others equally potential in themselves, but, for lack of opportunity, serve only as manure for his particular growth. It is not unworthy of remark that the above-named three historical characters appear to have formed the culmination of their stock, and to have exhausted its capabilities of variation in themselves; while in ordinary cases, though matrimonial connections appear to secure variation by instinctively forming antithetical conjunctions, the result is almost invariably a stereotyped mediocrity.

I think we have now arrived at a stage in the development of intellect whence we should discern the fallacy of judging of the worth or utility of conduct by its proximate rather than its ulterior results, and the uselessness of expecting to

modify the course of events to any great extent by operating upon proximate rather than distant links in the chain of causation. This improvement could only ensue upon the expansion of knowledge and the multiplication of recorded observations. And in proportion to the enlargement of our apprehension of the importance of studying wider causes and effects, will mere human individuality sink into its proper relative insignificance in the production of sociological improvement; and steps in civilisation, and even the achievements of the least puny of men as much as the movements of the masses which they appear to direct, will be recognised as being evolved in cosmical history of which they form but infinitesimal parts. While the attention of men was restricted to immediate causes and effects, it was scarcely wonderful that they should entirely fail to modify the sequence of events to any large extent. The theory of free-will—which arose in a feeling of personal power with an ignorance of its source—was the very narrowest possible conception of causation, in which all but the single last connected link in the chain of causation escaped observation altogether; and it was scarcely wonderful that the influence of human wisdom upon the course of events should have been proportionately slight. As we gain a more accurate conception of causes and effects we shall learn also how much more powerfully intelligent and consistent efforts are capable of modifying the distant future; and hence also the ultimate importance of all our actions. The further back in the precession of events that human wisdom recognises the efficiency of causes, so much further may it hope eventually to influence effects. Could Howard have discerned the remote effects of his course of action he would certainly have modified it so as to prevent the evil in them. But they could not be discerned then by Howard, nor even perhaps by Judge Heath himself.

By declining to judge men by their motives, and to allot praise and blame to them for what is the product less of their intervention than of antecedent and concomitant circumstances, we shall entirely avoid injustice and uncharitableness to those who would certainly have done better if they could; and by estimating the value of their actions by the results alone, we shall with due caution derive much more advantage in guiding our own conduct than if we proceeded on the theory of motives. Judging Howard's work by his motives, which were good, we should be bound to accept the

results as good. But, if so, we should recognise the results of any other man's work, however evil, as good also, because good is the motive of all.* And it seems to me that the true value of his work has yet to be estimated; in fact, it has scarcely yet been fully developed. What are now the results?

The most obvious immediate result which Howard discerned was the lessening the actual physical cruelty practised upon prisoners. This was a good. But what has been the later effect upon the world? Prisoners, as a rule, may fairly be taken to represent the bad—the evil portion of human society. To say that Howard did good solely or mainly to the evil would be to give an entirely new aspect to the question of the value of his work. If that were the case, and the whole of it, surely the results would be wholly evil. But it is not the whole of the case, though a material feature in it. Howard's sympathy was with misfortune rather than with crime. He was one of the first builders of model cottages, and was careful that those who inhabited them should be good citizens so far as he could judge. This was even better, for thus he marked the distinction between good and evil. He founded schools, too, which was better still. For that was calculated to spread knowledge, which is the best preservative against evil. But alas! he sadly qualified the good thus done; for in his schools girls were not taught to write, and that accomplishment was withheld from all boys, except a few that he selected as fittest to be trusted with so much power. This evident want of confidence in knowledge as the best preventative of crime strongly suggests that Howard acted in blindness to consequences, though not in disregard of those which he discerned. We should learn better. I am not forgetful that his later labours were partly directed to the improvement of hospitals and the alleviation of the sufferings of others beside criminals. I shall show that even this has also produced evil effects. But his principal work was directed to the improvement of the condition of prisoners in gaols, and upon that is mainly based his reputation.† In the right hand of his statue in St. Paul's Cathedral is a KEY.

* This assumption that *good* is the motive of all men is scarcely fit to be used in any serious essay.

† This statement is imperfect. The improvement of the condition of prisoners was but one of a series of labours to which he was successively called by duty and opportunity.

Before Howard's time, although the Report of the Committee of 1701-2 proves that the abuses in prison management had received attention and condemnation, no effective measures appear to have been taken to remedy them until 1773, when Mr. Popham brought a bill into Parliament to remedy the greatest general abuse, which Howard soon afterwards assisted to abolish, namely, the payment of gaolers by fees instead of by wages. Howard's enthusiasm doubtless accomplished in a few years what might otherwise have taken much longer to do.* But his enthusiasm overshot the mark, as feeling not strictly regulated by reason always does.

I must now endeavour to distinguish the results to which his enthusiasm was blind, but which the disregarded reason of his time was not incompetent to discern. The logic of Judge Heath was almost impregnable ("Dixon's Life of Howard," p. 219). Speaking of transportation, he said, "If you imprison at home, the criminal is soon thrown back upon you hardened in guilt. If you transport, you corrupt infant societies, and sow the seeds of atrocious crimes over the habitable globe. *There is no regenerating a felon in this life.* And for his own sake, as well as for the sake of society, I think it better to hang." The only defect of this reasoning is, that in it the alternative of perpetual imprisonment was overlooked, and short imprisonments only were contemplated. Whereas, if convicted criminals were never released, the greatest mischiefs that they do would be entirely prevented. First, they would not contaminate the honest and innocent; and, secondly, they would not propagate their evil stock. It is altogether a narrow, imperfect view that regards only the particular case or individual. The improvement of society, or rather its preservation from evil, is the pre-eminent duty of social rational men. Good citizens should always be preferred to bad ones by moral beings. This principle dictated another wise saying, which has been preserved, though not adequately appreciated. It was spoken by an English judge, but I regret that I know not if it was Heath. "Prisoner at the bar," said he, "you will be hanged—not because you have stolen a horse, but in order that horses may not be stolen." In this admirable pithy saying is embodied the whole duty of man as legislator and administrator. Society at large, and particularly those of its members otherwise

* This is a very inexact statement. The work that Popham did not succeed in doing, Howard accomplished in about five months of the winter of 1773-74. Nor was any work ever less deserving of the epithet "*enthusiasm.*"

most exposed to contamination and temptation, are in it regarded as entitled to security from those evils, and to consideration in preference to one individual who has forfeited his title to any. Were this principle consistently practised, crime would be greatly lessened, if not nearly exterminated, in a few generations.

Howard, however, like other people, and more particularly like criminals, acted from feeling and not from reason. His instinct was to do good, to alleviate and relieve suffering; and he devoted himself to what seemed to his superficial view the cases in which amendment was most required. He disregarded the reason of his age, which I have quoted. Still I am far from saying that he should be blamed or held responsible for the evil which has followed. He did his best; but though his motives were as pure as Judge Heath's, the present result of his labours I hold to be mischievous and immoral in the highest degree. I do not say that he in any instance sympathised with a criminal as such. But from his time certainly dates the unreasoning sympathy with criminals which has spread and grown to the present time, having sprung originally from his enthusiasm as cause. It may be that we should ascend to even more distant causes, and trace Howard's own enthusiasm as well as that to which it gave birth, to that system of which he was such a devoted adherent, and which states that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance. In worldly practice no principle could offer a more direct premium to crime, or could be more mischievous or immoral in its general tendency.

I hold that all men are alike blameless; their motives being without and not within them; and good—not evil—being their universal desire. The results of their acts are alone worth estimating, as furnishing data for future rational action, and those results I now desire to expose as accurately as possible. I maintain that the sympathy and enthusiasm in favour of criminals, which Howard's work was mainly instrumental in producing, tends to confound the judgment of good and evil more or less throughout society. It tends directly to ameliorate the physical condition of the felon to such an extent, as to make him an object of rational envy to the thousands of struggling poor who are far worse housed, fed, and clothed than he. It has tended inevitably to provide for the felon and criminal a life of ease and comfort in gaol, while hundreds starve—and see their children starve and grow

criminal—simply because they will not thieve and swindle.* It has affected popular feeling, and legislation, and administration to such an extent, that sleek convicts are constantly released to contaminate the previously honest, and demonstrate to them that the simplest and legal way to exchange a condition of cruel anxiety as well as privation for one of ease and idleness is to violate the laws of society. It has rewarded the guilty and taught immorality to the innocent, and it has so blinded men to these results, that the human race is now undergoing a process of deterioration in other ways. The NON "*survival of the fittest*" is now the rule. Irrespective of the moral contamination which the perpetual release of invigorated and skilled criminals ensures, the morbid sentimentality which blindly causes this evil, produced others scarcely less gigantic and pernicious. The hopelessly diseased and the lunatic are the objects of far more care and expenditure than the honest distressed poor; and it is notorious that the imprudent, the diseased, the weakly, the immoral, and the criminal, propagate in an enormously greater ratio than the prudent, the healthy, the strong, the moral and the honest.† I say notorious; and to show that the imprudent and the immoral, which include the criminal, do so—requires no corroborative remark. That the diseased and weakly do so is easily shown. For a larger proportion of them lead sedentary or home lives, and receive attentions which lead to matrimonial connections, while the healthy and strong run risks, and are often actively engaged, so as to preclude settling down to a home life; and the chances are in favour of the most enterprising among them being cut off by accident or privation. The multiplication of the evil proportion would not be much the greatest, were it not that a much larger number than formerly are, at great cost and with most pernicious results, saved from the extermination for which nature would select them. What logical reason—to counterbalance the obvious evil results—can be given for preserving any person with hereditary disease? Yet this is done at enormous expense. Or in defence of the heavy expenditure incurred for the support of gibbering idiots and two-legged animals who possess no distinguishing characteristic of humanity but the form and the capacity for mischief? Formerly they were exterminated by neglect and barbarity. Why should the healthy and the sane be sacrificed, as they

* Obviously untrue.

† Some proof of this ought to have been given.

now are, for the sake of the sickly and the mindless? Would it not be better for the sake of our posterity, and to prevent the certain deterioration and possible destruction of the human race, that they should be exterminated with tenderness and humanity? * Particularly while it is merely barbarity and worse than neglect to keep them alive in conditions of disadvantage, and frequently of positive pain? Reason unmistakably pronounces their doom. Only feeling exclaims against it. Why? Is it not because, listening to feeling and being deaf to reason, causes crime, lunacy, disease, and even weakness? Is not the very sympathy felt with those whom nature would unhesitatingly condemn to rapid extermination symptomatic of the general spread of the disease itself? † Would it be exhibited by perfectly sane and healthy persons? Is not the whole head sick and the whole heart faint? Why will ye be stricken any more?

I think it certain that, from the above causes, the average of morality and intelligence in the human family is lowering surely and perhaps not slowly. The first and most feasible remedy is—the perpetual imprisonment of criminals. The next is the painless destruction of all those whose intellectual existence has already ceased, and of those by whom disease would be propagated. Thirdly—I would recommend a thorough knowledge of physiology to be taught to all of both sexes, with a view to guard against evil matrimonial connections. These measures alone would suffice to work a moral revolution in the world.

Nothing was farther from Howard's intentions than to assist in the production of such a state of things as now exists. And I honour him personally exactly as much (and as little) as any one else for his intentions. I think it, however, the duty or function of a rational being to endeavour to discern the truth, and, having found it, to proclaim it for the benefit of the world; and if Howard did good to the diseased and the criminal, I confess that I would rather save the healthy and the moral from degenerating to the conditions which awakened his sympathy; the present NON-SURVIVAL OF THE

* If this be seriously meant, it is not very consistent. Such practice would be the most effectual way of exterminating that social and moral feeling of mankind which is the essential condition of the evolution of the social organism.

† Is not human sympathy then nature; and human art, whether it be supposed to mend or mar nature, itself nature? The author is practically declaring that nature was more enlightened at its lower than at its higher stages of evolution. He clearly should give reasons for this assumption, and not merely declare it.

FITTEST being a great and increasing fact.* To all who believe in heredity (and who does not, more or less?) it should be a striking fact that one Howard should really do much mischief, while nominally sacrificing himself for the benefit of the most evil of mankind,† and that the next Howard should have actually sacrificed himself to vice; and for whose advantage, if not theirs who have the wit to reason out the salvation of humanity from the history of both?

I am strongly of opinion that Howard did most good by far by the uncompromising way in which he did and said what he imagined to be right, without heeding the prejudices and conventionalities of society. True, he could well afford to do it, and for his mere constitutional energy he deserves no praise. But he seems to have done it consistently without fear or favour; and if that were generally done, I believe that far more would be done than Howard did by all his labours.

On the Measurement of the Palate in Idiots and Imbeciles. By
T. CLAYE SHAW, M.D., Medical Superintendent of the
Leavesden Asylum.

(Read before the Medico-Psychological Society at Bethlem Hospital, on May 10, 1876.)

There is a general idea expressed in text-books, and more or less freely asserted in practice, but which I shall prove to be a fallacy, that a high-arched palate is so frequently met with in idiocy and imbecility that it may be taken as a sign of their existence. Indeed, when a case of this kind is brought forward the patient is made to open his mouth, under the conviction that a high palate will be found as certainly as a superficial alteration of the tongue in gastric disturbance. We shall see that the connection is an accidental one; and there is, in reality, no relationship between the development of the intellect and the height and width of the palate. If we consider that the bones of the cranium are developed in a different manner from those of the face, and that ossification at the base is complete long before that of the bones forming the palate, it is clear that there can be no *primâ facie* reason

* Howard did largely save the healthy and the moral from disease and degeneracy.

† Not so—not for the prisoner only, but quite as much for those whom the state of prisons in his own day destroyed—inside and out.