

# **PRISON DISCIPLINE IN AMERICA**

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Prison Discipline in America by Francis C. Gray

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**FRANCIS C. GRAY**

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IN

A M E R I C A .

BY

FRANCIS C. GRAY.

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L O N D O N :

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1848.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE statements in the text, for which no other authority is cited, are founded, so far as relates to the Eastern Penitentiary in Philadelphia, on the printed reports of the officers of that institution; as to the prison at Charlestown, on the like reports, on the records of the prison, on communications from the warden and the chaplain, and on personal observation; as to prisons in Great Britain, on official reports and parliamentary documents, especially on the testimony given before a committee of the House of Lords last spring by officers of those prisons.

It would be presumptuous to assert that there are no mistakes in this pamphlet. But it is enough for my purpose, if there are none, which affect materially its arguments or its conclusions.

F. C. GRAY.

Boston, November 10, 1847.



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## PRISON DISCIPLINE IN AMERICA.

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THE extensive and systematic inquiries and experiments, which have been made in this country during sixty years past, in relation to Prison Discipline, have given to our accumulated knowledge on this subject almost the character of a science. Many general conclusions in it are established, and many questions, once the occasions of violent controversy, are now determined in a manner which commands universal assent. That stinted food, constant confinement, total privation of social intercourse, should form no part of any system; that all systems should provide for entire separation at night, and for vigorous exercise and useful labor, instead of the fatiguing and unprofitable toil of the treadmill by day; and that no more nor greater punishments, should be inflicted than are requisite for the attainment of these objects and for the preservation of order; these and other propositions once doubted or even strenuously denied, are now admitted by all.

One of the most important questions, which remains to be decided, and one which has recently excited great zeal and interest here and in Europe, is this : Whether the daily labor of prisoners should be carried on in workshops containing several in company under constant supervision ; or by each alone in entire solitude ; and it is now proposed to consider this question, especially as it is illustrated by the experience of certain prisons in the United States.

This diversity forms the chief distinction between the two systems of prison discipline generally known here as those of Auburn and of Pennsylvania, as they are now administered in this country. It is not designed, however, to discuss the general merits of these systems ; nor indeed would it be easy to give a definition of them, since each of these terms is used in different times and places to convey very different meanings. The Pennsylvania system for some years before 1829 prescribed the constant confinement of each convict to a solitary cell by day and by night, without permission to labor. For several years afterwards, it permitted labor, but prohibited all intercourse between the convicts and any other persons, excepting their religious teachers and other official visitors, and denied them all knowledge of anything transpiring beyond the walls of the prison, even of the situation of their families and friends. At present, visits may be received from well-disposed persons, admitted by permission of the inspectors, and are indeed represented to be an essential part of the system. The Auburn sys-