

**PERSONAL EXPERIENCES IN
THE PRISONS OF THE WORLD,
WITH STORIES OF CRIME,
CRIMINALS, AND CONVICTS**

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Personal experiences in the prisons of the world, with stories of crime, criminals, and convicts
by Chas. Cook

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MR. CHAS. COOK

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BY
CHAS. COOK, F.R.G.S.

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P R E F A C E .

FOR many years I have been interested in criminals, and when I first entered a foreign gaol, and learned that the inmates were not provided with the Word of God, I endeavoured to supply them with it.

While pursuing my labours in this direction, I found many prisoners suffering unjustly, or lacking food. In the one case I could not but protest, sympathise, and help ; in the other I was bound to provide.

The following pages are a record of my journeys and experiences in the Prison World ; and an account of prisoners, with the treatment they receive in most civilised countries.

Remarks made by friends who have heard my lectures on the subject, or who have read the articles I have from time to time contributed to *The Christian*, have led me to think that a more detailed and comprehensive account would not prove unacceptable. It will be evident that there has been no attempt at literary finish ; I have but given a simple description of sufferings seen, of reforms needed, and of work accomplished.

Meanwhile I shall be glad to deliver lectures on this subject, illustrated by costumes of the different countries through which I have travelled, or by dissolving views which I have obtained abroad. Friends who are interested in the above will perhaps correspond with me.

CHAS. COOK.

6, FRITHVILLE GARDENS,
SHEPHERD'S BUSH, W.,
September 1891.

INTRODUCTION BY C. H. SPURGEON.

JOHAN HOWARD, of Bedford, went forth under the impulse of humanity—and, I think, under the guidance of God's Spirit—to visit the dungeons and the prisons of Europe. You know how he spent his life in going from one gaol to another, and at last died of a fever which he had taken in gaol, and passed away to his rest. He exposed things which had not been known, and he set in clearer light things that were known, but which had been thought tolerable, and had been winked at; and he commenced a great reform in prison life, which has been carried on to this day. I do not think that every alteration has been an improvement; but certainly the prisons of one hundred years ago were very, very different from what they are to-day. There is room for improvement still, even in our own country; and I especially call to mind the fact that if any one were charged with any crime of which he might be perfectly innocent, yet there is no room in which he would be put as an innocent man, but he would be mingled with the guilty, which I hold to be a treason to every honest man, and it ought to be rectified as soon as possible. There are other things which are constantly being brought to light with regard to the mismanagement

of our prisons, but there is a healthy public sentiment abroad, which I believe will not allow anything that is desperately bad long to remain. In countries which Mr. Cook has visited there is often an absence of any such sentiment. Yet, if things are more exposed to light in civilised Europe, that cannot live long. Even a Turk cannot be a Turk while there are English people and others about to tell him what they think of him. Everywhere, I trust, there is so much power about the Christian religion, that if the blaze of Christian light once falls upon an intolerable evil, it will continue to expose it until it dies. I feel very glad, therefore, that Mr. Cook took it into his head to go and visit prisons. I know him as an evangelist at Hyde Park, preaching there. I have had to know him through some persons who have been converted there, and who have afterwards come to join the Church at the Tabernacle; and I have felt very grateful that God has put him to work in that part of London. I have also had sympathy from him in time of trouble, for which I have felt grateful. *He is the Howard of the day*, and I call earnest attention to his remarkable work. May our Lord greatly bless him! I feel that it is quite a proper time now, that any one who can tell us anything about prisons in Spain, or Algiers, or Egypt,—Eastern prisons,—should tell it to us all, that we may all know about it, and that the papers may know about it, and that the world may know about it, so that if there be any cruelty hidden away, it may be exposed to light; and the very exposure is the best means of removing it.

I wish to him good health in his journeys, and that when he comes out of a sickening prison he may soon get over it. It is not the nicest thing in all the world to