

**THE PURGATORY OF PRISONERS; OR AN  
INTERMEDIATE STAGE BETWEEN THE PRISON  
AND THE PUBLIC: BEING SOME ACCOUNT OF  
THE PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE NEW  
SYSTEM OF PENAL REFORMATION  
INTRODUCED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
OF CONVICT PRISONS IN IRELAND**

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The Purgatory of Prisoners; Or an Intermediate Stage between the Prison and the Public: Being Some Account of the Practical Working of the New System of Penal Reformation Introduced by the Board of Directors of Convict Prisons in Ireland by Orby Shipley

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**ORBY SHIPLEY**

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THE  
PURGATORY OF PRISONERS:

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BETWEEN

*The Prison and the Public;*

BEING SOME ACCOUNT OF THE PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE NEW SYSTEM  
OF PENAL REFORMATION INTRODUCED BY THE BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS OF CONVICT PRISONS IN IRELAND.

BY

THE REV. ORBY SHIPLEY, M.A.,

DEACON IN THE MOCHSE OF OXFORD.

"COME, YE BLESSED OF MY FATHER. . . . I WAS IN PRISON, AND YE CAME  
UNTO ME. . . VERBILY I SAY UNTO YOU, INASMUCH AS YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO  
ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE MY BRETHREN, YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ME."

S. MATTHEW' xiv. vi. 26.

LONDON: JOSEPH MASTERS,  
ALDERSGATE STREET AND NEW BOND STREET.  
OXFORD: JOHN HENRY AND JAMES PARKER.  
MDCCLVII.

" THAT IT MAY PLEASE THEE . . . TO SHOW THY MERCY UPON ALL PRISONERS  
AND CAPTIVES . . . AND TO TURN THEIR HEARTS ;

WE BESEECH THEE TO HEAR US, GOOD LORD."

THE LITANY.

LONDON : PRINTED BY W. CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE title of the following pages was not adopted without much prayer, without much consideration. No one who takes the trouble to read the Pamphlet will attribute to the Writer any design to use the title in a vain, trifling, frivolous, scoffing, or irreligious spirit. Being fully persuaded of the religious character of the movement these lines strive to chronicle, he was desirous to impart to them a title which would in some degree harmonise with the spirit of the undertaking. It is then with a thoughtful, a reverent, a devotional design that the title has been selected, embodying an important truth rightly understood, and typical—at a very great distance—of an estate through which all alike, within a prison and without, must eventually pass. It is needful, perhaps, in these times of misapprehension, to state that the term “Purgatory of Prisoners” was chosen with reference, not to the mediæval and modern notions of the Intermediate State, but in imitation of the Doctrine which the Church of England, in common with ancient Catholic consent, has ever held upon this mysterious subject. Of course the more popular, and less Scriptural notion, of a place of unmitigated torment could by no possibility apply to the benevolent, and truly Christian system in force, at present, in the Irish Prisons. It is thought that the explanation, “an Intermediate Stage,” sufficiently well indicates the meaning the Writer would wish to be given to the principal title of these pages; an explanation, moreover, which equally clearly, to his apprehension, points to



the Catholic Doctrine of which many indications are given in Holy Scripture. In a few words then, the "Intermediate Stage between the Prisons and the Public," is a condition of convict existence instituted with a view of purgatorial cleansing, of purification, of oblivion to the past, of hope for the future, of social filtering, of moral cleansing, of educational instruction, of industrial teaching, of Religious culture, and of reformatory training. To say that the type, and the antitype are not in every sense of similar design, is to assert that they are typical and antitypical, figure and reality, shadow and substance, accidental and essential, elements of time and elements of eternity.

There are probably many things in the following pages to which some readers will be unable to subscribe—many things, that is to say, on matters of Belief. The Writer deprecates any attempt to raise a collateral and subsidiary question, upon the doctrinal questions alluded to incidentally. These lines were not written to teach persons Divinity. They were published to explain a system of Prison Discipline. It is altogether accidental to their purpose to refer to Dogmatic Theology. They might have been composed without a reference to Religion. But the Writer felt it inconsistent with his position as an Ambassador of CHRIST to refuse to mention that which may cause opposition from minds of a different caste, from opinions of another school. He felt it impossible to refer to secondary causes of Penal Reformation, and to make no note of the primary, the chief cause. He is sure that conscientious persons with whom he has the misfortune to differ, will agree with him as to his duty on such a point. The Reader and the Writer have both one object in view, the amendment of the Criminal. Let this then be the point of issue, or of accordance, between them. Both may have different means of producing the same results: both may have similar ones. These are legitimate subjects for discussion. Let the discussion then be confined to these: but let

not polemical differences in any degree prejudice the account of social improvement. The Writer may have one way of explaining a result, the Reader may have another. Let both retain their own opinion. Let not the mere sentiments of the Writer be called to account: rather let the facts, the figures, and the results of the system, he has the pleasure and the honour to advocate be ventilated, be questioned, be confirmed, or be confuted. It is perhaps right to add, that the Directors are in no sort of way responsible, or accountable for any opinions expressed by the Writer. He alone has to bear the blame, or to support the praise of any Doctrinal statements mentioned or inferred. What the Directors are responsible for, and for what they willingly take the responsibility, are the matters of fact detailed, and the statistics enumerated. And any person who advisedly, and after warning, voluntarily seeks to confound things separate, will only ensure the opprobrium and the disapprobation of all right thinking men.

The Writer sincerely wishes that some one more fitted for the task had undertaken to make public the new system of Irish Prison Discipline. He is only too conscious of the disparity which exists between the end sought, and the means proposed. A compulsory absence from parochial labour, and an unexpected opportunity for the examination of the system now in operation in Ireland, gave him the means of attempting to master a portion of the large subject of the treatment of Criminals. He is thankful to have had such an opportunity; and he trusts that he may not have failed to benefit by it. Whether, or not, he has succeeded at all satisfactorily to elucidate the new mode of action, remains to be proved. The explanation is not so clear, so logical, so exhaustive as he wishes. Indifferent health, and the impossibility of giving undivided attention for any length of time to one subject, may be sufficient excuse for these defects. All that is considered not imperfect, is attributable to the ability with which the Chairman

of the Board enunciated his theories, discussed his sentiments, and elaborated his arguments; and to the kindness of the Prison officials, without whose aid and assistance the present production would have been even more fragmentary and incomplete. The Writer owes his best thanks for the trouble they took.

In the following pages little or no particular notice will be taken of other systems of Prison discipline, of those adopted in England and France, in America, at Munich, or at Valencia. Space prevents a comparison between the Irish plan and any other, notwithstanding the interest which would attach to such a proceeding. Neither have abstract principles of penal amendment, otherwise than in a very superficial and elementary manner, been alluded to: and this for the same reason.

Persons acquainted with the practical working of the Irish prison systems, old and new, will perceive that the Writer has been obliged to speak in guarded terms of some portions of both; and of some portions of both to be entirely silent. Necessity was in this case the rule.

Writing in Ireland, an Hibernianism has been perpetrated in calling the clergy of the Irish Church, Anglican. For reasons which will be patent to some Readers, the term commonly applied to them could not be used. It would have appeared pedantic to have styled them Hibernian Chaplains.

No account of the new Irish system of prison discipline would be complete, without an acknowledgment of the very great element of success which has been infused into its practical working, both by the late, and also by the present Lord Lieutenant. The former presided over the affairs of State during the transition period, from the old to the new Irish system. The latter held away from the infancy of the system to its maturity, and still influences for good its practical working. This influence has been effected by the great interest and anxiety always expressed for its welfare; by support and sympathy in seasons of difficulty; by personal superintendence and visiting