

for the reception of moral and religious truths which are sedulously inculcated.

One of the chief excellencies of the Pennsylvania system is that by it, the convicts are kept in ignorance of the persons of each other; and after liberation every prisoner is free from any liability to exposure by those who may have been inmates of the prison with himself, so that any moral improvement produced during his confinement meets with no impediment to a permanent duration. As no communication takes place between the convicts, the adept in crime is not contaminated by association with hardened criminals, and all leave the prison, with their morals, if not improved, at least not worse than when they first entered.

The members of the Committee, singly and together, visited many of the criminals in their cells, and they are satisfied that the Pennsylvania Penitentiary system of solitary confinement, with labor, possesses decided advantages over any other of which they have any knowledge. They refrain from pressing on the attention of the Legislature the many reasons, in addition to those already stated, which influence their judgments in giving this preference, as they are not prepared, at this time, to recommend its adoption in this State. The recent introduction into the Maryland Penitentiary of the Auburn system, and the heavy expense incurred in rebuilding all the work shops, to adapt them to its successful practice, at least requires that its merits should be fully tested by us, before it is abandoned for another, even of acknowledged superior merit.

Before passing to a description of the Auburn or New York system, we should do injustice to our own feelings, were we not to notice in terms of commendation the kindness and courtesy which we received at the hands of Mr. Samuel R. Woods, the Warden of the Cherry-Hill Prison. In the few days which our engagements allowed us to remain in Philadelphia, and which were almost entirely passed within the walls of that prison, we had abundant evidence of his great fitness for the office which he fills, so honorably to himself, and so usefully to the State; and we but add our opinion to those of every writer who has visited that institution, in speaking of Mr. Woods as a man whose high moral feelings, extended philanthropy and intellectual powers fit him for the discharge of the responsible duties of any station where these qualities are required. Responsible and important as is the station which he fills, he borrows no grace from it, but rather he adds dignity and character to the office, which heretofore, and in other hands, might hardly seem to merit respect, but in his excites admiration.

The first great improvements in prison discipline appear to have been made in New York. The almost total failure of the Penitentiary system, as originally adopted, in effecting any moral improvement in the criminals, induced the States of New York and Pennsylvania to try the effect of solitary confinement without labor, as a remedy for