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S T A T E
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ENGLAND AND WALES.

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I N
E N G L A N D A N D W A L E S,
W I T H
P R E L I M I N A R Y O B S E R V A T I O N S,
A N D A N A C C O U N T O F S O M E
F O R E I G N P R I S O N S.

By JOHN HOWARD, F.R.S.

AH! LITTLE THINK THE GAY -----
WHOM PLEASURE, POWER, AND AFFLUENCE SURROUND;
HOW MANY PINE IN WANT, AND DUNGEON-GLOOMS.
THOMSON.

WARRINGTON,
PRINTED BY WILLIAM EYRES,
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MDCCLXXVII.

TO
 THE HONOURABLE
 THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,
 IN GRATITUDE
 FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT
 WHICH THEY HAVE GIVEN
 TO THE DESIGN,
 AND
 FOR THE HONOUR
 THEY HAVE CONFERRED
 ON THE AUTHOR,
 THIS BOOK
 IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
 BY THEIR
 MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT,

CARDINGTON,
 BEDFORDSHIRE,
 April 5th, 1777.

JOHN HOWARD.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE distress of prisoners, of which there are few who have not some imperfect idea, came more immediately under my notice when I was Sheriff of the county of Bedford*; and the circumstance which excited me to activity in their behalf was, the seeing some, who by the verdict of juries were declared *not guilty*; some, on whom the grand jury did not find such an appearance of guilt as subjected them to trial; and some, whose prosecutors did not appear against them; after having been confined for months, dragged back to gaol, and locked up again till they should pay *sundry fees* to the gaoler, the clerk of assize, &c.

* In 1773.

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IN order to redress this hardship, I applied to the justices of the county for a salary to the *gaoler* in lieu of his fees. The bench were properly affected with the grievance, and willing to grant the relief desired: but they wanted a precedent for charging the county with the expence. I therefore rode into several neighbouring counties in search of a precedent; but I soon learned that the same injustice was practised in them; and looking into the prisons, I beheld scenes of calamity, which I grew daily more and more anxious to alleviate. In order therefore to gain a more perfect knowledge of the particulars and extent of it, by various and accurate observation, I visited most of the *County-Gaols* in England.

SEEING in two or three of them some poor creatures whose aspect was singularly deplorable, and asking the cause of it, I was answered, "they were lately brought from the *Bridewells*." This started a fresh subject of inquiry. I resolved to inspect the *Bridewells*: and for that purpose I travelled again into the counties where I had been; and, indeed, into all the rest; examining *Houses of Correction, City and Town-Gaols*. I beheld in many of them, as well as in the *County-Gaols*, a complication of distress: but my attention was principally fixed by the *gaol-fever*, and the *small-pox*, which I saw prevailing to the destruction of multitudes, not only of *felons* in their dungeons, but of *debtors* also.

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THE gaol-fever is no new subject of complaint. I remember Stowe, in his *Survey**, speaking of the *King's-Bench Prison*, says, that in the six years preceding the year 1579, an hundred prisoners died there: and twelve between Michaelmas and March of the last-mentioned year, "through a certain contagion called *the sickness of the house*;" and I shall presently have occasion, among the fatal effects of this distemper propagated from prisons, and infecting many abroad, to mention an *ancient* instance of that sort also. These effects are now so notorious, that what terrifies most of us from looking into prisons, is the gaol-distemper so frequent in them.

UPON this subject I was examined in the House of Commons in March 1774; when I had the honour of their thanks. Soon after that, Mr. Popham, Member for Taunton, repeated the humane attempt which had miscarried a few years before; and brought in a bill for the relief of prisoners who should be acquitted, respecting their *fees*; and another bill for preserving the *health* of prisoners, and preventing the gaol-distemper. They both passed that session. By those acts, the tear was wiped from many an eye; and the legislature had for them "*the blessing of many that were ready to perish*."

* Vol. II. p. 18.

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THE great honour done me by the House has excited the curiosity of some to inquire what facts I had collected. This is one reason of the present publication: but it is not the only, nor the principal one. There are still remaining many disorders that ought to be rectified: prisoners suffer great hardships, from which I am desirous to set them free: the *gaol-fever* is not, as I am persuaded it may be, totally eradicated. These are my motives for printing this book. I think it will shew plainly, that much is yet to be done for the regulation of prisons; and I am not without hope, that the present Parliament will finish what was so laudably begun by the last.

I WAS called to the first part of my talk by my office. To the pursuit of it I was prompted by the sorrows of the sufferers, and love to my country. The work grew upon me insensibly. I could not enjoy my ease and leisure in the neglect of an opportunity offered me by Providence of attempting the relief of the miserable. The attention of Parliament to the subject, led me to conclude that some additional labour would not be lost; and I extended my plan. The difficulty I found in searching out evidence of fraud and cruelty in various articles, together with other sources of distress, obliged me to repeat my visits, and travel over the kingdom more than once; and after all, I suspect that many frauds have been concealed from me; and that sometimes the interest of my informants prevailed over their veracity.

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racity. Besides; as I had in my first journeys gathered, from facts and experience, proofs of the mischievous effects of the want of cleanliness and fresh air, I had in my latter visits these strong arguments to enforce my persuasions; and, in consequence, some gaolers grew at last more mindful and complying, for the sake not only of their prisoners, but of themselves and their own families.

IT was not, I own, without some apprehensions of danger, when I first visited the prisons; and I guarded myself by smelling to vinegar, while I was in those places, and changing my apparel afterwards. This I did constantly and carefully when I began; but by degrees I grew less cautious: not only because use abated the force of noxious impressions upon me, but also on account of the alteration made in some gaols by the act *for preserving the health of prisoners*. A person may now look into many a prison without gaining an idea of the condition it was in a few years ago. I wish the reformation to be not for the present only, but lasting. If the motive for amendment has any where been merely temporary, there is no doubt but the effect will cease with the cause: those who from such inducement have obeyed, will in future follow the example of others who have disregarded the law; and prisons that have been amended will relapse into their former state.

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As to what is still wrong, I set down matter of fact without amplification; which would in the end rather impede than promote the object of my wishes; that is, the correction of what is really amiss.

THE journies were not undertaken for the traveller's amusement; and the collections are not published for general entertainment; but for the perusal of those who have it in their power to give redress to the sufferers.

THE writer begs his reader to excuse the frequent egotisms; which he did not know how to avoid, without using circumlocutions that might have been more disgusting.

SECTION

SECTION I.

GENERAL VIEW OF DISTRESS
IN PRISONS.

THERE are prisons, into which whoever looks will, at first sight of the people confined there, be convinced, that there is some great error in the management of them: the fallow meagre countenances declare, without words, that they are very miserable: many who went in healthy, are in a few months changed to emaciated dejected objects. Some are seen pining under diseases, "*sick and in prison*;" expiring on the floors, in loathsome cells, of pestilential fevers, and the confluent small-pox: victims, I must not say to the cruelty, but I will say to the inattention, of sheriffs, and gentlemen in the commission of the peace.

THE cause of this distress is, that many prisons are scantily supplied, and some almost totally unprovided with the necessaries of life.

THERE