A TREATISE

OF

CRIMINAL LAW

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PREFACE.

The duties in which I have been recently engaged, as counsel for the Department of State of the United States, have led me to give increased attention to those portions of the following pages which deal with offences against the United States distinctively, with offences against international law, and with conflicts of jurisdiction. I have felt myself obliged, also, in consequence of the great recent increase of adjudications in respect to statutory nuisances, and to violations of liquor laws, to re-write the chapters embracing the discussion of those topics. The other portions of the book have been subjected to numerous modifications, and the text of the whole has been revised. Upwards of forty-six hundred new citations have been distributed through the entire work, giving in many instances new aspects to positions previously taken, and in other instances modifying those positions. I trust that in this way the work accurately and exhaustively exhibits the law of which it treats down to the present day.

F. W.

WASHINGTON, MAY, 1885.
ANALYSIS.

BOOK I.
PRINCIPLES.

CHAPTER I.
BASIS OF CRIMINAL JURISPRUDENCE.

I. Relative Theories of Punishability.
   Prevention, § 2.
   Self-defence, § 8.
   Reformation, § 4.
   Terror, § 7.
   Example, § 9.

II. Absolute Theory.
   Retribution, § 10.

CHAPTER II.
DEFINITION AND ANALYSIS OF CRIME.

Definition, § 14.
Distinction between Immorality and Indictability, § 14 a.
Distinction between Public and Private Remedies, § 15.
English Common Law in Force in the United States, § 15 a.
Meaning of Felonies, § 22.
Meaning of Misdemeanors, § 23.
Meaning of Police Offences, § 23 a.
Statutory Offences, § 24.
Divisibility of Offences, § 27.
ANALYSIS.

CONSTRUCTION OF PENAL STATUTES, § 28.
RETROSPECTIVE LAWS, § 29.
LIMITATION AND PARDON, § 81 a.
CONCURRENCE OF CIVIL AND CRIMINAL REMEDIES, § 81 b.

CHAPTER III.
FITNESS OF OFFENDER TO COMMIT OFFENCE.
I. PERSONS NON COMPOTES MENTIS, § 32.
II. INFANTS, § 67.
III. MARRIED WOMEN, § 73.
IV. IGNORANT PERSONS, § 84.
   Ignorance of law, § 84.
   Ignorance of fact, § 87.
V. CORPORATIONS, § 91.
VI. PERSONS UNDER COMPULSION, § 94.
VII. PERSONS UNDER NECESSITY, AND ACTING IN SELF-DEFENSE, § 95.

CHAPTER IV.
MALICE AND INTENT, § 106.

CHAPTER V.
NEGLIGENCE AND HEREFIN OF OMISSIONS, § 125.

CHAPTER VI.
FITNESS OF OBJECT OF OFFENCE.
I. PHYSICAL UNFITNESS.
   Things on which no crime can be committed, § 136.
II. JURIDICAL UNFITNESS.
   OUTLAWS, § 137.
   CONVICTS, § 138.
   Persons assecding to wrong—Volenti non fit injuria, § 141.
   How far consent of party injured bars criminal prosecution,
   §§ 142 et seq.

CHAPTER VII.
CAUSAL CONNECTION BETWEEN OFFENDER AND OFFENCE, § 152.

CHAPTER VIII.
ATTEMPTS, § 173.
ANALYSIS.

CHAPTER V.
ABDUCTION AND KIDNAPPING, § 585.

CHAPTER VI.
ABORTION, § 592.

CHAPTER VII.
CONCEALING DEATH OF BASTARD CHILD, § 600.

CHAPTER VIII.
ASSAULTS, § 603.

PART II.
OFFENCES AGAINST PROPERTY.

CHAPTER IX.
FORGERY, § 653.

CHAPTER X.
BURGLARY, § 768.

CHAPTER XI.
ABET, § 825.

CHAPTER XII.
ROBBERY, § 847.

CHAPTER XIII.
LARCENY, § 882.

CHAPTER XIV.
RECEIVING STOLEN GOODS, § 982.

CHAPTER XV.
EMBEZZLEMENT, § 1009.

VOL II.

CHAPTER XVI.
MALICIOUS MISCHIEF, § 1085.

CHAPTER XVII.
FORCIBLE ENTRY AND DETAINER, § 1083.

CHAPTER XVIII.
CHATS.
I. AT COMMON LAW, § 1117.
II. UNDER FALSE PRETENSE STATUTES, § 1120.

CHAPTER XIX.
FRAUDULENT INSOLVENCY, § 1238.

PART III.
OFFENCES AGAINST SOCIETY.

CHAPTER XX.
PREJUDICE, § 1246.

CHAPTER XXI.
CONSPIRACY, § 1337.

CHAPTER XXII.
NUISANCE, § 1410.

CHAPTER XXIII.
LOTTERIES, § 1490.

CHAPTER XXIV.
ILLEGITIMATE SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS, § 1498.
ANALYSIS.

CHAPTER XXV.
RIOT, ROUT, AND UNLAWFUL ASSEMBLY, § 1535.
I. UNLAWFUL ASSEMBLY, § 1535.
II. ROUT, § 1536.
III. RIOT, § 1537.
IV. AFFRAY, § 1551.
V. POWER OF MAGISTRATE AS TO DISPERSION, § 1555.
VI. DISTURBANCE OF MEETINGS, § 1556.

CHAPTER XXVI.
WEARING CONCEALED WEAPONS, § 1557.

CHAPTER XXVII.
COMPOUNDING CRIMES, § 1559.

CHAPTER XXVIII.
MISCONDUCT IN OFFICE.
I. NATURAL OFFICES, § 1563.
II. STATUTORY OFFICES, § 1568.
III. VOLUNTARY OFFICES, § 1585.
IV. EVIDENCE, § 1589.
V. RESISTANCE TO OFFICERS, § 1591.

CHAPTER XXIX.
LIBEL, § 1584.

CHAPTER XXX.
ESCAPE, BREACH OF PRISON, AND RESCUE, § 1667.

CHAPTER XXXI.
BIGAMY AND POLYGAMY, § 1682.

CHAPTER XXXII.
ADULTERY, § 1717.

CHAPTER XXXIII.
FORSNICATION, § 1741.

CHAPTER XXXIV.
ILICIT COHABITATION; INCENT; "MISCEGENATION," § 1747.

CHAPTER XXXV.
SEDUCTION, § 1756.

CHAPTER XXXVI.
DEUELING, § 1767.

PART IV.
OFFENCES AGAINST GOVERNMENT.

CHAPTER XXXVII.
TREASON, § 1782.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.
OFFENCES AGAINST THE POST-OFFICE, § 1822.

CHAPTER XXXIX.
ABUSE OF ELECTIVE FRANCHISE, § 1832.

CHAPTER XL.
FORESTALLING, REGATING, AND ENGROSSING, § 1849.

CHAPTER XLI.
CHAMPIRITY AND MAINTENANCE, § 1853.

CHAPTER XLII.
BRIEFLY, § 1857.

PART V.
OFFENCES ON THE HIGH SEAS.

CHAPTER XLIII.
PIRACY, § 1860.
ANALYSIS.

CHAPTER XLIV.
MALTREATMENT OF CREW, § 1871.

CHAPTER XLV.
REVOLT, § 1876.

CHAPTER XLVI.
FORCING SEAMAN ON SHORE, § 1885.

CHAPTER XLVII.
SLAVE TRADE, § 1889.

CHAPTER XLVIII.
DESTROYING VESSEL WITH INTENT TO DEFRAUD UNDERWRITERS, § 1894.

PART VI.
OFFENCES AGAINST FOREIGN NATIONS.

CHAPTER XLIX.
VIOLENCE TO FOREIGN MINISTERS, § 1900.

CHAPTER L.
LIBELS ON FOREIGN STATES, § 1900.

CHAPTER LI.
BREACH OF NEUTRALITY, § 1903.

BOOK I.
PRINCIPLES.

CHAPTER I.
1. BASIS OF CRIMINAL JURISPRUDENCE.

I. RELATIVE THEORIES.

That object of punishment is to
prevent offender from further
offending, § 2.
That the object is public self-de-
defense, § 3.
That it is reformation of offender,
§ 4.
That it is to terrify others, § 5.
That punishment is law teaching
by example, § 9.

II. ABSOLUTE THEORIES.

That punishment is an act of re-
tributive justice to which refor-
mation and example are inci-
dental, § 10.
Crime as such is to be punished by
de facto government, § 11.
Prevention of further crimes to be
kept in View, § 12.
And so the reformation of the
offender, § 13.

§ 1. What purpose has the State in punishing? Upon the
answer to this question depends not merely the extent of the pun-
ishment which we inflict upon conviction, but the conception
of justice on which convictions rest. It becomes important, there-
fore, to examine at the outset the several theories which have been
propounded as the basis, in this respect, of criminal jurisprudence.
These theories may be arranged as follows:

I. RELATIVE THEORIES.

§ 2. Is it the sole object of punishment to prevent the offender
from the commission of future crimes? So has it been
argued. Damages in civil actions, it is urged, are gen-
ernally only compensatory for past injuries. This is enough
by way of compensation, but it is not enough for preven-
tion. The State is bound to take cognizance of the pos-
sible and contingent breach of law which is contained in
the criminal will; the State must suppress the danger that is thus
§ 3. CRIMES. [BOOK I.

encountered. By penal jurisprudence this suppression is properly to be worked. By this reasoning the imposition of punishment can be defended. By these tests the extent of punishment may be determined.

Yet in reply to this we cannot escape the following criticism: If the theory be correct, and be logically pursued, then punishment should precede and not follow crime. The State must explore for guilty tendencies, and make a trial to consist in the psychological investigation of such tendencies. This contradicts one of the fundamental maxims of the English common law, by which, not a tendency to crime, but simply crime itself, can be made the subject of a criminal issue. And then, again, the object which the prevention theory sets before it, namely, the creation of right motives, belongs to the sphere of ethics, and not to law. Undoubtedly, as will be seen, one of the objects of penal discipline, especially in the case of an inveterate offender, is to put him in a condition in which he cannot be guilty of future mischief. Often enough, in sentencing old convicts, do judges tell the prisoner that he is to be placed where for a time he can do no harm. It may be questioned whether, at least in some of these cases, the prevention idea has not a little too much consequence assigned to it; because so far as concerns most old convicts, imprisonment for a term usually makes them more hardened and more wary in the pursuit of crime when they are discharged. Prevention however may, in peculiar cases, be a proper point to be considered in punishing sentences. But prevention cannot be viewed either as forming the proper theoretical justification of judicial punishment, or as one of its invariable results.

§ 3. The right of self-defence has also been invoked as a justification of punishment. As the individual has a right to resort to self-defence, to prevent a wrong being inflicted on himself, so has the State. The individual has a right

1. See Berens, ed. of 1877, § 11.

2. To this theory President Woolsey justly objects that "the cardinal doctrine that the motives to be set before the criminal are simple pleasure and pain, and the end, prevention, by over-looking the ill-desert of wrong-doing, makes it and all similar systems immoral, and furnishes no measure of the amount of punishment, except the law-giver's subjective opinion in regard to the sufficiency of the amount of preventive suffering." Woolsey's Political Science, § 112.

3. Trendelenburg, Naturrecht, etc., Berlin, 1876, § 56.

to repel an attack, and even to kill the assailant, it is argued, when his existence is imperilled, and so has the State; and as every crime threatens the existence of the State, by the State every crime may be punished. But to this there are two replies. The first is that there are many crimes which, so far from imperilling the State, strengthen it, being reasons why the State should be invested with increased power; and as the State is not imperilled by such crimes, on the theory now before us such crimes cannot be punished by the State. The second, and less technical objection, is that this theory confounds self-defence with retribution. Self-defence, as we will hereafter more fully see, can ward off a threatened crime, but cannot be invoked to punish a crime that is consummated. It may be preventive, but it cannot be retributive. On this theory, therefore, while the State can seize and even destroy a person threatening a crime, it cannot punish a person by whom a crime has been committed.

§ 4. That the object of punishment is simply reformation of the offender was the theory of the humanitarian-philosophers of whom Rousseau was the chief, whose eloquent declamation on this topic was one of the preludes of the French Revolution. The good can take care of themselves; so reads this theory when stated in its boldest terms; it is the duty of the State to take care of and reform only those whom social prejudice is pleased to call the bad. Hence in inflicting punishment the safety of the injured is not to be considered, but simply the reformation of the injurer. Nor is this to be effected by fear; for fear, as an engine of government, is to be discarded. Fear, indeed, it is subtly argued, may produce increased cunning in the execution of crime, but cannot prevent crime from being undertaken. Relapsed convicts, it is declared, are most plentiful in the land of hard laws. Crime can only be thoroughly repressed by a system of penalties which, from the benignity they breathe, serve rather to soften than to inflame those on whom they are imposed.

§ 5. Undoubtedly the reformation of the offender is one of the objects which a humane judge will have in view in the adjustment of his sentences; but it cannot be viewed as the primary object, or

1. See infra, §§ 97 et seq.
as supplying the sole standard. The protection of the unoffending, if we reduce the question to a mere personal balance, is at least as important an object of humanitarian consideration as it is the reform of the offender. And again, if we examine the theory critically we find we are reduced to this absurdity, that we can punish only when we can reform, and hence that the desperate and irreclaimable offender cannot be punished at all. 1

§ 6. Nor does this theory make any distinction as to crimes. While an incorrigible assassin is not to be punished at all, because he is incorrigible, a trespasser, who in sudden heat strikes another, but whose temper it may take twenty years to correct, would be kept in the house of reform for twenty years. Nor is this all. What kind of correction, as has been well asked, is to be applied? Is it to be preventive, so as to make the supposed offender innocuous? Then we encounter the objections which, as we have just seen, are fatal to the preventive theory. Is it to be purely corrective? Then it is to be graduated by tests which we have no means of applying, and which depend upon the capacity of characters whose secrets we cannot penetrate. To carry out such a system thoroughly the State must become a church, undertaking, within the bounds of a prison, to extirpate selfishness and implant moral principle. Aside from the objection that this transcends the functions of the State, it makes the State attempt to effect a moral end by immoral means. For it is immoral to punish except for the purpose of vindicating right against wrong. 2

1 See criticism in Lorimer's Inst. (1873), 346. The point in the text is well put by Lord Justice Fry in an article in the Nineteenth Century, reprinted in the Criminal Law Magazine for January, 1884. "Prisoner at the bar," he suggests a judge acting on the principle here criticized to say, "you are an incorrigible villain; this is the fourth burglary of which you have been convicted, and the second attempt at murder. It is plain that there is no hope of your reformation, and therefore I discharge you."

2 Woolley's Political Science, § 107.

3 In this connection may be considered the following observations by the present author, printed in 4 South. L. R. 245 at sq. 79:—

"The first inquiry we may make, in meeting the theory that reformation is to be the reason and limit of penal justice, is, What right have we to reform a man by removing him from his business and putting him in a prison, unless he be guilty of a crime which requires a specific punishment? Would imprisonment be likely to reform me if I thought it undeserved and unjust, and if it were imposed without a due conviction of guilt?"

4 The next inquiry is as to the constitutional power of a State to reform its citizens by force. In answering this question we may waive the provision in our state as well as federal constitutions limiting convictions of crime to cases where bills have been legally found by grand juries, and where the offender has the right to meet before the petit jury the witnesses against him face to face. Aside from these restrictions, what power has a constitutional State to attempt to forcibly reform its adult citizens, unless as a mere subsidiary incident to penal justice? What power has it to make penal justice subordinate and auxiliary to ethics? Governments there have undoubtedly been which —sometimes on the paternal theory, sometimes because they were distrustful of the ordinary processes of law—have undertaken ethical reformation; but such governments have never been called constitutional. A prominent Russian officer, for instance, may require, in the opinion of his superiors, reformation, and he may be sent to Siberia, or imprisoned in a fortress, in order to develop his better, and repress his worse qualities. A group of leading French politicians may be banished or imprisoned as an incident to a coup d'etat, in order to reform their political views. A vigilance committee may undertake to reform an obnoxious citizen by maltreating his person or destroying his property. We can conceive of such things in conditions of despoticism or of anarchy; but we cannot conceive how, in a constitutional State, of which it is one of the fundamental sanctions that nothing is to be done but what government that can be properly executed by the voluntary moral power of the community, the reformation of individuals should be attempted by force. Houses of refuge and other asylums, as well as schools for children, we rightfully have. But it is beyond the scope of a constitutional government to open compulsory houses of reform for adults, or to make moral reform by force a primary function.

"Supposing, however, we should hold that this is within the province of the State, the next question that would arise, in view of the fact that there must be discrimination, is, What persons are to attempt to reform?" To say, those convicted of crime, is no answer, because this takes us back to the absolute theory that a person is to be punished because he is guilty, whereas the theory before us is that a person is to be punished because he is to be reformed. In a general sense, as all men are susceptible of reformation, all men, in this view, are to be punished. As this cannot be, we must, as has just been said, make a discrimination; and the interesting question for the advocate of the reformatory theory remains as to where the line is to be drawn. Now, in view of the fact that it is dogma after all that is the fountain of action, are not those who hold what we conceive to be pernicious dogmas the proper persons to be punished? If they should be reformed, would not the reformation of those who are influenced by them follow? Why should not the State, therefore, undertake the reformation, by means of fine, imprisonment, and the whipping-post, of those teaching pernicious opinions? We have examples enough of this in old times; and, supposing that this mode of education proved effective,—admitting for
That the object is to terrify others.

a moment that history shows us that heretics and other unseemly teachers are really to be reformed in this way,—why not revive the same machinery? Here, for instance, is a bold political swaggerer teaching what we, on the eastern seaboard, hold to be highly immoral principles of inflation; why not catch him if he happen to be travelling among us, and put him in the stocks? and, if this does not reform him, why not apply severer treatment? Or, an eastern hard-money capitalist, exalted with Adam Smith and Ricardo, is travelling in the West, promulgating views which may be supposed by some of his audiences to bear hardly on the working classes; why not arrest him and subject him also to reformation?

"Another interesting question will arise as to the distribution of punishment, if susceptibility to reform, and not guilt, is to be the test. Indeed, the only proper course, if we are to formulate the proceeding under such a system, would be to collect a number of persons, proper subjects for reformation, in the court-house, and then, without regard to the crimes of which they are suspected, call testimony to determine what degree of punishment would be necessary to a reformation in each particular case. A person, for instance, of extreme sensitiveness to discipline, might be reformed by imprisonment of two or three weeks, if such imprisonment were accompanied by the application of severe punishments and by expressions of endearment calculated to awaken dormant affections. Another person, more calculous, more defiant, or less gratifying, might require years of severe treatment for his reformation. Now, it might happen, as has often been the case, that the sensitive and grudging defendant is a murderer; while one whose offence is limited to an assault and battery, committed in defence of his rights, may be the obdurate and irretractable person, who declines to be reformed at anything less than a long term of years. The consequences would be that the murderer would be let off after a few weeks' detention, solaced by music and painting, or whatever else was likely to develop his moral tone, while ten or twenty years might be a light punishment to him guilty of the assault and battery.

"Another inquiry remains: What is to be done with the incorrigible offender? When the sole object of punishment is reformation, then, when there can be no reformation there can be no punishment. The Pennsylvania boy (now a full-grown man), who was convicted in Massachusetts some few years ago of at least one cruel murder, has been pronounced by competent specialists to be so desperate a case that no hope of his reformation could be indulged; and if this be so, he should at once, on the reasoning now before us, be discharged. More than half of those on the trial list of our criminal courts are marked as old convicts; and by recent statutes in almost all our States such old convicts, when reconvicted, are to have cumulative sentences, proportioned to the degree of their former conviction. Our penal system, therefore, goes on the hypothesis that the more incorrigible a man, by the record of his former convictions, appears to be, the longer should be his imprisonment when convicted. The theory we bear contest is, that the more incorrigible he is the less he is to be punished. In other words, the criminal is to be punished severely for a first and comparatively light offence, and relieved in proportion to his obstinacy and his persistent crime.

"The State, endeavouring to operate on the fears of mankind, organizes a method of absolutely repressing or of absolutely commanding certain classes of men," Ainsworth on Criminal Punishments, 297, London, 1872. See also, Maine's Ancient Law (Ed. of 1870), 388. To the same effect speaks Seneca: "Nemo prudens punit qui pecuniam est; sed nec poscitur." Seneca, de Ira, lib. i., cap. 18.

Dr. Franklin, in a letter of March 14, 1788, to Mr. Vaughan, argued that "punishment, inflicted beyond the merit of the offence, is so much punishment of innocence!" and, when commenting on a pamphlet just published ("Thoughts on Executive Justice"), which advocated the "example" theory, pure and simple, gives the following characteristic criticism:

"I have read of a cruel Turk in Barbary, who, whenever he bought a new Christian slave, ordered him immediately to be hung up by the ears, and to receive an hundred blows of a cudgel on the soles of his feet, that the said house should not be passed against him, and answering, that it was hard to hang a man for only stealing a horse, was told by the judge: 'Man, thou art not to be hanged only for stealing a horse, but that horses may not be stolen.' But the man's answer, if candidly examined, will, I imagine, appear reasonable, as being founded on the eternal principles of justice and equity, that punishments should be proportioned to offences, and the judge's reply brutal and unreasonable."
§ 8. The theory of the crime has the coarse side of this theory been abandoned. In the United States, it has had no foothold since the Revolution, though it was not without influence in instituting barbarous punishments in our early colonial days. And rightly has more terrorism been rejected as one of the objects which the judge, in adjusting sentence, is to keep in view. For terroristic penalties, viewing them in their crude shape, undertake to punish the offender, not merely for what he has actually done in the past, but for what others may possibly do in the future. Terrorism, also, treats the offender not as a person, but as a thing; not as a responsible, self-determining being with rights common to all members of the same community, to whom justice is to be distinctively awarded as a matter between him and the State, but as a creature without any rights, on whom punishment is imposed so that others should be deterred from acts requiring punishment. The theory, therefore, is open to two fatal objections: (1) It violates the fundamental principle of all free communities—that the members of such communities have equal rights to life, liberty, and personal security. (2) It conflicts with that public sense of justice which is essential to the due execution of all penal laws. For this reason the terroristic system has failed even in producing the result which it sought. For terrorism, as such, has been shown to multiply rather than diminish brutal crime. No place is more prolific in crime than the sites of public executions. Inflicting public capital punishment on minor crimes has been found to generate bolder and more ferocious crimes which no capital punishment can suppress. Hence it is that terrorism has of late days ceased to be one of the elements in the measurement of judicial punishment.

§ 8. But it should be remembered that this criticism applies to terrorism in its coarse and merely sensuous aspect. For there remains to be considered a principle with which terrorism is sometimes unintelligently confounded, but which, when disentangled from the spectacular brutalism and the contempt of personal rights by which terrorism is marked, forms an important element in penal jurisprudence. This principle will now be noticed.

1 It is remarkable, in view of the importance of the question before us in such slight attention from English and American jurists. Beccaria—whose

§ 9. In another work, the educational bearing of penal legislation is largely discussed, and it is there shown: (1) that the

treatise on Crimes was translated early in the present century, and who held that as the State rests on social contract it has the right to punish only so far as it has power given to it by such contract—look the ground that the object of punishment is simply preventive and deterrent; and what Beccaria taught it was natural that those who agree with him in principle, and who were fascinated by the purity and dignity of his style, should adopt as it were unquestionable. General prevention, it was argued, ought to be the chief end of punishment. General prevention is distinguished from particular prevention in this: that particular prevention has respect to the cause of the mischief, and general prevention to the whole community. This system is, therefore, virtually the terroristic theory of Ferrerbach, which is discussed in the text; with this qualification—this pleasure, as well as pain, are to be used by the law-giver as inducements to avoidance of criminal acts. To this, as we will soon see more fully, applies with great force President Woolsey's criticism that the preventive theory, "by overlooking the ill-desert of wrongful doing, makes it and all similar systems immoral, and furnishes no measure of the amount of punishment except the law-giver's subjective opinion in regard to the sufficiency of the amount of preventive suffering.

The founders of the Pennsylvania prison system, it should be added, while laying great stress on reform and prevention, fall back on justice as the main end of punishment.

Mr. Livingston repeatedly gives his adherence to the preventive theory.
§ 9. CRIMES. [BOOK I.

Announcement of punishment as a consequent on crime is essential to just penal jurisprudence; (2) that such an announcement of punishment is futile unless it is followed up, as a rule, by infliction. Two great instrumentalties, it is alleged, are within the law-makers’ control for the suppression of crime. The first is education, showing its moral and economical ill consequences. The second is to be found in penal laws; such laws to be humanely and justly devised, lucidly expressed, universally promulgated, and firmly executed. Each of these features is essential to enable these laws to be effective on the public at large. Men will not be deterred from crime by unjust or inhuman laws capriciously executed. And the appeal made by a right system of laws is not sensuous, simply agitating the passions, as is the case with the terroristic theory. For just laws, clearly expressed, faithfully disseminated, and firmly executed, address the reason of men. The offender is, indeed, to be punished simply to make him an example to others, for this would be as objectionable as is the terrorism just condemned. But being justly punished, his case is

In his Principles of Penal Law, chapter II., maintains the absolute theory. Mr. Bentham, as will be seen, substantially takes the same view. Mr. Lorimer, in his Institutes, page 346, rejects the reformatory theory as inadequate and delusive. Mr. Austin and Sir W. Hamilton follow the modified scheme of Kant, to be presently noticed.

Both the “example” and the “reform” theories were used with great effect by the defenders of Governor Eyre, when he was charged in England with permitting reckless and brutal vengeance to be inflicted on all persons suspected of complicity in the Jamaica negro outbreak of 1886. It will be recalled that after order was entirely restored, great cruelties were inflicted, with the apparent permission of the governor, on persons who had not borne arms, and who were not proved to have been actually concerned in the revolt. This subject became a matter of active controversy in England, and Governor Eyre was defended by Mr. Carlyle, Mr. Ruskin, and others, on the ground that the object of punishment is to prevent crime and reform the community; and that only by sentences of punishment, in cases such as that of the late disorders in Jamaica, could the still more atrocious crime of a universal massacre of the white race be prevented. This position was reviewed with great ability by Cockburn, C. J., in his charge to the grand jury, which took the ground that punishment could only be meted out in retribution of crime duly established in a court of law. “Professor Huxley,” says Mr. McCarthy, after narrating the procedure, “disposes once for all of that sort of argument by the quiet remark that he knew of no law authorizing virtuous persons to put to death less virtuous persons as such.” McCarthy’s Own Times, London, 1886, p. 47. See discussion in 4th vol. of Froude’s Carlyle.

§ 10. BASIS OF CRIMINAL JURISPRUDENCE. [§ 10.

The absolute theory of punishment, on which we must therefore fall back, rests on the assumption that crime as crime must be punished; punitur quia peccatum est. But then comes the question, by whom? The State, as representing society at large, springs from a moral necessity. It is not a matter of choice whether we will live under government. Some government, some form of civil organization, we must have. And the State is not to be guided simply by expediency, or by the purely external purposes of society. It has an existence of its own to maintain, a conscience of its own to assert, moral principles to vindicate. Penal justice, therefore, is a distinctive prerogative of the State, to be exercised in the service and in the satisfaction of the duty of the State, and rests primarily on the moral rightfulness of the punishment inflicted. Penal discipline undoubtedly is expedient, both for the community and for the individual punished. But the jurisdiction is exercised, not because it is expedient, but because it is right. Another step remains to be taken, which is this: Each de facto government is to be viewed as representing, for penal purposes, the State by which it is sanctioned. The State says, “Crime as crime is to be punished, and I consti-

1 In this result, though by different hibbled by Bercher, Strafrecht, 1877, § 13. See, for instance, the work of Hooker, 17. See supra, § 13, note.
tute each de facto government as my agent for this purpose.” We have an interesting illustration of this tacit authorization in the recognition given by the Supreme Court of the United States, at the close of the late civil war, to the penal sentences of the Confederate courts. These courts were de jure nullities. Yet, nullities as they were, through their sentences thousands of convicted offenders were, when the war closed, confined in Southern prisons. To release them, write of habeas corpus were taken out, and argued before the judges of the Supreme Court of the United States. But the reply to these applications was substantially that given above: Society, in its large sense, is invested with the right to punish crime; and each de facto government is the agent of society for this purpose. The penal sentences of such de facto governments, therefore, will not be disturbed.

§ 11. Relieving ourselves, therefore, of all jure divino questions as to the right of particular governments to execute penal justice, we reduce what is called the absolute theory of penal jurisprudence to the following propositions: (1) Crime as such must be punished by society; (2) Each de facto government must act as the agent of society for this purpose. Consequently each de facto government is bound to punish crime as crime. And every judge exercising penal jurisdiction is bound to do so as the vindicator of Right as such. Crime is primarily to be punished because it is a violation, of moral law, and society is to punish crime because society is the divinely appointed vindicator of moral law.

§ 12. But is the absolute theory, as thus delineated, one which is to be nakedly administered? Are the objects which have heretofore been specified as relative to be entirely left out of sight? In reply to this, the following answer is to be made:

While punishment is based on justice, it must be proportioned to guilt. If, however, we resolve guilt into its component elements, we find among them some of these very qualities to which the relative theories are distinctively applied. Thus, for instance, all of these theories rest more or less on the danger of crime to society; and punishment, in accordance with these theories, is to be graduated by the extent of this danger. But if, while accepting the absolute theory, we analyze guilt, we find that it becomes subjectively more or less heinous in proportion to the danger to society with which it is fraught. The guilt of drunkenness on the part of a man locked up in his own chamber is comparatively slight. If his drunkenness is concealed, while he is his own enemy, and the enemy, it may be, of his immediate family, he is the enemy, perhaps, of few others. But drunkenness on the part of the engineer of a steamer is a far more flagrant, because it is a more dangerous crime. It displays, when deliberate, a heart not only callous to social duty, but recklessly depraved. So, to adopt another illustration, setting fire to a building at night, when its inmates are unconscious in their beds, is an act exhibiting a guilt far more heinous and depraved than setting fire to the same building in the day, when, if within doors, they will soon discover the fire, and if they do not extinguish it can at least escape. Graduating the punishment, therefore, by the guilt involved, a far higher penalty will be imposed in the first case than in the second. And so, with regard to the grade of homicide, as settled by our American law. Homicides by poisoning, and lying in wait, are engendered by a deeper guilt, while productive of greater danger, than most other classes of homicide; and hence they are visited with peculiarly condign punishment. In fact, with intelligent agents, the guilt of an act is proportioned, as a general rule, to its dangerousness, since the audacity and probity of the offender are measured by the extent of the mischief he attempts. There is no necessity, therefore, for resorting to the ground of expediency, as a means of grading punishability, when we can reach the same result by adopting the right principle of the adaptation of punishment to guilt.

§ 13. And so with regard to the reform theory. The old convict, who has been twice or thrice previously sentenced, needs severer treatment, and is sentenced to longer imprisonment, with the least ameliorations; and this because his guilt is of the deeper dye. On the other hand, the boy who is tried for his first offense is committed to a house of refuge, surrounded with benignant influences which may tend to his reform. In each case the objects aimed at by the reformatory theory are effected; and yet in each case the punishment is graduated simply by the offender’s guilt. The old convict is sentenced to a long imprisonment at hard labor, because his guilt is great; but the very greatness of this guilt invokes the severity of sentence that would
be produced by a just construction of the reformatory theory, when it was found that all milder measures failed. The youthful culprit is sentenced to a more lenient punishment, under more generous influences, because his grade of guilt is light, and the very lightness of this grade calls for that mildness of sentence which the reformatory system in such case recommends.

1 See vindications of absolute theory in Hartenstein, Grundbegriffe d. eth. Wiss. 269–374; Rothle, Christ. Ethik, iii. 374, 360. In our own literature the oldest exposition of this view will be found in President Woolsey's Political Science, §§ 100 et seq. It is also vindicated by Lord Justice Fry, in the article above quoted in the Nineteenth Century, reprinted in the Crim. Law Mag. (Jan. 1884), 18.

According to Kant (see Berner, ed. of 1877, § 28), judicial punishment cannot be employed as a means to obtain a collateral good, but must always be imposed on and must be commensurate to a violation of law. A man, so he argues, is not to be treated as a thing, to be sacrificed to the policy of the State; from this he is protected by his inherent personality. He must be justly convicted of a crime before the State can punish him for the public benefit. Penal law is a categorical imperative. Punishment is inflicted, not because it is useful, but because it is demanded by reason. But he insists that social contract is the basis of punishment; and he forcibly illustrates this by saying that even if society, by the consent of all its members, should be on the point of dissolution, a murderer, sentenced to death, should first be executed, and that this would be right. As a rule he recommends retaliation; the like is to be punished by the like. This, however, is not to be literally carried out, as in the Moabite system, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. The principle of equality is to be substantially, not formally, applied. It has, however, been objected to Kant's theory that it is inconsistent with itself. In his view law is the emanation of the united will of the people, following in this the social contract theory of Rousseau. The security of individuals is, by this view, the object of the State. It is difficult to reconcile with this conception, that the State inflicts punishment, not primarily for the sake of the individual, but primarily for the sake of justice. But however inconsistent in this respect Kant may be, his example shows that it is possible for the absolute theory of punishment to be held by an adherent of the social contract hypothesis.

An analysis of Hegel's philosophy of punishment is found in the 5th edition of Berner's Lehrbuch des Deutschen Strafrechts, Leipzig, 1877, a work which is one of the most popular and the most authoritative of recent German treatises on criminal law, and which adopts as its basis the Hegelian philosophy in this relation.

Punishment, according to Hegel (as writes Berner, § 21), is to be regarded as an agency to annihilate wrong in its effort to annihilate right. It is, therefore, the negation of a negation. This is tantamount to saying that punishment is retribution (Vergebung). But the punitive negation must be so applied as to do no more than cancel the prior criminal negation. The punishment must find its measure in the crime. As the right that has been impaired has a specific scope and

quality, so the punishment, to be a correspondent negation, must on its side have its quantitative and qualitative limitations.

The identity of crime and punishment, however, which is thus required, does not consist in a specific similarity. It is not requisite that the crime should be retaliated on the criminal. All that is asked is that the evil of the punishment should be proportioned in value (nach dem Werde) to the evil of the crime.

It is not the mission of philosophy, so continues Hegel, to establish a valuation of punishment so as to ascribe it duty to each particular crime. Philosophy deals with the principle, and leaves the application to the practical reason. All that philosophy can do is to assign a qualitative and quantitative quantity to an impaired right, to which its punishment is to correspond. Hegel, Rechtesphilosophie, 880 et seq.

Hegel's views may in this respect be criticized as speculative, but it must be remembered that they have been accepted and elaborated as the basis of penal law by some of the most practical of contemporary jurists. Bismarck is no idealist, yet we find the democracy, in a speech in the Prussian Reichsrath, in 1872, adopting the Hegelian theory of punishment, and illustrating it by the famous maxim which Meyer has taken as the motto of his late valuable treatise on criminal law: "Laws are like medicines; they are usually nothing more than the healing of one disease by another disease less, and more transient, than the first." Certainly Hegelianism, in adopting and sustaining philosophically the theory of just retribution as the sole primary basis of punishment, exhibits a healthy contrast to the sentimentalism of humanitarian philosophers who ignore the moral and retributive element in punishment, making its primary object to be the reform of the alleged criminal, and example to the community. To such theorists the final answer is, that until a man is proved to be guilty of a crime we have no right either forcibly to reform him or to punish him as an example to others; and that neither reformation nor example will be promoted by assigning to him, after he has committed, a punishment disproportioned to his offense. At the same time, in the application of such punishment, reform and example are to be kept incidentally in view. Conviction and sentences are to be according to justice; but prison discipline is to be so applied as to make the punishment conducive as far as possible to the moral education of both criminal and community.

The general question of the limits of punishment will be found discussed by Plato, in Gorgias (ed. Rigott, 4, pp. 49, 57; and in de legisl.; 8, 9, 10, 11); and by Aristotle, Ethics, book 5, chap. 8.

Bentham, in his treatise on punishments, advocates the absolute theory, subject to the following qualifications:

1. The evil of the punishment must exceed the advantage of the offence.

2. The severity must be increased as the certainty is diminished.

3. The greater the offence, the more severe may be the punishment adopted for the chance of its prevention.

4. Punishments may be varied with the sensibility of the offender.

5. "Real" punishments should be "apparent" for the sake of example.

6. The power of further injuring should be taken away or reduced.

7. Recompense to the injured party.
§ 13.] CRIMES. [BOOK I.

should be kept in view. See summary in Montague on Punishment, p. 211 et seq.

According to President Woolsey, the retribution theory which he vindicates "assumes that moral evil has been committed by disobedience to rightful commands; that according to a propriety which commands itself to our moral nature it is fit and right that evil, physical or mental, suffering, or shame should be incurred by the wrong-doer; and that in all forms of government over moral beings there ought to be a power to decide how much evil ought to be inflicted on special kinds and instances of transgression. . . . Its province (that of the State) is confined to such actions as do harm to the State, or to interests which it is necessary to protect. . . . Its object in punishing is not, in the first instance, to punish for the sake of punishing, because so much wrong demands so much physical suffering; but to punish—punishment being in the circumstances otherwise right—not directly for the ends of God's moral government, but for ends lying within and far within that sphere." Woolsey's Political Science, § 107.

Sir J. Stephen speaks thus to the same effect:

"The infliction of punishment by law gives definite expression and a solemn ratification and justification of the hatred which is excited by the commission of the offence, and which constitutes the moral or popular as distinguished from the conscientious sanction of that part of morality which is also sanctioned by the criminal law. The criminal law thus proceeds upon the principle that it is morally right to hate criminals, and it confirms and justifies that sentiment by inflicting upon criminals punishments which express it." 2 Hart, Cr. L. 81.

18

CHAP. II.] DEFINITION AND ANALYSIS OF CRIME. 

§ 14. An offence which may be the subject of criminal procedure has been defined to be an act committed or omitted in violation of public law, either forbidding or commanding it.1 This definition, however, though adequate in those

Crime is an act made punishable by law.

1 "A crime or misdemeanor (delict) is an act committed or omitted, in violation of a public law, either forbidding or commanding it." Stephen's Institutes, 63.

A crime may be provisionally defined to be 'an act which the State...
States in which there is no common law, fail in States in which there is recognized, as will presently be seen, a common law, which determines from the reason of the thing, that a particular act is an indictable offence. In such States the definition before us is a petitio principii, it being equivalent to saying, that an act is a crime because it is forbidden by law, and that it is forbidden by law because it is a crime. When we seek, however, for a test to determine, in States where the common law obtains, whether a particular offence, as to which there is no statute, or no prior ruling specifically applicable, is indictable, then we must go further than the definition above given, and hold that at common law a wrong which public policy requires to be prosecuted by the State is an indictable absolutely prohibits, or a forbearance from an act which the State absolutely commands to be done, the State making use of such a kind and measure of punishment as may seem needed to render such prohibition or command effectual. 1

Sir J. F. Stephen's definition is as follows: "The criminal law is that part of the law which relates to the definition and punishment of acts or omissions which are punished as being (1) attacks upon public order, internal or external; or (2) abuses of authoritie public authority; or (3) acts injurious to the public in general; or (4) attacks upon the persons of individuals or rights connected with, and similar to, rights of property." 1 Hist. Crim. Law, 3. This, however, is too comprehensive. The last head, for instance, would include trespasses as well as larcenies.

"To the question, What is a criminal act? the answer most generally applicable seems to be—a criminal act is one which in some way or other subjects the actor to punishment," Brown's Phil. of Law, § 152. To this is added (§ 164) that a "crime is constituted by an overt act done with a guilty intent, or includes a guilty mind, knowledge, or purpose, affecting or prejudicing the public." This is defective in not including offences which are criminal from want of intent, i.e., from negligent omission to perform a duty.

"As law is the necessary form in which right is embodied, crime, not indeed in its essence, but in its form, presupposes law, and must, therefore, be called an unlawful act." Halscher, System, 1 p. 19.

Mr. Livingston does not attempt a definition. "All contraventions of penal law," he tells us, "are denounced by the general term, offences. Some division was necessary to distinguish between those of a greater and others of a less degree of guilt. No scale could be found for this measure so proper as the injury done to society by any given act." That "offences," however, are not convertible with "injuries done to society" is plain, since there are many "injuries" done to society, which are not "offences," so far, at least, as to be subject to indictment. I have discussed this subject in greater detail in my Commentaries on American Law, Chapters I., II., and III.

1 See Com. v. McHale, 97 Penn. St. 397.
2 In re, § 29. In Steph. Cr. Dig. art. 160, we have the following:

"Acts deemed to be injurious to the public have, in some instances, been held to be misdemeanors, because they appeared to the court before which they were tried that there was an analogy between such acts and other acts which had been held to be misdemeanors, although such first-mentioned acts were not forbidden by any express law, and although no precedent exactly applied to them," etc.

To this there is the following note:

"After quoting the judgment of Wilkes, J. (the colleague of Lord Mansfield), in Miller v. Taylor, 4 Burr. 2312, to the effect that 'justice, morals, fitness, and public convenience, when applied to a new subject, make common law without precedent,' Pollock, C. B., said: 'I entirely agree with the spirit of this passage so far as it regards the pressing what is a public evil, and preventing what would become a public mischief, but that there is a wide difference between protecting the community against a new source of danger and creating a new right. I think the common law is quite competent to pronounce anything to be illegal which is manifestly against the public good; but I think the common law cannot create new rights,' etc. Jeffreys v. Bovey, 4 H. L. C. 328. In 3 Steph. Hist. Cr. L. 329, there is a protest against these views, it being said that "though the existence of the power as inherent in the judges has been asserted by several high authorities for a great length of time, it is hardly probable that any attempt would be made to exercise it at the present day." But the preponderance of authority is against Sir J. F. Stephen's opinion in this respect. See Whart. Com. on Amer. Law, § 30.

2 See Lien on Penal Law, 1 Lien's Mis. Works, 474, et seq.
3 In re, § 88.
§ 15. CRIMES.

Respect, even as against the opinion of the majority, no ethical system could be constructed. On the other hand, there are numerous immoralities which the State does not and cannot undertake to punish. We must, therefore, reject immorality as the condition of indictability, and fall back upon the public sense of right and public policy as already stated. If we are required to supply a further test, we might say that public policy demands the indictability of all immoral acts of which punishment by law is the proper retribution. From this class are to be excluded immoralities which are not of enough consequence to be prosecuted, and immoralities which the public welfare requires should remain unpunished.

§ 15. The common law may be defined to be right reason, applicable to present issues, in analogy with prior rulings of the courts and opinions of authoritative jurists. In accordance with this view, and adopting the principle that crimes at common law, apart from statute, are offences which public policy manifestly requires to be prosecuted by the State, we may be able to give logical expression to the distinction between wrongs which can be redressed only by private suit, and wrongs the perpetrators of which may be proceeded against by public prosecution. That such a distinction exists in practice we have numerous instances. I may have a right to have the air about me pure; but this does not make it an indictable offence for a neighbor to invade this right by opening on his land a drain whose odors reach to no one but myself. I may exclude trespassers from my grounds; I may sue them for damages caused by their trespass; but I cannot, for the mere trespass, if there be no malicious hurt inflicted, prosecute them criminally. On the other hand, if the drain is such as to affect the community injuriously, or the trespass be conducted in such a way as to threaten the public peace, an indictment lies. The reason for this, if the above definition be correct, is that public policy in the first class of cases does not require the State to intervene, while in the second class of cases it does so require. In other words, in all matters in which the peace, order, or health of the community is not concerned, a sound social economy requires that men should settle their differences by themselves, either by compromise or private suit, just as a sound social economy requires that they should conduct their own business and regulate their own families, provided that in so doing they do not threaten public peace, or disturb public comfort, or create public scandal. As to acts, however, threatening public peace, or disturbing public comfort, or creating public scandal, it is the duty of the State to intervene. We have abundant illustrations of this distinction in other departments of social science; the principle being that it is not within the province of the State to enforce duties purely private. A board of health, for instance, may properly forbid unwholesome food to be sold in a market, but it cannot properly forbid an individual from eating food that will probably make him sick. Public scandalous drunkenness, to take another illustration, is indictable at common law; but common drunkenness, which is not a public scandal, is not indictable. The same distinction applies to remedies. The State is only justified in intervening to protect interests that concern itself directly; and if wrongs be committed strictly private in their character, then these wrongs must be redressed by private suit. It may be said that a distinction of this kind, based on public policy, is one to be laid down, not by the courts, but by the legislature. This is no doubt the case where there is a code which undertakes to cover the whole ground, so that no offence is indictable which is not made indictable by the code. It is otherwise, however, when offences are to be defined by the common law. In the latter case, there is a wide range of offences as to which the judges are obliged to apply the test of public policy. The banks of a canal, for instance, or the embankments of a railroad, are wantonly torn down by a murrader. The case is one of first impression in the courts, as no one has heretofore been prosecuted for doing this particular thing. Is the offence indictable as malicious mischief? It certainly would not be, where nobody but the owner is affected by the trespass, and where no specific malice to such owner is shown. Yet as it is, in consequence of the danger to the public if canals or railroads be subject

1 See remarks of Branwell, J., in Cowan v. Melbourne, L. R. 2 Ex. 236, and distinctions taken in 2 Steph. His. Cr. L. 75 et seq.
2 Meyer, § 4, while concurring in the reasoning of the text, makes the test incompatibility with the well-being of the Commonwealth. He predicates indictability of acts "welche den Bedingungen des Gemeinwohlens und seiner Fortentwicklung widersprechen."
CRIMES. [BOOK I.

to deprivations of this kind,—i.e., on grounds of public policy—such an offence would be held indictable. I may be standing by a river side, to take another illustration, and see a man drowning. I do not help him out, though I could readily do so; but as omissions to perform acts of charity cannot be made indictable without great disarrangement of industry, I am not indictable for this omission, immoral as it is. I am indictable, however, on the grounds of public policy, if, being charged, as a public officer, with the protection of persons bathing on the spot, or having undertaken especially to protect this particular person, I neglect to perform my duty. This, however, concerns the subject matter of crime. So

1 See infra, §§ 1065, et seq.
2 Infra, §§ 130, 133.

Several theories have been proposed in Germany as to the distinction between public and private wrongs. By Stahl a crime consists and defies the domination and dignity of the State by positive assaults, which are by themselves under all circumstances (in these) a violation of law; while there is no such defence in civil wrongs, since here we have exclusively to do with acts which are only unlawful (in hypothe) under the given relations. On the other hand, Kerner and Kaufm, representing the Hegelian school, include under crimes exclusively the conscious resistance of the general will by the individual will; under civil wrongs exclusively, acts whose perpetrators are unconscious of wrong. By Halscher crimes consist of absolute wrongs, that is to say, wrongs as against the objective existing law; while civil wrongs are merely relative, that is to say, wrongs exclusively directed against the privileges of other persons. Gehrl, ii. 175. That there is any definable distinction is denied by Bekker, Theor., s. 108; Gehrl, ii. 173; Morkel, Abh., p. 41; and Binding, Normen, s. 173 et seq. By the latter writer the view in the text is assailed elaborately.

Blackstone's distinction, that "civil injuries are private wrongs and concern individuals only, while crimes are public wrongs and affect the whole community," is objected to by Austin on the ground that many crimes are private wrongs, and many civil injuries affect the whole community. See B. v. Paget, 3 F. & F. 29; R. v. Trafford, 1 B. & Ad. 574; Dobbin's Distillery v. U. S., 96 U. S. 395.

Mr. Austin, in his own definition, begs the question. "The differences," he says, "between crimes and civil injuries is not to be sought for in a supposed difference between their tendencies, but in the difference between the modes wherein they are respectively pursued, or wherein the sanction is applied in the two cases. An offence which is pursued at the discretion of the injured party or his representative is a civil injury. An offence which is pursued by the sovereign, or by the subordinate of the sovereign, or, as in England, in the name of the sovereign, is a crime." Austin's Jur. ed. 1863, ii. 192; ed. of 1868, 1052, adopted in Nasmith's Inst. 63. This defect of this distinction is pointed out in Whart. Com. Am. Law, §§ 56, et seq.

Sir H. Maine's explanation of the origin of the distinction leads to the definition in the text. A crime, he

CHAP. II.] DEFINITION AND ANALYSIS OF CRIME. [§ 15 a.

far as concerns the form, the distinction is that criminal wrongs are punishable by the State, while for civil wrongs redress is obtained at the suit of the party injured. A wrong, however, may be in one aspect civil, in another criminal.

§ 15 a. The common law of England was adopted as a part of their own common law by such of the American colonies as were of English settlement, and is operative in the States embracing or people from such colonies. And, as is elsewhere seen, even in States where the common

English common law is in force in the United States.

tells us, in the original conception of the term, was an act "involving such high issues that the State, instead of leaving its cognizance to the civil tribunal or the religious court, directed a special law or privileges against the perpetrator." Maine's Ancient Law, 109, 372.

More indelibility is not the test, since there are cases in which an indiction is prescribed merely as a civil remedy. R. v. Paget, 3 F. & F. 29; Bancroft v. Mitchell, L. R. 2 Q. B. 549.

Infra, § 31 b.

See cases cited infra, §§ 17, et seq.; and see State v. Bellius, 8 N. H. 650; State v. Briggs, 1 Altkr. 223; Con. v. Newell, 7 Mass. 240; Con. v. Chapman, 19 Met. 55; State v. Danforth, 3 Conn. 112; Lown's v. Edgerton, 19 Ward. 419; Kilpatrick v. People, 5 Denio, 277; Resp. v. Telcher, 1 Dall. 355; Con. v. Eckert, 2 Browne (Penns.), 248; Con. v. Taylor, 5 Mass. 277; Henderson's Case, 8 Tred. 703; Griswold v. State, 2 Yerger, 589; Smith v. People, 25 Ill. 17; State v. Hamlet, 3 Ired. 418; State v. Twogood, 7 Iowa, 292; State v. Pulle, 12 Minn. 184; Blanchard, ex parte, 9 Iowa, 101; Territory v. Ye Wan, 2 Montana, 476.

The federal courts, as well as will be seen (infra, § 253), have been ruled to have no common law criminal jurisdiction. The New York Penal Code of 1882, provides that no acts or omissions shall be deemed criminal, except as prescribed by the code, or by some statute not repealed, § 2. This appears to abolish the common law, but the common law is in a measure reestablished by a subsequent section, § 675, by which it is provided that "a person who wilfully and wantonly commits any act which seriously injures the person or property of another, or which seriously disturbs or endangers the public peace or health, or which openly outrages public decency, for which no other punishment is expressly prescribed by this code, is guilty of a misdemeanor." Were it not that the word "wilfully" excludes negligence, this clause would be a reinforcement of the common law.

In Ohio it has been decided that the criminal side of the English common law is not in force. Vanvalkenburg v. State, 11 Ohio, 404; Smith v. State, 12 Ohio St. 405. Such is the statutory rule in Indiana; Hackney v. State, 3 Ind. 494; Marvin v. State, 19 Ind. 121; Jones v. State, 59 Ind. 228, and to a limited extent in other States. See Ralst v. Carter, 10 Iowa, 400; Meyer, ex parte, 44 Mo. 379. As to Pennsylvania and Florida, see infra, § 56. In Louisiana, the English common law has been established by statute. State v. Davis, 22 La. An. 77. The evolution of the common law in America is discussed in Whart. Com. Am. Law, §§ 24, et seq. How far the ecclesiastical or
§ 16] CRIMES. [BOOK I.

Law is by legislation declared not to be in force, it nevertheless remains in force for the purpose of interpreting legislative action. We have a curious illustration of this in Texas, where it was at one time required that an offence should be "expressly defined" by statute. This was found to be impracticable; and now the common law is resorted to for a definition of statutory terms.

§ 16. Certain points of difference, however, between the penal policy of England and that of the United States must be kept in mind, in determining how far the want of common law authority in one country is to weigh upon the courts of the other. There is a grade of offences, in the first place comprehending adultery, fornication, and lewdness in general, together with those misdemeanors connected more particularly with the conduct of the rites and observances of religion, which in England is cognizable chiefly in the ecclesiastical courts, but which with us is in many States punished by indictment at common law. In England, in the second place, from the earliest period of judicial history, statutes were from time to time passed which defined the limits and determined the punishment of almost every offence, as it in its turn attracted legislative action. Thus, in the English books, few cases are found of malicious mischief at common law; penalties more summary than the common law afforded being provided for the protection of each species of property as it became the object of investment. No case, for instance, is to be found of an indictment at common law for malicious injury done to locks or other improvements on navigable rivers; because, as soon as locks were introduced into England, and canals built, such offences, by the statute 1 Geo. II. st. 2, c. 19, were made felonious, and were subject to transportation. So, though elementary writers agree that the destruction of an infant en ventre sa mere

canon law of Christendom is here effective will be considered in other sections. Infra, §§ 20, 1742, 1743.

Infra, §§ 20, 1742, 1743.


In State v. Williams, 34 La. An. 87, it was held that the court would give a common law definition to the words, "crime against nature," see infra, § 579. To same effect, see Wall v. State, 23 Ind. 150.

3 Black, Com. 66 w.; 1 Hawk. P. C. c. 5, s. 1; 1 Russel on Crimes, 46.

4 Grisham v. State, 2 Tex. 509.

5 See infra, §§ 1084-7.

is indictable at common law; no case is to be found in England where such is adjudged by the courts, the statute of 43 Geo. III. c. 58, making it a felony, being enacted about the time when the offence first required the action of the public authorities. The want of English precedents, in such cases, does not show that offences of such character were not cognizable at common law; it shows only that at an early period common law remedies gave way to statutes with provisions more specific and penalties more severe. Many offences, accordingly, which have been punished exclusively by statute in England, have been brought, in this country, within common law sanction, and have been considered misdemeanors. We cannot infer the non-indictability of such offences at common law because they are indictable in England only under statutes which we have not reenacted. The want of English common law authority, in many cases of this class, is attributable not to the non-indictability of the offences at common law, but to the fact that statutes imposing severe penalties on the offence, and absorbing by their terms the common law, were passed before common law affirmations of the indictability of the offence were reported. As said by the Supreme Court of Vermont, in a case adopted afterwards in New York, "the English statutes were so ancient, and the punishment so severe, that they were of course resorted to, and the common law thus lost sight of, though the statutes were intended as a mere increase of its penalties."

1 Branson, 1 S. 21; 3 Coke's Inst. 250; 1 Hawk. 34, 44; 1 Vessy, 88; 1 Russell on Crimes, 371. Infra, § 692.

2 The comprehensiveness of the common law is illustrated in England by a series of cases, which, though much less numerous than those in this country, from the fact that the common law remedy has been there so much more nearly absorbed by statute, nevertheless shows that there is no public wrong which is not the subject of criminal action. Thus it has been held indictable unlawfully and injuriously to carry a child infected with the smallpox along the public streets; E. v. Vantandillo, 4 M. & Scw. 73; E. v. 50; 1 Hawk. 24, 44; Vessy, 88; 1 Russell on Crimes, 371. Infra, § 692.

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5 State v. Briggs, 1 Ark., 226; Leoma v. Edgerton, 19 Wend. 419; State v. Carwood, 4 Stewart, 590. On this point see a comprehensive opinion of Shaw, C. J., in In re. Chapman, 13 Me. 68.
§ 17. It has been held by us, therefore, in application of 1 the reasoning just stated, that whatever, in the first place, is provocat 2 of public disturbance; or, in the second place, consists of 3 malicious injury to another’s property in such a way as to provoke 4 violent retaliation; or, in the third place, constitutes a public 5 scandal or indecency, is indictable in this country, although in England the offence is punishable only by statute, or in the ecclesiastical courts.

(1) Acts, therefore, provocation of public disturbance are indictable, though there be no English precedent for the indictment. Hence it has been held indictable to drive a carriage through a crowded street in such a way as to endanger the lives of the passers-by; to disturb a congregation when at religious worship; to go about armed with dangerous and unusual weapons, to the terror of citizens; to raise a liberty-pole in the year 1704, as a notorious and riotous expression of ill-will to the government; to tear down forcibly and contumaciously an advertisement, set up by the commissioners, of a sale of land for county taxes; to agree to fight, though no fight takes place; to break into a house in the day or night time, and disturb its inhabitants; to violently disturb a town meeting, though the parties engaged were not sufficient in number to amount to riot; to attempt to kidnap another; and, in short, to do any act which may create a public disturbance, provided that such be the natural consequence of the act.

1 In re A., 1066 et seq. Resp. v. Telicher, 1 Dallas, 336; State v. Council, 1 Tenn. 305; though this case has since been denied; Shell v. State, 6 Humph. 283; Taylor v. State, 6 Humph. 295.
3 State v. Scott, 2 Dev. & Bat. 35; Waart, Prec. 213.
4 In re A., 1067 et seq. Loeb v. Edgerston, 19 Wendell, 419; see, particularly, Kilpatrick v. People, 5 Denio, 277; Henderson’s Case, 8 Gratt. 738; though see State v. Wheeler, 5 Vt. 344; Illies v. Knight, 3 Tex. 312; and comment, infra, §§ 1068 et seq.
5 State v. Briggs, 1 Atkins, 228; see, for a general discussion of this question, 7 Law Rep. N. S. 89, 96.
7 State v. Rockman, 8 N. H. 203.

§ 18. The better opinion now is, that, to make such an offence indictable, it must be done either secretly and in the night time; Kilpatrick v. People, 5 Denio, 277; or in such a way as to provoke a breach of peace. State v. Phipes, 10 Ired. 17.

1 See infra, § 1066 et seq. Resp. v. Telicher, 1 Dallas, 336; State v. Council, 1 Tenn. 305; though this case has since been denied; Shell v. State, 6 Humph. 283; Taylor v. State, 6 Humph. 295.
3 State v. Scott, 2 Dev. & Bat. 35; Waart, Prec. 213.
4 In re A., 1067 et seq. Loeb v. Edgerston, 19 Wendell, 419; see, particularly, Kilpatrick v. People, 5 Denio, 277; Henderson’s Case, 8 Gratt. 738; though see State v. Wheeler, 5 Vt. 344; Illies v. Knight, 3 Tex. 312; and comment, infra, §§ 1068 et seq.
5 State v. Briggs, 1 Atkins, 228; see, for a general discussion of this question, 7 Law Rep. N. S. 89, 96.
7 State v. Rockman, 8 N. H. 203.
to the terror and alarm of the females in the house; though it is not an indictable offence to remove a stone from the boundary line between the premises of A. and B. with the intent to injure B.; nor to shave and crop the hair from a mare's tail in a stable; nor to frequent a neighbor's house, and grossly abuse his family, if there be no assault.

§ 19. (3) On the same reasoning it has been held to be indictable, to injure the community. Under this head it has been held to be a scandalous and indecent to cast a dead body into a river without the rites of Christian sepulture; to be guilty of eaves-dropping; to knowingly sell noxious food; to sell a wife; to deface a dead body without proper authority; to give more than a single vote at an election; to be guilty of individual offensiveness drunkenness; or notorious loudness, though on this point the better rule is that, to make the offence indictable, it must be such as to shock and insult, not an individual, but the community, to indulge publicly in profane swearing, or in loud and obscene language, so as to draw together a crowd in a thoroughfare, though the offence be not laid as a nuisance; and, in fine, to commit any act which

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**CRIMES.** [BOOK I.]

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**CHAP. II.** DEFINITION AND ANALYSES OF CRIME. [§ 20.]

from its nature must scandalously affect the morals and health of the community. 1

§ 20. It has sometimes been said that Christianity is part of the common law of the land, and from this it has been argued that the State in some way bound to punish by indictment offences against Christianity. Christianity, undoubtedly, has affected the common law in the United States, in the following important particulars: (1) In most jurisdictions we have adopted the principles of the canon law in relation to matrimony and to succession. The rules which the English ecclesiastical courts imposed in this connection we have in a large measure accepted as binding us; and in several States we have recognized as indictable certain offences, such as adultery and fornication, which in England can only be prosecuted in the ecclesiastical courts. (2) We have also, adopting the ethical rules of Christianity, as distinguished from those of heathendom, made indictable breaches of domestic duty which were not criminally punishable by the old Roman law. (3) Witnesses, unless they have conscientious scruples, or believe another form of oath more binding, are sworn as a rule on the Christian Bible. But beyond this we have not gone. We make blasphemy of Christianity indictable; but this is because such blasphemy is productive of a breach of the public peace, and not because it is an offence against God. We treat a disturbance of Christian worship as indictable when such disturbance amounts to a private assault or to public disorder; but we give the same protection to non-Christian assemblies. And in no State does the government interfere to prosecute offences consisting of a denial of Christian dogma, or a rejection of Christian sanctions. Nor in any State is Christianity in such sense part of

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2 Com. v. Edwards, 1 Ashmead, 46. See infra generallly, §§ 1430 et seq. See also Kansas v. State, 1 Greenleaf, 226. See infra, § 1433 a.

3 State v. Williams, 2 Tenn. 108; Com. v. Lorett, 6 Penn. J. L. 228; State v. Pennington, 3 Ind. 199. See Ibid. 351; infra, § 1444.

4 State v. Smith, 3 Hawks, 378; State v. Nerton, 2 Ill. 40; R. v. Sharpe, 7 Cox C. C. 214.

5 R. v. Delavall, 3 Bar. 1434. See infra, § 1442-4; State v. Kirby, 1 Murphy, 254; State v. Litar, I Dev. 257; State v. Graham, 3 Sneed, 134. See also infra, §§ 1452; State v. Appling, 30 Mo. 316.

6 Barker v. Com., 19 Penn. St. 412; Bell v. State, 1 Swan, 42.

7 See infra, §§ 1717, 1741.

8 State v. Jasper, 4 Dev. 333; Holt v. Education v. Minor, 23 Ohio St. 211.
§ 20. CRIMES. [BOOK I.]

the common law that the State can determine what are the dogmas of Christianity. That which is part of the common law can be changed by statute; but as the dogmas of Christianity are beyond the reach of statute, we must hold that they are not part of the common law of the land.


1 In an article by Dr. Spear, reprinted in the Albany Law Journal, vol. xiii. p. 306, we have the following:—

"Lord Campbell, in his Lives of the Chief Justices, explains the language so as to mean that the law will not permit the essential principles of revealed religion to be laid down and avowed. The English common law on civil law, in their sixth report (1841), express the opinion that the maxim does not 'supply any reason in favor of the rule that arguments may not be used against Christianity, provided it be not done in such a manner as to endanger the public peace by exciting futile resentment.' Archbishop Whately, in his prefixed to his Elements of Rhetoric, says that he had 'never met with any one who could explain' this meaning of the maxim; yet he did not understand it as implying the 'illegality of arguing against the established religion of England.'

In R. v. Foote (and Ramsey), 48 L. T. N. S. 753; infra, §§ 1605, 1627, Lord Cockburn, C. J., said, in charging the jury:

"Gentlemen, you have heard with truth that these things are, according to the old law, if the dicta of old judges, dicta often not necessary for the decisions, are to be taken as of absolute and unqualified authority—that these things, I say, are undoubtedly blasphemous libels, simply and without more, because they question the truth of Christianity. But I repeat what I said on the former trial that, for reasons which I will presently explain, these dicta cannot be taken to be a true statement of the law, as the law is now. It is no longer true, in the sense in which it was true when these dicta were uttered, that Christianity is part of the law of the land."

See, also, to the same effect as the text, Snodwick's Stat. & Const. Law, 14; Coke's Court Limitations, 472.

An exhaustive examination of the authorities by Dr. Anderson will be found in 20 Alb. L. J. pp. 255, 256. Among the conclusions reached by this able writer may be given the following:—

"6. We see that the first introduction of the maxim under discussion was due to a misunderstanding of the Year Books, and has never been practically sanctioned in its natural and literal sense by any English or American court. The common law has never furnished the ground for persecution, but it has always been inflicted by positive statutory enactment. The common law has taken account of Christianity as a positive system, for the purpose of punishing blasphemy and malicious ridicule of Christian doctrine and rites. The common law has recognized it as crimes against the State, and not as sins against God. It has regarded them in the light of moral abstractions against which the believers in Christianity have a right to be protected.

7. "The principle upon which blasphemy is punished would oblige a common law court to protect the worship and regard the sentiments of Mahometans or Hindus, if their forms of religion were to be widely prevalent in a community over which it had jurisdiction. This protection, of course, could be given only to the extent that their rites and worship did not infringe upon the laws of natural morality and justice."

8. Every code of morality is intimately connected with the system of religion from which it springs, and in which it finds a sanction. As every civil code in its formation and growth adopts the moral code of the people for which it furnishes rules of government, so the common law of England and the United States has absorbed, and is still absorbing into itself, the moral principles of Christianity. Hence the Christian system is the moral source of an undetermined but very large part of our common law as well as of our statute law. In this sense Christianity has contributed enormously to the common law, and also to the Code of Justinian, and the legal systems of all Christendom.

§ 21. Offences at common law are divided into three heads; treasons, felonies, and misdemeanors. In England, under the head of treason were embraced, first, under the name of high treason, the compassing of the king's death, the comforting of the king's enemies, the counterfeiting of the privy seal, the forging of the king's coin, and the slaying of the chancellor, or either of the king's justices; and secondly, under the name of petit treason, such offences as were imputable in private life to the same principle of treachery and disloyalty as led, in the affairs of State, to the com-

phemy which provide for the community protection against nuisances, whether physical or moral in their nature."

The following remarkable clause occurs in the treaty with Tripoli, approved by the President, and confirmed by the Senate of the United States, in 1797:—

"As the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion; as it has in itself no character of munificence against the laws, religion, or tranquility of Mahometans; and as the said States never have entered into any war or act of hostility against any Mahometan nation, it is declared by the parties that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries." Art. xli. treaty with Tripoli of Jan. 3, 1797, signed by Joel Barlow, consular-general, on part of the U. S.; U. S. Treaisies, edition of 1873, page 838; viii. U. S. Statutes at Large (Foreign Treaties, Porter's ed.), 135; mt. Marten's Rec. de Traités, 208.

In State v. Brooksbank, 6 Ired. 73, it was held that Sabbath breaking is not an offense at common law. Bat this can only be good as to such "Sabbath breaking" as is not a nuisance.
passing the sovereign's death; comprising the slaying, by a wife, of her lord and husband, and by an ecclesiastic of his ordinary.

In this country, however, petit treason as a distinct class of offences is no longer recognized, the crimes composing it having sunk into a place among homicides; and high treason, under the constitutions both of the Federal Union and of the several States, is limited to the levying war against the supreme authority, or adhering to its enemies, giving them aid and comfort. 1

§ 22. Felonies, in England, as distinguished from misdemeanors, comprised originally every species of crime which occasioned the forfeiture of lands and goods; but though this distinction, originally based on the supposed heinousness of the crime, is still nominally recognized, its continuance, while conducing to much technical difficulty, is productive of no good, and its abolition is only a question of time. 2 At common law, in addition to the crimes more strictly coming under the head of treason, the chief, if not the only felonies, were murder, manslaughter, arson, burglary, robbery, rape, sodomy, mayhem, and larceny. By statutes, however, running from the earliest period, new felonies were, from time to time, created; till finally, not only almost every heinous offence against person or property was included within the class, but it was held, that whenever judgment of life or member was affixed by statute, the offence to which it was attached became felonious by implication, though the word

1 Jefra, §§ 1725 et seq.

2 "In modern English legislation, any affected denunciation of crimes by the sort of moral or social significance subsequently implied in a felony as contrasted with a misdemeanor, is practically abandoned, though a memory of the distinction is preserved in certain judicial forms. The tendency of all modern legislation is to arrange crimes on no more logical or abstract principle than that based on either the gravity of the punishment with which they are visited, or the dignity and constitution of the courts of justice in which they are investigated." Amos on Jurisprudence (London, 1872), 302.

See also, Stephen's Cr. L. 56, 57, 165-110; Lyford v. Parras, 31 N. H. 314; Shaw v. People, 22 N. Y. 317.

There is no lawyer," says Mr. J. S. Mill, "who would undertake to tell what a felony is, otherwise than by enumerating the various kinds of offences which are so called."

"In consequence of the general statutory departure from the ancient English gradation of crimes and punishments, the word 'felony' has, for some purposes, in this State lost its ancient English signification, and acquired the meaning of a crime punishable by death or imprisonment in a state prison." People v. Pelosi, 58 N. Y. 11.

§ 28. Misdemeanors comprise at common law all offences, lower than felonies, which may be the subject of indictment. They are

1 In Louisiana it has been held that a prior ruling of the late Court of Errors and Appeals, that the term felony was not known to the laws of Louisiana, was an unwarranted dictum, and not law. State v. Rohrbaugh, 12 La. An. 382.

2 U. S. v. Coppersmith, 1 Cr. Law Mag. 741; 2 Fip. 540.

3 See Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr., § 261; and see Braggs v. U. S., 4 D. C. 65, 54.

4 Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr., §§ 35 et seq.


6 People v. Park, 41 N. Y. 21; Randall v. Com., 24 Grat. 644; Weitschurpin v. State, 7 Blackf. 150; Nichols v. State, 33 Wis. 305; Ingram v. State, 71 Mo. 703.

7 See Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr., § 261; and see Bragger v. U. S., 1 Dak. T. 5.
Chap. II. Definition and Analysis of Crime.


§ 23a. In all jurisdictions a distinction more or less marked has been made between police wrongs and criminal wrongs. The distinction is made to rest sometimes on the tribunal having jurisdiction of the wrong: wrongs peculiarly cognizable by police courts being called police wrongs; those peculiarly cognizable by criminal courts of record being called criminal wrongs. This line, however, is unsatisfactory, many prosecutions which are eminently of a police character involving large interests, and hence made subjects of prosecution in our highest courts. For similar reasons we must reject the distinction that little wrongs are police wrongs, and great wrongs are criminal wrongs; since there are many criminal wrongs (e.g., small larcenies) which are little, and many police wrongs (e.g., such as interfere with liberty of trade) which are great. Nor can we accept as entirely adequate the tests sometimes given, that police wrongs consist of threatened, and criminal wrongs of consummated injuries; or that police wrongs consist exclusively in disturbances of order, criminal wrongs in violations of justice. We may more properly hold, enlarging the last distinction, that by criminal wrongs the existence of the State is assailed; by police wrongs, only the administration of its economical structure: the first attack the fundamental institutes of society, the latter only its modes of operation: the first concern principle, the second concern procedure. It is true that the two classes melt indistinguishably into each other, as is the case with civil and criminal wrongs, and that an offence, which in one aspect is a police wrong, is a criminal wrong in another aspect. But that there is a distinction in ethics there can be no question, the one case involving, the other not involving, a moral taint. Nor can we refuse to admit a distinction in law. Accessories in criminal offences, for instance, are involved in the guilt of principals; not so accessories in police offences.

1 As to the distinction in such cases, see Oakley v. Schwartz, 55 Wis. 453.
2 That a police procedure is no bar to a criminal prosecution for the same offense, see Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. § 300, 312, 448.
3 Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. §§ 1529; Comm. v. Willard, 22 Pick. 476. And, so as to attempts, infra, § 177.
4 See Com. v. Wolf, 3 S. & R. 46; Specii v. Com., 8 Barr. 312, in which it was held that conscientious religious belief that another day was the Sabbath is no defense to an indictment for Sabbath breaking. For other cases, see infra, § 1431. And see, also, § 82, 88.
§ 25.] CRIMES.

We must at the same time remember that there are other offences beside those exclusively of a police character which are punishable, irrespective of the criminal intention of the offender. It is within the power of the legislature to say of particular acts that they are to be prohibited irrespective of the intention of the person by whom they are committed.1

§ 24. Misdemeanors which are _mala prohibita_, and which become penal by statute, may consist, not only of acts made specifically indictable, but of acts enjoined or forbidden by statute, though by such statute such omission or commission is not made the subject of indictment. If a statute prohibit a matter of public grievance, or command a matter of public convenience, all acts or omissions contrary to the prohibition or command of the statute, being misdemeanors at common law, are punishable by indictment, if the statute specify no other mode of proceeding.2 Thus, wherever a duty is imposed on a public officer, the neglect to perform it is a public offence, and as such is indictable.3 And the imposition by statute of a penalty (unless where it is imposed, as in tax and similar statutes, as a mere alternative) in itself implies a prohibition.4 It is otherwise, however, when a civil action is made by statute the specific remedy.5

§ 25. Wherever a statute creates an offence, and expressly provides a punishment, the statutory provisions must be followed strictly and exactly, and only the statutory penalty can be imposed.6

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1 See infra, § 88.
2 Wilson v. Com., 10 S. & R. 378; 2 Hawks. 226, s. 4; R. v. Davis, Gearhart v. Dixon, 1 Burr. 254, Say. 153; and see R. v. Gregory, 2 N. & M. 475; 5 B. & Ad. 555; R. v. Nott, 5 B. & Ad. 768; R. v. Salzinger, 4 T. R. 213; E. Railway Co., 9 Q. B. 315; Whart. 453; R. v. Harris, 4 T. R. 202; State v. Fletcher, 6 N. H. 257; Com. v. Shattuck, 4 Cush. 341; People v. Bogart, 3 Parker R. 143; State v. Sanford (N. J. 1853), 4 Crim. Law Mag. 291; Keller v. State, 11 Md. 325; State v. Leonard, 4 Hawks, 192; State v. Williams, 12 Iowa 172; State v. Kendall, 23 Iowa, 435; R. v. Wright, 1 Burr. 543; People v. Stevens, 13 Iowa, 530; People v. Jones, 2 Str. 1146; R. v. Harris, 4 T. R. 202; Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. §§ 232-281; but if the manner of proceeding for the penalty be contained in the same clause which prohibits the act, the mode of proceeding given by the statute must be pursued and no other; for the express mention of any other mode of proceeding impliedly excludes that of indictment. R. v. Robinson, 2 Burr. 793; R. v. Beck, 2 Str. 675.
3 Turnpike Road v. People, 25 Wend. 247.
4 Where a statute prohibits an act which was before lawful, and enforces the prohibition with a penalty, and a succeeding statute (R. v. Boyall, 2 Burr. 833), or the same statute, in a subsequent substantive clause, describes a mode of proceeding for the penalty different from that by indictment, the prosecutor may, notwithstanding, proceed by indictment upon the prohibitory clause, as for a misdemeanor at common law; or he may proceed in the manner pointed out by the statute, at his option; 2 Hale, 171; R. v. Wright, 1 Burr. 543; and see R.

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§ 27. Questions frequently arise whether a particular offence is divisible; in other words, whether it is susceptible of being divided into two or more offences, each to be open to a separate prosecution. The first line of cases of this class we have to notice is where one offence is an ingredient in another, as assault in assault and battery, manslaughter in murder, and larceny in burglary. Several of such concentric layers may successively exist. Thus we may take the case of an assault, enveloped by a battery, and this by manslaughter, and this by murder. Add the blow to the assault, and it becomes assault and battery. Add a killing to the assault and battery, and it becomes manslaughter. Add malice aforethought to manslaughter, and it becomes murder. Or, to take the converse, strip from murder the malice aforethought, and it becomes manslaughter. Strip from manslaughter the death of the party assaulted, and the offence becomes assault and battery. Negative the battery, and the case is one of assault. Now this rejecting of successive aggravations is a function open to juries in all cases where there is presented to them one offence in which another is

§ 27.]

CRIMES. [BOOK IT.

offence by any act of assembly, the common law remedy is abrogated, and the indictment and sentence must pursue the act. It was even held, that where an act of assembly gave a penalty to the party injured by the extortive and corrupt conduct of a magistrate, which penalty was to be recovered in a civil suit, the offence ceased to be indictable at common law. But it seems that the act in question only applies when a specific method of procedure is directed by act of assembly; for when a new penalty is attached to a common law offence, then the indictment may still be at common law, though in cases of conviction no other than the statutory punishment can be inflicted. Thus, when an act of Assembly provided a new punishment for murder, it was held, that though by so doing the Act of 21st of March, 1806, prevented any other than the statutory punishment from being imposed, yet the indictment would still lie at common law, and that it was not necessary for it to conclude contrary to the act. Com. v. Evans, 12 Serg. & Rawle, 428. The statutes, also, against obstructing navigable rivers; White v. Com., 6 Blanev, 173; and establishing a board of health, armed with plenary powers, to protect the health of the city of Philadelphia; Com. v. Church, 1 Barr, 105; leave unimpaired the remedy of the common law for such nuisances. Com. v. Van Sickel, Brightly R. 68; Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. § 282.

1 Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. § 455 c.

CHAP. II.] DEFINITION AND ANALYSIS OF CRIMES. [§ 27.

inclosed. The jury may acquit of murder and convict of manslaughter; or, as the practice is, convict of manslaughter which operates as an acquittal of murder. Or the jury, on the same prosecution, may convict of the assault, and thereby acquit of the manslaughter and the murder. No question has ever been made as to this right on the part of the jury 7 and it is settled by a great preponderance of authority that a conviction of the minor offence, on an indictment which would have sustained a conviction of the major, is an acquittal of the major. 8 It has, however, been much contested whether the prosecution, by dropping the major offences, when such offence is a felony, can proceed for the minor offence. At common law it has frequently been held, that if on trial a misdemeanor (e. g., assault) turns out to be a felony (e. g., robbery), then, on the ground that the misdemeanor is extinguished by being merged in the felony, the defendant must be acquitted of the felony. 9 A more reasonable doctrine, however, has been established by statutes, and in some jurisdictions by common law, to the effect that the prosecution may in such cases waive the felony, and prosecute only for the constituent misdemeanor, supposing the misdemeanor be proved. 10

1 See Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. § 465.

2 That under an indictment for murder there can be a conviction of manslaughter, see infra, § 542; that under burglary, inducing larceny, there can be a conviction of larceny, see infra, § 519; that under robbery there can be a conviction of larceny, see infra, § 508; that under treasonable assault there can be a conviction of assault, see infra, §§ 576, 641 c; that under adultery there can be a conviction of fornication, see infra, § 1737. Whether there can be a conviction of a minor offence on an indictment for rape, see infra, § 576.

3 See Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. § 464.

4 Ibid. infra, §§ 576, 641 c, 1344.

5 In Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. the topic in the text is discussed under the following heads: When an unlawful act operates on separate objects, conviction as to one object does not extinguish prosecution as to the other; e. g., when two persons are simultaneously killed, § 468; otherwise as to two batteries at one blow, § 459; so when several articles are simultaneously stolen, § 470; when one act has two distinct punishable aspects, if the defendant could have been convicted of either under the first indictment, he cannot be convicted of the two successively, § 471; so in liquor cases, § 472; severance of identity by place, § 473; severance of identity by time, § 474; but continuous maintenance of identity can be successively indicted, § 475; conviction of assault no bar (after death of assaulted party) to indictment for murder, § 476. As to merger, see infra, § 27 a.
§ 27.][CRIMES. [BOOK I.

No matter how long a time an offence may take in its perpetration, it continues but one offence. An explosive package, for instance, may be sent from Maine to California, and may take weeks in the transit, but the transmission is a single act. Difficult questions, indeed, may arise, to be hereafter noticed; when gas or liquor is tapped by a pipe through which there is a continuous passage for days. But whatever may be the conclusion as to such cases, it is settled that nuisances, when distinct impulses are given at intermittent successive times, may be the object of successive prosecutions. The distinction is this: when the impulse is single, but one indictment lies, no matter how long the action may continue. If successive impulses are separately given, even though all unite in swelling a common stream of action, separate indictments lie.

An offence which is continued through a series of jurisdictions may be prosecuted in any one of them.

An offence, also, is capable of division by being directed to a plurality of objects. It has been said, indeed, that to strike A. and B. at one blow is but one offence. But though this may be sustained in cases in which there was no intention to strike more than one blow, it is otherwise when two homicides, of distinct grades, are consummated by one act, or when there is an intention to kill two persons. And so the stealing simultaneously of the goods of two persons is divisible.

An offence may have several aspects; e. g., it may be a larceny, or it may be an official embezzlement. If an offence of this class can be described in its several phases in one indictment, then, as a rule, it is not divisible; if it cannot be so described, then it may be indicted in either aspect. There are cases, however, to be elsewhere discussed, in which the State, by selecting one of these aspects to prosecute is precluded from afterwards prosecuting the other.

An offence, in the last place, may have several actors, who may be jointly indicted, but as to whom verdict and judgment are to be several. Any one of these, as a rule, may be acquitted or convicted independently of the others; though, in cases of conspiracy and riot, one party alone cannot be convicted unless, in conspiracy, there is at least one co-conspirator to unite in constituting the offence, or, in riot, at least two co-rioters.

§ 27 a. Merger is said to exist when a lesser offence is absorbed in a greater, but in criminal practice the only cases in which such absorption is claimed to be operative is when a misdemeanor is an ingredient of a felony, in which case the older authorities maintain that the trial must be exclusively for the felony, and that the defendant cannot, under an indictment for felony, be convicted of misdemeanor. The reason alleged for this is that in those days the incidents of a trial for felony were so different from those of a trial for misdemeanor that it was not right to invest the prosecution with the power of interchanging them at its caprice. A party charged with felony, for instance, was not entitled to counsel, and his right of challenge, and his right to a copy of the indictment, were restricted. If there were no merger,—if, on the one side, the defendant, on proof of the felony on an indictment for misdemeanor, could be convicted of the misdemeanor charged; or, if, on the other side, on disproof of the felony on an indictment for the felony he could be convicted of the constituent misdemeanor, this would do away with the distinction between felonies and misdemeanors, as above stated. This distinction, however, the courts could not do away with, and the only way to avoid this was to preserve the line of demarcation between felonies and misdemeanors intact. This they did by determining (1) that there could be no conviction of a misdemeanor on an indictment for a felony, for this would be to deprive the defendant of privileges to

1 In re, § 931. Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. § 474.
2 Ibid. § 475.
3 See Crepeau v. Jordan, 2 Crop. 649; 1 Smith L. C. 711 (5th Eng. ed.), where Lord Mansfield said: "It would be unreasonable to suppose that the legislature intended that if a tailor sewed on the Lord's day, every stitch should be a separate offence." On the other hand, where a statute imposed a penalty on a person who should "profanely curse or swear," it was held that there could be a cumulative penalty for one conviction for several oaths on one day. R. v. Scott, 4 B. & S. 355. And several convictions have been sustained for selling several pieces of bad meat at one stall on the same day. Hartley, in re, 31 L. J. M. C. 231; Heal, ex parte, L. R. S. Q. B. 322.
4 Ibid. § 473; and see, as to conflicting jurisdictions, infra, §§ 287-291.
5 Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. § 469.
6 Ibid. §§ 254, 468.
7 Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. §§ 252, 470.
which he would be entitled if the indictment was for a misdemeanor; and
(2) that if the offence charged was a misdemeanor, and the
offence proved turned out to be a felony, then there must be an
acquittal, which would not be an indictment for felony, on the trial
of which the defendant would be put under such restrictions as
to counsel and other privileges. As will be hereafter seen, since
the abolition of these distinctions between felony and misdemeanor,
the doctrine of merger, above stated, has no reasonable basis on
which to rest. The consequence is that a defendant charged with
an assault is no longer, as a rule, held to be entitled to an acquittal
because the assault is part of a felony; while by statute, if not by
judicial construction, there are now no jurisdictions in which a
defendant, on an indictment for felony, cannot be acquit of the
felony, and convicted of the constituent misdemeanor, if duly
pleaded. If, however, there is no constituent misdemeanor duly
pleaded, then the defendant, if acquitted of the felony, cannot be
convicted of a misdemeanor proved on the trial but not averred in
the indictment.

§ 28. The proposition that penal statutes are to be strictly con-
strued is to be applied not to the merely remedial, but only to
the restrictive and prohibitory clauses in penal statutes. A statute
operates to enlarge or to restrain liberty: when the former, it is to
be largely construed; when the latter, cautiously and strictly. This is
a maxim of the Roman law, which, though foreign to the notion of the
old English common law, that crime is to be avenged in kind and in
full measure, was at an early period adopted by English jurists. In
construing such statutes, however, we are to look for their
reasonable sense, and if this is clearly ascertained it must be applied,

Hartwell, 6 Wall. 355; State v. Smith, 32 Me. 369; Com. v. Houghton, 3
Mass. 107; Com. v. Whitemarsh, 4 Pick. 235; State v. State, Spencer, 401;
Holman v. People, 4 Denio, 235; People v. Mathew, 4 Wend. 229; Peo-
lple v. Hennessey, 15 Wend. 417; Room v. Com., 3 S. & R. 207; Com. v. King,
1 Whart. 445; State v. Peterson, 2 Md. 210; Angel v. Com., 2 Va. Cas. 228;
Thomas v. Com., 2 Leigh, 741; State v. Girty, 1 Fred. 124; State v. Smith,
65 N. C. 140; State v. Taylor, 2 McCord, 486. This qualification is common
to all systems of jurisprudence. Thus the Roman law, e. g.,
2 L. 42, D. de poen. (48. 19.) Interpretatione legum poenae mollissimae sunt potius, quam asperissimae. L. 155,
§ 2. D. de reg. jur. (50. 17.) In poenalius causis baud viget interpretandum est. cap. 45, de reg. jur. in V. (5. 15.)
In poenis beati est interpretatio facienda. See, also, 1 Bl. Com. 86, 87;
Bae. Abr. Stat. i. 7, 9; Andrews v. U. S. 2 Story, 202; U. S. v. Ragaldos,
42

Humph. 497; Com. v. Martin, 17 Mass. 359; Carpenter v. People, 9 Barbour,
603; Warner v. Com., 1 Barr, 154; Brush v. Com., 103 Penn. St. 529; State v.
Hephusianus, 2 Bailey, 384; State v. Johnson, 63 Mo. 463; Randolph
v. State, 9 Texas, 521.

Cooper v. New York Penal Code of 1882; under California Code; People

§ 29. A law cannot impose a penalty on acts committed before
its enactment. When a punishment is inflicted at com-
mon law, then the case is brought within the principle
just stated by the assumption that the case obviously
falls within a general category to which the law attaches
indictability. It may be said, for instance, "All malicious mischief
is indictable. This offence (although enumerated in no statute, and
never in the concrete the subject of prior adjudication) is malicious

Hartwell, 6 Wall. 355; State v. Smith, 32 Me. 369; Com. v. Houghton, 3
Mass. 107; Com. v. Whitemarsh, 4 Pick. 235; State v. State, Spencer, 401;
Holman v. People, 4 Denio, 235; People v. Mathew, 4 Wend. 229; Peo-
lple v. Hennessey, 15 Wend. 417; Room v. Com., 3 S. & R. 207; Com. v. King,
1 Whart. 445; State v. Peterson, 2 Md. 210; Angel v. Com., 2 Va. Cas. 228;
Thomas v. Com., 2 Leigh, 741; State v. Girty, 1 Fred. 124; State v. Smith,
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Humph. 497; Com. v. Martin, 17 Mass. 359; Carpenter v. People, 9 Barbour,
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lple v. Hennessey, 15 Wend. 417; Room v. Com., 3 S. & R. 207; Com. v. King,
1 Whart. 445; State v. Peterson, 2 Md. 210; Angel v. Com., 2 Va. Cas. 228;
Thomas v. Com., 2 Leigh, 741; State v. Girty, 1 Fred. 124; State v. Smith,
65 N. C. 140; State v. Taylor, 2 McCord, 486. This qualification is common
to all systems of jurisprudence. Thus the Roman law, e. g.,
mischief. Therefore this offense is indictable." Strike out "malicious mischief" and insert "nuisance," and the same conclusion is reached. It is no reply to this reasoning that we have, by this process, judge-made law, which is ex post facto. Supposing the minor premise be correct, the objection just stated could not prevail without being equally destructive to most prosecutions for offenses prohibited by statute under a nomen generalissimum. In most of our statutes, for instance, neither murder, burglary, nor assault is so described as to leave nothing remaining to the court by way of explanation or application. At the same time, if the offense charged is not one which by ordinary and natural construction falls within a statutory class, it is far better that the criminal should escape, than that by a forced and unnatural construction the offense should be held indictable. So far as concerns statutes, the rule is rigorously applied, and is fortified by the constitutional provision that "no statute shall have an ex post facto operation. And this clause has been interpreted as meaning that no person is to be subjected by statute either to a penalty for an act which at the time of its commission was not the object of prosecution, or to a penalty higher than was attached to such act at the time of its commission.\footnote{1 See supra, §§ 14, 15 a; infra, § 265.}

§ 30. While acts imposing severer penalties cannot be applied retrospectively, doubtful questions as to what is a severer penalty are to be determined in favor of the accused; but, as a general rule, changes in a punishment subsequent to the commission of an offense, not consisting in a lessening of the prior penalty or some severable portion thereof, have no application to such offense.\footnote{2 See Const. U. S. art. 1, §§ 9, 10; 2 Story on Const. § 1834; Cooley's Const. Lim. 296 at sup.; Chin a On, in re, 19 Fed. Rep. 505; Com. v. Phillips, 11 Pick. 28; Com. v. Lewis, 6 Binm. 565; Com. v. Belgard, 14 S. & R. 216; Myers v. Com., 2 Watts & S. 60; Perry v. Com., 3 Gratt. 852; Rand v. Com., 9 Gratt. 738; State v. Hays, 22 Mo. 578; Darvey v. People, 6 Colo. 269.}

According to Chief Justice Marshall, an ex post facto law is one "which renders an act punishable in a manner not punishable when it was committed."

\begin{quote}
Fletcher v. Peck, 6 Cranch U. S. 167. This is adopted in 1 Kent Com. 409.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textbf{There has been great diversity of opinion as to what in this connection constitutes mitigation. In Texas, it has been held not to 'mitigate' the punishment where for the death penalty was substituted the infliction of stripes, and this upon the ground of the particularly degrading character of the latter method of punishment.}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textbf{Herbert v. State, 7 Tex. 65. (In this case, however, the defendant was allowed to take his choice, and as in State v. Kent, 65 N. C. 311.) On the other hand, in}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textbf{South Carolina, where the punishment for a crime was changed by an act of the legislature, and the new act was passed while the offense was in course of prosecution, it was held that the punishment fixed by the original act was not 'mitigated' by the new act.}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textbf{State v. Williams, 2 Rich. 418. In Indiana, the law in force at the time of the crime was changed by the new act, and the defendant was arrested, tried, and convicted under the old law.}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textbf{In a certain case, before trial, the punishment was changed by imprisonment in the penitentiary, not exceeding seven years; Strong v. State, 1 Blackf. 193; and the last act was held applicable and not obvious to constitutional objections. Sherwood, J., State v. Willis, 68 Mo. 131.}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textbf{In Hartung v. People, 22 N. Y. 35, Mr. Justice Denio, speaking for the court, said: 'It is enough to bring the law within the condemnation of the constitution that it changes the punishment after the commission of the offense, by substituting for the prescribed penalty a different one. What is meant by the word "penalty" in this case? I think it contains the whole of the punishment, and that the word should not be restricted to the so-called civil punishments, as the word is sometimes used in the popular sense of the word. If the word 'punishment' is used in the broad sense of the word, it is evident that the legislature cannot change after the commission of the crime, that which is the punishment. It is enough to bring the law within the condemnation of the constitution that it changes the punishment after the commission of the offense, by substituting for the prescribed penalty a different one. What is meant by the word "penalty" in this case? I think it contains the whole of the punishment, and that the word should not be restricted to the so-called civil punishments, as the word is sometimes used in the popular sense of the word. If the word 'punishment' is used in the broad sense of the word, it is evident that the legislature cannot change the punishment for a crime after the commission of the crime, by substituting a different one for the punishment which was fixed by the original act.}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textbf{In Coonings v. Missouri, 4 Wall. 277, a State statute excluding clergymen from the right of exercising their profession if unable to take a test oath, and in Garand, ex parte, 4 Wall. 366, a federal statute, making a test oath a condition of admission to practice in the federal courts, were held unconstitutional in part as being ex post facto laws.}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textbf{While the statutory increase of a fine is void when ex post facto (Wilson v. State, 64 Ill. 542), it is held otherwise with the substitution of imprisonment for pillory and fine (Clarke v. State, 23 Miss. 251, redacted), and the substitution of imprisonment and whipping for death. State v. Williams, 2 Rich. 418. See 6 Crim. Law Mag. 325.}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textbf{In King v. Missouri, 107 U. S. 221, the plaintiff in error had been convicted in Missouri of murder in the first degree. He had been previously con-}
\end{quote}
§ 50. CRIMES.

Hence, where the punishments are capable of actual measurement, a milder recent statute in force at the time of trial, supersedes, so far as concerns the penalty, a prior statute under which the offence was committed. Should it happen that between a severer statute, during whose operation an offence was committed, and a milder statute, which was in operation at the time of the trial, a third statute was immediately in force, milder than either, the last-named statute is not to be taken into consideration, the dominant statute being that which was in force at the time of the trial. But where after the commission of an offence a statute is passed assigning an increased penalty to second offences of a particular type, and then a second offence of such type is committed, the increased penalty may be inflicted on the second offence.

§ 81. A statute, however, subsequent to an offence, may change the mode by which it is to be prosecuted, provided the punishment attached to the offence is not thereby increased, or the defendant's rights materially impaired.

The privilege, also, of merely technical objections may be immediately withdrawn. The law as to venue may be, therefore, retrospectively changed, and so as to the mode of challenging jurors, provided no substantial injustice is indicted. The rules of evidence, as is elsewhere seen, may be indefinitely changed, provided that the effect is not to materially impair the defendant's rights. Hence a statute enlarging the competency of witnesses acts retrospectively in criminal cases, and so of a statute making certain facts prima facie proof, and of a statute making it the duty of the defendant, in liquor cases, to prove a license. But a statute making certain evidence conclusive proof of guilt is in any event.

Maxwell, J., State v. Wish, 18 Neb. 448; State v. Wright, 5 Mo. 407; State v. Calfee, 9 Neb. 205.

Stokes v. People, 53 N. Y. 164; Dowling v. State, 13 Miss. 664.

Morphy, in re, 1 Woolf, 141; State v. Doherty, 60 Mo. 501.


See Biel v. Sloch, 53 Penn. St. 210; Journaux v. Gibson, 56 Penn. St. 57; Ridker v. Cummings, 60 Penn. St. 411. In Calder v. Bull, 2 Dall. 388-390, Judge Chase held that the constitutional limitation makes imperative every law that alters the legal rules of evidence, and receives less or different testimony than the law required at the time of the commission of the offence. See Yeaton v. U. S., 5 Cranch, 281; Whitehurst v. State, 43 Ind. 473.

Hopt v. Utah, 110 U. S. 711; Sutton v. Fox, 55 Wis. 531; Whart. Crim. Ev. § 360 a.

Com. v. Wallace, 7 Gray, 222; State v. Thomas, 47 Conn. 450; although see State v. Beswick, 13 R. I. 211; People v. Lyon, 27 Ill. 180.

Com. v. Kelly, 10 Cush. 69.
view unconstitutional, and it has so been held, also, so far as concerns antecedent cases, of a statute doing away with the necessity of corroborating an accomplice.

§ 312. On either of the theories of punishability which have been heretofore stated, it is within the prerogative of the State, through its proper organs, to limit, to suspend, or to prohibit prosecutions, and to relieve from the penalties imposed on crime. In exercise of this prerogative, it is ordinarily made essential to the prosecution of an indictment that it should be found by a grand jury, and that the defendant should be entitled to meet the witnesses produced against him face to face. By statutes of limitation and pardons, which are considered more fully in another volume, the State prescribes that prosecutions must be brought within a limited time after the commission of the offense, or that the offender is not for the particular offense to be subject to prosecution.

§ 313. As is elsewhere seen, the English rule is that the policy of the law precludes a person from seeking civil redress for a felonious injury to himself, if he has failed in his duty in endeavoring to bring the felon to justice. Whether this rule holds in this country has been much doubted; and neither here nor in England has it been held to apply to misdemeanors. In any view, the institution of a civil suit for redress for an injury is no bar to a criminal prosecution for the same offense, though in adjusting sentence in the criminal prosecution, the courts take into consideration payments made or amends rendered by the defendant in the civil proceedings. A prosecution for nuisance, for instance, as an offense against the public, may proceed concurrently with a suit by an individual for special damage incurred by the nuisance, supposing such special damage to have been sustained; and a civil suit and a criminal prosecution

...
CHAPTER III.

FITNESS OF OFFENDER TO COMMIT OFFENCE.

I. PERSONS NON COMPOSITES MENTIS.

1. Old English rules on insanity no longer authoritative, § 32.
   Irresponsibility to be determined by exclusion rather than by inclusion, § 33.

2. Incapacity to distinguish Right from Wrong.
   Party incapable of determining as to right and wrong is irresponsible, § 34.
"Wrong" means moral wrong, § 35.\]

3. Insanity.
   Insanity under the law is produced by intoxication may be irresponsible, § 48.
   Voluntary intoxication does not exculpate, § 49.
   Intoxication admissible to determine condition of mind, § 51.
   Especially as to intent to take life, § 52.
   And so as to other questions of intent, § 53.
   But not so as to reduce responsibility when malice is shown, § 54.
   "Voluntary" is conditioned by temperament, § 55.

4. Practice in Cases of Insanity.
   Witnesses may give opinion based on observation, § 56.
   Defence may be taken by friends of accused, § 57.
   In some jurisdictions defence must be special, § 57 a.
   Issue to be tried by Jury, § 58.
   Insanity after conviction does not excuse, § 59.

5. Burden is on party disputing sanity, § 60.
   Conflicting theories as to amount of evidence requisite to prove insanity, § 61.
   Insanity to be inferred from conduct, § 62.
   And from physical peculiarities, § 64.
   And from hereditary tendency, § 65.

6. Other forms of Unconsciousness.
   Unconsciousness may be a defence, § 68.

II. INFANTS.

Infants under seven not personally responsible, § 67.
Between seven and fourteen infant incapacity may be exculpated, § 68.
Boy under fourteen presumed incapable of rape, § 69.
Infant's liability in special cases, § 70.
Infant liable for false representations as to age, § 71.
When infant may appear by attorney, § 72.
Age is inadmissible in circumstances, § 73.
Confession of infant admissible, § 74.

III. FEMALES.

Indictment not bad on its face when against wife alone, § 73.
And so as to indictments against husband, § 73 a.
Wife's insanity must be pleaded in abatement, § 74.
Wife presumed to be acting under her husband's coercion when cooperating in crime, § 75.
Presumption is rebuttable, § 76.
For offences distinctively imputable to husband he is primarily indictable, § 78.
For offences distinctively imputable to wife she is primarily indictable, § 79.
In case and conspiracy there must be others besides husband and wife, § 80.
Distinctive view as to accessories, § 81.

IV. IGNORANT PERSONS.

Ignorance of law no defence to an indictment for a violation of law, § 84.
But on indictment for negligence in application of law non-specialist not chargeable with ignorance of specialty, § 85.
Mistake of law admissible to negate evil intent, § 86 a.

V. CORPORATIONS.

Corporations indictable for breach of duty, § 91.
Penalty in fine and distress, § 93.
Quasi corporations indictable for breach of duty, § 94.

VI. PERSONS UNDER COMPELMENT.

Persons under compulsion irresponsible, § 94 a.
But servant or child cannot defend on this ground, § 94 a.

VII. PERSONS UNDER NECESSITY.

Necessity a defence when life or other high interests are imperilled, § 99.
Culpability does not preclude the defence, § 92.

Distinction between necessity and self-defence, § 97 a.
Not necessary to have had prior recourse to public authorities, § 97 a.
Objects for which self-defence may be exerted, § 98.
Right not necessary to self-defence, § 99.

Defence of property justifiable, § 100.
But not violent defence of honor, § 101.
Danger must be immediate, and defence not to exceed attack, § 102.
Inference to be drawn from weapon, § 103.

§ 32. Born the legal and the psychological relations of persons.
of unsound mind are discussed at large in another work; to which the reader is referred as containing on these topics an exposition fuller than is permitted by the limits of the present chapter. At present it is proposed to do no more then to give a brief synopsis of the practical points which the decisions of the courts, as exhibited at large in the fuller treatises to which reference is made, may be considered as establishing.

At the outset, it should be observed that the introduction of compulsory confinement for parties acquitted of guilt on ground of insanity has, to some extent, altered the issue which the older text writers and judges discussed. Under the old practice, if the defendant were convicted, he was punished as if he were a perfect moral agent; and if he were acquitted he was suffered to run at large, though the acquittal was on the ground of a monomania which would impel him to commit the same act the very next day. Under the present practice both these alternatives may be avoided, and the jury, by acquitting on the specific ground of insanity, may insure the sequestration of the defendant from society until the insanity be cured. This change of policy should always be kept in view when comparing the older with the later cases. Under the old law the dangers ensuing from an acquittal on the ground of insanity made courts reluctant to accept insanity as the ground for an acquittal. Under the present law these dangers are much diminished, as such acquittal no longer involves the setting at large a dangerous lunatic.

To this, as well as to the growing force of humane interest in the insane, we may attribute the more lenient attitude towards this defence which judges have lately assumed. The old rulings, so far as they are attributable to the then policy of the law, are no longer binding.

§ 38. It will not be here attempted to lay down any general definition of insanity as constituting a defence in criminal trials. It is proposed simply to enumerate the several cases in which, in all of its phases, has been sustained by the courts, not as conferring irresponsibility for crime, but, according to the present practice, as constituting such a state of facts as to remove the defendant from the category of sane to that of insane transgressors.


To responsibility (imputability) there are, we must remember, two constituents: (1) capacity of intellectual discrimination; and (2) freedom of will. If there be either incapacity to distinguish between right and wrong as to the particular act, or delusion as to the act, or inability to do or refrain from doing the act, then there is no responsibility. The difficulty is practical. No matter what may be our speculative views as to the existence of conscience, or of freedom of action, we are obliged, when we determine responsibility, to affirm both. The practical tests of capacity will be considered in the following sections.

1. Incapacity to distinguish between Right and Wrong.

§ 34. Wherever idiocy or amentia, or general mania, is shown to exist, the court will direct an acquittal; and if a jury should convict in the teeth of such instructions, the court will set the verdict aside. While the earlier cases leaned to the position that such deprivation of understanding must be general, it is now conceded that it is enough if it is shown to have existed in reference to the particular act.

1 The controversy which divides theologians as well as metaphysicians as to the freedom of the will is not involved in the discussion in the text. It may be possible that, from a speculative point of view, all acts are necessitated. With this, however, jurisprudence, which is a practical science, has nothing to do. These have been indeed leading jurists, such as Bonhoeffer, who have adopted the principle of necessity as a basis, and have invoked the fear of punishment as a counterweight to the temptation to crime; and Mr. Balm, as is elsewhere shown, has accepted the same view. See Whart. & St. Med. Jur. §§ 188, 540. But this, as is well said by a leading German author (Mayer, § 20), takes not only from jurisprudence, but from life, its moral dignity, making the former a mere marching of mechanisms, and the latter, a mere mechanism of necessity.

A series of interesting papers on insanity will be found in the proceedings of the New York Med. Legal Soc., N. Y. 1872.

§ 35. To this effect is the answer of the fifteen judges of England to the questions propounded to them by the House of Lords in June, 1848. "The jury," they said, "ought to be told in all cases that every man is presumed to be sane, and to possess a sufficient degree of reason to be responsible for his crimes, until the contrary be proved to their satisfaction; and that, to establish a defence on the ground of insanity, it must be clearly proved that at the time of committing the act the party accused was laboring under such a defect of reason, from disease of the mind, as not to know the nature and quality of the act he was doing, or if he did know it, that he did not know he was doing what was wrong."

In this country, whatever may have been the hesitancy as to the enunciation of other propositions to be hereafter stated, there has been none as to this. There has scarcely been a case where the defence of insanity has been taken, in which the jury have not been told that if the defendant was unable "to distinguish right from wrong," or to discern "that he was doing a wrong act," or was "incapable of knowing what he was about," or was "deprived of his understanding and memory," or was "incompetent mentally to know what is wrong as distinguished from what is right," he is irresponsible. And it has been further properly held that when idiocy or semi-idiocy is proved, it is for the prosecution to establish affirmatively a capacity on the part of the defendant to distinguish right from wrong.

The New York Penal Code of 1822 provides as follows:

"A person is not excused from criminal liability as an idiot, imbecile, lunatic, or insane person, except upon proof that at the time of committing the alleged criminal act he was laboring under such a defect of reason as either, 1, not to know the nature and quality of the act he was doing; or 2, not to know that the act was wrong." It will be observed that this is an affirmation of the doctrine of the English judges above given.

§ 36. "Wrong," in the sense in which the term is here used, means moral wrong. A man may want the capacity to distinguish between the various shades of illegality which the law assigns to a particular act. This is no defence.

State v. Erb, 74 Mo., 190; State v. Katzeney, 74 Mo., 247; People v. Coffman, 24 Cal., 286.

It is in England that the right and wrong test is applied with the most exclusive rigor; and it is in England that attempts at its formal expansion have been most stoutly resisted. See 3 Whart. & St. Med. Jur. § 166; State v. Huling, 21 Mo. 464.

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State v. Erb, 74 Mo., 190; State v. Katzeney, 74 Mo., 247; People v. Coffman, 24 Cal., 286.

It is in England that the right and wrong test is applied with the most exclusive rigor; and it is in England that attempts at its formal expansion have been most stoutly resisted. See 3 Whart. & St. Med. Jur. § 166; State v. Huling, 21 Mo. 464.
§ 37. GRIMES. [BOOK I.

If, however, he was "labouring under such a defect of reason from the disease of the mind as not to know the nature and quality of the act he was doing," or if he did know it, that he did not know he was doing wrong," he is held to be irresponsible on the ground of insanity. And whatever we may think of the second of these alternatives, the first (that in italics) is broad enough to sustain a verdict of insanity in all cases in which the defendant's mental condition was such as to preclude him from having knowledge of the nature and character of the act. 1

2. Insane Delusion.

§ 37. The answer of the English judges on the special topic of delusion is as follows: "The answer must of course depend on the nature of the delusion: but making the same assumption as we did before, namely, that he labors under such partial delusion only, and is not in other respects insane, we think he must be considered in the same situation as to responsibility as if the facts with respect to which the delusion existed were real. For example: if under the influence of his delusion he supposes another man to be in the act of attempting to take away his life, and he kills that man, as he supposes, in self-defence, he would be exempt from punishment. If his delusion was that the deceased had inflicted a serious injury to his character and fortune, and he killed him in revenge for such supposed injury, he would be liable to punishment." To the same effect speaks Chief Justice Shaw. 2 "Monomania may operate as an excuse for a criminal act," when "the delusion is that the person under its influence has a real and firm belief of some fact, not true in itself, but which, if it were true, would excuse his act; as where the belief is that the party killed had made an immediate design upon his life, and under that belief the insane man kills in supposed self-defence. A common instance is where he fully believes that the act he is doing is done by the immediate command of God, and he acts under the delusive but sincere belief that what he is doing is by the command of a superior power, which supersedes all human laws and the laws of nature." 3

1 See J. F. Stephen's testimony before House of Commons, quoted in Whart. on Homicide, § 573.
2 Com. v. Rogers, 7 Met. 500.
3 That this covers Hadfield's Case, see 2 Steph. Hist. Cr. Law, 190.
4 See 2 Steph. Hist. Cr. Law, 156.

§ 38. SO far as the law thus stated goes it has been recognized as authoritative in this country. 1 Even where there is no pretense of insanity, it has been held that if a man, though in no danger of serious bodily harm, through fear, alarm, or cowardice, kill another under the impression that great bodily injury is about to be inflicted on him, it is neither manslaughter nor murder, but self-defence; 2 and though this proposition is too broadly stated, as is remarked by Bronson, J., when commenting on it in a later case in New York, 3 and should be qualified so as to make it necessary that there should be facts and circumstances existing which would lead the jury to believe that the defendant had reasonable ground (in proportion to his own lights) for his belief, yet with this qualification it is now generally received. 4 And, indeed, after the general though tardy acquiescence in Selfridge's Case, where the same view was taken as early as 1806 by Chief Justice Parker, of Massachusetts, and after the almost literal incorporation of the leading distinctions of this case into the Revised Statutes of New York, as well as into the judicial system of most of the States, the point must be considered as finally at rest. Perhaps the doctrine, as laid down originally in Selfridge's Case, would have met with a much earlier acquiescence had not the supposed political bias of the court in that extraordinary

1 The supposed contradictions of the authorities on this point have arisen from an attempt to reconcile an inflexible code opinion which, while relatively true in their particular connection, were not meant for general application. Thus, for instance, when a defendant in whom there is no presence of mania, or homicidal insanity, claims to be exempt from punishment on the ground of incapacity to distinguish right from wrong, the court very properly tells the jury that the question for them to determine is, whether he labors under such incapacity or not. The error has been to seize such an expression as this as an arbitrary elementary dogma, and to insist on its application to all other cases. Or, take the converse, and suppose the defence is merely homicidal insanity. In such a case it would be proper to tell the jury that unless they believe the homicidal impulse to have been uncontrollable, they must convict; and yet nothing would be more unjust than to make this proposition, true in itself, a general rule to bear on such cases as idiocy. It is by confining the decisions of the court to the particular class of facts from which they have been elicited that we can extract from the mass of apparently conflicting dicta the propositions given in the text.
2 Infra, § 489; Granger v. State, 5 Yerger, 433.
3 See citation infra, § 489, note.
4 See infra, § 489, et seq.; Whart. on Homicide, § 480; Cunningham v. State, 55 Miss. 569.
CRIMES.

§ 39. In cases of the kind which have just been noticed the actual existence of danger as an essential ingredient, and the actual presence of such danger must be shown. It is true that in cases to be hereafter noticed, dicta have been thrown out to the effect that the danger must be such as to alarm a reasonable man; but whenever the requisite state of facts has been presented, courts have not hesitated to say that the defendant must be apprehended, not by the jury's standard but by that of the defendant himself. Thus, an enlightened and learned judge in Pennsylvania, one who would be among the last to weaken any of the sanctions of human life, directed jury to take into consideration "the relative characters, as individuals," of the deceased and the defendant, and in determining whether the danger really was imminent or not, to inquire "whether the deceased was bold, strong, and of a violent and vindictive character, and the defendant much weaker, and of a timid disposition." And though it may not be admissible to prove, by way of defence, that the deceased was of a barbarous and vindictive nature and character, unless this tend to explain the defendant's conduct under an apparently sudden and deadly attack, yet threats uttered by the deceased, and expressions of hostile feeling of which the defendant was advised, may always be received as explaining the excited condition of the defendant's mind.

§ 40. The principle which may be inferred from the cases is, that if by an insane delusion, or depravation of the reasoning faculty, the defendant insanely believes, either that some Delusion. Deprivation of the reasoning faculty, the defendant insanely believes, either that some person is an imagined evil so intolerable as to make life-taking necessary or justifiable in order to avert it, or that while the evil is of a lesser grade, life-taking is an appropriate and just way of getting rid of it, he is entitled to such a verdict as will transfer him from the category of sane or insane criminals. But the delusion must be mental.

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2 See infra, § 485; Whart. Cr. Ev. § 69.
4 See Wesley v. State, 37 Miss. 327, where the position in the text is controverted at large.

That an insane delusion, as to the value or nature of human life, will have this effect, even though the party himself knows when committing the act that he is doing wrong, and is violating the laws of the land, is illustrated by Lord Brougham, in a well-known case: "Let me suppose," he said, "that the character of an insane delusion consisted in the belief that some given person was an actual animal, or an inanimate being (and such cases have existed), and that upon the trial of such a man for murder, you, being on your oath, were convinced, upon the uncontradicted evidence of one hundred persons, that he believed the man he had destroyed to have been a potter's vessel; that it was quite impossible to doubt that fact, although to other intents and purposes he was sane—answering, reasoning, acting as a man, not in any manner tainted with insanity, converse and reason and
§ 41. Partial insanity, however, is no defense, when the crime was not its immediate product. If the defendant was sane as to the crime, but insane on other topics, the insanity in the latter respect will not save him. The crime must have been the result of a delusion. A defendant themselves. Suppose, further, that he believed the man whom he destroyed, but whom he destroyed as a poister's vessel, to be the property of another, and that he had maliciously destroyed his supposed person, and that he had to injure him, knowing the act he was doing to be malicious and injurious; and that, in short, he had full knowledge of all principles of good and evil; yet would it be possible to convict such a person of murder, if, from the influence of the disease, he was ignorant of the relation in which he stood to the man he had destroyed, and was utterly unconscious that he had injured the life of a human being? Winslow on Plea of Insanity, 6.

Again, in a case which has more than once occurred within the walls of a lunatic asylum, a man imagines himself to be the Grand Lama or Alexander the Great, and supposes that his neighbor is brought before him for an invasion of his sovereignty, and he cuts off his head or threatens him. He knows he is doing wrong; perhaps, from a sense of guilt, he conceals the body; he may have a clear perception of the legal consequences of his act. In such a case, however, criminal responsibility, in the full sense of the term, does not exist. It was in conformity with this view, in a case where it was proved that the defendant had taken the life of another under the notion that he was not about with a conspiracy to subject him to imprisonment and death, that Lord Lyndhurst told the jury that they might "acquit the prisoner on the ground of insanity, if he did not know, when he committed the act, what the effect of it was with reference to the crime of murder." What, therefore, he in fact decided was, that a man who, under an insane delusion, shoots another, is irresponsible when the act is the product of the delusion. Such, indeed, on general reasoning, must be held to be the law in this country, and such will it be held to be when any particular case arises which requires its application. Ibid.

In England this view has been recognized in several cases, notwithstanding the reluctance of the courts in that country to enlarge the boundaries of insane irresponsibility. Thus on the trial of Hadfield, who could distinguish between right and wrong, but who was under a delusion that it was his duty to offer himself as a sacrifice for his fellow-men, and that his shortest way of doing so was to kill the king, which he knew he must morally wrong, Lord Kenyon, on these facts being made out, advised the withdrawal of the prosecution. The same course was followed by Chief Justice Tindal in McNaughton's case, when, on a trial for shooting at Mr. Drummond, the private secretary of Sir Robert Peel, a similar delusion was proved. See also, R. v. Bixey, and R. v. Trench, cited in 1 Kent & Head's Lead. Cases, 66. It has also been held that insanity is no defense for malsodness setting fire to a building, in order to justify a jury in acquitting a prisoner on the ground of insanity, "they must believe that he did not know right from wrong; but if they find that the prisoner, when he did the act, was in such a state of mind that he was not conscious that the effect of it would be to injure any other person, this will amount to a general verdict of not guilty." R. v. Davies, 1 F. & F. 69—Crompton. In the ecclesiastical court, the existence of delusions or hallucinations on material points has frequently been held to so far constitute insanity as to pro tanto destroy testamentary capacity. Dew v. Clark, 1 Adams, 55; Frere v. Francis, 1 Robertson, 422; 1 Whart. & St. Med. Jur. §§ 24–60.

In this country, the legitimacy of such a defense in criminal cases has been in several instances specifically recognized. U. S. v. Holmes, 1 Cliff. 93; Com. v. Rogers, 7 Mass. 500; People v. Pike, 2 Barbour, 408; State v. Windsor, 5 Harr. 512; Com. v. Treth, 3 Ball. Rep. 165; Roberts v. State, 3 Ga. 540; 1 Whart. & St. Med. Jur. § 134.

1 State v. Lawrence, 67 Mo. 57; Sirodim v. People, 68 N. Y. 196; Com. v. Moler, 4 Barr. 264; State v. Eldrick, 42 Iowa, 224; State v. Naylor, 43 Iowa, 88; Boswell v. State, 83 Ala. 307; State v. Butting, 21 Mo. 404.

§ 42. Nor should it be forgotten that a delusion, to be a defense to a indictment for crime, must be non-negligent. When there is reason sufficient to correct a delusion, then a person continuing to nourish it, when there is opportunity given him for such correction, is responsible for the consequences.

1 State v. Pike, 40 N. H. 339.

Here, when an insane delusion is set up as a defense, it is admissible for the prosecution to offer evidence to prove that the delusion was base, i.e., that it was an opinion that ordinary reasoning might have produced. State v. Pike, 49 N. H. 359. See 1 Whart. & St. Med. Jur. 144.


3 See this argued at large, 1 Whart. & St. Med. Jur. § 137; and see infra, § 492.

61
§ 44. CRIMES.

3. Irresistible Impulse.

§ 43. In order to clear the question now before us from ambiguities, it is proper to remark:—

(a) "Irresistible impulse" is not "moral insanity," supposing "moral insanity" to consist of insanity of the moral system, coexisting with mental sanity. "Moral insanity," as thus defined, has no support, as will hereafter be seen, either in psychology or law.

(b) Nor is "irresistible impulse" convertible with passion to propensity or jealousy, no matter how strong, in persons not insane.

§ 44. In other words, the "irresistible impulse" of the lunatic, which confers irresponsibility, is essentially distinct from the passion, however violent, of the sane, which does not confer irresponsibility. And when it is shown

1 See this discussed in Whart. & St. Mod. Jur. § 137.
2 State v. Pike, 49 N. H. 399; Free- man v. People, 4 Denio, 5; Gustig v. State, 66 Ind. 94; State v. Strickley, 41 Iowa, 239. See 1 Whart. & St. Mod. Jur. 144.
3 It should be remembered that passion is made irresistible by withdrawing from it the checks by which it can be resisted. The first and most important of these checks is conscience. The second is fear. If conscience be torpid, and if the law of the land say that the irresistible impulse of a sane person is a defense, then criminal impulses would be irresistible simply because they would be without resistance. We may notice this in the case of young children, who, when not deterred from wrong acts by conscience, are deterred by fear of punishment. Nor does this characteristic belong only to children or to persons of low grade of intelligence. It was frequently said of Napoleon I. and of General Jackson, that each knew when he could with impunity give way to bursts of apparently irresistible rage; but that each knew when this rage was to be controlled. The cases are not infrequent in which men, presuming on the cowardice or feebleness of their intended victim, rush into violence which they would readily have restrained had they known that they would have received blow for blow. Wer sich zum Schaf macht, ist ein German proverb, "Den frisst der Wolf;" or, as we may paraphrase it, government, by becoming a sheep, creates the social wolf. The State which declares that no irresistible passion shall be punished evokes the irresistible passion it excepts.

We should remember, also, that there is no means of determining what constitutes "irresistibility." In a case mentioned by Sir Henry Holland, of a patient who deplored to him an irresistible impulse to kill Mr. Canning, the catastrophe was avoided, so Sir H. Holland seemed to think, by advising Mr. Canning to keep out of the way. If, however, the patient, instead of availing himself of his physician's aid

in this way, had sought it in another, and said, "I have this mortal desire; I cannot resist it; have me shut up," this would have been at least equally effective in causing the impulse to miscarry. If a man has reason enough to deplore a criminal desire, and power enough to take steps to prevent its gratification, the law holds him responsible if he does not take such steps. This is recognized in those familiar cases in which it is held that where a man whose passions are aroused with an assailant, the act is not excusable unless it appears that the accused had no means of retreat. If the "monomania" can retreat from his "monomania," it ceases to supply him with a defence.

But while "irresistible impulse," the mind being sane, is no defence to crime, yet violent passion is to be taken into account as a mitigating element, and the peculiar temperament of the offender is to be gauged for the purpose of estimating whether the provocation was such as to create hot blood, and whether there was adequate cooling time. A sane person may, from epilepsy, or from prior insanity, or from nervous or physical derangements, or from hereditary taint, be peculiarly susceptible to excitation; and as the law treats assaults committed in hot blood as of a lower grade than those committed deliberately, this excitability may properly be considered in determining whether the blood at the time was hot. That psychologically this varies with temperament is well known. The ordinary signs of passion (acceleration of arterial pulse, congestive flushings, increased activity of secretions and excretions) are different with different patients. Hence epilepsy, nervous, and cerebral diseases, and hereditary tendency, may be put in evidence to lower the grade of the offence, though they do not amount to insanity. In so doing we but follow the authorities, which declare that drunkenness, though no defence to crime, may be used to show that an assault was not deliberate. Whart. & St. Mod. Jur. § 144. See Com. v. Rogers, 7 Met. 500. infra, § 47, 388.

Sir J. F. Stephen, in his work on English Criminal Law, p. 91, states the questions to be, "Is he of age? Was he of sound mind? Could he help it? Did he know it was wrong?" He goes on further to say: "It would be absurd to deny the possibility that such (irresistible) impulses may occur, or the fact that they have occurred, and have been acted on. Instances are also given in which the impulse was felt and was resisted. The only question which the existence of such impulses can raise in the administration of criminal justice is, whether the particular impulse in question was irresistible as well as unsanctioned. If it were irresistible, the person accused is entitled to be acquitted, because the act was not voluntary and was not properly his act. If the impulse was resistible, the fact that it proceeded from disease is no excuse at all."

In Sir J. F. Stephen's Digest, art. 27, it is stated that a person is irresponsible when prevented (c) from controlling his own conduct, unless the absence of the power of control has

§ 45. In the enunciation of this conclusion there should be the strictest caution, and in the application of it the most jealous scrupulosity produced by his own default. To this we have as a rule:

(4) A. suddenly stabs B., under the influence of an impulse caused by disease, and of such a nature that nothing short of the mechanical restraint of A.'s hand would have prevented the stab. A.'s act is a crime if (c) is not law. It is not a crime if (c) is law.

(5) A. suddenly stabs B., under the influence of an impulse caused by disease, and of such a nature that a strong motive—say, for instance, the fear of his own immediate death—would have prevented the act. A.'s act is a crime whether (c) is or is not law.

(6) A. permits his mind to dwell upon, and desire B.'s death; under the influence of mental disease this desire becomes uncontrollable, and A. kills B. A.'s act is a crime whether (c) is or is not law.

Chief Justice Gibson, of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, sitting in 1846, with two of his associates in a court of oyer and terminer, after repudiating the doctrine that partial insanity excuses anything but its direct results, and holding, in reference to such cases, the "right and wrong" test, proceeded to charge the jury as follows:

"But there is a moral or habitual insanity, consisting of an irresistible inclination to kill or to commit some other particular offence." The charge in this case was oral, reported memorily by the present writer, and has had the approval of the judge himself, which may account for the want of literal exactness in some of its expressions.

"There may be an excess of excitement and passion in the mind, so that it has been driven to consequences which it sees but cannot avoid, and placing it under a coercion which, while its results are clearly perceived, is incapable of resistance. The doctrine which recognizes this mania is dangerous in its results, and can be recognized only in the clearest cases. It ought to be shown to have been habitual, or at least to have evinced itself in more than a single instance. It is seldom directed against a particular individual; but that it may be so proved by the case of the young woman who was deluded by an irresistible impulse to destroy her child, though aware of the horrid nature of the act. The frequency of this constitutional malady is fortunately small, and it is better to confine it within the strictest limits. If jurors were to allow it as a general motive, applying in cases of this character, its recognition would destroy social order as well as personal safety. To establish it is a justification in any particular case, it is necessary either to show, by clear proofs, its contemporaneous existence evinced by present circumstances, or the existence of an habitual tendency developed in previous cases, becoming in itself a second nature." Com. v. Miller, 4 Barr. 296. This was reaffirmed in Coye v. Com., 100 Penn. St. 571. To the same effect, see People v. Sprague, 3 Park. R. S. 43; and rulings by Judge Hills Lewis, cited in Lewis Cr. Law, 404; by Judge Edmunds (2 Am. Jour. of Ins.); by Judge Whiting (Framson's Trial Pamph.); and by the Supreme Court of Georgia (Roberts v. State, 3 Georgia, 310).

In 1833, the text with the case as it was cited with approval by the Supreme Court of Kentucky; and while irresistible impulse, as a distinct line of defense, was recognized, it was held that, to sustain it, "it must be known to exist in such violence as to render it impossible for the party to do otherwise than yield to its promptings." Scott v. Com., 4 Metcalf, 227.

See also, Smith v. Com., 1 Duvali., 224; Kirby v. Com., 5 Bush, 352; Hopkins v. People, 31 Ill. 364. To the same effect is the judgment of the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia, in 1848, Com. v. Haskell, 2 Brewster, 251 (see also Com. v. Firth, 5 Clark, Pa. L. J. 453); of the Supreme Court of Indiana, in 1849; Stevens v. State, 31 Ind. 486 (see Bradley v. State, 31 Ind. 492); of Iowa, in 1863, State v. Felker, 25 Iowa, 87; of Illinois, in 1856, Hopps v. People, 51 Ill. 958; and of the Supreme Court of the United States, in 1872, Life Ins. Co. v. Terry, 15 Wall. 580. The doctrine, however, was emphatically repudiated in North Carolina, in 1867, State v. Beadon, 3 Jones, 463.

In accordance with the text may be cited a case in which Judge Story decided that a young woman, who in a violent impulse in a domestic quarrel threw her child overboard, though at the time perfectly conscious of the enormity of the act, was entitled to an acquittal. U. S. v. Hawson, 7 How. Law Rep. 361.

Hans. Par. Deb. Lett. 728. In the speech as reported by Hansard, Lord Brougham bases the distinction in the text on the Preventive theory of punishment, herefore discussed. This, however, is not essential to the validity of his conclusion.
§ 45.] CRIMES.

Homicidal impulse in an insane person is a good defence, though such insane person was able to distinguish right and wrong. With a sane person, however, it is not a defence, as the law makes all sane persons responsible for their impulses. But mere intelligence develops a new element, the absence of the power of self-control.

"I concur most cordially in the proposed alteration of the law, having been always strongly of opinion that, as the pathology of insanity abundantly establishes, there are forms of mental disease in which, though the patient is quite aware he is about to do wrong, the will becomes overpowered by the force of irresistible impulse, the power of self-control, when destroyed or suspended by mental disease, becomes, I think, an essential element of responsibility. But while it would be desirable to establish the law on this basis, it is certainly not desirable to establish it as to homicide, while in the closely cognate case of the offence doing grievous bodily harm, a different law would obtain. For this strange anomaly would arise: if the grievous bodily harm ended in death, there would be one test of insanity as created by this bill; if it did not, there would be another and a different one as established by the general law. This comes from the law relating to homicide being dealt with by itself, instead of being treated as part of the entire department of the law to which it belongs." An error of punctuation probably exists in the passage in italics, which is here copied accurately from the printed report. The mistake, however, is in accordance with the position in the text: "that the knowledge that an act is wrong does not prevent an irresistible impulse from being a defence, when the act is at the time insane. See also, Willis v. People, 5 Parker, R. 620; and also Andrews's Case, 1 Whart. & St. Med., J.R., § 165.

§ 46.] INSANITY.

Moral power to plan and premeditate, does not constitute sanity. There may be such power, and yet, from an incapacity to form a right view of the relations of the act, the party may be insane.

As insane persons, in the sense just stated, may be mentioned, persons afflicted with idiocy or amnesia, the former being congenital, the latter consisting of a loss of mental power; and mania.

4. "Moral Insanity."

§ 48. "Moral insanity," in its distinctive technical sense, is a supposed insanity of the moral system coexisting with mental sanity. It is therefore to be distinguished from "insane irresistible impulse," which has just been noticed, in two respects: (1) "Irresistible impulse" is only a valid defence when the party offering it is mentally deranged, while in "moral insanity," by its very terms, the patient is always mentally sane; and (2) "Irresistible impulse" is a special propensity impelling to a particular bad act, while in "moral insanity" he is impelled to all sorts of badness. It is enough for the present to say that, as it is abundantly shown elsewhere, the position that "moral insanity," as thus defined, exists, is now almost without a defender among specialists in mental diseases. That it is repudiated by the courts of England and of the United States there is an almost unbroken current of authority to show. Carefully and conscientiously has the defence, by a vast number of independent courts, been scanned; and in almost every instance the conclusion is that the theory on which it rests is without sufficient support either in jurisprudence or psychology.

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2 See 28 Ali. L. 40. I have discussed this question in a note to Gunton's Case, 10 Fed.Rep. 151 et seq.
6 Bennett v. State (Wisc.), 4 Cr. Law Mag. 375.
§ 47. The old common law authorities took the ground that sanity and insanity are states as clearly and absolutely distinguishable as are coverture and non-coverture; and that men are either wholly sane, so as to be wholly responsible, or wholly insane, so as to be wholly irresponsible. This principle, however, is now abandoned...

...nature and a psychological untruth. There are many degrees both of sanity and insanity; and the two states approach each other in...
imperceptible gradations, melting into each other, to adopt an
illustration borrowed by Lord Penzance from Burke, as day melts
into night. There may, therefore, be phases of mind which cannot
require, on the part of all persons en-
dowed with reason, the exercise, under
penal discipline, of such reason, in all
matters which concern the safety and
health of the body politic. The State,
in this respect, is a delicate machine,
over whose mechanism every rational
man has more or less control. It may
seem hard, to adopt the analogy of a
railway, to make it an indictable of-
ference for a brakeman simply to fall
asleep at his post, or for the acting
superintendent of a great corporation
not to construct a time-table suffi-
ciently rigid and accurate to prevent pos-
sible collisions. It may seem hard to
achieve an admiral of acknowledged
bravery for inaction in action, or to
cast him in prison as an engineer for a
slight miscalculation as to the thickness
of an iron plate. Yet we all feel the
necessity of such hardness for the
purpose of educating men at large in the
exercised of all their faculties when
in the discharge of public trusts. It
is such discipline alone that makes
railway travel practicable, and that
prevents a nation's life from being
carelessly sacrificed in war. Reason,
in such cases, is called forth, moved,
and pointed, by the penalty the law
imposes on its action. But the State
cannot effectively punish by precept,
or by mere expression of disapproba-
tion. It must punish, if at all, by
penal discipline; and this discipline,
to have a moral effect, must be executed
as announced. In other words, supe-
runity of reason over passion, on the
part of all persons possessing such
reason, is essential to the safety of the
State; and the State is bound to edu-
cate its subjects to the exercise of their
reason to this extent. It needs care-
ful engineers, careful drivers, careful
superintendents, and careful work-
men; and, to create this carefulness,
it must impose penalties on carelessness.
A fiction, therefore, if it needs,
among those concerned with its ma-
cinery, the capacity to control passion
by reason, must it impose penalties on
the yielding of reason to passion.
This hierarchy among its subjects
is one of the highest offices of the
State to create; and it must, for this
purpose, in addition to education, call
in the aid of penal discipline. Punish-
ment can only, it is true, be imposed
on a responsible being as an act of ju-
tice proportioned to wrong, but it must
be dispensed in such a way as to plant
the consciousness of responsibility in
every reasoning breast. Reason, it
must thus teach, is indissolubly asso-
ciated with responsibility. See this
argument more fully developed in 1

1 We use no more metaphor when
we say that the intellect passes through
innumerable gradations from the full
flow of morning to the depth of mid-
night. He who attempts to place a
limit to the twilight on either side, at-
ttempting to fix a limit at which reason
either suddenly ceases or suddenly be-
gins, is in the quandary of those who
put to the stoical philosophers the
question what constitutes a heap of
corn, and what a full head, and who
were brought at last to confess that a
single grain made a heap of corn, and
pulling out a single hair made a full
45-61.

be positively spoken of as either sane or insane. Are persons
in one of these phases to be acquitted of crime? If so, they
would constitute a class not only dangerous but uncontrollable; for
they would not be sane enough to be convicted as felons, and yet
would not be insane enough to be confined as lunatics. Are they to
be convicted, when charged with offences involving malice and
premeditation? At this justice would revolt; for at the time of the
commission of the guilty act the defendant, as it could readily be
shown, was not in a condition of mind coolly to premeditate, or
accurately to contemplate, a malicious design. Under such circum-
cstances the better course is to find the defendant guilty of the off-
cense in a diminished grade, when the law establishes such grade; or
when it does not, to inflict on him an intermediate punishment. Nor
is this view inconsistent with the analogies of the law. Such consid-
erations (i.e., those of the defendant's mental constitution) are
invoked whenever we have to determine whether a party assailed
acted bona

1 See 1 Whart. & St. Med. Jur. §§ 126,
181, 200.
401. Iff. § 388-391.
3 Iff. §§ 388, 389, 491; 1 Whart. & St.
4 See, as illustrating this, McGreg-
or's Case, 23 Am. Jour. Ins. 490.
§ 47. CRIMES. [BOOK I.

prisoner must be acquitted; but if he would have had no right to break the supposed jar, he might be convicted of an unlawful and malicious wounding; 1 or, in case of the death of the party so wounded, the defendant might be found guilty of manslaughter, 2 on the ground of negligent homicide.

It is true, that whether a man is responsible can be answered only by yes or no. But while on the general question of amenability for crime there can be no grades of responsibility, it is otherwise when we view the question objectively, as involving responsibility for crimes of which there are several grades. A man may have capacity, for instance, to be responsible for manslaughter, but not to be responsible for murder; for he may have capacity enough for a blind, passionate killing, but not for a killing that is deliberate and intelligent. In this sense we may hold that there may be modified guilt. Responsibility itself is capable of no modifications. But certain phases of guilt require higher capacity than do other phases of guilt. 3 And there may be properly a verdict of murder in the second degree in cases where there was an intent to kill, and yet, from mental disturbance, this intent was not specific. 4

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1 Stephen's Cr. Law (1853), p. 92.
2 In Jones v. Comm., 73 Penn. St. 403, Agnew, C. J., said: "Want of intelligence is not the only defect to moderate the degree of offence; but with intelligence there may be an absence of power to determine properly the true nature and character of the act, its effects upon the subject, and the true responsibility of the actor: a power necessary to control the impulses of the mind, and prevent the execution of the thought which possesses it. In other words, it is the absence of that self-determining power which in a sane mind renders it conscious of the real nature of its own purposes, and capable of resisting wrong impulses. When this self-governing power is wanting, whether it is caused by insanity, gross intoxication, or other controlling influences, it cannot be said truthfully that the mind is fully conscious of its own purposes, and deliberates or predetermines in the sense of the act describing murder in the first degree. We must, however, distinguish this defective frame of mind from that wickedness of heart which drives the murderer on to the commission of his crime, reckless of consequences. Sill passions often seem to tear up reason by the root, and urge on murder with heedless rage. But they are the outpourings of a wicked nature, not of an unsober or delirious mind."

3 See Murray, § 125. Barnard, § 125, says, "die Verleihung der verminderten Verantwortlichkeit weist Richtige in unrichtiger Form.

4 Jones v. Comm., 49 Penn. St. 75 (C affection § 366, 456); Putnam v. Comm., 84 Penn. St. 488; Willns v. Comm., 29 Grant. 298. In Indiana the doctrine of the text is not accepted; but the same result is reached by authorizing the defendant to

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6. Intoxication.

§ 48. Settled insanity, produced by intoxication, affects responsibility in the same way as insanity produced by any other cause. 1 If a man who, laboring under delirium tremens, kills another, be made responsible, there is scarcely any species of insanity which on like principles would be subjected to the severest penalties of criminal law. A man laboring under this species of delirium may be as utterly insane as a man laboring under any other kind of delirium. The only ground for assigning a higher degree of responsibility in cases of delirium tremens is the fact that in the latter case the delirious person has subjected himself voluntarily to this calamity. But to this the answer is threefold: (1) That delirium tremens is not the intended result of drink in the same way that drunkenness is; (2) That there is no possibility that delirium tremens will be voluntarily generated in order to afford a cloak for a particular crime; (3) That so far as original cause is concerned, delirium tremens is not peculiar in being the offspring of indiscretion or guilt, for such is the case with many other kinds of insanity. These points scarcely need to be expanded. The fact is, delirium tremens runs the same course with almost every other species of insanity known in the criminal courts. It is the result, like many other manias, of prior vicious indulgences; but it differs from intoxication in being shunned, rather than courted by the patient, and in being incapable of voluntary assumption for the purpose of covering guilt. Hence the conclusion above given has been repeatedly affirmed. 3 And expressly to this point is a case where Judge

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Clarke, 2 Cranch C. C. 158; Flingar v. People, 86 N. Y. 554; Com. v. Green, 1 Atch. 285; State v. Bilhansen, 3 Harring. 551; Roberts v. People, 19 Mich. 461; Mann & Nix v. State, 5 Ohio St. 77; Beavon v. Comm., 20 Grant. 680; Smith v. Comm., 1 Dav. 224; Bales v. State, 3 W. Va. 665; Bailey v. State, 25 Ind. 422; Chuck v. State, 40 Ind. 263; Fisher v. State, 45 Ind. 435; Bennett v. State, Mar. & V. 133; Cornell v. State, Ibid. 147; Beauch v. State, 60 Ala. 149; Carter
§ 49. Temporary insanity, produced immediately by intoxication, does not destroy responsibility, where the patient, when sane and responsible, made himself voluntarily intoxicated. It may, as we will presently see, lower the grade of guilt in cases in which the defendant did not previously make himself drunk with the crime in view. But it does not, when voluntary, and when not amounting to insanity as above stated, destroy responsibility. This conclusion is sustained not only by reason but by policy. There could rarely be a conviction for homicide if drunkenness avoided responsibility. Few violent crimes would probably be attempted without resorting to liquor

n. State, 12 Tex. 509; Brin v. State, 10 Tex. App. 769; Schlecker v. State, 3 Neb. 241; and see Stuart v. State, 57 Tenn. 172, where the right and wrong test was applied. Cf. People v. Commons, 42 Mich. 354.


When delirium tremens is set up as a defense, the prisoner must show that he was under a delirium at the time he acted; the act was performed, there being no presumption of its existence from antecedent facts from which he has recovered. State v. Sowall, 3 Jones Law (C. C.), 345. See, as to presumption of continuance of insanity, Whart. Cr. Br. § 730.

Where it is shown that the defendant's mind has been so far destroyed by long-continued habits of drunkenness as to render him mentally incompetent for the intelligent commission of crime, this mental incompetency is held a sufficient defense. Bailey v. State, 28 Ind. 422; Clark v. State, 40 Ind. 263. As to "dipnornia," see Whart. & St. Med. Jur. § 693; State v. Fink, 40 N. L. 353; People v. Blake, cited infra, § 53.

2. Infra, § 54.


4. That when the defendant was made drunk by the artifice of another he is to be treated as if pro tanto insane, see Bartholomew v. People, 104 Ill. 805. In Smith v. Com., 1 Duvall, 224, Judge Robertson held that temporary drunkenness may in respect to the crime of manslaughter, but this was repugnant in Shuman v. Com., 8 Bush, 463.


§ 50. In this country this same position has been taken with marked uniformity, it being held that voluntary drunkenness not

both as a stimulant and as a shield; and the very fact, therefore, which shows peculiar malignant deliberation, would be interposed as an excuse. The authorities, however, concur in rejecting this position. Sir E. Coke tells us: "For a drunkard who is voluntary daemon, he hath, as has been said, no privilege thereby, but what hurt or ill soever he doth his drunkenness doth aggravate it. Omne crimen ebritas et incendit et detegit." And though casual drunkenness cannot now be said to aggravate a crime in a judicial sense, yet it is settled that it forms no defence to the fact of guilt. Thus Judge Story, in a case already cited, after noticing that insanity, as a general rule, produces irresponsibility, went on to say: "An exception is, when the crime is committed by a party while in a fit of intoxication, the law allowing not a man to avail himself of the excuse of his own gross vice and misconduct to shelter himself from the legal consequences of such crime." Lord Hale said: "The third sort of madness is that which is dementia affe-
tata, namely, drunkenness. This vice doth deprive a man of his reason, and puts many men into a perfect but temporary frenzy; but by the laws of England such a person shall have no privileges by his voluntary contracted madness, but shall have the same judgment as if he were in his right senses." And so Parke, B., said to a jury in 1837: "I must also tell you, that if a man makes himself voluntarily drunk it is no excuse for any crime he may commit whilst he is so; he takes the consequences of his own voluntary act, or most crimes would go unpunished." And Alderson, B., said in 1839: "If a man chooses to get drunk, it is his own voluntary act; it is very different from madness, which is not caused by any act of the person. That voluntary species of madness which is in a party's power to abstain from he must answer for." In harmony with this is the unbroken current of English authority.

1 See Nearling v. Com., 98 Penn. St. 718. See a learned article in 8 Law Rep. (N. S.) 554.

3 See McKee v. People, 38 III. 516.

4 See 1 Hale, 7; 4 Black. Com. 26; 1 R. & R. 186; R. v. Gamlen, 1 F. & F. 60; 1 Russell on Crimes, 8.

74
§ 51. [BOOK I.]

CRIMES.

amounting to settled insanity is no defence to the factum of guilt; the only point about which there has been any fluctuation being the extent to which evidence of drunkenness is receivable to determine the exactness of the intent, or the degree of deliberation.

§ 51. When a particular condition of mind is requisite to constitute an offence, intoxication may be proved to explain such condition. Great caution is necessary in the application of this doctrine to prosecutions for homicides and other violent crimes, for, as has already been remarked, there are few cases of premeditated violence in which the defendant does not previously nerve himself for the encounter by liquor, and there would in future be none at all, if the fact of being in liquor at the time is enough to disprove the existence of premeditation. The true view, therefore, is, not that the fact of liquor having been taken affects the issue when the offence is shown to have been premeditated, but that when there is no evidence of premeditation aliunde, and the defendant is proved at the time of the occurrence to have been in a state of mental confusion of which liquor was the cause, the fact of such mental confusion may be received to show that the defendant was at the time in hot blood, making him peculiarly susceptible to supposed insult, which would


§ 52. Hence drunkenness is material under the statutes resolving murder into two degrees, in which the distinguishing test is a spe-


In New York, on a trial of an indictment for murder with a club in a sudden strain, it was held admissible to prove that the prisoner was intoxicated at the time: and where a witness, then present, well knowing the prisoner, after describing his appearance and conduct, was asked to give his opinion whether the prisoner was intoxicated, and the court excluded such evidence, this was held ground for a new trial.

1 See infra, §§ 54, 389.

2 So on a trial for murder, the defendant's counsel requested the court to charge "that if it appeared from the evidence that the condition of the prisoner from intoxication was such as to show that there was no motive or intention to commit the crime of murder, that the jury should find a verdict of manslaughter." The court refused, and it was held that the charge should have been given, as the question of intent was material to the degree of the crime. Rogers v. People, 3 Parker C. R. (N. Y.) 623; S. C., in error, 18 N. Y. 9. For advanced doctrine as to same point, see Smith v. Com., 1 Duvall, 294; Blinn v. Com., 7 Bush (Ky.), 529; which, however, are greatly qualified in Shannon v. Com., 9 Bush, 465. See State v. Edwards, 11 Mo. 312. That this excuse is to be received with "great caution," see People v. Ferris, 55 Cal. 588.


4 Dig. Crim. Law, art. 26.

5 To this is cited R. v. Cruse, 3 C. & P. 541. This view is affirmed in Hoyt v. People, 164 U. S. 631.
specific intent to take life. In the Philadelphia riot cases of 1844, where it was shown that bodies of men were inflamed by sectarian and local prejudices and blinded by a wild apprehension of danger to such an extent as to make them incapable of discrimination, or of precise or specific purpose, it was held that they could not be considered as guilty of that species of "wilful and deliberate" murder which constitutes murder in the first degree. Analogous to this is the case of the drunkard, who in his intoxication he may be incapable of such mental action as the term "premeditated" describes, or of forming a "specific intent" to take life. And yet, at the same time, at common law, the offense might, without the head of murder, for it would possess the incidents of malice, would be independent of that of provocation, and would be prompt by a determination to inflict great bodily hurt. Under such circumstances the offense may be ranked as murder in the second degree, and this has repeatedly been decided by the courts. And if no malice be shown, the offense would be manslaughter, at common law.

3 Com. v. Dorsey, 103 Mass. 412.

When a statute establishing different degrees of murder requires deliberate premeditation in order to constitute murder in the first degree, the question whether the accused is in such a condition of mind, by reason of drunkenness or otherwise, as to be capable of deliberate premeditation, necessarily becomes a material subject of consideration by the jury. Gray, J. Hopt v. People, 104 U. S. 331.

Whart., on Hulm. § 111.


The question left to the jury in such cases is, whether the defendant’s mental condition was such that he was capable of a specific intent to take life. In Missouri, the rule in the case is not accepted. State v. Edwards, 71 Mo. 334; State v. Dearing, 65 Mo. 530; nor in Vermont. State v. Tatro, 50 Vt. 485.


§ 58. The same considerations apply to the question of specific intent in other relations. Thus in an Ohio case it was properly held, that when the charge was knowingly passing counterfeit money with intent to cheat, the drunkenness of the defendant at the time of the offense was a fit subject for the consideration of the jury, there being no ground to suppose that the defendant knew the money to be counterfeit before he was drunk. To perjury, also, drunkenness may be a defense, though not when the false oath is intelligently taken. Larceny, also, is not imputable to a person so drunk as to be incapable of a fraudulent intent. And when the defendant is indicted for an attempt to commit suicide by drowning, and it was alleged that she was at the time unconscious of the nature of her act from drunkenness, Jervis, C. J., said to the jury: "If the prisoner was so drunk as not to know what she was about, how can you find that she intended to destroy herself?" So, again, when the charge was assault with intent to murder, Patterson, J., said: "A person may be so drunk as to be utterly unable to form any intention at all, and yet he may be guilty of very great violence. If you are not satisfied that the prisoners, or either of them, had formed a positive intention of murdering the child, you may find them guilty of an assault." The same distinction applies to attempts. Whenever, however, the offense is not dependent on intent, e.g., in double voting, then drunkenness is no defense.


3 Supra, § 369. See, however, Estes v. State, 55 Ga. 59.

4 See infra, §§ 86, 1833: People v. Harris, 29 Cal. 87; contra, State v. Worsh, 21 Minn. 22.
§ 54. In an English case, decided in 1819, where Holroyd, J., is reported by Sir W. Russell, who adopts his opinion as text law, to have said that the fact of drunkenness might be taken into consideration to determine the question whether an act was premeditated or done only with sudden heat and impulse. Although this has been doubted, yet it may now be as settled as to be considered in England that where no prior intention to kill is shown, drunkenness is a condition from which hot blood may be inferred, and therefore deliberate murder is excluded. In this country we have repeated rulings to the effect that where the encounter was sudden, and the defendant, prior to such encounter, had no intention to kill, intoxication at the time of the encounter can be taken into consideration, to ascertain whether the defendant, when under a legal provocation, acted from malice or from sudden passion, and whether there was deliberation, or a specific intention to take life. But when an intention to kill, formed when the defendant was in possession of his faculties, is shown, the court will tell the jury that voluntary intoxication does not lower the offence to manslaughter. And, under any circumstances, the intoxication must be coupled with the act. Thus evidence that the defendant was in the habit at times of drinking to excess, and of the effect of this habit upon his mind, is incompetent unless confined to a period within a few days of the homicide.

§ 55. Interesting questions may arise as to what "voluntary" is. There may be persons who from constitutional peculiarities are so susceptible to stimulants that on even slight indulgence they become virtually insane. If such persons are aware of this infirmity, and nevertheless voluntarily take the stimulant, their subsequent insane condition, if it be only special and temporary, is no defence. But what if they are not aware of this peculiarity of their constitution? Or how is it if such susceptibility, instead of being constitutional, so that they can have notice of it, is exceptional, induced by some peculiar temporary debility or disease? Is a man, who, under such abnormal conditions, is madden by a quantity of wine, which on former occasions he wisely and soberly used as a mere tonic, to be regarded as making himself voluntarily mad? This question is elsewhere fully discussed. It is enough now to say that the tendency both of argument and authority is to answer the question in the negative. And a fortiori is this the case where the stimulant is given through the mistake or misconduct of others.

7. Practice in Cases of Insanity.

§ 56. The mode of examining witnesses called to testify as to sanity is examined in detail in another work.

At present it may be sufficient to recapitulate the following conclusions:

(1) Non-experts as well as experts may be asked whether in their opinion a party whom they had the opportunity to observe was at the time drunk.


See People v. Robinson, 2 Park. 192. C. R. 255; Choice v. State, et supra, of Pearson's Case, 2 Low. 143-4, 216, remarks by Purvis, J., and see infra, § 373.

1 Whart. Cr. Ed. 427, See Com. Paton's Case, 2 Low. 143-4, 216, remarks by Purvis, J., and see infra, § 373.

This page contains legal references and citations, which are not transcribed into plain text.
§ 58.] CRIMES.

(2) Such being the case, we must also hold that as to conditions equally patent to the lay mind—e.g., stupor, dementia, amnesia, paralysis—a non-expert as well as an expert may give his opinion.

(3) When acts of doubtful signification are put in evidence by a non-expert, he is not entitled to give his opinion as to their effect, since this is a matter of which the jury are as qualified to judge as he is.

(4) As to hypothetical cases an expert may be examined, but not a non-expert.

(5) The weight of authority is that intelligent attendants, who have lived continuously with a party, may give an opinion as to his sanity, though they are not specialists in psychological disease.

§ 57. Whatever may once have been thought, it is now settled that the defence of insanity may be taken by the friends and counsel of a prisoner, even though such course be objected to by himself. Thus in an English case, a man was indicted for shooting at his wife with intent to murder her, and was defended by counsel who set up for him the defence of insanity. The prisoner, however, objected to such a defence, asserting that he was insane, and was allowed to suggest questions, to be put by the judge to the witnesses for the prosecution, to negative the supposition that he was insane; and the judge also, at the request of the prisoner, allowed additional witnesses to be called on his behalf for the same purpose. They, however, failed to show that the defence was an unfounded one; but, on the contrary, their evidence tended to establish it more clearly, and the prisoner was acquitted on the ground of insanity.

To refuse this right to the guardian or friends of the accused would be to assume his sanity, which is the question at issue.

§ 57 a. In some jurisdictions the defence of insanity must be set up on a special plea.

§ 58. By the common law, if it be doubtful whether

issue to be a criminal who, at his trial, in appearance is a lunatic, be tried by jury, such in truth or not, the issue is to be tried by the jury who

are charged to try the indictment, or, being a collateral issue, the fact may be pleaded and replied to ore tenus and a venire awarded, returnable instanter, in the nature of an inquest of office. If it were found by the jury that the party only feigned himself lunatic, and he refused to answer, he was, before the 7 & 8 Geo. IV. c. 28, s. 2, dealt with as one who stood mute, and as if he had confessed the indictment; but now, by virtue of that enactment, a plea of not guilty may be pleaded. The principal point to be considered by the jury under that statute is, whether the defendant is of sufficient intellect to comprehend the course of the proceedings on the trial, so as to be able to make a proper defence. The question whether the defendant was insane at the commission of the offence is considered at common law under the

1 Ball. Ab. "Idiot" (B) ; R. v. Ley, 1 Lewin, 238; 1 Russ. C. & M. 14. See 1 Hark. 21, s. 4; R. v. Haswell, R. & R. 458.

2 An article on this topic by Prof. Ordronaux will be found in 1 Crim. Law Mag. 431 et seq.

3 See 46; 1 Lor. 61; Russ. C. & M., by Greaves, 14.

4 See R. v. Pichard, 7 C. & P. 303, 306; 1 Lewin, 64, S. C.

5 In Massachusetts, where one, having committed a homicide, was sent to the house of correction, pursuant to Stat. 1797, c. 61, s. 3, as a person dangerous to go at large, and was then tried for murder and acquitted on the ground of insanity, the court remanded him to the house of correction till he should be duly discharged. Com. v. Meriam, 7 Mass. 188. See Gen. c. 36.

6 See 1 Brag. 1 Mass. 161; 13 Mass. 299; Com. c. 527, 1 Mass. 25. But by the General Statutes it is provided that "when any person indicted for an offence is, on trial, acquitted by the jury, by reason of insanity, the jury, in giving their verdict of not guilty, shall state it was given for such cause; and thereupon, if his discharge or going at large is deemed manifestly dangerous to the peace and safety of the community, the court may order him to be committed to one of the state lunatic hospitals; otherwise he shall be discharged." Gen. Stat. c. 175, § 17. See 7 Gray, 554; Rev. Stat. Mass. c. 138, s. 13. In the same State, in case of insanity, "the grand jury shall certify that fact to the court," and thereupon the court is required to take order on the premises. Ibid. c. 136, s. 15. See Gen. Stat. c. 171: § 15.

7 In New York, it has been judicially held that the test of insanity, when set up to bar a trial, is, whether the prisoner is mentally competent to make a rational defence. Freeman v. People, 4 Deans, 5. On a preliminary trial to determine whether the defendant is sane enough to make a rational defence, the defendant is not entitled to preponderate challenges; but challenges for cause may be made. Ibid. See as to statute, 1 Crim. Law Mag. 435.

8 In Pennsylvania, the revised act (1850) provides for a special verdict in case of insanity on a preliminary issue.

9 In Tennessee, under the statute, an analogous practice exists. Coldwell v. State, 5 Baxter, 418.
§ 61. CRIMES. [BOOK I.]  

plea of guilty. As has been already seen, the defendant who sets up this defense is required, in some jurisdictions, to present it in a special plea to be tried before the plea of not guilty.1

§ 59. If a party under sentence of death becomes insane after conviction, execution is to be deferred,2 and in some jurisdictions the issue in such case is referred to a jury for determination.3 It has been ruled in such case that evidence of the convict's mental condition at the time of the commission of the crime is admissible to illustrate his present condition, provided there be other evidence of present insanity, or provided permanent insanity be thereby shown.4

§ 60. By the common law, every man is presumed to be sane until the contrary be proved; and the better opinion is, that when insanity is set up by the defendant, it must be proved as a substantive fact by the party alleging it, on whom lies the burden of proof.5 The finding of an inquisition of lunacy, which is admissible, shifts the burden.6

§ 61. Three distinct theories have been propounded as to the degree of evidence requisite to justify a conviction on the issue of insanity.

The first is that insanity, as a defense of confession and avoidance, must be proved beyond reasonable doubt; and that unless this

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2 State v. Lane, 4 Irel. 431; State v. Hillsom, 82 N. C. 540; State v. Vann, 84 N. C. 722.

3 Spoon v. State, 47 Ga. 553.

4 In Pennsylvania, when insanity is set up as a bar to sentence, the question of a jury trial is at the discretion of the court. Laros v. Comm., 64 Penn. St. 200.

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CHAP. III.] PRACTICE IN CASES OF INSANITY. [§ 61.

be done, the jury, the case of the prosecution being otherwise proved, are to convict. This is expressed by Hornblower, C. J., as follows: "The proof of insanity at the time of committing the act ought to be as clear and satisfactory, in order to acquit him on the ground of insanity, as the proof of committing the act ought to be to find a sane man guilty."1 Several English authorities are cited to the same effect.2

The second is that the jury are to be governed by the preponderance of evidence; and are not to require insanity to be made out beyond reasonable doubt.3 This view is generally accepted in England;4 and is maintained in Maine,5 in Massachusetts,6 in Pennsylvania,7 in Virginia,8 in West Virginia,9 in Ohio,10 in Michigan,11 in Minnesota,12 in North Carolina,13 in South Carolina,14 in Alabama,15 in Georgia,16 in Louisiana,17 in Texas,18 in California,19 in Iowa,20 in Idaho,21 and in Arkansas.22

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1 State v. Spencer, 21 N. J. L. (1 Zeb.) 202. 2 Lawrence v. State, 23 Ohio St. 341; Bergin v. State, 31 Ohio St. 111.
3 People v. Finlley, 38 Mich. 482.
4 State v. Gull, 13 Minn. 241; State v. Grear, 22 Minn. 426.
13 State v. Foster, 32 Iowa, 49.
14 People v. Walker, 1 Idaho, 8.
15 State v. Mississippi, 2 Ark. 334.
16 As to Indiana, see Mitchell v. State, 69 Ind. 276.
§ 61.] CRIMES.

A third view is, that in such an issue the prosecution must prove sanity beyond reasonable doubt. Thus, in a case in Michigan, in 1869, while it was admitted that sanity was the normal condition of the mind, and that the prosecution might rest upon the presumption that the accused was sane when he committed the act, until it was overcome by the opposite case, it was nevertheless determined, that, when any evidence which tends to overthrow that presumption is given, the jury are to examine, weigh, and pass upon it, with the understanding that, although the initiative in presenting the evidence is taken by the defense, the prosecution is bound to establish this part of the case as fully as it is bound to establish other essential incidents of guilt. 1

Similar views have been maintained by other American courts; and it has been not infrequently ruled, that, where there is reasonable doubt as to sanity, the jury must acquit. 2


In New York, the tendency in the main is to sustain the distinctions of the text, and to hold that while a reasonable doubt as to sanity is sufficient to require an acquittal in all cases in which sanity is part of the case of the prosecution, yet, when insanity is set up by the defense for the purpose of establishing general non-accountability, and of placing the defendant under permanent incarceration as a dangerous insane, such insanity must be established by a preponderance of proof. See People v. McCann, 16 N. Y. 58; Walker v. People, 32 N. Y. 147; Ferris v. People, 36 N. Y. 125; Flanagan v. People, 55 N. Y. 467; Brotherton v. People, 75 N. Y. 154; O'Connell v. People, 87 N. Y. 377; Walker v. People, 88 N. Y. 81. These cases are considered in detail in Whart. Cr. 2d ed. § 338.

In Missouri, the cases may be harmonized by the application of the above distinction. See State v. Handley, 46 Mo. 414; State v. Kinglor, 43 Mo. 127; State v. Smith, 53 Mo. 297; State v. Simms, 68 Mo. 306; State v. Redmon, 71 Mo. 172; and see in Indiana, McDonald v. State, 87 Ind. 24.

2 As taking this position, may be cited, U. S. v. Lancaster, 7 Miss. 449; State v. Bartlett, 43 N. H. 224; State v. Jones, 56 N. H. 308; State v. Patterson, 55 Va. 308; State v. Johnson, 40 Conn. 129; Folk v. State, 19 Ind. 179; Bradley v. State, 31 Ind. 423; Success v. State, 31 Ind. 435; McDonald v. State, 88 Ind. 24; Hopper v. People, 23 Ill. 233; Hopper v. People, 31 Ill. 325; Chase v. People, 40 Ill. 325; Smith v. Comm., 1 Ill. 224; Kiesel v. Comm., 5 Bull. 303; Bull v. Comm. (Ky. 1864); Dorsey v. State, 3 Mo. 423; Lawless v. State, 4 Mo. 179; State v. Markle, 2 Mo. 43; Cunningham v. State, 56 Miss. 199; State v. De Rainoe, 44 La. An. 156; Wright v. People, 4 Nev. 407; State v. Crawford, 11 Kan. 42; People v. Waterman, 1 Neb. 543; Webb v. State, 9 Tex. Ap. 496. See State v. Graves, 46 N. J. L. 203.

In South Carolina, it is held, following the distinction of the text, that where the issue is at common law, whether there is capacity to commit crime, this capacity must be proved beyond reasonable doubt by the prosecution. Calloway v. State, 29 S. C. 444. See clearly prove insanity. Case v. State, 40 Ark. 511.

§ 62. It may be said that the position, that unless there be a preponderance of proof of insanity, there can be no acquittal on the ground of insanity, is inconsistent with the principle that if there is reasonable doubt of guilt there can be no conviction. But there is no such inconsistency. Insanity, as a defense in criminal prosecution, has two distinct aspects, subject to very different rules. When the question, as in a charge of murder in the first degree, is whether there was a particular intention in the defendant's mind at a particular time, then, if such intention cannot be proved beyond reasonable doubt, there must be an acquittal of this grade of murder. An indictment, for instance, is found in Pennsylvania for murder in the first degree. By the law of that State there can be no conviction of murder in the first degree, unless it be proved that the defendant at the time of the homicide specifically intended to take the deceased's life. We will assume a case, however, in which the defendant's mind, at the time of the litigated event, was so affected by disease, that it is questionable whether he was then capable of forming a specific intent to take life. Now, in such a case, if there be reasonable doubt whether the defendant was capable of forming a specific intent to take life, the jury should be instructed (and this has been so done in several cases in Pennsylvania) to acquit of murder in the first degree, and convict of murder in the second degree, or of manslaughter. 1 The same rule applies to all other cases in which it is incumbent on the prosecution to prove a sane intent on the part of the defendant; in which cases such intent must be proved beyond reasonable doubt. It is otherwise, however, where insanity is set up, not to qualify the proof of intent, but as a bar to criminal procedure. In the former case, it goes to the question of guilt or innocence; in the latter case, it goes to the amenability or non-amenability of the defendant to criminal jurisdiction. In the former case the defense says, 'not guilty of specific act charged'; in the latter case it says, 'not the subject of penal discipline.' The plea of insanity, when thus offered in bar of the prosecution, stands, as do analogous pleas of non-amenability, beyond reasonable doubt by the prosecution, that the burden is on the defendant. Coleman v. State, 20 S. C. 444. See clearly prove insanity. Case v. State, 40 Ark. 511.

1 Supra, § 52.
CRIMES.

§ 62. LIABILITY, on the ground of want of jurisdiction. This brings us to the rightful solution of this vexed issue. The test of "reasonable doubt" only applies to questions of "guilt" or "innocence." The defence of insanity, as a bar, like other defences based on non-amenable to penal discipline, is not one of "guilt" or "innocence." It is not one, therefore, when offered in bar of an indictment, to which the test of "reasonable doubt" applies. The errors into which judges have been led in this respect have been errors arising from the defective way in which the plea is presented. If it were offered specially in bar, as a preliminary issue, as it is in some jurisdictions, then no one would question that the case would go to the jury to be decided according to the preponderance of proof. Supposing that the plea, being special (as is the plea, for instance, of autrefois acquit), should be determined against the defendant, then he would be compelled to plead over, and then, to the questions of facts arising under a plea of not guilty, the test of "reasonable doubt" would be applicable. And it would be easy to conceive of cases in which, after a verdict against the defendant.

CHAP. III.] PRACTICE IN CASES OF INSANITY. [§ 68.

on the special plea of insanity, a verdict acquitting him of the highest grade of the offence might be had on the ground of the very insanity which was held not to be sufficient to sustain a verdict of non-amenable on the first plea. Suppose, for instance, that, in a case of homicide, the proof of insanity on the first trial was not sufficiently strong to transfer the defendant from the category of the same to that of the insane, and yet that such evidence was strong enough on the second trial to raise a reasonable doubt as to whether the defendant had specifically intended to kill the deceased. In such case, though the issue of insanity had been determined on the first trial against the defendant, he should be convicted only of murder in the second degree, or of manslaughter, on the second trial, which would involve his acquittal of murder in the first degree. By maintaining this distinction we avoid the danger (incident to the application of the test of "reasonable doubt" to all issues of insanity raised in a criminal court) of committing a defendant as to whose sanity there is "reasonable doubt" to perpetual sequestration in an insane asylum.

§ 63. When insanity of a permanent type is shown to have

1 We may cite, as an illustration, the case of Moode, 1 Hill, N. Y. 377, 20 Wend. 483, where, in order to sustain non-amenable to the New York tribunals, the defendant's counsel maintained that the defendant, in the transaction which was the subject of the indictment, was acting as a servant of the British government, under the direction of that government. If this had been sustained, as a matter of fact, then the conclusion would have been, as a matter of law, that our quarrel was with the British government, and not with Moode. But if the question of fact in such a case should be disputed, no one would claim that there be reasonable doubt as to whether the defendant acted as the servant of a foreign government, he should be acquitted. What the jury would be told would be, "Here is a question of fact; if the proof satisfies you, that a defendant was a British subject, and acted under British orders, then he is to be remanded to his own government for discipline."

Another illustration, already noticed in the text, is to be found in those cases in which, on a plea of autrefois acquit, a question of fact, to be determined by a jury, arises, whether the offence of which the defendant was acquitted was the same as that on trial. In such a case the jury would not be told, "If you have a reasonable doubt you must find for defendant." What they would be told is, "If you decide that there is a preponderance of proof to the effect that the cases are the same, then you must so find; otherwise you must find that the cases are not the same." See Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. § 483. In neither of the cases last mentioned does the question of guilt or innocence arise, and in neither case, if the defence be properly pleaded, would evidence to show either guilt or innocence be relevant.

1 Walker v. Poppin, 88 N. Y. 81, above cited, is an illustration of this danger. Walker was tried for abdication. Suppose he had been indicted for an assault, and suppose, as it has frequently been decided to be permissible, his relatives or friends, against his protest, had interposed the plea of insanity. We can imagine, in fact, many cases in which this might be a convenient way of disposing of an unconfident relatable or neighbor. A defendant of this class finds himself, when tried for some minor offence, constituted by a plea of insanity interposed in his behalf. If the view here contended for be the law, the judge would have in such case but one course open to him. He would be obliged to hear the evidence, no matter what might be the defendant's protestations; and, what is more, he would be obliged to tell the jury that, if they have a reasonable doubt of the defendant's sanity, they must find him insane. The only way to avoid this absurdity is to put the determination of the issue of insanity, when set up to bar amenable, on the same basis in criminal as that adopted in civil courts. In both cases the presumption is that persons coming into courts of justice are sane, and the burden of proof is on the party contesting such sanity. In criminal courts, as in civil, the rule should be that to take a particular person out of the category of responsible and responsible beings, and to subject him to the sequestrations and restrictions imposed by the law on adjudicated lunatics, at least a preponderance of proof of insanity should be required.

The above argument is expanded by me in the Central Law Journal for May 22, 1884. The subject is discussed more fully in Whart. Cr. Br. §§ 388 et seq. See, also, 1 Crim. Law Mag. 445.
§ 64. In insanity be inferred from conduct.

Evidence, therefore, of prior insane conduct and declarations may be received on a trial for an act alleged to have been insane; and so may that of subsequent attacks of derangement, if connected in system with the defendant's condition at the time of the offence. Attempt at suicide is one of the incidents from which insanity may be inferred.

§ 64. As facts from which insanity may be inferred, it is admissible to prove epilepsy, cerebral peculiarities, and anomalies of sensibility, pulse, secretion, and to put in evidence the history, conversation, writings, and deportment of the patient, so far as they bear on the issue.


1 Id.; State v. Reddick, 7 Kan. 163; Lewis v. Baird, 3 Me. 56; People v. Frankis, 35 Cal. 183. See U. S. v. Quiltum, 1 Machey. 428.

2 State v. Sewell, 3 J. Jones Law (N. C.), 245; People v. Frankis, supra; State v. Reddick, supra.

3 Whart. on Cr. Ev. § 731; R. v. Haswell, R. & R. 458; Com. v. Brayman, 136 Mass. 438; Yancey v. Com., 2 Virginia Cases, 132; U. S. v. Sharp, 1 Peters C. C. 118; McAllister v. State, 17 Ala. 434; McLean v. State, 15 Ala. 873; Lake v. People, 1 Parker C. R. 490; State v. Mowcher, 46 Iowa, 88. Insanity of the prisoner, at the instant of the commission of the offence, can only be established by evidence tending to prove that he was insane at some period before or afterwards.

* See 1 Whart. & St. Med. Jur. § 378; People v. Marsh, 6 Cal. 543.
* Com. v. Pomroy, 117 Mass. 143.
* Com. v. Com., 300 Penn. St. 573.
* Ibid. § 347. But it has been ruled that family and neighborhood reputation is not admissible to prove that the prisoner was permanently injured in his mind, by reason of a wound which he had received. Choice v. State, 31 Ga. 424.


§ 66. Other forms of unconsciousness may be noticed as constituting a defence to a criminal charge. A man may commit an injury when asleep, as when in a state of sleep-walking or somnambulism. It may be under the influence of opium, or of other intoxicating stimulants such as verithum. The defence of insanity will not be allowed if the injury is done in a state of delirium tremens.

1 Rogers v. State, 33 Ind. 643.
3 State v. Christmas, 6 Jones N. C. 471.
5 Whart. Cr. Ev. § 731.
7 Ilaros v. Com., 44 Penn. St. 200; it is ruled that such evidence is not competent until evidence of the defendant's own insanity is given. See People v. Pine, 2 Bar. 566; State v. Christmas, 6 Jones N. C. 471.
8 Sawyer v. State, 35 Ind. 30; Bradley v. State, 61 Ind. 442.
9 See these cases discussed in 1 Whart. & St. Med. Jur. §§ 482-484.
§ 68. CRIMES.

The question then arises, was the defendant at the time of the act a free agent? If not, the act is not criminally imputable to him. But we have to keep in mind two possible conditions which may greatly vary the case. If the abnormal state was artificially induced in order to facilitate the commission of the crime, then the offence is malicious. If such state was negligently induced, then the defendant may be chargeable with a negligent offence.

II. INFANTS.

§ 67. Until an infant arrives at the age of seven, he cannot be convicted of a criminal offence. Under that age the infant may be chastised by his parents or tutors, but cannot be judicially punished, for he cannot be guilty in such a way as involves the ordinary penalty of crime.

§ 68. Between the age of seven and fourteen is reflected on capacity. If it appear that a child within these limits is put under dol, which it is to be determined by the circumstances of the case, he may be convicted and condemned.

The presumption that an infant is not put under dol, as to a child under seven, is irrebuttable. As to a child between seven and fourteen the presumption is rebuttable, the burden of overthrowing it being on the prosecution; the intensity of proof varying with age and other circumstances.

It has been held in North Carolina that "as the reputed age of every one is peculiarly within his

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4 Whart. Cr. Ev., § 801.


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CHAP. III.] INFANTS. [§ 68.

own knowledge," a defendant setting up infancy has the burden on him to establish it.

An exceptional case is reported in New Jersey, where a boy of twelve years was convicted, on his own confession, imperfectly sustained by circumstantial corroborator, of murder, and was sentenced and executed.

When the age of fourteen arrives, full criminal responsibility, at common law, attaches.


In Illinois the age of incapacity is extended to ten: Angee v. People, 96 Ill. 290. In Texas the periods are nine and thirteen; McDaniels v. State, 9 Tex. Ap. 472; Under the N. Y. Penal Code of 1884 the limit is placed at twelve.

According to an enlightened German jurist and statesman, the age of criminal responsibility is postponed in proportion to the extent to which the State assumes the responsibility of the education of its children. "The better the school discipline, the more ably can the State defer to older years the application of penal justice. Thus, while in the Roman and canon law responsibility began at seven years, in modern Germany it does not begin till twelve." Schaper, in Holts. Straf. ii. 161.

1 State v. Arnold, 13 Ind. 184; id. § 73.


3 State v. Goin, 9 Humph. 175; State v. Bostick, 4 Barrin. 563; State v. Hardy, id. 564; Trby v. State, 32 Ga. 426. This is not a case of "not guilty," adding, "We do not think the prisoner had any guilty knowledge." R. v. Smith, 1 Cox C.
§ 70. CRIMES. [BOOK I.

Parental influence, not amounting to coercion, however much it may affect a jury's conclusion on the merits, is not a technical defence. 4

§ 69. A boy under fourteen is presumed by law unable to commit a rape, and therefore, it seems, cannot be guilty of it; 5 and though in other felonies malitia suppl et acetatem in some cases, yet it seems that as to rape the law presumes him impotent as well as wanting discretion. 6 Nor at common law is any evidence admissible to show that in fact he had arrived at the full state of puberty, and could commit the offence. 7 But he may be a principal in the second degree, if he aid and assist in the commission of this offence, as with other felonies, 8 and if intelligent evil purpose on his part be shown by the prosecution, 9 which must, however, be plainly established. And though an infant under fourteen cannot be convicted of an assault with an intent to commit a rape, 10 he may be convicted of an indecent assault under the 7 Will. IV. s. 1; 10 Vict. c. 85, s. 11. 11 After he passes fourteen, the presumption vanishes; and in Delaware a boy just arrived at that age has been held in law capable of the offence. 12

§ 70. An infant, under the limitations which have been above expressed, may be guilty of forcible entry, if concerned in actual personal violence; 13 and the justices may fine him therefor; though it is doubtful whether under the old English statutes he could be imprisoned for this offence. 14

C. 220; People v. Davis, 1 Wheeler C. C. 220; Walker's Case, 5 City Hall Recorder, 1st; Stage's Case, 5 City Hall Rec. 177, ante 5 Bost. L. Rep. N. S. 394; State v. Doherty, 2 Tenn. 80. 15

In re, § 84 a. 16

1 An infant is liable in special cases.

§ 651. See State v. Pull, 7 Jones N. C. 61.


Infra, § 551.

1 Hawk. c. 24, s. 35.

Infra, § 551.

Infra, § 1149. See People v. Kendall, 25 Wend. 399; infra, § 1150.


* R. v. Sutton, 5 N. & M. 363; Bla. Com. 22; Co. 3d. 297. See infra, § 551.

* See 4 Bla. Com. 308.

* See People v. Townsend, 3 Hill N. Y. 479.

Infra, § 1149. See People v. Kendall, 25 Wend. 399; infra, § 1150.


* State v. Arnold, 18 Ind. 154; People v. Townend, 3 Hill (N. Y.) 470. See supra, § 70; Whart. Cr. Ev. § 510.

* See infra, § 551.

To burden of proof see supra, § 69.

1 Hawk. c. 24, s. 35.
likely to indulge in loose talk. But a child’s confessions, if not, elicited by threats or promises, are technically admissible against him.¹

III. FEME COVERTS.

§ 75. There is no technical objection to an indictment naming the wife singly. It is not necessary that the husband should be included as a joint defendant, even though he was living with her at the time,² or was jointly participant with her in the offence, which is a matter of defence.³ But it is right and proper, in the latter case, that there should be a joinder, and though a nonjoinder is no defence, and is not dammable, the court may on motion compel it.⁴ The husband may be singly indicted for his wife’s acts done under his command,⁵ or in case of misdemeanors, in his presence with his knowledge and apparent assent,⁶ or, in cases where the business of the house is at issue, for her acts in their common home.⁷ The indictment need not negative coercion.⁸

§ 76. Indictments against wife jointly with husband are good on their face, and will be sustained on demurrer, on arrest of judgment, or in error.⁹ And this rule has been specifically applied to indictments for assault and battery;¹⁰ for keeping a bawdy house;¹¹ for keeping a gaming house;¹² for keeping a tippling house;¹³ for forbe-  

3. Somersett’s Case, 2 St. Trials, 966 (1673); R. v. Cranton, 2 Strange, 1210.
6. Infra, § 1509; Bemley v. State, 52 Atl. 16.
7. Infra, § 1509.
10. R. v. Cruise, 8 C. & P. 541; State v. Parkerson, 1 Strothb. 169.
12. Infra, § 1509; Bemley v. State, 52 Atl. 16.
13. Infra, § 1509.
16. Infra, § 94; Russ. on Cr. 19-22.

96

entry and detainer;² for stealing and receiving;³ for murder;⁴ and for treason.⁵

After a conviction of husband and wife jointly, of a severable offence, the court may affirm the judgment as to the husband, and reverse as to the wife.⁶ But where the offence is joint, the wife cannot be convicted without the husband.⁷

§ 77. If a fame covert be indicted as a fame sole, her proper course is to plead the misnomer in abatement, for if she pleads over, she cannot take advantage of it.⁸ She must aver her marriage in her plea, and prove it affirmatively.⁹ The practice on such a plea is elsewhere discussed.¹⁰ But notwithstanding she is thus precluded from setting up misnomer as a bar, she may, so it has been held, make the defence of marital coercion, though she has pleaded not guilty to an indictment charging her as a fame sole.¹¹

§ 78. By the English common law, if a wife is party to a crime under her husband’s direct command and constraint she is entitled to acquittal; but though by some of the old writers an exception is made in cases of treason, murder, and robbery,¹² the weight of authority is against this exception.¹³ It is also a doctrine of the same law that if a crime of minor grade be committed by a wife in company with or in the presence of her husband, it is a rebuttable presumption of law that she acted under his immediate coercion.¹⁴ It is, however, conceded, that if she commit a crime of
§ 79. CRIMES. [BOOK I.

her own voluntary act, or by the bare command of her husband in his absence; or, as it is held by the old writers, if she be guilty of treason, murder, or robbery, or any other crime, malum in se, and prohibited by the law of nature, or which in his opinion in the character, or dangerous in its consequences, even in company with or by command of her husband, then she is punishable as much as if she were sole. It may be questioned, however, whether the coercive presence of the husband, if a defence at all, is not a good defence in all cases, and whether the exception taken as to the higher grades of felonies can be maintained. The difficulty, however, is in finding, in the present state of society, when the husband is as likely to support the wife as she is engaged in doing wrong, as the wife is to support the husband, any reason on which the presumption is to rest. And the presumption of coercion is rebutted by proof of independent criminal action on the part of the wife.

§ 79. In any view, while proximity of the husband at the time of the commission of the crime is necessary to enable this presumption to apply, such proximity by itself starts the presumption. It is sufficient if the proximity is near enough to the hardness of the law in ancient times, and partly to its uncertain and fragmentary condition, it is disregarded by a rule which is tolerable only because it is practically evaded on almost every occasion where it ought to be applied.


2 Whether proximity is near enough to imply control, see State v. Shee, 13 R. I. 356.

3 1 Hawk. c. 1, n. 9; 1 Hals. 47; Dall. c. 157; 4 Bl. Comm. 29; R. v. Cruse, 5 C. & P. 541; 2 Moody C. C. 53, S. C.; R. v. Dixon, 10 Mod. 355;
near at the time as to sustain the presumption. So, if a woman receive stolen goods into her house, knowing them to be such, or lock them up in her chest or chamber, her husband not knowing thereof; if her husband, so soon as he knows the fact, forsook his house and her company, and make his abode elsewhere, he is not to be charged for her offence; though the law otherwise will impute the fault to him, and not to her. And ordinarily the pre-

3 Sir J. V. Stephen (Dig. Crim. Law, art. 30) summarizes the law as follows:—
4 If a married woman commits a theft, or receives stolen goods, knowing them to be stolen, in the presence of her husband, she is presumed to have acted under his coercion, and such coercion excuses her act; but this presumption may be rebutted if the circumstances of the case show that, in point of fact, she was not coerced.
5 It is uncertain how far this principle applies to felons in general.
6 It does not apply to high treason or murder.
7 It probably does not apply to robbery.
8 It applies to uttering counterfeit coin.
9 It seems to apply to misdemeanors generally.

In a note he it is said:—"As to high treason, murder, and robbery, see 1 Hale P. C. 45; Dalton, c. 157; 1 Hawk. P. C. 4; R. v. Buncombe, 1 Cox C. C. 183; but as to robbery, see Mr. Carrington’s argument in R. v. Cruse, 8 C. & P. 556. In R. v. Torpey, the present recorder of London held that the doctrine applied to robbery. 22 Cox C. C. 45. As to misdemeanors in general, see note to R. v. Price, 8 C. & P. 20, and 1 Russ. Cr. p. 145, note (b) 5th ed. See, too, R. v. Torpey, 12 Cox C. C. 45. As to uttering, see R. v. Price 8 C. & P. 19. As to false swearing, R. v. Bickers, 1 Russ. Cr. 34, 4th ed.

In People v. Sellers, 77 N. Y. 411, it is held that the wife steals of her own will, or by the bare command or procurement of her husband, she is not excused, citing R. v. Buncombe, 1 Cox C. C. 183; R. v. Hughes, 1 Russ. Cr. 44. And that, as in the case before the Court, the alleged husband was two hundred feet or more away from the prisoner at the time of the larceny, it was not error for the trial court to call the attention of the jury to the fact, and to charge that it was for them to say whether it did not rebut the presumption of coercion, and whether she was in his presence.

Where a husband and wife were convicted jointly of receiving stolen goods, it was held that the conviction of the wife could not be supported, though she had been more active than her husband, because it had not been left to the jury to say whether she received the goods in the absence of her husband. R. v. Archer, 1 Mood. 143.

A married woman who swore falsely that she was next of kin to a person dying intestate, and so procured administration to the estate, was held responsible for the offence, though her husband was with her when she took the oath. R. v. Dickens, 1 Russ. Cr. 34 (4th ed.). So, where a husband delivered a threatening letter ignorantly,
§ 83. CRIMES. [BOOK I.

manager of the house.¹ So she may be indicted together with her husband, and punished with him, for the same offence; for the malfeasance relates to the government of the house, in which the wife has a principal share, and constitutes an offence which may generally be presumed to be managed by the intrigues of her sex.² She may be indicted for keeping a gaming house,³ and when, in the absence of her husband, though in the house where they live and trade together, she sells intoxicating liquors under such circumstances as would, but for her coverture, prove her to be a common seller, she may be indicted as such, unless it appears that she acted by his command or under his coercion or influence.⁴

As has been already incidentally noticed, the "married women's acts, conferring particular business privileges on married women, do not change the common law rules of marital criminal responsibility.⁵ Hence, the husband is indictable for the wife's act in the illegal sale of liquor in their common domicil.⁶

§ 82. It has been held that in cases of conspiracy and riot it will not suffice to join the husband and wife alone; and if all the parties named, except the husband and wife, be acquitted, judgment against the latter will be arrested.⁷ But if an overt act be performed by the wife apart from her husband, in execution of a conspiracy concerted by her, or concerning matters distinctively belonging to her sex, it may be questioned whether in such case she is an independent person.

§ 83. The better opinion is, that in cases where a married woman incites her husband to a felony, she is an accessory before the fact; but she cannot be convicted as an accessory after the fact for receiving her husband, knowing that he has committed a felony; nor for receiving goods feloniously stolen by him; nor for concealing a felony jointly with her husband.⁸ As we have seen, she will not be answerable for her husband's breach of duty, however fatal, though she may be privy to his misconduct, if no duty be cast upon her, and she be merely passive.⁹ A husband can be convicted of knowingly receiving goods stolen by his wife; but not of receiving goods which she had previously received without his cognizance, and passed to him.¹₀

IV. IGNORANT PERSONS.

§ 84. If ignorance of a law were a defence to a prosecution for breaking such law, there is no law of which a villain would not be scrupulously ignorant. The more brutal in this view, a man becomes, the more irresponsible an indi⁵
tent for a violation of law.

As, however, it is a postulate of penal laws that they should be obeyed, it is a condition of those laws that ignorance of them should be no defence to an indictment for their violation.¹¹

¹ 1 Hale, 47; R. v. Manning, 2 C. & C. 118; v. Anthony, 11 Blatch. 230; U. S. v. K. 887, 889.
² R. v. Brooks, 14 Bag. & 123; C. B. 360; Dears, 6 C. C. 184; 6 Cox C. C. 146.
³ Ib. 1 Hawk. 8, 6; 57 Mass. 673 (2d ed.); Jerr. Arch. (9th ed.) 17; Supra, § 80.
⁴ See infra, § 922; R. v. M'Althay, 1 Hark. & C. 250; 9 Cox C. C. 251.
⁵ R. v. Dargaville, 7 Cox C. C. 282; Dears & B. 329. infra, § 922.
⁶ See Whart. on Neg. § 411, where this question is fully discussed; Whart. Cr. Ev. § 717, as to presumption of knowledge of law. For rulings to this effect in criminal cases see R. v. Price, 3 P. & D. 421; 11 A. & E. 727; R. v. Reep, 7 G. & J. 165; R. v. Osceol, 1 Car. & K. 185; R. v. Heaton, 3 C. & K. 777; The Ann, 1 Gallis, 62; U. S. v. Anthony, 11 Blatch. 230; U. S. v. K. 887, 889.
⁷ R. v. Brooks, 14 Bag. & Eq. 360; Dears, 6 C. C. 184; 6 Cox C. C. 146.
⁸ See infra, § 922; R. v. M'Althay, 1 Hark. & C. 250; 9 Cox C. C. 251.
¹⁰ See Whart. on Neg. § 411, where this question is fully discussed; Whart. Cr. Ev. § 717, as to presumption of knowledge of law. For rulings to this effect in criminal cases see R. v. Price, 3 P. & D. 421; 11 A. & E. 727; R. v. Reep, 7 G. & J. 165; R. v. Osceol, 1 Car. & K. 185; R. v. Heaton, 3 C. & K. 777; The Ann, 1 Gallis, 62; U. S. v. Anthony, 11 Blatch. 230; U. S. v. K. 887, 889.
¹¹ R. v. Brooks, 14 Bag. & Eq. 360; Dears, 6 C. C. 184; 6 Cox C. C. 146.
§ 84.] CRIMES. [BOOK I.

It is no defence to an indictment for a crime that it was the custom of the country to do the act that constituted the crime.

As to conscientiousness as a defence, see infra, §§ 336, 1716; that a foreigner cannot set up this defence, see R. v. Barrowes, Pars. 51; R. v. Keop, 7 C. & T. 436; Casabianca v. Maffett, 2 Wash. C. C. 36. But that such defence may be set up in mitigation of punishment, see R. v. Lynn, 2 T. R. 239; 2 Leach. 549.

Belief in the unconstitutionality of a law; belief in its violation of higher law; belief in its conflict with conscientious duty, will be no defence to an indictment for disobedience to such law. U. S. v. Reynolds, 68 U. S. 145. And even a conscientious belief that an act is right (e. g., labor by a Jew on Sunday in contravention of the Sunday laws) will not prevent such act from being indictable when made by the State. Com. v. Haz., 123 Mass. 40; Specht v. Com., 8 Penn. St. 312; though see contra, Cincinnati v. Rice, 16 Ohio, 226; infra, § 1491.

In this respect the Roman common law is more tender than the English. When an offence is such iure gestionem, that all persons are expected to have notice that it is prohibited, and are liable to punishment for its commission. But it is otherwise, by the Roman law, when a government makes an act, in itself innocent, penal. In this case ignorantia et error juris is a defence, unless there be notice either express or implied. See Savigny, System, lib. ii. pp. 111, 326. Indeed, there were certain conditions in which ignorantia legis is charitably assumed. Thus, for instance, the female sex:


§ 85. A distinction, however, is to be noticed in respect to cases in which the gravamen is negligent ignorance of law. A public officer, or a lawyer, for instance, is charged with such negligent ignorance, producing injury to another. In such case he is bound to show that he had the knowledge of the law usual with good specialists of his class. On the other hand, if I throw business into the hands of an agent not professing to be a specialist in the law, he is not liable to me for negligence in not possessing knowledge that he did not pretend to; in other words, he is not chargeable with culpa levis. I may prove that he entered into the agency without such knowledge; yet this will not be enough system of criminal jurisprudence can be sustained upon any other principle. A verdict of guilty was subsequently rendered, which was sustained by the court. U. S. v. Anthony, 11 Blatch. 200; U. S. v. Taintor, 11 Blatch. 374. See this case criticized 2 Green's C. R. 218, 244, 275, 639; U. S. v. Taylor, 3 McCreary, 565. In State v. Goodenow, 65 Mo. 36, it was held no defence to an indictment for adultery that the defendant believed that the female defendant, her husband having married again, could lawfully marry, and that they were so advised by the magistrate who married them, they relying upon the opinion of the magistrate in good faith. See R. v. Lucy, C. & M. 311; State v. Welsh, 21 Minn. 22; Minor v. Happapetz, 33 Mo. 68. Tyrer, § 1858. In Beaver v. State, 59 Ala. 67, it was held that it was not admissible for the defendant, on an indictment for misrepresentation, to prove that he was advised that he was lawfully at the time of the express mention of the Supreme Court to that effect. In The Ann, 3 Gall. 62, it was held that ignorance of an embargo law was no defence to an indictment for violation of its prohibition, though it was impossible for the defendant to have known of the law.

CRIMES. [BOOK I.

to sustain a verdict against him. He will be only liable in this respect for gross negligence, or 

*culpa lata*, which consists in not knowing what every one ought to know. But if I employ him as 
an expert in law, then he is negligent if he enters upon the employment without due knowledge, and consequently is chargeable not 
only with *culpa lata*, but in addition to this, with *culpa levior*, or with negligence as a specialist.1

At the same time it is essential to 

1 See Whart. on Neg. §§ 36, 418, 510, 520, 749; Miller v. Proctor, 20 Ohio St. 442; and see Whart. on Cr. Ev. § 724.

2 See Whart. on Neg. §§ 52, 744-5, and Mentress v. Jefery, 2 G. & P. 113, where Abbe, C. J., declared that neither attorney, nor counsel, nor judge is expected to know all the law, nor to be liable for mistakes into which caution men may fall. See, also, R. v. Mayor, etc., 1 R. 3 Q. B. 629.


§ 85 a. Cases, also, may occur in which evil intent is a condition precedent to conviction, but in which a mistake of law; if 

Mistake of law admissible to negative evil intent.

Thus in larceny it is admissible to prove that the defendant the

§ 85 b. When the question is whether a particular fact 
or group of facts falls under a particular rule of law, an 
error in this respect is to be regarded as an error of fact. 

See Whart. on Neg. §§ 26, 418, 510, 520, 749; Miller v. Proctor, 20 Ohio St. 442; and see Whart. on Cr. Ev. § 724.

4 R. v. Stukeley, 12 Mod. 493. infra, § 1576.

5 See R. v. Langford, C. & M. 622; Cater v. State, 26 N. J. L. 123; Dye v. Com., 7 Grat. 603; Whart. on Cont. § 198; Whart. Cr. Ev. § 724; 1 Steph. Hist. Cr. Law, 114, citing Burne v. Newell, 5 R. 5 Q. B. D. 454. **The fact that an offender is ignorant of the law is no excuse for his offence**, but it may be relevant to the question whether an act which would be a crime if accompanied by a certain intention or other state of mind, and not otherwise, was in fact accompanied by that intention or state of mind or not.1

1 See Stephen's Dig. Cr. Law, art. 83, citing Barron & Co.'s Case, 1 B. & 1. 1, where it was held that: If A., a foreigner, unacquainted with the law of England, Lilla B. in a duel in England, A.'s act is murder, although he may have sup-

goods under a claim of right, however erroneus; in malicious 
mischief, that the act was believed to be the exercise of a legal 
right; in assault, that he committed an assault under a mistaken 
conviction of his legal rights; in perjury, that the alleged per-
jury was under *bona fide* and intelligent advice of counsel; in 

misconduct in office, that the alleged misconduct was under ad-

vice of counsel on a debatable question of law; or under *bona 

fide* non-negligent misconception of power.1

For, however, the ignorance is the result of negligence, then the defendant may be indicted for the negligence. And when the question does not 

depend exclusively on intent, it is no defence that the act charged as 
a crime was committed under the advice of counsel that it was lawful.2

But when the question is one of intent, such proof is admissible though it must be proved that the defendant acted on it.3

infra, §§ 884-9. So as to malicious 


infra, § 1075 a.

infra, §§ 456 of seq.

infra, § 1049.

infra, §§ 1576, 1582.

infra, § 1072 a.

infra, §§ 456 of seq.

infra, § 1576, 1582.

infra, §§ 456 of seq.

infra, § 1049.

infra, §§ 1576, 1582.

infra, §§ 456 of seq.

infra, § 1049.

infra, §§ 1576, 1582.

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infra, §§ 1576, 1582.

infra, §§ 456 of seq.

infra, § 1049.

infra, §§ 1576, 1582.

infra, §§ 456 of seq.

infra, § 1049.
§ 87. Ignorance or mistake of fact is admissible for the purpose of negativing a particular intention. Thus

1 R. v. Bailey, R. & R. 3, where a pardon was ordered on this ground; 2
2 B. v. R. 5, Q. B. D. 454;  
3 Ship Cotton, Pinckney & Fauteux, 20 Bl. 22; U. S. v. 
4 14 Packages, Gipson, 235; though see 1 Ann. 1 Gallis, 62, cited supra;  
5 §§ 84; Hibbard v. Heard, 6 Ga. 382.

1 1 R. S. 244, § 12; Barb. C. L. 292.
2 R. v.白色., State, 63 Ala. 141.
3 Responsibility, according to Bersen, Ledingham, § 91, occurs when the will and the object are present, but where they do not concur, and the connection between the two is prevented. Error felicitous et absurdo defict. Under the latter the following cases are to be noticed:—

(a) Consequences which by a suitable foresight could not have been foreseen have no causal connection with the will of the actor. Responsibility cannot attach to them. They are simply cases. Thus a slight bodily injury, which in the party injured produces serious results beyond the range of calculation will be imputed to the actor simply as what it in appearance was. He is not responsible for the unforeseen consequences. And with this according to the North German Code, § 224.

(b) If the act be a false hypothesis, which, if it were correct, would justify his act, this act cannot generally be considered as a crime. For the will and the deed do not correspond.

(c) If the act be a false hypothesis, which, if correct, would lower the grade of his guilt, the act is to be regarded as correspondingly lowered in responsibility. For instance, A. shoots B., whom he supposes to be a stranger, but who turns out to be his father; this is not a parricide, but mere homicide. So A. and B. go out together to steal, but A. is ignorant that B. is armed. A. is then responsible only as a principal in a mala, as distinguished from an aggravated larceny. To this effect are the codes of the several German States. This law, it will be observed, is much more lenient than our own, which makes conspirators liable for all their co-conspirators' acts committed in pursuit of the common design.

1 Supra, § 38; In re, §§ 487, 495; 1 Hale, 42, 43; 4 Bl. Com. 27; R. v. 
2 Hale, 507. infra, §§ 497-498. See also, Com. v. Frearly, 34 Gray, 65.  
1 See infra, §§ 884-892. This has been held where an ignorant person, finding goods, honestly believes that they are his. E. v. Reed, C. & M. 306; 
2 Merry v. Greene, 7 Mon. & W. 528. See also, Com. v. Frearly, 34 Gray, 65.  
3 R. v. Matthews, 14 Cox C. C. 5.  
4 State v. Matthews, 20 Mo. 56; State 
5 v. Graham, 38 Mo. 490.

7 State v. Gutter, 36 N. J. L. (7 
8 Vroom) 125. infra, § 1576.  
9 The Marianna, Hort, Wheat. 1.  
10 See also Co. v. Wright, Brayt. 118.  
11 Though see U. S. v. Malak Adiel, 1 
12 Row. 210; U. S. v. Packages of Linen, 1 Paine, 128, where forfeit was held

not to be dependent on the state of mind of parties implicated.

1 infra, § 640; R. v. Rickett, 3 Camp. 
2 68; Yates v. People, 32 N. Y. 509; 
3 Logue v. Com. 55 Penn. St. 265. Dunbar, 
4 R. v. Forbes, 10 Cox C. C. 326. See 
5 Com. v. Kirby, 3 Co. 577; Com. v. 
6 Cooley, 3 Gray, 350; People v. Muldoon, 2 Parker, C. R. 48; State v. Bell, 
7 64 N. C. 19; Johnson v. State, 39 Tex. 
9 310, it was held that a courier who 
10 bound fide and non-negligently ejected 
11 a passenger from a car on the ground of non-payment, was not indictable for assault; and see Co. v. Wright, Brayt. 118.
CHAP. III. | IGNORANCE OF FACT. [§ 88.

dead. And an indictment has been sustained in Massachusetts against a man for marrying a woman who believed herself to be a

luring illustration: "A. abducts B., a girl under fifteen years of age, from her father's house, believing, in good faith and on reasonable grounds, that B. is eighteen years of age. A. commits the offence of abduction, although if B. had been eighteen years of age she would not have been within the statute." R. v. Prince, 11 Cox C. C. 134; S. C., 13 Cox C. C. 138.

In R. v. Prince, above cited, it was said by Blackburn, J.: "It appears to us that the intention of the legislature was to punish those who had connection with young girls, with their consent, unless the girl was in fact old enough to give a valid consent. The man who has connection with a child, relying on her consent, does it at his peril, if she is below the statutory age."

In England, we have similar rulings by single judges to the effect that honest belief that the husband was dead would be a defence to an indictment against the wife for bigamy. R. v. Turner, 9 Cox C. C. 145; R. v. Norton, 11 I. & B. 670; but these decisions were subsequently overruled; R. v. Gibbons, 12 Cox C. C. 237. Afterwards, in R. v. Moore, 13 Cox C. C. 354, Denman, J., consulting with Amphlett, L. J., held that "honest belief" might in some cases be a defence. But in a still later case, R. v. Bennett, 14 Cox C. C. 45 (1877), where the jury found that the wife was not railroaded and sentenced to two years' penal servitude.

In Fitzpatrick v. Kelly, 11 R. C. 8 Q. B. 357, it is said that the same rem is may be dispensed with by statute, but that the intention to so provide should be clearly and strongly expressed.

Sir J. F. Stephen, commenting on R. v. Gibbons, 12 Cox C. C. 257, says: "It seems to me that if the belief was founded on positive evidence the case would be otherwise. Suppose, e.g., a woman saw her husband fall overboard in the middle of the Atlantic, and saw a boat go out to search for him and return without him; suppose that she took out administration to his estate, named nothing of him for five years, and then married again; would she be guilty of bigamy if by some strange chance he had escaped? Surely not. I am informed this view was taken by Denman, J., and Amphlett, J., in a case (R. v. Moore) tried at Lincoln Spring Assizes, 1857.


2 It was urged in the argument," said Shaw, C. J., in Cons. v. Orchard, that there was no criminal intent there to be no guilt; and if the former husband was honestly believed to be dead, there could be no criminal intent. The proposition stated is undoubtedly correct in a general sense; but the conclusion drawn from it in this case by no means follows. Whatever one voluntarily does he of course intends. If the statute has made it criminal to do any act under particular circumstances, the party voluntarily doing that act is chargeable with the criminal intent of doing it."
CRIMES.

[BOOK I.

§ 88.]

widow, although eleven years had elapsed since she had last seen or heard from her husband, whom she had left, it being held by the court that the statutory exceptions do not apply to the deserting party. It has been further held, that when a guilty party in a divorce suit marries again without leave of court (this being legally essential) during the life of the other party, and afterward obtains such leave, an honest belief that the second marriage is or has become legal has no effect in making it so, and in protecting the parties. That the defendant honestly believed in the existence of a non-existent divorce is also no defense.

think the proviso in 24 & 25 Vict. c. 100, s. 57 (art. 297), ought clearly to be read, not as excluding the general common law principle stated in this article, but as supplementing and completing it, by providing that a second marriage, after seven years' ignorance as to the life of the first husband or wife, shall not be criminal, although the party so marrying has no positive reason to believe, and perhaps does not believe, that the absent person is dead." The report of the English commissioners of 1879, the rule in R. v. Glibbons was adopted, and this was approved by Sir J. P. Stephen. See his explanation in the South Century for January, 1890. As to scope of Texas statute in this relation, see Nash v. State, 8 Tex. Ap. 64.

In Cancy v. Le Coq, 51 L. T. N. S. 265; 32 W. R. 721, L. R. 15 Q. B. D, 207, where it was held that ignorance that the vendee was drunk is no defense to a charge for selling to a drunkard (the statute creating the offence not containing the word "knowingly"), Stephen, J., said: 'On the other side it has been argued that the maxim of the criminal law, that before a person can be convicted of a crime there must be a 'guilty mind,' applies to this case. This maxim came into use in early times, when the criminal law was in an undeveloped state, for the guidance of those who administered that law, and in those times the maxim may have been of general application. A 'guilty mind' is a necessary element in some crimes, but those crimes have now been defined. The maxim has been superseded in consequence of the greater precision in the definitions of crimes, and now, the question whether a 'guilty mind' is necessary to constitute an offence turns upon the words of each particular statute. The case of Reg. v. Prince (supra) shows that a guilty knowledge is not always necessary to constitute an offence; and Reg. v. Bishop, L. R. 5 Q. B. D. 290, is to the same effect. The same distinction is taken in Attorney-General v. Lockwood, 9 M. & W. 375; Roberts v. Egerton, L. R. 3 Q. B. 484; and Fitzpatrick v. Kelly, L. R. 8 Q. B. 337. And see State v. Hopkins, 53 Vt. 250. 1 Com. v. Thompson, 6 Allen, 591; Com. v. Thompson, 11 Id. 23.

1 Thompson v. Thompson, 114 Miss. 596. See infra § 1695.

2 State v. Goodnow, 65 Me. 50; Hood v. State, 25 Ind. 263; Davis v. State, 13 Ind. 216. See, however, Squire v. State, 20 Ind. 455, where it was held that an honest belief by a man that his first wife had been divorced from him was a defense, when he had made diligent inquiries which sustained this view.

§ 88.

CHAP. III.

IGNORANCE OF FACT.

[BOOK I.

§ 88.

 Numerous illustrations to the same effect may be drawn from prosecutions for violations of the laws making indelible the sale of liquors under certain conditions. It is no defense, for instance, to an indictment for keeping or selling adulterated or intoxicating liquors that the defendant did not believe them to be intoxicating or adulterated. So, on an indictment for selling adulterated milk, the defendant is not protected by ignorance of the adulteration, or even by belief that the milk was pure. And the same rule applies to indictments for selling other deleterious drinks.

In several states selling intoxicating liquors to minors is indictable by statute, and in such cases, arises the question, whether the defendant knew that the vendee was a minor. Here, again, we have the rule before us applied, it having been repeatedly held that in cases in which knowledge is not part of the statutory offense, ignorance in this respect, coupled even with an honest belief that the vendee was of full age, is no defense; and the same rule applies to all cases of dealing illegally with minors.

It is also no defense to an indictment for selling to persons of in-temperate habits that the defendant did not know that the vendee was of in-temperate habits; though it is otherwise when the statute


makes the offence to be selling to persons of known intemperate habits, in which case knowledge is an ingredient of the prosecutor's case. 2

Analogous cases have arisen under statutes making it indictable to abduct, seduce, or violate girls under a specific age. Here, also, it is no defence that the defendant mistook the girl's age. 3 We have recently had a signal illustration of this application, where the rule was affirmed by the great majority of the English judges. The defendant was convicted under 24 & 25 Vict. of unlawfully taking an unmarried girl under sixteen years out of her father's possession and against his will. It was proved by the defendant that he bona fide believed, and had reasonable grounds for believing, that the girl at the time of the act was over sixteen. Cockburn, C. J., Kelly, C. R., Bramwell, Clesby, and Amphlett, BB.; Blackburn, Mellon, Lush, Grove, Quinn, Denman, Archibald, Field, and Lindley, JJ., held that the defence was no avail, and that the conviction was right. The sole dissentient was Brett, J. 4 A similar ruling is to be found in the Iowa reports, it being held in that State that knowledge that a child is under ten years is not necessary to convict a defendant of the statutory offence of assaulting a child under ten years. 5 And it has been held in England, by the Court for Crown Cases Reserved, that the defendant's belief that the patients received were not lunatics, is no defence to an indictment for receiving lunatics without license. 6 In Missouri, also, it is no defence to a suit for marrying minors that the defendant believed them to be of full age. 7 Nor will the defendant be at liberty to prove that the minor appeared of full age. "His honest mistake in this regard will not protect him. The law explicitly de-

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1 Smith v. State, 55 Ala. 1. See Crabtree v. State, 30 Ohio St. 382.
2 R. v. Booth, 12 Cox C. C. 231; R. v. Officer, 10 Id. 403; R. v. Robbins, 1 C. & K. 456; State v. Redl, 8 Ohio, 447; Lawrence v. Com., 20 Grat. 845.
4 State v. Newton, 44 Iowa, 45.
8 U. S. v. Thompson, 12 Fed. Rep. 245; State v. Bailey, 13 Md. 181; Western R. R. v. Fulcon, 4 Swed., 585; though see Duncan v. State, 7 Humph. 148; Com. v. Stout, 7 B. Mon. 247. In Duncan v. State, and Com. v. Stout, the indictments were under statutes prohibiting officers of vessels from transporting "colored persons" in which statute the question of color was left open.
9 Infra, § 1811.
10 Infra, § 1335.
11 Infra, § 401.
§ 88.] CRIMES. [BOOK I.

for a libel that the defendant was ignorant of the contents of the libel; or that his motives were scientific or philanthropic.

As diverging from the line of these cases just stated may be mentioned a series of rulings in Ohio, Indiana, and Texas. In Ohio, the precedent was set in a case rather political than judicial in its type. James G. Birney, conspicuous in the old anti-slavery agitation, was indicted, in 1807, for harboring a fugitive slave. The statute under which the prosecution was instituted did not make either the scienter or the intent essential to the offence, though it might well be argued that as this was a statute in derogation of liberty, and as in a free State no one has a right to view another man as other than a free man, the case was exceptional, and notice of the enslaved status of the fugitive must be brought home to the defendant in order to charge him with the statutory offence. Under the pressure of this argument the Supreme Court held, that, to make out the case of the prosecution, it was essential to prove that the defendant knew that the party harbored by him was a fugitive slave. In a subsequent case this ruling was held to establish the general principle, that there can be no conviction of a criminal offence without proof of guilty knowledge, and hence of guilty intent. The same view has been taken in Indiana, in Georgia, and, under local statute, in Texas.

The function of imposing indictability on pernicious acts irrespective of intent is one which has been exercised by legislatures, not only frequently but from necessity. It may be indispensable to public safety that storing of gunpowder, or of highly inflammable oils, in exposed localities should be prohibited; and as in such cases the statutes could be easily eluded if a scienter be requisite to conviction, the policy that requires the enactment of the statute requires also that the statute should relieve the prosecution from proving a

scienter. Sometimes this is done by an express clause in the statute, as where a woman concealing the death of a bastard child was, by the old statutes, "deemed" to have been concerned in killing it, and where it is provided that persons selling spirituous liquors shall be "deemed" common sellers of the same, or that delivery of such liquors shall be proof of sale, or that persons carrying concealed weapons shall be presumed to carry them knowingly. Such provisions are constitutional, as concerning matters of process, and are illustrated by statutes prescribing that a person not heard of for a specific period shall be presumed to be dead, and that debts not acknowledged within a specific period shall be presumed to be paid. If this can be done by an express clause, it can be done by implication; and if so, where the legislature imposes a specific penalty on a person doing a particular thing, irrespective of scienter, it will be the duty of the courts to enforce the prohibition. The question is one of policy; and this may be taken into consideration when the legislative meaning is sought. That a man should be convicted of a malicious act without proof of malice, or of a negligent act without proof of negligence, is of course an enormity which no legislature could be supposed to direct. But it is otherwise as to certain mischievous acts which it may be a sound policy to prohibit arbitrarily, because they imperil public safety (as, for example, the selling of intoxicating drinks and defective storing of explosive compounds), and because to require scienter to be proved would be to defeat the object of the statutes, since in many cases, and those the most dangerous of the class, it would be out of the power of the prosecution to prove scienter beyond reasonable doubt. The legislature may properly say, "in such cases we presume scienter; whoever deals with these dangerous agencies does so at his risk." The same reasoning applies to illicit intercourse with young girls, a case above given. The act is itself an invasion of good morals, and if indulged in brings with it its own risks. Even at common law ignorance as to aggravating facts cannot be set up as a defence, as, on a trial for burglary, is the case with ignorance that the building entered was a dwelling-house. A fortiori this is the case when a statute, on grounds of public policy, makes scienter irrelevant. It is also to

1 Curtis v. Mussey, 6 Gray, 251; People v. Wilson, 64 Ill. 195. 1 infra, § 149.
3 Birney v. State, 8 Ohio, 250.
4 Crabtree v. State, 29 Ohio St. 352; Farrell v. State, 32 Ohio St. 455.
5 Brown v. State, 24 Ind. 113; Farbuck v. State, 41 Ind. 192; Robinson v. State, 61 Ind. 236. But see, as qualifying above, Holmes v. State, 58 Ind. 138.
7 Watson v. State, 13 Tex. Ap. 73; Presbiter v. State, 13 Ind. 95, which last case was under a statute making it indictable to sell knowingly to a minor.
8 Supra, § 23 n.
9 Supra, § 1028.
10 See Whart. on Cr. Ev. 715; Halsted v. State, 12 Vroom, 346, with note in 1 Cr. Law Mag. 340.
be observed that to declare that honest ignorance of fact is a defense would extend the same privilege, in many cases, to honest ignorance of law. Ignorance, for instance, that the State prohibits by indictment dealing with minors is morally as good a defense, in cases where the party dealt with has apparently reached majority, as is ignorance that such party is a minor. In both cases the defendant is ignorant that he is doing an illegal thing. That in the former case it is conceded that such ignorance is no defense shows that honest belief that an illegal act is legal is no necessary ground for acquittal. We cannot, therefore, lay down the rule that ignorance of inculpatory facts shall be always a defense, without extending the same immunity to ignorance of inculpatory law. And if we cannot so extend this immunity, then we must hold that ignorance does not necessarily acquit when scienter is not an essential of the offense.  

§ 89. Even where, as affecting intent, ignorance of fact is set up, the defense is unavailable where the defendant, by the exercise of due diligence, could have become aware of his mistake. Of course, if the defendant was ignorant of facts from a knowledge of which alone could mitigate or justify his conduct, and has been convicted of a malicious crime. But in such case he may be convicted of negligence when his ignorance was culpable, and was productive of harm. A man who negligently mistakes a visitor for a burglar, and kills the visitor, cannot, indeed, be convicted of murder, but he can be convicted of manslaughter. And, as a general rule, if the defendant is chargeable with negligence in not acquainting himself with the true facts of the case, his ignorance is no defense.  

It is certain that ignorance is, as a rule, no excuse as regards the liabilities of a quasi-criminal kind which arise under penal statutes (Carter v. McLaren, 3 R. 2 So. & D. 125), or such as are purely civil.”—Peck v. Cont., Wald's ed., 385, citing Fowler v. Hol- lins, 3 R. 7 Q. B. 616; Hollins v. Fowler, 3 R. 7 H. L. 757; Coles v. Clark, 9 Cach. 399; Courtis v. Case, 32 Vt. 232; Hoffman v. Crow, 22 Wend. 285; Pearson v. Smith, 31 N. Y. 477; Koch v. Brantch, 41 Mo. 543.  

* See Whart. on Negligence, § 443; Hubbard v. Maclans, 4 B. & S. 558; Com. v. Villard, 2 Allen, 512; People v. Reed, 47 Barb. 235.  

In Banker v. People, 37Misc. 4, it was held that under a statute forbidding any person to join others in marriage, knowing he is not authorized to do so, or knowing of any legal impediment to the proposed marriage, actual personal knowledge is not required; but it was held that if a party so offending neglects to take the testimony which he is required to take, and re-

CHAP. III. \n
IGNORANCE OF FACT.  

no defense, for instance, to a physician indicted for malpractice, that he was ignorant of facts with which it was his duty to become acquainted. Nor is it a defense to an engineer for negligent homicide that his negligence arose from ignorance of facts which he ought to have known. Nor is it a defense to an indictment for perjury that the defendant believed what he swore to be true, if he had no probable cause for so believing; nor can persons selling dangerous compounds, required by law to be subject to certain tests, set up as a defense that they were ignorant that the tests were not satisfied. It is otherwise, in cases of this class, where the party charged has used due diligence to inform himself. Of course, the case here considered is of a sort where the omission to take the required testimony is itself a breach of duty, not merely a failure to perform a condition precedent to an act not done. And the omission is an intentional failure to perform, and therefore the requisite knowledge is to be inferred from the conduct of the party, unless he can show that he had no knowledge of the circumstances which he is required to take.  

lh upon less satisfactory oral statements, such neglect will be imputed to illegal intent. “No doubt,” said Cooley, C. J., “where guilty knowledge is an ingredient in the offense, the knowledge must be found; but actual, positive knowledge is not usually required. In many cases to require this would be to nullify the penal law. The case of knowingly passing counterfeited money is an illustration; very often the guilty party has no actual knowledge of the spurious character of the paper, but he is put upon his guard by circumstances which, with felonious intent, he disregards. Another illustration is the case of receiving stolen goods knowing them to be stolen; the guilt is made out by circumstances which fall short of bringing home to the defendant actual knowledge. He buys, perhaps, of a notorious thief, under circumstances of secrecy and at a nominal price; and the jury rightfully hold that these circumstances apprise him that a felony must have been committed. Andrews v. People, 60 Ill. 554; Schriber v. State, 23 Ohio St. 130. If by the statute now under construction actual personal knowledge is required, the statute may as well be repealed: for items seldom be established even in the grossest cases. How many justices are likely to know the exact age of all the girls in their township approaching the age of consent? or even of all those in their immediate neighborhood, except as they rely upon reputation or family report? Had he taken the proper evidence under oath and been deceived, perhaps he would have been justified, even though he had had reason to believe the age of consent had not been reached; but where he neglects the testimony which he is required to take, and pretends to rely upon the less satisfactory oral statements which he is not required to take, the neglect may well be imputed to illegal intent.”  

That in police prosecutions the scienter need not be proved, see supra, § 23 a.  


2 U. S. v. Taylor, 8 McLean, 428.  

3 R. v. Muson, 10 Mol. 152; R. v. Schleicher, 10 Q. B. 670; R. v. Fe- rrie, 1 Leach, 324 (33 ed.); State v. Gates, 17 N. H. 373; Com. v. Cornish, 8 Blum. 249; Com. v. Crock, 1 Rob. (Va.) 729; State v. Knox, Phil. (N. C.) 532; In re, 1242, and cases there cited.  


5 Hearne v. Garon, 2 B. & E. 66.  


119
where the statute makes the scienter essential to the offence, then the scienter must be proved.1

§ 90. In prosecutions for negligent exercise of a specialty, a person is not required to know facts outside of his profession. A person, for instance, not claiming to be skilled in medicine, and giving notice of his ignorance, cannot, if called upon to act as a medical attendant, be held responsible for his ignorance of the specialty, unless it appear that he displaced, by his rash acceptance of the post, a more competent person from undertaking its duties.2 And, generally, we may hold that where a person is employed, not as a specialist, but as a non-specialist, undertaking a business of which he Professes to know nothing, he can only be held liable for gross negligence, or culpa iusta, consisting of ignorance of facts which every ordinary person ought to know.3

V. CORPORATIONS.

§ 91. In the ancient case of The Abbot of St. Benet's v. The Mayor, etc., of Norwich,4 Pigot said arguendo that a "corporation cannot do a personal tort to another, as a battery or wound..."

1 R. v. Sleep, 8 Cox C. C. 472. See U. S. v. McKim, 8 Pitts. 165.

Subtle distinctions arise in this relation which in the Roman law are noticed under the titles of Error in iudice, and Auctorat delicti. Error in iudice is where A designs to shoot B, but by mistake shoots C, mistaking C for B, or where A designs to steal B’s property, but by mistake steals C’s property. Auctorat delicti is where A designs to shoot B, recognizes and aims at B, but accidentally shoots C, who at the moment happens to intervene. In other words, the error may arise from a mistake of the actor, or from a defection of his aim. Error of the former class exists when the object at which the actor aims is not that which he supposes it to be. Error of the second class exists when the means used by the actor glance from the intended object, and injure an unintended person. As to the first case, we may generally remark that when the object actually injured has the same legal consequences as the object intended, then, at common law, the fact that there was a mistake as to the victim is no defence. In re, §§ 109, 120.

As to the auctorat delicti more intricate questions arise which will also be hereafter considered. As a general rule we may here say that an injury designed for B, which is accidentally diverted from B and falls on C, cannot logically be regarded as malicious so far as concerns C. Under such circumstances, A may be held liable for a malicious attempt to injure B, and for a negligent injury of C. In re, §§ 110, 111, 119, 117, 128.

Wharton on Neg. §§ 590, 7. Wharton, §§ 390-1, and cases cited supra, § 50.

Y. B. 21 Ed. IV, 7, 13.

§ 91] CORPORATIONS. [§ 91.

ing, nor can they do treason or felony, so far as the corporation is concerned.7 Much the same language is used in the case of Sut- ton’s Hospital,1 and in Orr v. The Bank,2 it was expressly ruled that a corporation, as such, could not be held guilty of an assault and battery. It has been more recently held in England that such a body is not subject to be indicted for a violation of the Foreign Establishment Act.3 And Lord Holt is reported, in an anonymous case, to have laid it down generally that a corporation is not indictable at all, though its individual members are.4 This general proposition of Lord Holt has, however, received considerable qualification in modern times, and is now limited to cases of felonies, assaults, riots,5 and malicious wrongs.6 We may, therefore, hold that a corporation may be indicted for a breach of duty imposed on it by law, though not for a felony or for public wrongs involving personal violence, as riots or assaults.7 Thus an indictment will lie at common law against a corporation for not repairing a road, a bridge,

1 5 Coke’s Rep. 263.
2 6 Ohio, 36.
3 King of the Two Sicilies v. Wilcox, 14 Jur. 751.
4 Anon., 12 Mod. 569. In the State v. Great Works Co., 39 Maine, 41, Weston, C. J., states the law thus: “A corporation is created by law for certain beneficial purposes. It cannot therefore commit a crime nor misconduct by any passive or affirmative act, or incite others to do so, as a corporation. While assembled at a corporate meeting, a majority may vote, entered upon their records, require an agent to commit a battery; but if he does, it cannot be regarded as a corporate act for which the corporation can be indicted. It would be standing aside altogether from their corporate powers. If indictable as a corporation for an offence thus indicated by them, the innocent dissenting minority would become equally amenable to punishment with the guilty majority. Such only as take part in the measure should be

Corporations Indictable for Breach of Duty.

1 5 Coke’s Rep. 263.
2 6 Ohio, 36.
3 King of the Two Sicilies v. Wilcox, 14 Jur. 751.
4 Anon., 12 Mod. 569. In the State v. Great Works Co., 39 Maine, 41, Weston, C. J., states the law thus: “A corporation is created by law for certain beneficial purposes. It cannot therefore commit a crime nor misconduct by any passive or affirmative act, or incite others to do so, as a corporation. While assembled at a corporate meeting, a majority may vote, entered upon their records, require an agent to commit a battery; but if he does, it cannot be regarded as a corporate act for which the corporation can be indicted. It would be standing aside altogether from their corporate powers. If indictable as a corporation for an offence thus indicated by them, the innocent dissenting minority would become equally amenable to punishment with the guilty majority. Such only as take part in the measure should be

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9 R. v. Wilcox, 1 Sim. N. S. 301; Com. v. Proprietors, 2 Gray, 399.
or a wharf, where by statute or prescription it is bound so to do; or for disobedience to an order of justice for the construction of works in pursuance of a statute, and this, though a specific remedy be given for the breach of duty, by the act of incorporation, if there be no negative words. In some jurisdictions in this country, it is true, it was once held that a corporation cannot be indicted for a nuisance in obstructing highways or rivers by its agents, the ground being the now exploded distinction between nuisance and nonfeasance. But in England, after a full consideration of the authorities, a contrary principle was established. It was ruled there that an indictment lay at common law against an incorporated railway company for cutting through and obstructing a highway in a manner not conformable to the powers conferred on it by act of parliament. The case was put on general grounds; and the distinctions which had been attempted between nonfeasance and misfeasance were overthrown. Indeed, since it has been settled against some of the earlier authorities that trespass or ease, for a private nuisance, would lie against a corporation, no good reason can be assigned why the same sets, when to the injury of public at large, may not equally be the basis of criminal proceedings. And such is now

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**Chap. III.**

**Corporations.**

generally considered to be the law when the object is the imposition of a fine on the corporation estate, or the abatement of a nuisance, as for a nonfeasance. But, at common law, under an indictment against a corporation as such there can be no punishment inflicted on the members of the corporation. They must be indicted personally to be punished corporeally.
§ 93. CRIMES.

In several jurisdictions in this country, criminal proceedings against railroad corporations for negligent injuries are prescribed and regulated by statute. Statutes have also been passed making it indictable for corporations to act except under certain limitations.

§ 92. The old mode of proceeding against a corporation as such, to compel an appearance to an indictment, was by distress for fine and distress.

Penalty is infinite; 4 while under recent statutes the course adopted is to summon and thus bring into court the proper officers of the corporations proceeded against, enforcing the process by attachment or distraint. 4 A fine is the usual penalty inflicted, though, according to Lord Holt, in an indictment against the inhabitants of a county for not repairing, an attachment may go against all to "catch as many as one can of them." In such case, however, the indictment is against the inhabitants individually. And the individual members of a corporation, concurren in a wrongful act, may be severally indictable as a cumulative remedy.

§ 95. Quasi corporations, as counties, townships, parishes, have long been held subject to indictment for a neglect of the duties imposed on them by law; as for not maintaining a road or bridge, or for not opening them when laid.


In New York the Revised Statutes provide that an indictment may be found against a corporation for some of its officers, since those statutes provide that "whenever an indictment shall be found against any corporation it shall be "ordered by the summons to appear and plead," and that if it neglects "a distraint," as a procedure in the nature of an execution, "shall issue against its property to enforce the appearance." This "distraint" may be in any amount the court shall direct. See Law Ins. Co. v. State, 60 Mass. 395.

§ 94. PERSONS UNDER COMPELATION.

out. And it is now well settled that such corporations are indictable for a neglect of a duty imposed on them by statute to repair roads, even though other remedies be given, if such remedies are not exclusive.

VI. PERSONS UNDER COMPELATION.

§ 94. Compulsion may be viewed in two aspects: (1) Where the immediate agent is physically forced to do the injury, as where his hand is seized by a person of superior strength, and is used, against his will, to strike a blow, in which case no guilt attaches to the person so coerced.

(2) Where the force applied is that of authority or fear. Thus, where a person not intending wrong, is swept along by a party of persons whom he cannot resist, he is not responsible if he is compelled to do wrong by threats on the part of the offenders instantly to kill him, or to do him grievous bodily harm if he refuses; but threats of future injury, or the command of any one not the husband of the offender, do not excuse any offence. Thus it is a defence to an indictment for treason that the defendant was acting in obedience to a de facto government, or to such concurrent and overbearing sense of the community in which he resided, as to imperil his life in case of dissent.

Under the Roman law, when a subordinate acts in obedience to a superior's lawful commands, the defence respondent superior
§ 94. CRIMES. [BOOK I.

Applies. 1 With us, also, a command, to be a defence, must be lawful. 2 "In all cases," says Sir J. F. Stephen, "in which force is used against the person of another, both the person who orders such force to be used and the person using that force are responsible for its use, and neither of them is justified by the circumstance that he acts in obedience to orders given him by a civil or military superior; but the fact that he did so act, and the fact that the order was apparently lawful, are in all cases relevant to the question whether he believed, in good faith and on reasonable grounds, in the existence of a state of facts which would have justified what he did apart from such orders." 3 But unless the order were one which the subaltern was required by the law of the land to obey, 4 or unless physical compulsion were applied, 5 the superior's order is no defence.


3 Dig. C. L. art. 202.

Of this are given the following illustrations:

(1) "A., a marine, is ordered by his superior officer on board a man-of-war to prevent boats from approaching the ship, and has ammunition given him for that purpose. Boats persisting, after repeated warnings, in approaching the ship, A. fires at one and kills B. This is murder in A., although he fired under the impression that it was his duty to do so, as the act was not necessary for the preservation of the ship though desirable for the maintenance of discipline." R. v. Thomas, 1 Russ. Cr. 529; A. M. & S. 442. (2) "A., the driver of an engine, orders R., the stoker (whose duty it is to obey his orders), not to stop the engine. The train runs into another in consequence, and C. is killed. It is justified by A.'s order. R. v. Trainer, 4 F. & F. 105; 1 Russ. Cr. 5th ed. 837. 838. The language of Wilkes, J., in this case, seems to be a little too wide, unless it is taken in connection with the particular facts." For malicious acts the subaltern is personally responsible. Infra, § 411.


§ 94 a. The subject of marital compulsion has just been considered. 5 The compulsion of a master is no defence to a servant, when charged with crime, unless such compulsion deprived the servant of his free agency. 6 An agent, also, on the same ground, cannot set up as a defence his principal's command. 7 Nor with the same limitation is a parent's order to a child a defence. 8 VII. PERSONS UNDER NECESSITY: SELF-DEFENCE.

§ 95. Necessity is a defence when it is shown that the act charged was done to avoid an evil both serious and irreparable; that there was no other adequate means of escape; and that the remedy was not disproportioned to the evil. 9 Homicide through necessity—i. e., when the life of one person can be saved only by the sacrifice of another—has frequently been spoken of as Right against Right, though, according to the more recent opinion in Germany, it is more properly Privilege against Privilege, or Goods against Goods. (Gott genommen.*) When two privileges, equally protected by law, collide, the question arises which is to yield. And the answer is, the lesser must yield to the greater. The greater is that which includes and conditions the other; the present and immediate is greater than the future and possible; if both are equal, self-sacrifice may require the possession of the one to yield to the possession of the other; but the law only requires this surrender in cases where one person is arrayed against several. Otherwise,

1 Infra, §§ 283, 310.


3 Supra, § 78.


5 The agent or servant cannot be excused for a violation of the criminal law because the act was done in the course of his agency or servitude. 8 Roos v. State, 23 Ala. 10, citing Winter v. State, 30 Ala. 22.

6 See Humphrey v. Douches, 10 Vt. 71; People v. Richmond, 29 Cal. 414.

7 Stephen's Crim. Dig. art. 32. See R. v. Stratton, 21 St. Tr. 1045, cited by Sir J. F. Stephen.

8 Need has been frequently spoken of as Right against Right, though, according to the more recent opinion in Germany, it is more properly Privilege against Privilege, or Goods against Goods. (Gott genommen.*) When two privileges, equally protected by law, collide, the question arises which is to yield. And the answer is, the lesser must yield to the greater. The greater is that which includes and conditions the other; the present and immediate is greater than the future and possible; if both are equal, self-sacrifice may require the possession of the one to yield to the possession of the other; but the law only requires this surrender in cases where one person is arrayed against several. Otherwise,
§ 96. Crimes. 

of another—will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. The issue, it should be observed, is not simply whether a particular life is to be sacrificed in case of necessity, but whether it is right for a person to commit a crime in order to save his life. The canon law prescribes that a person whose life is dependent on immediate relief may set up such necessity as a defence to a prosecution for illegally seizing such relief. To the same general effect speak high English and American authorities. Life, however, can usually only be taken, under the plea of necessity, when necessary for the preservation of the life of the party setting up the plea, or for the preservation of the lives of relatives in the first degree.

The same reasoning justifies a crew, in cases of necessity, in rising and depositing a master; a prisoner in escaping from a burning prison; a citizen in joining a rebellion, when otherwise his life would be imperilled; a vessel in entering a blockaded port or breaking home revenue laws. On the same reasoning a nuisance may be temporarily tolerated, and when any important authorized industry would be imperilled by the observance of laws prohibiting labor on the Sabbath, these laws may be for the occasion disobeyed.

though there may be an invasion of privileges, there is no invasion of law. Merek, in Holt, ii. 137.

2 See citations infra, § 510.
3 See Broom's Leg. Max. 10; 1 East P. C. 70; though see 4 Bl. Com. 31; 1 Hale, 565.
4 Royal Treati, ii. 222. 2 Supra, 24. 5 Bernard, De impunitate propter summam necessitatem, etc. (1861); Goeb, Lehrbuch, ii. 225; and an interesting compendium in Holtenhoff, Rapp. ii. 180.
5 See infra, § 510.
6 See infra, § 175.
7 See infra, §§ 178, 179.
8 See supra, §§ 180, 181.
9 See supra, §§ 182, 183.
10 See R. v. McCarty, 2 Hall, 33; S. v. Thomas, 12 Wall, 357. So in submitting to a rebellion, and paying to the de facto authorities money con-

and property may be destroyed when necessary to avert any serious danger to the community. The law of cases of necessity is not likely to be well furnished with precise rules; necessity creates the law, it supersedes rules, and whatever is reasonable and just in such cases is likewise legal. It is not to be considered as matter of surprise, therefore, if much instigated rule is not to be found on such subjects.

§ 96. It has been sometimes said that necessity can never be advanced as a defence when the necessity is the result of the defendant’s own culpable act. This, however, as Bernet demonstrates, cannot be accepted as universally true. Thus a person who negligently causes a house to catch fire will not, by this negligence, be barred from setting up necessity as a defence, if, in rushing from a burning chamber, he should crush another in the throng; nor would a trespasser, who, upon stealing sheep, should fall overboard, and in his struggle to save himself upset a boat, be barred from setting up necessity, if life should thereby be accidentally lost, because his act which put him

teach self-sacrifice. It permits, as much for the interests of good order as from its inability to teach pure morality, its subjects to repel, under due restrictions, assaults on their persons or property, even though in repelling these assaults the aggressor is put in danger of his life. But self-defence, it must be remembered, is not limited to assaults. A person whose house is on fire may assist without incurring the charge of felony, the hose of a neighbor as a means of extinguishing the fire. A person who is bathing, and whose clothes have been stolen, may snatch up clothing he may find on a clothes-line, so as not to be obliged to enter into a village naked. For these two examples I am indebted to Bernet, § 85.

In Gilbert v. Stone, Ablyn, 50 Style, 75, decided in 1648, it was held that a householder, who had no defense to a man for breaking into another’s close, and taking a horse, that he was pursued by twelve men, and was in fear of his life. But this would not be good law in a case in which the defendant acted convulsively under a necessity he did not provoke and could not avoid. And even were we to concede civil liability, yet, supposing that it should appear that from an unprovoked attack this could be the only way of escaping with life, no criminal prosecution could be maintained.

In Com. v. Brooks, 20 Mass. 451, it was held that seizure by a duex facto government of money belonging to a legitimate government was a defense to a suit by the latter against a custodian not implicated in the seizure.

3 See, to this effect, the Argus, 1 Gil- lis, 150; B. v. D'anett, 1 C. & K. 428.
4 Lehrbach d. Strafrechts, 140.
§ 97. As will hereafter be seen more fully, the right of self-defense can only be appealed to to ward off a danger that is actual and immediate; though in determining what is immediate we must be guided by the conditions of each particular case. The fact, however, that an attack has been expected does not preclude me from repelling it when it comes. A public man, for instance, as was the case with the Duke of Wellington during the Reform Bill riots, may have good grounds to expect an attack on his house; but this does not prevent him from vigorously defending his house when the assault is actually made. It has also been said, that the right does not exist when the party attacked had an opportunity of calling on the public authorities to intervene. This, however, is not universally true. As there are few attacks which the injured party could not have more or less clearly expected, it would be incumbent on him, if the position here contested is sound, to call on the government for protection in every case, or else to lose the right.

But to call on the government for aid is only necessary when such aid can be promptly and effectually given. There are many cases of suspicion, also, in which a prudent man would decline to call in governmental aid, feeling that the case is not sufficiently strong to justify so extreme a remedy. As a rule, therefore, we cannot say that self-defense cannot be resorted to when the party asserting the right could have protected himself by calling in the government. Of this position we have abundant illustrations in cases of nuisance which a private citizen is authorized to abate without appealing to the law.  

Review, for 1879, p. 368; condensed in the 6th edition of the present treatise, § 97.

That the English law of self-defense has fluctuated in sympathy with political economy, see article in Crim. Law Mag. for Jan. 1852.

1 See R. v. Scully, 1 C. & P. 319.  
2 See infra, §§ 487-490.  
3 See infra, § 485.  
4 Beatty v. Gilbaut, 47 L. T. N. S. 134, Q. B. D. 1882, cited more fully infra, § 1355, where it is held that the fact that the leaders of the "Salvation Army" expected that its meetings would be attacked by a mob, did not make it necessary for them to disperse or invoke police aid.  
5 Right may be exercised even though public authorities might have been called upon previously.

§ 97 a. The distinction between necessity and self-defense consists principally in the fact that while self-defense exonerates the repulse of a wrong, necessity justifies the invasion of a right. It is, therefore, essential to self-defense that it should be a defense against a present unlawful attack, while necessity may be maintained though destroying conditions that are lawful. In self-defense the attack must be upon interests which it is the duty of the party assaulted to defend. But the right is not limited to attacks on his own person. Whatever the law places under his protection, he may defend according to the law. Self-defense, by an individual also differs from preventive punishment by a State in this, that the former binds the crime, and is prospective, the latter punishes for the crime, and is retrospective. Since to constitute self-defense the attack must be unlawful, as a general rule, the right does not exist as against an officer armed with a legal warrant. Children, also, cannot exercise this right against their parents; nor pupils against their teachers; nor apprentices against their masters; provided the limits of the right of correction by the assilant be not overstepped. It follows that there can be no self-defense against self-defense. Self-defense is only permissible against an unlawful attack. If A., unlawfully attacked by B., resorts to violent means to repel the aggression, his repulse of B. is lawful; but if B., in pursuance of the struggle, deliberately and unnecessarily renalues the attack on A., this is not self-defense, since self-defense only obtains against an unlawful attack.
§ 98. Whoever possesses a right is entitled to defend that right.

No matter what may be the character of the right, it cannot lawfully be taken from the owner by violence; and violence applied for this purpose he may violently resist.


2 See Brightman v. Bristol, 36 Me. 250; F barren v. Lee, 71 III. 193.

3 In re, §§ 301-2, 1100, 1105; Over- door v. Lewis, 1 W. & S. 99. In Reddick v. Maitland, 44 L. T. R. (N. S.) 424, C. D. 1859, the rightful owner of a house forcibly ejected a person wrongfully in possession, and injured his furniture. It was held that the violent entry of the rightful owner might be an offense under 5 Richard II. stat. 1, c. 3, but that no damages could be obtained for the forcible entry. Damages were, however, given for the injury to the furni- ture. See Newton v. Harvard, 1 Scott N. R. 474. In re, § 1190.

4 De Bent v. Bowerbank, 2 Camp. 511.

5 Lord Hale, 2 B. & C. 311.

6 As illustrating the principle in the text may be mentioned a case in North- Carolina decided in 1878, where it was held that the owner of land has the right to arrest and repossess a nuisance, a person using loud and obscene language on the highway in front of such land; and when the person so offending is armed with a pistol, the limitation sollice seems does not apply. State v. Davis, 20 N. C. 381; citing State v. Perry, 6 Jones, 9; State v. Rob- bins, 78 N. C. 431.

§ 99. The Roman law is emphatic on this point, making the right to defend one of the incidents of the right to possess. "Vim vi repellere licet, idque ius natura comparatur." "Ut vim atque iniuriam propulsamus, iuris gentium est." "Vim vi defendere omnes leges omniqve iura permitturn." Nothing, as has been well said, can be more general than these utterances. In our own law there have been tendencies to limit the right to the defence of home, of person, and of relatives in the first degree. No doubt there is a peculiar sanctity attached to these conditions which justifies even the taking of life in their defence. But this circumstance must not make us insensible to the fact that whenever a right has any value, then its possessor may protect it forcibly from assault.

§ 99. It has also been said that a party who can fly from an agressor is bound to fly, and cannot set up self-defence.

This, as we will hereafter see, is so far true that an as- sailed party cannot, unless driven to the wall, take his assailant's life. But as an elementary proposition it is not true that if I can evade an attack by flight then I must fly to evade the attack. If this were the law, few persons in times of trouble could remain at their posts. This, however, by confining the right of self-defence to attacks of which there could be no prior suspicion, would virtually abrogate the right. For it would be to say that the right of self-defence only exists when there is nothing to defend. And besides, the fundamental principle is that right is not required to yield to wrong.

1 L. i. § 27 D. de vi.


4 Barlow, § 87.

5 In re, §§ 420, 429-508: and see particularly § 501.

6 In re, § 420.

7 This is a settled rule of Roman law. See Ulpianus, Digest, 133. 24; and see ex eo cited infra, §§ 499-501. That an assault in defence of personal right is justifiable, see infra, §§ 501-621. R. v. MITTON, 3 C. & R. 421; R. v. DRISCOLL, C. & M. 214; State v. ELLIOTT, 11 N. H. 440; State v. MILLER, 12 N. H. 437; Com. v. KENNARD, 8 Pick. 132; Com. v. CLARK, 2 Mass. (Mass.) 23; Com. v. FOWLER, 7 Met. (Mass.) 550; Com. v. DOWNS, 107 Mass. 249; Com. v. Mann, 116 Mass. 58; Fitsimons v. People, 69 N. Y. 101; Parsons v. Brown, 15 Barb. 500; State v. GIBSON, 19 Irel. 214; State v. CORYTNIGHT, 79 N. C. 77. See, however, Hendrix v. State, 10 Ala. 148. The law is thus stated by Sir J. F. Stephen (Steph. Dig. Cr. L. art. 200): "Any person unlawfully assaulted may defend himself on the spot by any force short of the in- tentional infliction of death or grievous bodily harm; and if the assault upon him is, notwithstanding, continued,

133
§ 100. We must remand to future sections the discussion of the question, what degree of violence may be used in defence of home. It is only necessary here to repeat what has just been said, that the right to property of all kinds may be forcibly defended when it is forcibly attacked, and that the degree of force to be used in the defence is to be measured not by the value of the article, but by the degree of force used in the attack. Were it otherwise, the property of the poor would be discriminated against, and the right to defend property limited only to those rich enough to possess property of value. Nor is it possible to gauge our attachment to any piece of property by its mere money standard. An article of no money value may convey greatly to my comfort and happiness; and beside this, I have a right to repel spoliations even of things of little value, on the ground that yielding to spoliations in little things is a yielding to spoliations in all things.

The right extends also to mere possession, so that the bare possessor of a thing has a right forcibly to repel a forcible attempt to take it from him. Thus, a party having a right to the use of a well, though such right be not exclusive, may repel by force an intruder attempting to draw from it.

§ 101. An interesting question, which will be hereafter more fully discussed, arises as to the extension of the right of self-defence to injuries to honor. The cases which have heretofore been adjudicated in this relation have been mainly those in which persons whose character has been assailed have assaulted or killed the assailant. On these facts it has been uniformly held, as an elementary principle, that no words, no matter how insulting, will excuse an assault. At the same time insults of all kinds, words as well as blows, are to be taken into consideration in determining how far hot blood can be considered to exist. It is easy, also, to conceive of cases in which a party insulted is entitled to remove the instrument of insult; and we may adopt as sound law a ruling already noticed, that a person

he is in the position of a person assaulted in the employment of lawful force against the person of another. In infra, § 574.

§ 102. A future danger, as we will hereafter see, cannot be anticipated by an attack upon the expected aggressor, unless this be the only means of warding off the attack. Nor is the party attacked excusable in using greater force than is necessary to repel the attack, remembering that the danger of the attack is to be tested, as will be hereafter noticed, from the standpoint of the party attacked, not from that of the jury or of an ideal person. Whoever, by his misconduct, puts another in a condition in which the mind cannot act with reasonableness, cannot complain that such reasonableness is wanting. If the injured party acts negligently or unfairly in coming to the conclusion that he is in danger of life, then he is liable for the consequences if he exceed the limit of self-defence; but if his conclusion be honest and non negligent, then the party assailing him must bear the consequences of the mistake. This view has been maintained by the German courts, and will be vindicated fully hereafter. The same limitation, prohibiting an excess of force, applies to the private abatement of nuisances.

1 Du Bost v. Bercenford, 2 Camp. 511; cited infra, § 574.
2 See infra, §§ 408, 408, 524.
4 Archib., 1849, p. 592.
5 See infra, §§ 408, 410.
6 In the same connection we may notice the following striking remarks from a leading German commentator:—

If the State would not expose the rights she undertakes to protect—rights such as life, limb, freedom, honor, chastity, property of all kinds, family relationships,—she must leave the limits of self-defence to be determined, not by the tribunal by whom the case is ultimately to be decided, but by the individual assailed himself, according to his capacity as executed in the excitement, the confusion, and the surprise of the attack. It is particularly to be kept in mind that in self-defence the conflict is not simply between power against power, but between superior and prepared against inferior and unprepared power; that the assailant is rarely able to convince the assailant that the attack has an object less destructive than at the first glance it appeared to be: that the assailant knew this when he made the venture: that he in this way knowingly exposed his life and limbs to the violence, wild and
When the danger is over, the right of self-defense ceases. It follows that when a thing which is the object of attack is finally taken from him, the loser cannot ordinarily use violence to recover it. For this purpose he must resort to process of law. The technical right extends to the defence of a thing before it is taken; not to its recovery after it is taken. "Quamvis vim vi repellere omnes leges et omnia iura permittunt,—tamen id debet fieri cum moderamine inculpatae tutela, non ad remedium vindicatam, sed ad propulsionem iniuriam." If, however, he can retake it without undue violence he may do so. But an assault on his person he cannot punish when the danger is over. His right is defence, not retribution.

§ 103. The inference to be drawn from the weapon used applies with peculiar force to cases of self-defense. A man who, when attacked, draws out a pistol and shoots down his assailant, cannot, under ordinary circumstances, claim that he was surprised by the attack. No one in a civilized society, where the law gives protection to those in danger, is entitled to carry concealed weapons, in order to meet an attack which he could avert by the ordinary processes of law. If, however, the weapon is one which it is customary to carry, or if it is caught up in a sudden, in fright or in hot blood, by the assaulted, then no inference of premeditation can be drawn.

Malice in evil intent, and is convertible with dolus, § 106. To dolus, will, object, and causation are essential, § 107. Sufficient if party charged contemplated result as a contingency, § 108. Dolus classified as determinatus and alternativus, § 106. Dolus determinatus is where a single object is perfectly pursued, § 109. Dolus alternativus is where the purpose is capable of alternate realization, § 111. Malice to a class includes malice to an individual, § 112. Fallacy of distinction between malice express and implied, § 113. Malice presumed to be continuous, § 114. But duration to be inferred from facts, § 115. Premeditation requires no fixed period, § 116. Intent at time of action enough, § 117. Malice does not require physical contact, § 117. In cases of doubt, verdict is taken for the lower degree, § 118. Motive to be distinguished from intent: combination of motives no defence, § 119. Unintended injury derives its character from purpose to which it is incidental, § 120. Motive need not be proportionate to consequences of crime, § 121. Malice infeasible from facts, § 123. Consequence of unlawfulness not essential, § 123. Malice distinguishable from fraud, § 124.

§ 106. Malice may be defined as intent to do injury to another; and may, for the purposes of this treatise, be regarded as having the same meaning as dolus. Dolus, also, includes the idea of fraud, which in our present legal use is not convertible with malice; but so far as concerns injuries effected by force, dolus and malice are equivalent terms. A wound, which by our law would not be regarded as malicious, would not by the Roman law be regarded as caused by dolus. A wound, to whose author the Roman law does not impute dolus, would not be regarded by our law as malicious. Between dolus and culpa the line is drawn in the Roman law in the same way as

1 By Holt malice is defined to be "a design formed of doing mischief to another," and this definition is adopted by Sir J. F. Stephen, 3a Inst. Cr. Law, pp. 70 et seq.

CRIMES. [BOOK I.

§ 107.]

in our own law the line between malice and negligence. There is, however, this difference between the two jurisprudences: to _dolus_, as a psychological study, the Roman jurisprudence, and the Roman law, devoted great attention; to malice, as a psychological study, our jurisprudence has given but little attention, contenting themselves in dealing cruelly with the subject in the concrete. In our own system, malice, in its most general sense, includes all unlawful intent; and is therefore distinguished from motive, which is ultimate purpose, and which, unless introduced as a link in a chain of inculpatory or exculpatory proof, is irrelevant. The motive of A. in killing B. may have been to rid the community of a villain. But this does not touch the issue, so far as A.'s state of mind is concerned; the question is not was A.'s motive good in killing, but was it his intent to kill.

§ 107. According to an able recent commentator on the Roman Law, the following are the essential ingredients of _dolus_:

1. The internal will.
2. The external act.
3. The causal relation of the will to the act.

If the will is not brought into connection with the act, the act is not to be considered as willed; yet we must remember that no thoughtful man can insulate a particular act so as to cut that act off from the consequences that naturally follow from it. I throw a stone into the water, intending simply to get rid of the stone from the ground. Yet at the same time I cannot, as one who has previously observed similar results, and who reasons from the most familiar principles of physics,

1 See Austin's Jurispr., s. 327. This looseness of definition is deplored by Bramwell, J., in his evidence before the English Homicide Committee, as given in Whart. on Homicide, § 29.

Malice is where a person "wilfully does that which he knows will injure another in person or property." Blackburn, J., in R. v. Ward, Law Rep. 1 C. C. 360; Holland v. State, 12 Florida, 137. It should not be forgotten in this connection that the legal meaning of the term _malice_, or malice, is different from its popular meaning, which makes it synonymous with spite. Thus Lord Holt says: "Some have been led into mistakes by not well considering what the passion of malice is; they have confounded it in the person killing for some considerable time before the commence- ment of the fact; which is a mistake, arising from the not well distinguishing between hatred and malice. Every, hatred, and malice, are three distinct passions of the mind." Keel. 127. The confusion arising from this ambiguity is discussed in 2 St. 126, 129.

2 See infra, s. 110.

3 See Geiler's 'Dolus,' Tübingen, 1860.

CHAP. IV. MALICE AND INTENT. [§ 108.

forget that this stone will cause a ripple on the surface of the water. A similar case, it is argued, arises when A. shoots at B., intending to kill him, but the ball glances and kills C., whom A. has reason to expect to be in close vicinity. The intention to kill B., could it be so insulated as to detach it from any consequence except that intended, could not support an indictment for killing C.; but if it cannot be so insulated, and if shooting at B. naturally involves the contingency of missing B. and hitting C., then _dolus_ is to be imputed to the killing C.

We must at the same time remember that an instrumental intent, the realization of which produces an injury to another, may be either indifferent or criminal. A man may drop a stone from a roof on a street, and may do this either sportively or with intent to hurt a passer-by. When there is an intent to hurt, in other words, when to the intent to use a particular instrument the intent to hurt by the use of such instrument is added, then _dolus_ exists. _Dolus_ (malice) is therefore the condition of an offence by an instrument specifically intended, and the act must be immediately directed by the intent.

_Culpa_ (negligence) is the condition of an offence not intentional, but imputable to the lack of such diligence as it was the duty of the party to bestow.

§ 108. It is here that emerges the question that has been productive of so much difficulty in this branch of jurisprudence. Is it sufficient to constitute _dolus_ (malice) that the fatal result should only appear to the assailant as a mere possibility? In answering this question we must remember that we are not able to select arbitrarily the instruments we want to effect a particular end, nor is there

1 See Meyer, § 108, who defines _dolus_ to be the will to do in the concrete that which the law forbids in the abstract.

2 See infra, s. 318, and see E. v. Smith, Deas. C. C. 559; 7 Cox C. C. 51; 33 Eng. C. L. 567; E. v. Stop- ford, 11 Cox C. C. 643. In these cases the defendant intentionally shot at C., whom he mistook for B., and he was held to be guilty of wounding C. with intent to kill C. In E. v. Hewett, 1 P. & F. 91, however, where the defen-

Sufficient if party changed contum- neant wounded B. unintentionally, his dually or contumeliousness as a con- weapon glanced from A., when he tended to kill, an acquittal was directed. See infra, s. 120: Ward- ham v. State, 25 Ok. St. 601; Laconcel v. State, 31 Ark. 275; Angel v. State, 36 Tex. 542; State v. Lee, 34 La. An. 1092.

3 See E. v. Preston, 2 Dea. C. C. 358; E. v. Chapman, 1 Den. C. C. 422; Morse v. State, 6 Conn. 9; Besp. v. Roberts, 1 Dall. 395.
any instrument which we can speak of as absolutely in our power. Whatever we attempt we have to execute by means of agencies whose operation may be modified by numerous contingencies over which we have no control. No plan of wrong, therefore, can be framed by even the most capable and cautious of conspirators, which they must not regard as dependent upon contingencies for its consummation. An assailant, therefore, in meditating an attack on another, must contemplate the possibility of miscarriage. This possibility may be greater or less. A good marksman may be almost sure of hitting his intended victim; a man who sends an explosive compound to an enemy may estimate that the probability of injuring his enemy is slight. If the means adopted are such as cannot possibly succeed, then there is no such connection between the instrumental intent and the final intent as is essential to constitute guilt. But if there be no such impossibility, and if the means adopted, improbable as it would seem, have a fatal result, then the end is to be regarded as having been intended.¹

§ 109. We shall hereafter have occasion to distinguish between motive and intent;² motive being in this sense the moving power impelling to action for a particular result; intent being the purpose to use a particular means to effect such result. An analogous distinction is expressed in Germany by the words  Vorsatz and Abseh. The intent, for instance, may be directed to the use of a particular instrument, but this instrument may be used to give effect to one of several motives, e. g., a blow may be given with the motive of wounding, or disgracing, or killing; or when a house is set on fire, the motive may be either plunder or homicide. In this view dolus may be regarded as either  determinatus, alternativus, or eventualis.

§ 110. 1. Dolus determinatus exists when the instrument is intentionally used to effect a single purpose, as when a deadly poison is intentionally given with the sole purpose of killing. It makes no difference whether or not the instrument will effect the object with apparent certainty. The person whose life is attempted may have warded off susceptibility to disease by antidotes. Or it may happen that the assailant may be limited in carrying out his

plan to a single agency comparatively uncertain. In either case dolus determinatus is established.

§ 111. 2. Dolus alternativus or eventualis.—It may happen that the instrument selected may have two or more distinct effects, and that of the possibility of this the assailant is or ought to be aware. This may occur in the following cases:

a. The assailant has a primary object in view, and his final intention is directed to effect this object; but he recognizes a second object as either the possible or probable result of the instrument he employs. Cases of this class are divided by the Roman authorities as follows:

a¹. Dolus eventualis.—When only the second object is criminal, as when A. shoots at a mark, seeing B. near the mark, and knowing that a slight divergence may cause the shot to miss the mark and to strike B.; and when B. is struck and killed.¹

b. Dolus determinatus et eventualis.—When both objects are criminal; as when A. shoots at B. and hits C., who is so near to B. that the hitting of C. was or ought to have been within the contemplation of A. as probable.²

b¹. When it is indifferent to the assailant which of several probable objects is effected by the instrument chosen by him.

b². When all are criminal, as when a man shoots at a crowd, not caring whom he hits; which is dolus alternativus in the ordinary sense.³

b³. When the assailant desires to effect, and does effect, several criminal objects simultaneously. This brings a concurrence of several doli determinati, which are to be tried severally.⁴

d. The assailant has his intention fixed on a single criminal object, but while effecting such object he, accidentally and against his will, effects, by the instruments used, another

¹ See R. v. Hewlith, supra, § 107; ² Infra, §§ 120, 698.
³ For discussion of this question, see comments, supra, § 107; infra, see Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. §§ 466 et seq. § 120.
§ 112. CRIMES. [BOOK I.

Criminal object. If so, the first contingency involves only dolus; the second only culpa. This covers the case, hereafter fully discussed, of a person who, when shooting a tame fowl, accidentally, and against his will, kills the owner of the fowl.\(^1\)

Dolus generalis is where an injury is directed at a crowd, let the blow fall where it may.\(^2\)

§ 112. By the leading English writers of the old school, malice is held to denote not only special malevolence to the individual slain, but a generally wicked, depraved, and malignant spirit, a heart regardless of social duty, and deliberately bent on mischief.\(^3\) And, in general, any formed design of doing mischief is by these authors called malice, whether the mischief be intended to fall upon a particular person, or upon any person who may be within its range.\(^4\) Thus placing an obstruction on a railway track, with intent to kill, is a malicious homicide, and is murder, whether the intent be to kill a particular person, or to kill any one who may be on the train.\(^5\) And malice to a class includes malice to the members of that class.\(^6\)

\(^1\) See authorities cited supra, § 108. Infra, § 320.  
\(^3\) Fost. 356, 392.  
\(^4\) Hawk. F. C. 31, n. 18; Fost. 287; 1 Hale, 451; 4 Black. Com. 199. Infra, §§ 129, 349.  
\(^6\) Infra, §§ 129, 319, 383.

In R. v. Martin (Crown Cas. Res.) 72 L. T. (Journ.) 63, the defendant was charged with malicious wounding, which resulted from his extinguishing the gas in the outboard entry of a theatre and putting a bar across the passage, which caused a tumult in which several persons were wounded. The defendant was convicted, and the conviction was sustained by the court. Lord Coleridge, C. J., saying:—

"The prisoner was indicted under the statute 24 & 25 Viet. c. 100, s. 20, which enacts that any one who unlawfully and maliciously wounds or inflicts grievous bodily harm upon any other person, with or without a weapon, shall be guilty of an offence, and punishable accordingly. (The words, 'with or without a weapon,' were introduced because difficulties often arise as to the use of a weapon or instrument.) What the prisoner in the present case did was this: he came out first and turned off the gas, and put across the passage an iron bar, and then went his way. The people in the theatre, as they came out, finding the place dark, very naturally fell into a panic and rushed forward, and of course met the iron bar, and the person injured knocked his head against the bar and was seriously injured, though happily not killed. For that the prisoner was indicted, and the jury found all that was necessary to sustain the charge under the enactment that he did unlawfully and maliciously inflict grievous bodily harm upon the person injured—that is, without a weapon or instrument in his hand. The question is whether under these circumstances he was guilty of everything the enactment includes, and I am clearly of opinion that he was. He must be taken to have intended the natural consequences of what he did. And what he did was to do what would certainly alarm and frighten a number of people and also obstruct their exit by something which, when they came against it, would certainly cause them serious injury, and then if a person did thus come against it, and was so injured, then the prisoner did 'unlawfully and maliciously' cause him to be so injured—that is, maliciously in the sense of actual malice against the particular individual, but in the sense of doing an unlawful act calculated to injure, and by which another person was in fact injured—that is 'maliciously' injuring—just as in the case of a man who unlawfully frees a gun among a crowd, and who, if he kills one of them, is clearly guilty of murder. That principle is one of sound sense and reason and it is applicable here. The prisoner, therefore, was most properly convicted, and if he receives exemplary punishment I shall be satisfied with the result."  

Whart. on Cr. Ev. §§ 16, 734 et seq.


\(^3\) See Whart. on Cr. Ev. §§ 730, 818; and see infra, § 477.

\(^4\) Murray v. Com., 79 Penn. St. 311.
§ 116. CRIMES. [BOOK I.

are apt the most noisily to threaten are often those who are the most reluctant to execute.\footnote{1}

§ 115. No human gauge existing by which duration of malice can be measured, we are obliged to resort for this purpose to the same probable reasoning by which the existence of malice is proved. A. shoots B. in the public streets, without authority and without provocation. As reasonable beings usually intend any important step they take, we infer that A. intended this shot; but this, as we will hereafter see, is a matter not of legal presumption, but of logical inference.\footnote{2}

§ 116. To preméditation, which is an essential ingredient of malice, and which by many statutes is made a condition of certain crimes, it is logically necessary that there be a period of prior consideration; but as to the duration of this period no limit can be arbitrarily assigned. The reasons for this are obvious: (1) No psychological tests which the law can supply can help us in determining how long a time an evil intent was harbored. (2) In men of quick action, engaged in desperate enterprises, evil designs hastily hustle upon each other, shaping themselves almost instantaneously to meet new necessities as they arise. The old are much less rapid in coming to a conclusion than are the young. Persons with mechanical aptitudes are more rapid in deciding as to mechanical acts than are persons without such aptitudes. A soldier would require less time to deliberate as to the use of a gun, a chemist as to the preparation of a poison, than would a person not accustomed to fire-arms or poisons. No limit as to preméditation can be arbitrarily imposed by the law. Whether there has been preméditation must be determined by the concrete case. As to the relations of preméditation to hot blood the following points may be noticed:

(1) The fact that passion intervenes after a preméditioned offence has been undertaken, does not sustain the defence of hot blood.

\footnote{3} Infra, § 477. and see Cannon v. People v. Moore, 6 Cal. 280; Falmouth State, 77 Mass. 147; Jones v. State, 57 Ind. 623; Werk v. State, 66 Ind. 394; State v. Holm, 54 Mo. 153.\footnote{4} Infra, § 122. See People v. Clark. As to preméditation under statutes, see 7 N. Y. 385; Com. v. Drum, 58 Penn. Infra, § 380. St. 9; U.S. v. Cornell, 2 Mason, 91; 3 Dor. (3. C.) 486; People v. Moore, 8 Cal. 280; People v. Cotta, 49 Cal. 109; Ferri v. People, 57 Ill. 17; McKenna v. State, 15 Ark. 305; Falmouth v. State, 22 Ind. 231; Miller v. State, 54 Ala. 155; Green v. State, 13 Mo. 382;itcham v. State, 11 Ga. 615; Nichols v. Com., 46 Mass. 775; State v. Ocklow, 19 Iowa. 447; Burnham v. State, 43 Tex. 302; Green v. State, 38 Ark. 364. The rule in this text is applied even as to murder in the first degree, which by statute requires deliberation. Infra, § 380.\footnote{5} Infra, §§ 167, 246, 248, 278-9.\footnote{6} Infra, §§ 167, supra, § 116.\footnote{1} See Infra, §§ 315, 380, 380; and see Berner, 4th ed. § 94. As to cooling time, see infra, § 450; and see, as to time necessary to intention, Whart. Cr. Hw. §§ 738, 816.\footnote{2} Infra, § 380. R. v. Noon, 5 Coxe C. 137; U. S. v. Cornell, 2 Mason, 91; U. S. v. McPhail, 1 Carr. C. C. 1; Leskinan v. People, 20 N. Y. 385; People v. Clark, 7 N. Y. 385; People v. Sullivan, 7 N. Y. 390; Leighton v. People, 68 N. Y. 117; Com. v. Drum, 57 Penn. St. 9; State v. Rhodes, 1 House, C. C. 478; Woodhull v. State, 2 Howard's Misc. R. 696; Davis v. State, 2 Humphreys 439; Coffee v. State, 3 Yerger, 288; State v. Lipsey, 144

CHAP. IV. MALICE AND INTENT. [§ 117 a.

(2) A crime conceived in hot blood, but executed coolly, and with deliberation, is to be regarded as preméditioned.

(3) On the other hand, the fact that a crime may have been contemplated vaguely beforehand does not make it preméditioned if its execution took place in hot blood or sudden passion.\footnote{1}

§ 117. It is constantly laid down that intent at the time of action is enough. It is not meant to assert by this that a person who, under a sudden impulse, kills another is guilty of murder. To say this would be unwarranted, for the reason that we have no means of saying that a particular impulse is sudden. What we have a right, however, to say, and what the law means by this maxim to say, is this, that when a homicide is committed by weapons indicating design, then it is not necessary to prove that such design existed at any definite time before the fatal blow. From the very fact of a blow being struck, we have a right to infer (as a presumption of fact, but not of law) that the blow was intended prior to the striking, although it may be at a period of time immeasurably distant.\footnote{2}

§ 117 a. Malice may be exerted against a party at a distance; as where A. lays poison for B. in his food, which B. afterwards takes and dies. And so where A. procures an idiot or lunatic to kill B., which is done. In both instances A. is guilty of the murder as principal.\footnote{3} The same result follows when an injury is produced by frightening the injured party.\footnote{4}
§ 118. As is elsewhere seen, wherever on a prosecution for an offence, embracing two or more degrees, there is reasonable doubt as to whether the evidence sustains the higher degree, the verdict is to be taken for the lower. The rule in such case is "in dubio mitius." 1

§ 119. The will acts under a variety of motives, some very complex. 2 The motive varies with the man, what is strong with one being weak with another. The gratification of passion is a responsible motive; and so also is the general intent to violate law, fall the consequences on whom they may. 3 And the law is, that no matter what may be the motives leading to a particular act, if the act be illegal, it is indictable, notwithstanding that some one or more of these motives may be meritorious. 4 Thus the motive of promoting ultimate public good is no defence to an indictment for nuisance; 5 intending to instruct the public is no defence to an indictment for libel; 6 the motive of returning the goods is no defence to an indictment for embezzlement, 8 or for larceny, 9 nor is the motive of giving away the goods to another; 10 scientific enthusiasm is no defence to an indictment for disseminating a corpse; 11 the motive of notifying of a fire is no defence to an indictment for

1 Whart. on Cr. Ev. §§ 334, 721.
2 See infra, § 103.
6 infra, §§ 1094, 1096. See infra, § 1085.
7 infra, §§ 1094, 1096.
8 See infra, §§ 132, 1108; Whart. Cr. Ev. § 734 et seq. See especially remarks on motives in 1 Whart. & St. Med. Jur. §§ 399-405. "Who would dare," asks a great German jurist, "to determine how far a single morbid tendency is isolated from all other tendencies in a particular person, so as to attach to it exclusively certain evil consequences; and who could shape a procedure, even if there could be such a severance, by which such tendency could be separately put on trial?"
9 infra, §§ 1426, 1429.
10 infra, § 1404.
11 infra, § 1085.
12 infra, § 1096.
13 infra, § 1096.
14 infra, §§ 1416, 1421.
malevolent purpose. A man out of general malignity may fire on a crowd, or may displace a rail on a railway; and then, if any life be lost, he is responsible for murder, though he may have had no intention of taking any particular life. It has been further ruled that if a man shoots A. by mistaking the person, when intending to shoot B., he is responsible for shooting A., under statutes which make it penal to shoot at another with intent to kill the person shot at. And so has it been held with regard to murder at common law. We have the same distinction taken as to burglary, where the intent was to steal something different from that actually stolen; and as to arson, where the intent was to get a reward by giving the earliest information of a fire at the police station, and not to injure the owner; or where an unintended house was burned. And so if there be a deliberate intent, when taking lost goods, to steal, no matter who may be the owner, this intent may be viewed as an intent to steal from A., when A. is subsequently discovered as owner.

In other words, when there is a general intent to do evil, of which evil the wrong actually done may be looked upon as a probable incident, then the party having such general intent is to be regarded as having intended the particular wrong. A man using a deadly weapon, intending to kill, must be regarded as intending to kill all within the range of the weapon, whether as a primary object, or as incidental to such primary object. And a

from the woman attacked, this may be robbery, though no money was demanded; R. v. Blackburn, 2 East P. C. 711; infra, § 856.


7 R. v. Moore, L. & C. 1; 8 Cox C. C. 415.

8 The distinction taken in the old books between malum in se and malum prohibitum in this relation is now exploded. A man who inflicts injury incidentally to attempting a statutory crime is, on the reasoning of the text, as responsible as is the man who inflicts injury incidentally to a common law crime.

1 See supra, §§ 110, infra, §§ 166, 318.
2 R. v. Smith, Dear C. C. 558; 33 Eng. Law & Rq. 507; R. v. Jarvis, 2 Mood. & S. R. 40; Callahan v. State, 21 Ohio St. R. 306; Walker v. State, 8 Ind. 280; People v. Torres, 38 Cal. 141; infra, § 645 a. In Com. v. McLaughlin, 13 Cush. 615, it was held that when A. shot at B. and C., intending to kill whichever he hit, he might be indicted for an assault with intent to murder both B. and C.

3 See infra, §§ 317-320, 645 a; R. v. Saunders, 2 Plov. 473; Angell v. State, 36 Tex. 543.

4 See infra, § 610.

5 R. v. Regan, 4 Cox C. C. 335. It has been held, also, that where a party intending to commit a rape takes money


6 R. v. Pemberton, L. R. 2 C. C. 119; 12 Cox C. C. 607; infra, § 1079. As to concurrence of malice and negligence, see infra, § 128. And on the question of killing A. in mistake for B., see infra, §§ 317-323; State v. Smith, 32 Me. 599. In R. v. Hewlett, 1 P. & F. 91, the defendant was indicted for wounding A. with intent to do him bodily harm. The evidence showed that the defendant, intending to wound B., unintentionally wounded A. This was held a fatal variance. S. P. Com. v. Morgan, 11 Bush, 601; Barons v. State, 49 Miss. 17; Morgan v. State, 13 Sm. & M. 242; Lacefield v. State, 31 Ark. 275. See, however, R. v. Slapford, 11 Cox C. C. 645. These cases are noticed supra, § 107; infra, § 645 a. See discussion in 10 Cent. L. J. 36 et seq.

2 See infra, §§ 317-318. The controversy as to error in objects, and as to eleemosynary acts, as they are called, relates to the effect and not to the character of malice. As to this controversy, Meyer (Lehrbuch, 1875, § 50), makes the following observations:

(1) Where the actor errs in the execution of the evil, and hurts a person other than he intended (error in person), the true view is that he makes no defense. The actor is responsible, even when he had no desire to injure the person hurt, and would never have attacked such person. It is enough, to impute the crime to him, that he intentionally attacked an object under the protection of the law, and it is immaterial whether or no he effected his particular purpose. The opposite view, which in such cases holds the error to be essential, determining the defendant to be guilty of a negligent offense as to the injured party, and of an attempt to the non-injured party, fails in its mistaking the period in which the of
§ 121. CRIMES.

to constitute an offence, proof of one will not sustain the averment of another. Thus the allegation of an intent to steal in an indictment for burglary, will not be sustained by proof of an attempt to commit a sexual offence.1

§ 121. It is sometimes argued, "Is it likely that one man should kill another for so small an object? Are we not to infer when there is a homicide which is followed by the stealing of a mere trifle, that the homicide was the result of sudden passion, rather than luceri causa? Or for a mere prejudice or spite is it likely that one man would assassinate another, and thus expose himself to the gallows? Or is a person likely to incur the penalties of larceny for the sake of an article of no intrinsic worth?" No doubt when a tender mother kills a child, or a friend kills a friend, and nothing more than the fact of killing is proved, we may be led to infer misadventure or insanity from the motivelessness of the act. But we have no right to make such inference because the motive is disproportionate. We are all of us apt to act on very inadequate motives; and the history of crime shows that murderers are generally committed from motives comparatively trivial. A man unaccustomed to control his passions, and unregulated by religious or moral sense, exaggerates an affront, or nourishes a suspicion, until he determines that only the blood of the supposed offender can relieve the pang. For the smallest plaintiffs took shape. That period is the time immediately before the commission of the act; and when in this period the actor willed to injure the object before him, and did injure that object, this completes the offence; and the error he was in as to the identity of the object is as immaterial as error as to any other motive for action.

(2) On the other hand, where the intention is aimed at a specific object, and if by circumstances independent of his will another object of like character is struck (adverraio iato), in this case the offence is not single and complete in itself, but (a) the attempt of a delict as to one object, and (b) negligent or causal injury in respect to the other object. In this case the effect produced was not intended by the defendant, while in the former case the effect was intended, and would not only have been intended had the defendant not erred as to the identity of the object.

The old doctrine that an intention to burn A's house will sustain an averment in an indictment for the arson of B's house, that the intent was to burn B's house (1 Curw. Hawk. p. 140) can no longer be sustained. Whart. Cr. Ev. §§ 149-50. See R. v. Faulkner, 13 Cox C. C. 550.

1 infra, § 851; supra, § 38 et seq.; and see Whart. Cr. Ev., 8th ed. § 149.

2 See however, State v. Rhul, S.Iowa, 447; cited supra, § 38; infra, §§ 1766, 1781.

§ 123. MALICE AND INTENT.

der, also, murders have been deliberately executed. Crime is rarely logical. Under a government where the laws are executed with ordinary certainty, all crime is a blunder as well as a wrong. If we should hold that no crime is to be punished except such as is rational, then there would be no crime to be punished, for no crime can be found that is rational. The motive is never correlative to the crime; never accurately proportioned to it. Nor does this apply solely to the very poor. Very rich men have been known to defraud others even of trifles, to forge wills, to kidnap and kill, so that an inheritance might be theirs. When a powerful passion seeks gratification, it is no extenuation that the act is illogical; for when passion is once allowed to operate, reason loosens its restraints, and hence when there is a general wrongful intent, no specific commensurate motive need be shown.1

§ 123. Malice, as is elsewhere abundantly shown,2 is to be inferred from all the facts in the case, as a presumption of fact, and is never to be arbitrarily assumed as a presumption of law.3

§ 123. To malice, consciousness of unlawfulness is not essential. At the first glance, it is true, it seems hard to punish a person for doing that which he thinks he has a right to do. And in questions of title to property this is undoubtedly the rule, because a man cannot be said to intend to steal that which he believes to be his own. In other cases, also, the knowledge that a thing is unlawful (in other words, the scienter) is an essential ingredient of the offence, as where the charge is an assault on an official person, knowing his legal status. But apart from these exceptions, ignorance of the law, as is elsewhere shown, is no defence;4 otherwise, the administration of penal


2 See Whart. Cr. Ev. §§ 39, 40, 734, 734.


4 That the same rule is applicable to scienter, see Conner v. People, 37 Mich.

5 See supra, § 84.
§ 124. The task, often pronounced to be impossible, of exhaustively defining fraud, will not be here attempted. It is enough to say, that fraud in a general sense, is the deceitful unlawful appropriation of the property of another, and a fraudulent intent is the intent to effect such appropriation. All fraud, therefore, is malicious, though not all malicious actions (e.g., those falling under the head of malice, mischief), exclude the idea of such appropriation. To fraud, also, deceit is essential, which is always the case with malicious actions. A man may openly before the public rob another, yet, though this would be malicious, and would be indelible as robbery, it would not be fraudulent, as involving no deceit.

1 See 3 Steph. Hist. Cr. Law, 121.

CHAP. V. NEGLIGENCE: AND HEREIN OF OMISIONS.

CHAPTER V.

Negligence is the omission of usual care, § 125.
Negligence is an intellectual, mense a moral defect, § 126.
Tests of indictable negligence, § 127.
Concurrence of malice and negligence, § 128.
Negligence cannot constitute accessory
ship, § 129.
Omission, to be indictable, must be de
fective discharge of duty, § 130.
Omissions are breaches of affirmative
commands; commissions of negative
commands, § 130 a.

§ 125. A NEGLIGENT offence is an offence which ensues from a defective discharge of a duty, which defect could have been avoided by the exercise, by the offender, of that care which is usual, under similar circumstances, with prudent persons of the same class. Negligence is of two kinds: culpa levius, which is the lack of the diligence and care usual with good specialists of the particular class under the circumstances; and culpa lata, which is the lack of the diligence and care exercised by honest and worthy non-specialists, dealing with similar objects. In criminal cases this distinction operates mainly to determine the degree of evidence required to convict. A non-specialist (e.g., a person not claiming to be a physician or lawyer) cannot be convicted merely on proof of want of or failure to apply due qualifications; while a person claiming to be a specialist can be convicted on such proof. Culpa levissima, or that slight aberration from


2 See Whart. on Neg. §§ 27 et seq.

3 Whart. on Neg. § 26; supra, § 69; as to physicians, supra, § 303.
§ 126. Malice, as is elsewhere noticed, arises from an evil purpose, negligence from a failure of purpose; malice is imputable to a defect of heart, negligence to a defect of intellect. If what results corresponds to what was intended, then the offence is malicious; if it does not correspond to what was intended, then, if the actor did not at the time exercise due care, the offence is negligent. On what we may call, therefore, the subjective side of an offence, there are two phases of indubitable, the malicious and the negligent, corresponding to the ancient dolus and culpa. The legislature, however, may make penal dangerous acts irrespective of malice or negligence.

1 Whart. on Neg. § 26. Sir J. E. Stephen defines negligent offences as follows:—

"Every one upon whom the law imposes any duty, or who has by contract, or by any wrongful act, taken upon himself any duty tending to the preservation of life, and who neglects to perform that duty, and thereby causes the death of (or bodily injury to) any person, commits the same offence as if he had caused the same effect by an act done in the state of mind, as to intent or otherwise, which accompanied the neglect of duty.

"Provided, that no one is deemed to have committed a crime only because he has caused the death of, or bodily injury to, another by negligence which is not culpable. What amount of negligence can be called culpable is a question of degree for the jury, depending on the circumstances of each particular case.

"Provided, also, that no one is deemed to have committed a crime by reason of the negligence of any servant or agent employed by him." Dig. Cr. L. art. 212. See R. v. Allen, 7 C. & P. 152; R. v. Barrett, 5 C. & K. 349; R. v. Conolly, 2 Caw. & Dix, 66; R. v. Tindall, 1 Nev. & P. 719; 2 A. & E. 145. To impose criminal responsibility, Sir J. E. Stephen, 3 Hist. Cr. Law, 11, maintains that there "must be more, but no one can say how much more, carelessness than is required in order to create a civil liability. For instance, many railway accidents are caused by a momentary forgetfulness or want of presence of mind, are insufficient to involve the railway in civil liability, but are not sufficient to make the railway servant guilty of manslaughter if death is caused." But the better view is that the only difference between criminal and civil procedure in such cases, is that in the first, there can be no conviction if there be reasonable doubt of guilt, while in the second, the verdict goes with preponderance of proof.

2 Supra, § 100; and see Whart. on Neg. § 7.


3 Supra, § 88.

§ 127. Not every negligent act is necessarily indictable. The following incidents, however, may be noticed as involving indictability:—

(1) 

Indictment for failure to observe a statute, and sometimes by common law, specific duties become incumbent on all citizens. For non-performance of such duties, unless another special remedy be provided, an indictment may lie.

(2) 

Imperfect discharge of official duty. Wherever a specific duty is imposed on a public officer, there is a negligible defect in the discharge of this duty, when inflicting injury on an individual, is indictable.

(3) 

Omission to discharge specific duty assumed or imposed by law. As we will presently see, this kind of negligence, when followed by injury, is indictable.

(4) 

Maligny with dangerous agencies. It is the duty of all men to be cautious in dealing with dangerous agencies; and whoever, by carelessness in handling such agencies, injures another, is indictable.

§ 128. Interesting questions may arise when malice and negligence (or dolus and culpa) concur in a particular transaction. This may happen as follows:—

(1) 

When there are two successive acts of the same person, in the first of which there is a criminal intent which fails of execution, and in the second of which, without the intent to effect it, the object designed in the first act is effected. A., for instance, believes he has killed B., and casts him hastily into the water, to conceal the body, by which act, and not by the prior wounds, B. is killed. If the second act is to be viewed as a continuation of the first, then the death is to be imputed to the malice provoking the entire act. It is, however, conceivable that there is no such continuity. It may be that the original wound is struck in excitement; that the assailant, when the transaction is over, actually believes that the assailant is dead; and that subsequently the drowning of the body is in cool blood, after the heat of the contest is over, and with the intention only of putting the body out of sight.
In such case the first act would be indictable as an attempt to kill; the second, as a negligent homicide. 2

(2) It may be, however, that an unexpected and unintended consequence is coupled in the same act with a malicious design. A man, for instance, designs to seriously hurt, and unintentionally kills. In such cases, if the hurt be design is a felony, the killing, by statute, if not by common law, may be murder; but it is otherwise if the intention is merely to inflict a slight hurt not a felony. 3

§ 129. Negligent co-operation cannot constitute accessoryship in a malicious act, although a party occupying an official situation may be liable for negligence in the non-arrest of a criminal. To constitute the offence of accessoryship there must be malice, and malice cannot be inferred in any case where the co-operation is purely negligent. On the other hand, to negligent acts there may be malicious accessories; though, unless those acts are felonies by statute, all concerned, under the rule that in misdemeanors all parties are principals, are to be treated as principals. A curious and interesting question arises where one person intentionally puts another in the position of doing a negligent act, as where fire-arms are mischievously placed in the hands of a negligent or inexperienced person, or when the superintendent of a railroad knowingly and maliciously places a locomotive under the control of an engineer whom the superintendent knows to be incompetent. In such cases there is good ground for maintaining that the person thus originating the harm is liable for the consequences of the negligence of the immediate operator; and this is also the case when dangerous agencies are negligently left in the hands or in the way of incompetent persons. 4 But with these exceptions, a party, who by negligence produces another's negligence, cannot, as we have seen, be chargeable with the consequences of the latter's negligence. Morally reprehensible, also, as may be he who by negligence induces another to perform a guilty act, he cannot be made responsible without unduly enlarging the range of criminal

1 See infra, § 155.

2 See infra, § 317; supra, §§ 107–111, 120. If, on the other hand, the offender should design malicious mischief to property, and then, without intending it, carry it away, the offence would not be felony. See §§ 883 et seq.

3 Infra, §§ 130, 133, 154.

4 Infra, §§ 130, 133, 154.

1 See infra, § 155.

2 See infra, § 317; supra, §§ 107–111, 120. If, on the other hand, the offender should design malicious mischief to property, and then, without intending it, carry it away, the offence would not be felony. See §§ 883 et seq.

3 Infra, §§ 130, 133, 154.
§ 130 a. Penal laws are either affirmative, equivalent to "thou shalt," or negative, equivalent to "thou shalt not." An omission to do what the first orders is equally indictable with an actual doing what the second forbids. The chief distinction between the two classes of laws is that the first, the affirmative command, requires a continuous course of action; while the second, the negative, is usually limited to a single act. Thus among affirmative commands we may reckon continuous duties of officers of all classes. A public officer is required to execute his office diligently; if he fail to do so, he is indictable for misconduct in office, though the failure may consist in a mere omission. Persons exercising private offices are subject to a similar duty, though as a rule they are not indictable for omissions unless such omissions are productive of harm to persons whom they have specially in charge. The same distinction applies to omissions in the discharge of natural duties. A husband is indictable for an omission in the discharge of his duty to his wife, whenever this duty imposes upon him specially her support, she being incapable of self help, and whenever through the omission she is injured. A parent is in like manner indictable for an omission to feed and shelter a helpless child exclusively dependent on him. If I put another person in a position where injury will accrue to him, if I omit to relieve him, should I withdraw from him the care I undertook to give him, I am indictable for the injury I cause by the omission. But the duty in such case must be averred and proved.

§ 131. Indictable omissions may be classified as follows:

I. Omissions constituting defects in the performance of duties which have been undertaken. Under this head fall most of the adjudicated cases of so-called omissions—e. g., omissions by switch-tenders to turn switches, of telegraph operators to send messages, of physicians to give required attention to patients.

II. Omissions constituting defects in the performance of duties which have not been so nominally undertaken—e., non-contractual duties.

1st. From the standpoint of general civic duty, among which may be noticed the omission of an accessory after the fact to notify the government of a felony, and the omission of a person swearing to a fact to acquit himself as to such fact. Omissions may be malicious as well as negligent.

2d. From the standpoint of official duty, as where an officer whose duty it is to make an arrest neglects to do so.

3d. From the police standpoint, as where a person neglects to cover a ditch or well belonging to him, over which he knows travellers are accustomed to pass, or to cleanse a defective drain. Under this head may be classed the omission of masters to control their servants in the use of agency which may be injuriously applied.

§ 131 a. It has been frequently said that omissions are always negligent, and that consequently indictments based on omissions must be for negligent as distinguished from malicious offences. But this is a mistake. A man undertaking a duty may intentionally omit some act essential to its discharge, and in this case he is indictable for a maliciously imperfect discharge of the duty. And in this way, the increment of malice may turn a non-indictable offence into an indictable offence. Thus, if A. omits to succor B. when down-

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1 See infra, §§ 133, 156, 330, 367.
2 See infra, §§ 135, 247.
3 See 4 Crim. Law Mag. 9.
4 See 4 Crim. Law Mag. 9.
§ 183. CRIMES.

[BOOK I.]

... is not indictable for the omission. It is otherwise, however, if A. should induce B. to bathe with him, promising to succor B. in case of danger, and then should intentionally leave B. beyond his depth, and fail to relieve him, so that B. is drowned. In this case A. is indictable for malicious homicide.

§ 182. Whether a person who is under no specific obligation to rescue the life of another in danger is indictable for omission to render help not indictable.

Mere omission to render help, when he can do so without danger to his own life, has been much discussed. In the Roman law the negative was maintained. To such omissions, however, the canon law attached ecclesiastical penalties. In our own system, mere omission to render help, unless in contravention of a duty specially assumed or imposed, is not an indictable offence. It is otherwise where the omission is to perform a legal duty.

§ 183. Where a party puts a dangerous instrument in motion and then leaves it, penal responsibility is not diverted by the fact that the immediate injury is caused by an omission or negation of action, as where a party after putting poisoned food on his enemy's table, waits until the latter himself takes the food; or where, as we have just seen, a skilful swimmer, by false promises, entices another in deep water, and then leaves him to drown; or where a midwife, after cutting

2. Cas. 7. Case. 23. qu. 3.

If the law undertook to compel men to perform toward each other offices of mere charity, then the practical and beneficent duty of helping every one else. It is scarcely necessary to point attention to the fact, that if the maxim be true that he who injures another by his omission is indictable, then the converse must also be true that every one is obliged by law to omit nothing that would be of aid to any body else. But this, by destroying all speciality in business, would destroy all business that is made up of specialties. No public enterprise (e. g., a railroad when in working order) could be carried on safely if every one who conceives something to be wrong in it is required to rush in and rectify the supposed mistake. No man could courageously and consistently discharge his special office if all other persons were made both his condutors and overseers. Industry, also, would cease if the consequences of idleness were assured by making alarming conspiracy; and finally, by requiring by law that all be given to all that need, there would be none who would not be too needy to give alms.

1. Infra, § 156.
2. See infra, § 108.

§ 184. NEGLIGENCE: AND HEREIN OF OMISSIONS.

[BOOK V.]

... the umbilical cord, does not bind it up, so that the child bleeds to death; or where a watchman omits to give notice of the approach of a train; or where a person shooting a pistol neglects to properly guard it. In all such cases of withdrawal of action, after the destructive agency has been put in motion, there is no question of mere omission (Unterlassung). Such withdrawal of action, so argues a German jurist, closes almost all crimes of commission; for the actor brings his train of causes just to the point where that train can be left to itself; and even when he shoots at an opponent, he simply lets it happen (lassest es nur geschehen) that the ball goes on its mission, and perforates its object, so that the latter by his wound loses his life. And it may be held generally that it is the legal duty of a person putting in action a dangerous agency to prudently guard such agency, and if he fail to do so, is responsible penalty for the consequences.

§ 134. To make negligence indictable it is not necessary that it should be in violation of a contract. Wherever the defendant fails to discharge a duty imposed on him, whether this duty be by natural law, or statute, or contract, then he is indictable for injuries thus produced, provided, as has just been seen, the duty is one with which he is specially charged. Civil and criminal responsibility are in this view far from being convertible. On the one hand, contracts, as a general rule, cannot be made the basis of a criminal prosecution. On the other hand, there are many cases in which indictments lie (e. g., nuisance and neglect of official duty in which there is no special damage to an individual), where no civil action can be maintained. And we may readily suppose cases in which contributory negligence sufficient to defeat a civil suit would not defeat a criminal prosecution.

1. Infra, §§ 156, 337, 393; Berner, Leebuch, p. 434.
5. Berner, ut supra.

VOL. I.—II 161
Negligent homicides will be hereafter specifically considered.¹

§ 135. A master or other principal, who acts through subordinates, and whose duty it is to exercise due care in the appointment of such officers, may be indi-cated, on the principle of culpa in eligendo, for an injury caused by the negligence of a subordinate whom he has negligently appointed.² And the master is likewise liable for his servant's negligence when such negligence is a natural incident of the employment.³ Wherever, also, due supervision could have prevented the mischief, then the master neglecting such supervision is indi-cated.⁴ But unless negligence of selection, or the lack of such due supervision as is usual among good business men under the circumstances, be imputable to the master, he is not criminally responsible for the servant's misconduct in matters not incidental to the service.⁵

¹ Infra, §§ 329-370.
² See Whart. on Neg. § 170.
³ Com. v. Best & Low, R. R. 126; Mass. 61.

CHAP. VI.

PHYSICAL UNFITNESS.

FITNESS OF OBJECT OF OFFENCE.

I. PHYSICAL UNFITNESS.

To a crime a fit object is necessary. Objects physically unfit, § 136.

II. JURIDICAL UNFITNESS.

Objects may be juridically unfit, § 137.

Outlaws are still under protection of the law, § 153.

Convicts can only be punished according to law, § 139.

A criminal may divert himself of legal protection, § 140.

A party may be without an injury bar a prosecution—Volenti non fit injuria, § 141.

But not as to public criminal immor-talities, § 142.

Nor as to intangible rights, § 143.

Consent not to excuse the taking of life, § 144.

Nor the deprivation of liberty, § 145.

Nor waive constitutional rights of trial, § 146.

Capacity to consent and actual consenting pre-quisites, § 160.

Contributory negligence may be a defense, § 147.

Laches on prosecutor's part may be a defense, § 148.

Traps laid by prosecutor not ordinarily a defense, § 149.

Constitution obtained by fraud is no defense, § 150.

I. PHYSICAL UNFITNESS.

§ 136. The object of an intended crime may be such as to relieve the party charged from indi-cability. A., for in-stance, intending to murder B., may run his sword through a bolster, dressed in B.'s clothes, and placed in B.'s bed. This, if preceded by steps taken to kill B., may be an attempt to kill, but would not constitute a consummated offence. We can, in addition, conceive of cases in which shooting at a shadow on the roadside, supposing it to be a man, or at a scarecrow in a field, under the same supposition, would not even be an attempt. Or, to recur to a case elsewhere mentioned, a lady in crossing the British channel carries with her what she supposes to be Brussels lace, which she intends to smuggle into England. The lace, however, turns out to be of English manufacture, and therefore not an article susceptible of being smuggled into England.¹

¹ As to attempts to effect non-existent objects, see infra, § 166.

163
II. JURIDICAL DEFECTS.

§ 137. The object on which the alleged offence is committed may be not only existing, but may be that which the accused supposes it to be, and yet it may have juridical defects which withdraw it from the category of objects protected by the law. An impersonal object is only so protected when it belongs to the State, or to a juridical person. Waifs (unless belonging to the State), animals feræ naturæ, the water of the ocean and of navigable streams, are not the objects of larceny. It is not necessary, however, in order to throw the shield of juridical protection over a right, that it should be corporeal. A man's reputation is his right in such a sense that he who wantonly assails it is open to an indictment for libel. This, however, is because the rights of the individual are guaranteed by the State, the State intervening to protect the rights which it guarantees. It follows that a criminal prosecution lies for threatening to attack, at least by arms, the State itself, though no physical harm be inflicted on individuals; but the treason being an invasion of the direct rights of the State. But offences against religion and morals, unless injuring individuals, or affecting the social fabric, and thereby assailing the State, are not indictable crimes.

§ 138. Infamous persons, no matter how great may be their degradation, are still under the protection of the law. An outlaw, or a person fleeing from justice, may be arrested, as is elsewhere seen, without a warrant, but he cannot be personally hurt (unless such hurt be necessary to his arrest) without exposing the party injuring to criminal prosecution. Nor does any degree of collateral criminality in a party justify the infliction on him of injury by individuals.

§ 139. Persons condemned to death are under the protection of the law until the period comes for their execution, and the executioner undertakes the work. "Non licet privata potestate hominem occidere vel nocere." To the executioner alone is public authority to kill given, and this authority he is bound to execute in the way the law requires. In no other way is the killing justifiable. As a general

1 See Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. §§ 1 et seq.
2 See People v. Stetson, 4 Barb. 141.
3 Can. 9. Can. 23, qu. 5.

164
of the party injured, the maxim is recognized as good by all modern jurisprudence.1 Of this we will have frequent illustrations in the following pages. Thus, consent by an owner to the taking of goods is a defence to a prosecution for larceny;2 consent to entrance into a house is a defence to a prosecution for burglary;3 consent to an assault, not connected with a breach of public order, is a defence to a prosecution for assault;4 consent to an intended rape bars a prosecution for rape;5 consent to an intended robbery bars a prosecution for robbery.6 But it is to be remembered that this proposition is by its very terms limited to injuries strictly private, and to those which concern the merely alienable rights of the party injured. And it should also be kept

§ 142. Any injury committed in such a way as to be an offense to the body politic may be prosecuted in defiance of the consent of the party immediately injured. Prize fighters, for instance, may agree to beat each other, and if this is done in private, and death or mayhem does not ensue, no prosecution lies at each other's instance;7 but it is otherwise when there is a breach of the peace,8 or when the fighting is so conspicuously brutal as to produce public scandal, or work public demoralization.9 Consent cannot cure duels, or incest, or seduction,10 or adultery, or the making of another so as to render him unfit for public service,11 or such operations on women as prevent them from having children, or operations to produce miscarriage,12 or (when this is by statute indictable) proscribe dealings with minors. The reason is that parties cannot by consent cancel a public law necessary to the safety and morality of the State. Justi cium privatorem voluntate mutari negat.13

§ 143. The distinction between alienable and inalienable rights is asserted in the Declaration of Independence, and in the Bills of

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1 See B. v. Read, 1 Den. C. C. 377; 2 Car. & Kir. 957; R. v. Wellaston, 12 Cox C. C. 180; 56 Law T. Rep. 403 (1872); R. v. Martin, 2 Mood. C. C. 123; State v. Back, 1 Hill S. C. 363. In the Roman law we have the oft cited maxim, Volenti non fit iniuria; or as put by Aristotle, Metae 1012 3606, Ethic Nicom. v. 13. But this maxim was held not to include inalienable rights; while the better opinion was, that so far as concerns the State, no private individual can, by consenting to a crime shall be committed on him, stop the State from prosecuting. The Code on this point is clear. L. 58, D. de pact. (2. 14) fas publicum privatorem pas- tias mutari non potest. L. 45, § 1, D. de reg. jur. (60, 17). Privatorem con- ventus iuri publico non derogat. L. 6, C. de pact. (2. 3) Pastas, quae contra leges constitutionalesque, vid. coners bonos morae sunt, nullam vic habere, indubitali iuris est. L. 13, pr. D. ad L. Aquil. (2. 2) Liber homo suo nomine titulus Aquillae habet actio- nem: directam enim non habet, quot- niam dominum membrosum solum, nemo videtur. But the Roman law cautiously limits the maxim to cases where, as in theft, etc., "against the will" is an essential ingredient of the offense, and in which there is no breach of the peace or public scandal. L. 48, § 8, D. de furt. (47, 2.) § 8, I, de obig. quasi ex delict. (41.) Sed et si credat aliquis invito domino se rem commissim contracto, domino autem volente id fiat, dicitur tamquam non fieri. L. 1, § 5, D. de furt. (47, 16.) qua non alta infuria est, quae in voluntatem facta, cap. 27, de reg. juri. in VI. (5, 13.) Scienti et consentienti non fit infuria. L. 1, § 5, D. quod, vi aut clam. (43, 24.) Quod sit vi factum videamus. Vi factum riteur! Quinque Maxiis scripta, si quin contra, quam prohibetur, facit. L. 154, D. de reg. jur. (60, 17.) Nemo violatur fraudari eos, qui sequuntur et consultant. L. 3, § 5, D. de hom. lib. exhib. (46, 26.) Si quia volentem ratificat, non violatur dum sit retinaci, non violatur dum sit retine- tur. L. 6, § 2, D. de fab. de plagibus. (48, 13.) Legem Fabii cavat, et liber, qui hominem ingenium vel libertatem invitat odadvert, ... eius poena tenetur. L. 3, § 4, D. ad L. iul. de vi publica. (46, 6.) See Lemox's Inst. (1574) p. 82. As to consent to attempts, see infra, § 138.

2 Infra, § 512.
3 Infra, §§ 706-710.
4 Infra, §§ 855, 877, 856.
5 Infra, § 854.
6 Infra, §§ 888.
CRIMES.

§ 144. Rights of most of the United States. Inalienable rights as thus generally defined are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The distinction, however, is not modern; it lies at the basis of the penal sections of the canon law, and from that law is more or less fully absorbed into the common law of continental Europe.

§ 144. Life is the first of these inalienable prerogatives. Thus, a man who kills another with the latter's consent is guilty of homicide. Although some of the jurists of the stolich naeum argued in the negative, the affirmative was determined under the Justinian Code; and by the English common law the criminality of the act is such that the consent of the party slain does not even lower the degree. And this rule exists not only in cases where there is malice, but where no malice exists, as in agreements for concurrent suicides. Yet we may readily conceive of cases where the degree of guilt would be greatly reduced. A physician, at the request of a dying man suffering intolerable agonies, may, from humane motives, precipitate death; or a soldier on the battle-field, after urgent appeals, may, with intense agony on his own part, yet from the same humane motives, take the same course as to a dying comrade. Yet even here the maxim Volenti non fit injuria cannot be applied. There is nothing in the consent to bar a verdict of guilty. That verdict, however, would be for the lowest form of voluntary manslaughter, and could properly be followed by executive pardon.

We may, therefore, justly argue that if life be an inalienable prerogative, then taking it by self is a public wrong, and those who are necessary to this public wrong cannot plead in defence the suicide's consent.

sent of the accused, much less by his mere silence, when on trial and in custody, to object to unauthorized methods," Harlan, J. Hope v. People, 110 U. S. 570. 7

§ 145. Deprivation of liberty, no matter on what pretext, rests on the same principles. No man has a right to take away another's liberty, even though with consent, except deprivation by process of law. And the reason is that liberty is an inalienable prerogative of which no man can divest himself, and of which any divestiture is null. 2 Undoubtedly this in one relation conflicts with the attitude once assumed by English and American courts, when maintaining that the slave trade is not piracy by the law of nations. But the abolition of slavery in the United States, and the civil rights amendments and enactments that followed, relieve the courts in this country from the pressure of the precedents referred to, and restore the old doctrine of inalienability of liberty. It is true that cases of this class are not very likely to arise. But should it appear that incarcerations are effected, even by consent, by ecclesiastical or medical authority, of persons whose liberty is thus wrongfully destroyed, the fact of consent could not, if the doctrine here advanced be correct, be used as a defense, when such party seeks release. And a fortiori would it be no defense to a indictment for kidnapping Africans, that the Africans consented to be kidnapped. 3 Agreements, also, by a party absolutely giving up

1 See infra, §§ 451-2.
3 See infra, §§ 451-2; Com. v. Parker, 9 Met. 263; Macaulay's Indian Code, 449. As to consent in writing constitutional and other privileges of trial, see Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. §§ 351, 518, 733.

4 On this topic may be consulted Lord Macaulay's Report on the Indian Code, 449.

5 That which the law makes essential in proceedings involving the deprivation of life or liberty cannot be dispensed with, or affected by the consent of the accused, much less by his mere silence, when on trial and in custody, to object to unauthorized methods," Harlan, J. Hope v. People, 110 U. S. 570. 7

6 Of this we have a remarkable illustration in a Pennsylvania case, in 1836, in which it was held that an agreement not to bring a writ of error in a criminal case, especially one of high degree, does not estop the defendant from bringing such writ. The question arose after a conviction of burglary, where it was alleged that the defendant had agreed in writing not to bring a writ of error, and where a motion to quash the writ was on this ground made. But Tilden, C. J., in refusing the motion said: "What consideration can a man have received, adequate to imprisonment at hard labor for life? It is going but one step further to make an agreement to be hunged. I presume no one would be hardly enough to ask the court to enforce such an agreement, yet the principle is, in both cases, the same." Smith v. Com., 14 S. & L. 59; and see Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. §§ 541, 733.

7 See State v. Weaver, Bushue, 9, contra; a decision which cannot now be sustained.
the exercise of his business capacity, are void, though agreements not to do business in particular localities may be sustained.\footnote{\text{1}}

\text{§ 145 a.} Constitutional rights to trial by an independent jury, whose deliberations are to be guarded against outside interference, are to be placed in the same category. These a defendant cannot waive.\footnote{\text{2}}

\text{§ 146.} It need scarcely be added that even in those cases of purely private wrongs to which the maxim _Volenti non fit injuria_ applies, the party injured must be capable of giving consent.\footnote{\text{3}} Thus, consent by insane persons and young children incapable of assenting is no bar.\footnote{\text{4}} In cases of rape this has been frequently adjudicated,\footnote{\text{5}} and the same reasoning holds good in cases of larceny. Thus consent is no defence to an indictment for larceny from or upon an insane person, or a person in a state of unconsciousness of the meaning of the guilty act.\footnote{\text{6}} And so acquiescence extorted by fear or fraud is no defence.\footnote{\text{7}} But where a surgical operation is probably necessary

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1] Whart. on Cont., §§ 480 et seq.
\item[2] See Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. § 733.
\item[4] E. g., in cases of abduction, in U. S. v. Amsden, 28 Bitch. C. C. 423; State v. Rollins, 8 N. Y. 250; State v. Paraz, 41 N. H. 53; Com. v. Nickerson, 5 Allen, 518. As to infants, see Given v. Com., 29 Grant 586, and cases cited, infra, § 477.
\item[5] See infra, § 477; Hay v. People, 1 Hill, N. Y. 351; State v. Johnston, 76 N. C. 209. In Com. v. Burke, 105 Mass. 276, the court held that "without her consent," and "against her will," were convertible terms; and hence that carnal knowledge of a woman by force or fraud was rape. The statutory crime of having carnal knowledge of children is not dependent on consent, infra, §§ 577, 612.
\end{footnotes}

\text{Infra, § 160; } 2 East P. C. 486.

In November, 1872, the question of consent, as affected by ignorance of the act, came before Kelly, C. B., Martin, B., Jetri, Groce, and Quinn, JJ., on a crown case, in which the defendant was charged with an indecent assault upon two boys, of eight years old. "The boys were not asked by the counsel on either side if it" (the act which consisted in his playing with their private parts, and then throwing them on their backs and laying on them, etc.) "was done against their will or with their consent," but they stated that they did not know what the defendant was going to do to them when he took them into the field and placed them on his lap and laid them on the ground. The defendant having been convicted, Kelly, C. B., said: "I am of opinion that the conviction should be affirmed. There being no actual consent, and on the other hand no actual fraud to induce consent, I think that where a child submits to an act of this kind, in ignorance, the offence is similar to that perpetrated by a man who has connexion with a woman while asleep."

"In the present case the acts were done to children, and they were unconscious of the nature of the act which the prisoner did or was about to do, and were therefore not in a condition to exercise their wills one way or the other, and I think that the act done by the prisoner amounted to an assault." R. v. Lock, 27 Law T. Rep. 661; 12 Cox C. C. 244. \textit{Infra, § 555.}

The report in Law Rep. 2 C. C. 12, is more brief, and closed as follows: "And though there was submission on the part of the children, I do not think there was any consent; for they were so wholly ignorant of the nature of the act done as to be incapable of exercising their wills one way or the other." See R. v. Countet, 4 P. B. 1183; R. v. Case, 4 Cox C. C. 320; 1 Den. C. C. 500. \textit{Infra, § 577.}

1 Steph. Dig. C. L. art. 203; McClellan v. Adams, 19 Pick. 333.


3 \textit{Infra}, §§ 162-5, 703.

4 See \textit{infra}, § 163.


§ 149. The law as to detectives and decoys may be thus noted:—

(1) When to the constitution of an offence it is necessary that it should be committed without the consent of the party assaulted, it is no defence that opportunities for the committal of the offence were offered by government or by prosecution. Thus the owner laying a trap, such as putting out lights or lessening the difficulties of entrance, does not preclude a prosecution for burglary. Exposing, also, of marked goods, by their owner, to a supposed thief, has been repeatedly held not to bar a prosecution for larceny.

On the other hand, if, in cases of this class (e. g., those in which to constitute the offence it is necessary that it should be without the consent of the party to be injured), the party endangered, then the prosecution fails. Thus if a woman consent to a sexual assault there can be no prosecution for rape; if the owner of property surrender his goods to a thief he cannot maintain larceny or embezzlement; if he leave his house-door open, he cannot maintain burglary; if he consent to be robbed in order to prosecute the robber, he cannot maintain robbery; but if on the other hand he simply leave marked property in such a position that if stolen it could be identified, or if, while keeping his door fastened, he put out the lights, and collect a party of armed friends to seize the expected burglar; here the existence of such traps forms no defence.

(2) The employment by the government of a detective in the guise of a confederate does not preclude a prosecution in cases where the detective does not make himself apparent principal in the crime. A distinction is here made between the detective and the

decoy. The detective discloses, it may be often by the agency of the criminals themselves, who are led to expose themselves unguardedly, a crime already concocted; the decoy suggests the crime and is herein its originator. It is true that all detectives are in one sense decoys, and all decoys are in one sense detectives. But when the decoy ceases to be detective, and becomes the apparent originator of the crime, then one of two consequences follows. If he was not employed by the government, then he becomes a co-conspirator liable to the same punishment as his associates, on the same principle as that which makes a person who appropriates lost property for the purpose of getting a reward indictable for larceny.

If, on the other hand, he was employed by the government to cause the offence to be committed, the government is precluded from asking that the offenders thus decoyed should be convicted. They are associates with the government in the commission of the crime, and the offence being joint, the prosecution must fail. If that which one principal does is not a crime, the other principal cannot be convicted for aiding him.

(3) Detectives, whose office is limited to that of observing a crime when in the process of consummation, or of exploring its causes when consummated, and who have not instigated it or encouraged it, except to assist the corresponding authorities, are public agents entitled, when acting bona fide and discretely, to confidence and support. It is true that allowance is to be made for that zeal which leads officers of this class sometimes to attach undue importance to supposed signs of crime. It is important, also, that their testimony should, as far as possible, be corroborated. But the mere presence and apparent approval of a policeman is no defence where there is no authoritative instigation of the offence by the government; nor a fortiori is the presence and apparent approval of a disguised detective, not recognized as

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1 Infora, § 906. See Stegenton v. State, 5 Wis. 201, and other cases cited, infra, § 1424; see article in London Law Times, July 30, 1881. The same effect see observations of court in Blacklow v. Lawton, 18 Scottish Law Rep. 683, a conviction was quashed on the ground that the offence was instigated by an agent of the police. To the 25 Alb. L. J. 154; 15 Irish Law Times, 129; and note to 16 Fed. Rep. 97; Saunders v. People, 33 Mich. 218.

such by the offender, appointed to act as such by the government or the parties endangered.1

(4) Where a criminal scheme is in operation (as where a number of libellous2 or indecent documents are printed for transmission by mail), a party who calls for one of these is no more a participant in the crime of publication than is a party who buys a newspaper at a counter participant in the crime of publication.3

The same remark applies to the obtaining, by solicitation, of single articles, whose sale is prohibited by law, from a stock in the vendor's hands, as where a small quantity of drink is bought from a stock behind the counter,4 or where counterfeit money is obtained from one who has such money on hand,5 or where persons engaged in systems of revenue fraud are induced to expose themselves in a way that leads to detection. In this line of cases, it is not the crime that is instigated by the government. The crime has been already concocted—the prohibited books printed, the prohibited coin manufactured, the prohibited goods arrayed for importation. All that the government (or the prosecution, as the case may be) invites, is the exposure of that which already exists in overt shape. If the government, for instance, should say, "Import these goods, or write this libellous letter," there could be no prosecution. But if it simply say, though in disguise, "Is this the letter you have written, or these your goods?" then the prosecution can be maintained.4

(5) The testimony of accomplices, when introduced as witnesses

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1 That a detective is not inadmissible for an apparent attempt at crime committed by him in order to expose the real criminal, see Price v. People, 109 Ill. 109. That a detective acting bona fide is not an accessory before the fact, see infra, § 231, and cases there cited. On this point, see R. v. O'Callaghan, noticed in 70 Law T. (Journal), 15, where the question in the text is discussed.

2 R. v. Bardlet, 4 B. & Ald. 98; Com v. Blanding, 3 Pick. 304; State v. Avery, 7 Conn. 298; Swindle v. State, 2 Yerg. 581.


5 Where persons are suspected of being engaged in the violations of criminal laws, or of intending to commit an offence, it is allowable to remit to detect measures to procure evidence of such fact or intention. Many frauds upon the postal, revenue, and other laws are of such a secret nature that they can be effectually discovered in no other way. Accordingly, there have been numerous convictions upon evidence procured by means of what are called decoy letters—that is, letters prepared and mailed on purpose to detect the offender; and it is no objection to the conviction, when the prohibited act has been done, that it was discovered by means of letters specially prepared and mailed by the officers of the government, and addressed to a person who had no actual existence. The books contain many cases where such convictions have been sustained. U. S. v. Sago, 1 Curt. C. C. 364; U. S. v. Cottingham, 2 Hare 470; Regina v. Rollinson, Moody's C. C. 310; S. C., Carr. & Marsh. 220; Regina v. Gardner, 3 Carr. & Kirkw. 628; Regina v. Williams, Hald. 195; Regina v. Menzies, Carr. & Marsh. 254.


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for the prosecution, will not, as a rule, when uncorroborated, sustain a conviction; but detectives employed by government or prosecution to attend unlawful meetings in order to discover their secrets, or to watch persons concerned in crime, are not, even though apparently assenting to the purposes of such meetings, to be regarded as accomplices.1

§ 150. Consent obtained by fraud, as a general rule, is to be treated as a nullity.2 Thus, consent to a sexual offence, if fraudulently obtained, does not bar a prosecution for such offence; nor does consent to entering a house, if fraudulently obtained, bar a prosecution for burglary; nor does consent, when there is any deception as to the thing to be taken, bar a prosecution for larceny.3 And consent obtained from a drunken man does not bar a prosecution for kidnapping.4 Consent obtained by coercion is also no defence.5

objection to the conviction, when the prohibited act has been done, that it was discovered by means of letters specially prepared and mailed by the officers of the government, and addressed to a person who had no actual existence. The books contain many cases where such convictions have been sustained. U. S. v. Sago, 1 Curt. C. C. 364; U. S. v. Cottingham, 2 Hare 470; Regina v. Rollinson, Moody's C. C. 310; S. C., Carr. & Marsh. 220; Regina v. Gardner, 3 Carr. & Kirkw. 628; Regina v. Williams, Hald. 195; Regina v. Menzies, Carr. & Marsh. 254.


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One of the most notorious and infamous conspiracies ever known in this country—that of the "Molly Maguires," in 1874, to coerce by assassination the coal proprietors of the Pennsylvania anthracite region—was successful, and the chief perpetrators brought to justice by the sagacity and courage of a detective who attended the meetings of the conspirators, and thus became possessed not only of their plans for the future, but of their exploits in the past. The fact is, there is no crime that is not committed under the influence of some sort of decoy; and to acquit in all cases where the offender is induced to the crime by some incitement of this kind would leave few cases in which there could be a conviction. Campbell v. Com., 84 Penn. St. 117, cited infra, §§ 231, 236, 321, 529.


3 See infra, §§ 509, 561.

4 See infra, § 765.

5 See infra, § 707.

6 In re People, 25 N. Y. 373.

7 See infra, §§ 557, 772; Lewis v. State, 19 Kans. 260.
CHAPTER VII.

CAUSAL CONNECTION BETWEEN OFFENDER AND OFFENCE.

The will causes whatever effect it cooperates in producing, § 152.

A cause is that which turns the balance, § 153.

Other conditions cooperating do not affect the responsibility of one who operates with these conditions, § 154.

Otherwise when subsequent conditions occur to vary result, § 155.

Accelerating death of dying is homicide, § 155 a.

Omission to perform a legal duty indelible; and so of exposure of helpless dependents, § 156.

When death is negligently induced by a physician’s misconduct, assentant is not responsible, § 157.

Medical man may be in such cases responsible, § 158.

No defence that was death was caused by disease induced by wound, § 159.

Interposition of responsible will breaks causal connection, § 160.

Causation not broken by irresponsible intermediate agent, § 161.

Concurrent negligence of another no defence, § 162.

Injured party’s contributory negligence may break causal connection, § 163.

Contributory negligence no defence when the result of fright caused by defendant’s misconduct, § 164.

Prior negligence of party injured no defence if defendant by proper caution could have avoided injury, § 165.

Persons leaving dangerous agencies where they are likely to be unconsciously meddled with responsible for the consequences, § 166.

Causation not necessarily physical, § 167.

To negligent causation not necessary that damage should have been foreseen, § 168.

Responsibility causes when cause intervenes, § 169.

§ 152. The consequences of an act of the will can never be absolutely predicted. A thousand contingencies may intervene to defeat the most resolute purpose. Responsibility, therefore, at least for attempting a wrong, is not diverted because this wrong was arrested before consummation. Nor, as we have seen, is it necessary, to establish causation, that the effect should correspond with the conception. No purpose was ever completed as it was designed, and even should we suppose such a case, innumerable other agencies are concerned in the undertaking. It is not necessary, therefore, in order to establish a causal relation between the will and the effect, that the effect should be precisely what the party willed. Nor is it necessary that it should have been the primary object the offender

had in view, as it is sufficient if the object in view was one which could not be obtained without law-breaking. Nor need such act of law-breaking be necessary to the execution of the purpose. It may be only incidentally involved in such purpose, yet if the will be to effect the purpose, lawfully or unlawfully, the will is to be regarded as causing the illegal act. Thus, a party selling liquor recklessly to a crowd has been held responsible for their disorderly conduct; a person wilfully firing his own house is indiscernible from the wilful firing of an adjacent house which become involved in the conflagration; a person contributing to a nuisance, for the incidents of the nuisance.

§ 153. Assuming a cause to be that impulse which turns the balance between forces previously in equilibrium, many of the speculations of the old jurists in this relation become obsolete. Thus it used to be said that absolute lethality (absoluter letalität) existed when a wound, apart from all other conditions, produced death; and abstract lethality existed when a wound would be fatal with persons of all kinds; and many refined distinctions were taken in cases where, if superior skill had been applied, the wound might not have been fatal, or where the death was attributable eminently to some idiosyncrasies of the deceased. Of course, when after a wound a new and independent causation intervenes, producing death, this relieves parties to whom such new causation is not imputable. But the co-operation of other contemporaneous or prior conditions does not relieve the party charged. He who turns the scale is chargeable with the result. In other words, a cause is, in this sense, that condition which determines the final result. It is the presorodering (überwiegende) condition.

1 Supra, § 112. See on this topic, 1 Steph, Hist. Cr. L. 5.


3 State v. Baruchoff, 4 Barrington, 572.

4 Supra, § 120; infra, § 120.

5 Infra, § 1450.

6 Treuenehmrn, Logische Untersuchungen, 25 ed. p. 182; Mayor, § 84.

7 The cause of a change, so speaks another high German authority, is identical with a change of the equilibrium between forces producing and forces resisting the change. These forces may be balanced. The impulse, however slight, that disturbs the balance, is the cause of the movement. Binding, Normen (1872). p. 42.
§ 154. CRIMES. [BOOK I.

§ 154. A free moral agent (and none other can be a cause in the eye of jurisprudence) does not cease to be responsible for an alteration effected by him in the ordinary course of events, because there were other conditions which were, in addition to his action, co-antecedents of the same result. Thus, in a case where the death of a child proceeded from suffocation caused by the defendant, it was held, that when the primary cause of the suffocation was forcing moss into the throat of the child, the defendant’s liability was not relieved by the existence of an intermediate process, namely, the swelling of the passage of the throat, which occasioned the suffocation, such swelling having arisen by forcing the moss into the throat. 1 In this case, while the swelling of the throat was a condition of the death, the cause was the forcing the moss into the throat. The susceptibility of the human body to poison, to take another illustration, is a condition of poisoning; the administering of the poison is the cause. 2

Again: Iron is dug from a mine; is melted in a furnace; is shaped in a factory; is sold, as a weapon, by a tradesman; is used to inflict a fatal blow by an assassin. Now the mining, the melting, the shaping, the selling, are all conditions of the murder, without which it could not, in the line in which it was effected, have taken place; but none of these acts is a cause of the murder, unless the particular act was done in concert with the murderer, to aid him in effecting his purpose. So a workman places on the roof of a house a tile which a stranger maliciously tears up and throws into a crowded street, killing a passer-by. Now the workman is a

1 Sir J. P. Stephen, in his Digest of Cr. Law, article 221, says: "Dr. Wharton’s work on Homicide contains an interesting and elaborate chapter (chap. xii. §§ 381-389), entitled ‘Causal Connection,’ to which some discussion is introduced on the distinction between causes and conditions—a distinction of which Dr. Wharton maintains, and of which Mr. Mill (see his Logic, vol. i. p. 358, et seq.) denies, the solidity. For practical purposes, I think the article in the text is sufficient. And if this were the proper place, I should be disposed to discuss some of Dr. Wharton’s positions."

2 "Killing is causing the death of a person by an act or omission which, if the person killed would not have died when he did, and which is directly and immediately connected with his death. The question whether a given act or omission is directly and immediately connected with the death of any person is a question of degree, dependent upon the circumstances of each particular case." (Innsbruck.) But the conduct of one person is not deemed, for the purposes of this article, to be the cause of the conduct of another, if it affects such conduct only by way of supplying a motive for it, and not so as to make the first person an accessory before the fact to the act of the other.

1 R. v. Tye, R. & R. 345. See infra, § 335. Sir J. P. Stephen illustrates as follows the position in the text:—

"A woman dies in her confinement. It can hardly be said that the father of her child has killed her, though the connection between his act and her death is perfectly distinct. Even if the connection which caused the birth of the child was a rape, I do not think that the death would amount to murder; nor would it be so if a husband, tired of his wife, and being warned that her death would be the probable result of child birth, intending and hoping to cause her death, actually caused it in the manner supposed." 3 Steph. Hist. Cr. L. 9.

That in prosecutions for false pretences it is not necessary to show that the false pretence used was the sole motive operating on the defendant will be hereafter seen. Infra, § 116.


"This article is subject to the provisions contained in the next two articles."

Illustrations.

"(1) A substitutes poison for medicine which is to be administered to C. by B. B. innocently administers the poison to C., who dies of it. A has killed C. Dunlop's Case. See my Gen. View, Cr. L. 338.

"(2) A gives a poisoned apple to his wife, B, intending to poison her. B, in A's presence, and with his knowledge, gives the apple to C., their child, whom A did not intend to poison. A not interfering, C eats the apple and dies. A has killed C. Saunders's Case, 1 Hale P. C. 480.

"(3) A., an iron-founder, ordered to melt down a defective cannon which had burst, repaired it with lead, in a dangerous manner. Being fired with an ordinary charge, it bursts and kills B. A. has killed B. R. v. Carr, 8 C. & P. 163. See infra, §§ 337, 343, 369.

"(4) A., B., and C., road trustees under an act of parliament, and as such under an obligation to make repairs for the repair of the road, neglect to make any such contract, whereby the road gets out of repair, and D. passing along it is killed. A., B., and C. have not killed D. R. v. Popeck, 17 Q. B. (N. S.) 34. See infra, § 339.

"(5) A. by his servants, makes fire-works in a house in London contrary to the provisions of an act of parliament (9 & 10 Wm. III. c. 77). Through the negligence of his servants, and without any act of his, a rocket explodes and sets fire to another house,
§ 155. Suppose that A. maliciously aims a blow at B., which stuns B., and Α., thinking B. to be dead, buries B., and B. dies from being buried alive. Several cases of this kind (e.g., one of infanticide) have arisen in Germany, and have been the subject of much learned discussion, and the better opinion, as is argued by Bar in his authoritative work on Causal Connection, is that A. is guilty, so far as concerns the first blow, not of murder, but of an attempt to murder. Such would be the result in our own law, should the case come up on an indictment charging murder by the first blow, for as the evidence would not sustain the allegation that the blow killed the deceased, the indictment would fail, and the only redress for the first blow would be to prosecute the defendant for attempt to kill. But how would it be with the death by the burying? Supposing this was the cause of the death, then the defendant is chargeable with manslaughter in killing the deceased, but would not be chargeable with murder, as there was no malice. Hence the defendant, in such a case, is chargeable, first with attempt to murder, and then with manslaughter. In a late English case, where this question is approached, the evidence left it doubtful whether the death was caused by beating or by subsequent exposure. In either case the result, owing to want of malice, would have been only manslaughter; and as the indictment contained counts fitted to either alternative, the court told the jury that if the death was caused either by the blows or the exposure, they were to convict of manslaughter.1

In a case of earlier date, the indictment charged the death of a child to have been occasioned by exposure to cold. The evidence was that the child was found in a field, alive, with a contusion on the head, and that it died a few hours afterwards. The medical

whereby B. is killed. A. has not killed B. R. v. Bennett, Bell C. C. 1; S. Cox C. C. 74. See infra, §§ 246 et seq.

“(a) A. tells B. facts about C. in the hope that the knowledge of those facts will induce B. to murder C., and in order that C. may be murdered; but A. does not advise B. to murder C. B. murders C. accordingly. A. has not caused C.’s death within the meaning of this article.”

By § 673 of the N. Y. Penal Code of 1825 it is provided that any person who breaks a contract of labor, having reasonable cause to believe that the probable consequence of doing so will be to endanger human life, cause grievous bodily injury, or expose valuable property to destruction, shall be guilty of manslaughter.

1 R. v. Martin, 11 Cox C. C. 136.

180

CHAP. VII.] CAUSAL CONNECTION. [§ 156.

witnesses stated that the conclusion was in itself sufficient to occasion death, and that the exposure might have accelerated it. It was submitted on behalf of the prisoner, that supposing the death to have been only accelerated by the exposure, the count which charged it as the cause could not be supported, and of this opinion was the judge who tried the case.1

But this cannot be sustained. Supposing that the exposure accelerated the death, it “caused” the death. The conclusion did not kill. The fact that it might have killed had the deceased lived long enough, could not support an indictment for killing: 1. Because the averment of death from the wound could not be sustained; 2. Because to allow a conviction for an act that was not committed, simply because it might have been committed, would allow convictions for the murder of men still alive.

When two causes unite simultaneously in producing the same result, either may be legally regarded as the efficient cause. In a remarkable case decided in New Mexico in 1889, it was held that where Α. and B. shot at the same time C., they could be indicted together as principals.2 This is no doubt good law if A. and B. were confederates. But suppose they were not, and that it should be proved that the two at the same moment fired shots each of which was fatal. In such case Α. and Β. should be indicted separately.

Where, however, there is any appreciable distance of time between two mortal wounds inflicted by different persons, then he who inflicted the last wound is guilty of the homicide, while he who inflicted the first wound may be indicted for an assault with intent to kill.3

§ 155 a. Hence to accelerate the death of a person already mortally wounded or diseased is homicide.4

§ 156. Omission to help may be an indictable offence, when such help is a legal duty. We have already seen that, as a rule, an omission to perform any link in a chain of duty is a breach of such duty.5 It has also been

2 Fisher v. State, 10 Lee, 15. 48 Cal. 81. Small, §§ 153; infra, §§ 99
Johnson, 1 Lew. C. C. 164; R. v. 4 See supra, § 130.

181
§ 156. CRIMES. [BOOK L

Duty not indictable, and so of exposure of dependents.

noticed that a mere omission to help is not indictable unless such help is a legal duty. An officer of a railroad, for instance, whose duty it is to protect trains from accidents, is indictable if from his neglect to render such protection hurt ensues; a parent whose legal duty it is to nourish a child is responsible for an omission in this respect by which the child is injured, and so of a husband’s neglect to render necessary assistance to his wife when such is his legal duty. Hence, a fortiori, it is indictable to put a helpless person in a position of which hurt is a natural consequence. This principle has been applied to cases where a boy, having been beaten by the defendant, was left by him in a country lane during a frosty night in January, where a lane person, incapable of moving, and without voice to cry for help, was forced out of a wagon, in a place where he froze to death; where a person carried his sick father against his will, in a severe season, from one town to another, by reason whereof he died; where a woman being delivered of a child left it in an exposed place covered only with leaves, in which condition it was killed by a kite, or by cold; where a child was placed in a hogshead, where it was devoured, and where a child was shifted by parish officers from parish to parish till it died for want of care and sustenance. And such was held to be the law where a master, knowing a seaman’s debility and incapacity to hold on, forced him to go aloft, whereupon the seaman fell to the deck, and was killed; and where the captain of a vessel omitted to lower a life boat so as to save a seaman. But the injury must be the natural or probable consequence of the defendant’s act to make him responsible for it.

How far a parent is indictable for not obtaining sufficient medical attendance for a child will be hereafter considered.

§ 157. CAUSAL CONNECTION.

We have next to consider cases of homicide after the deceased receives the wound, he is placed under the charge of a medical man, who, in probing the wound or otherwise operating on the patient immediately causes his death. If the medical man acts negligently or maliciously, and so introduces a new responsible cause between the wound and the death, this, on the principle just stated, breaks the causal connection between the wound and the death. The medical man in such case is indictable for the homicide; the original assailant only for an attempt. But if the medical man, following the usual course of practice which good practitioners under the circumstances are accustomed to adopt, occasions death when endeavoring to heal the wound, then the person inflicting the wound is chargeable with the death. For he who does an unlawful act is responsible, as we have just seen, for all the consequences that in the ordinary course of events proceed from the unlawful act. Now it is one of the ordinary consequences of a wound that a medical man should be called in to treat it; and it is one of the probable incidents of medical practice that the patient should die under treatment. And the person inflicting the wound is responsible for this, as one of the consequences which, in the natural course of events, result from his unlawful act. It is no defence, in cases in which the deceased’s death is not shown to have been produced by his own negligence or that of his medical attendant, that he might have recovered had a higher degree of professional skill been employed. The law does not exact from physicians the highest degree of professional skill, but only such skill as men of their profession are, under the circumstances, accustomed to apply; and if we should convict only in cases where it is possible to conceive of recovery under another mode of treatment, we would convict in few cases in which death did not immediately follow the wound. The true test is, whether the deceased’s death followed as an ordinary and natural result

1 Supra, § 122.
2 Supra, § 133; infra, § 349.
3 In re, § 1563.
4 R. v. Martin, 11 Cox C. C. 136; if the exposure had been malicious, the offence would have been murder. R. v. Donovan, 4 Cox C. C. 999; See infra, § 355.
5 Nixon v. People, 2 Scammell, 297. 
6 infra, § 358.
7 1 Hale, 431; 1 Hawk. P. C. c. 31, s. 6.
8 1 East P. C. c. 5, s. 13, p. 226.
9 Palm, 545.
10 U. S. v. Freeman, 4 Mason, 505.
11 infra, §§ 164, 337.
12 U. S. v. Knowles, 4 Sawyer, 517.
13 infra, § 199.
15 McAllister v. State, 17 Ala. 424; Parsons v. State, 21 Ala. 300; State v. infra, §§ 362 et seq.
§ 159. CRIMES. [DOCK I.] from the misconduct of the defendant. If so, it is no defense that the deceased, under another form of treatment, might have recovered.¹

§ 158. But the physician, not the assailant, is responsible where the defendant inflicted on the deceased a slight wound, in itself not dangerous, which wound, by the maltreatment of the physician, became mortal.² If, in consequence of some physical idiosyncrasies of the deceased, the wound, which in ordinary cases would not be fatal, produces death, then the defendant is chargeable with the homicide, for the result flowed from the defendant through the agency of natural laws. But if the result is caused by the malpractice of the physician, the wound not being in itself mortal, and the physician not acting in concert with the defendant, then the defendant is not responsible, for the wound, though a condition of the killing, is not its juridical cause.³ And where death of the deceased was accelerated by the want of the due skill and competency of his physician, then the latter cannot defend himself on the ground that the deceased was at the time laboring under a mortal disease.⁴

§ 159. Where a wound, in its regular course, induces a fever which leads to death, the party inflicting the wound is responsible for the consequences. Even if a man is laboring under a mortal disease, those who hasten his death are responsible for the homicide. Nor is it any defense that the constitution, age, or habits of the deceased made him peculiarly susceptible to such disease as the wound inflicted would probably engender.¹ But it is easy to imagine a case in which a slight scratch, by producing local inflammation, might terminate in death; and in such case it would seem hard, at the first view, to charge the defendant with a result which would not under ordinary circumstances follow from such a wound. Yet if the defendant intended to take life, and in shooting, for instance, inflicted a wound which, though not ordinarily dangerous, in the particular case produced lock-jaw, we cannot say that the deceased’s death did not ensue in the ordinary course of events from the shooting. The difficulty arises where a scratch is negligently given by a non-lethal instrument. Here we can truly say that as the death was not an ordinary consequence of the negligence, there is no imputability of murder. Supposing, however, a person negligently uses a dangerous instrument, then we must hold he is liable for the consequences, peculiar as they may be, which wound from this instrument produce. For it is in accordance with the ordinary course of events that a dangerous instrument if negligently used should produce dangerous results.⁵

§ 160. The interposition of concurrent wills, in pursuance of a common plan, makes each confederate liable for the action of his associates. It is otherwise, however, when responsibility is based, not on intentional, but on negligent injuries.¹ As to these the rule is

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2. If one person inflicts upon another a dangerous wound, one that is calculated to endanger and destroy life, and death ensues therefrom within a year and a day, it is sufficient proof of the offense either of manslaughter or murder, as the case may be, and he is not the less responsible for the result, although it may appear that the deceased might have recovered if he had taken proper care of himself, or that an unskilful or improper treatment aggravated the wound and contributed to his death.” Pardoe, J., State v. Bantley, 44 Conn. 347. See People v. Cook, 32 Mich. 229; Kelly v. State, 33 Ind. 491; Williams v. State, 2 Tex. Ap. 271; People v. Ah Fat, 45 Cal. 61.

3. Harvey v. State, 40 Ind. 516.


5. Supra, § 153; infra, § 382; R. v. Webb, 1 M. & R. 406; People v. Ah Fat, 45 Cal. 61.

6. Interposition of independent respondents, will break causal connection.

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1. 1 Hale P.C. 428; R. v. Martin, 5 C. & P. 125; R. v. Webb, 1 M. & R. 406; R. v. Martin, 3 F. & P. 492; R. v. Martin, 5 C. & P. 128; R. v. Martin, 11 Cox C.C. 138; Brow’s Case, 291; Com. v. Fox, 7 Gray, 88; Com. v. Hatfield, 2 Allen, 126; State v. Bantley, 44 Conn. 537; Com. v. Green, 33 Ind. 491; Harvey v. State, 40 Ind. 516.

2. This is the case where the death was by aspilation, induced by the wound, Denman v. State, 15 Neb. 138.

§ 160. CRIMES. 

[BOOK I.

that causal connection between negligence and damage is broken by the interposition of independent responsible human action. I am negligent in a particular subject matter. Another person moving independently comes in, and either negligently or maliciously acts as to make my negligence injurious to a third person. If so, the person so intervening acts as a non-conductor, and insulates my negligence, so that I cannot be said for the mischief which the person so intervening directly produces. He is the one who is liable to the person injured. I may be liable to the party whom my negligence leads into difficulty, but I am not liable to others for the negligence which he alone was the cause of making operative. We may expand this rule still further, and hold that a defendant, no matter how wrongfully may have been his conduct, is not responsible for the acts of independent parties performed on the objects of the crime without his concert. Thus, as we have just seen, is it with regard to a death produced by a physician attending a wound not in itself dangerous. So is it also when the wounded person indulges in excess which destroys his life, or when he refuses to call in a physician, or to submit to any dressing of the wound. Or, in a case of greater complication, the defendant wounds another so desperately that the latter can only live a few hours, when a third party comes in and kills the wounded man by a blow that acts instantaneously. Who is the cause of the death? Certainly the last assailant, for the particular death which occurred was produced, not by the defendant, or within the range of his action, but by the interposition of a foreign independent will. And so a rioter cannot be held responsible for a homicide by persons engaged in suppressing a riot.

The following case is reported by Bar, in the able treatise on causal connection already referred to. The defendant left a loaded gun in a place where, it was assumed, damage would ensue from its negligent or ignorant use. A stranger, playing with the

2 See Harvey v. State, 40 Ind. 515. 4 State v. States, 5 Jones N. C. 426.
3 Supra, § 163 c; State v. Wood, 53 and see supra, § 165 a.
Vt. 860; People v. Ah Fat, 48 Cal. 61. 5 Con. v. Campbell, 7 Allen, 541.
The same rule exists where a person, infra, § 188.

187
not so constructed as to bar all such casualties. One man's malice or mischief would thus create another man's guilt.\(^1\)

§ 161. It is otherwise, however, when the agent so interposing is irresponsible. An explosive compound, for instance, negligently packed, is put into the hands of a carrier to deliver, the carrier being ignorant of its contents. Who, in case of the package being left at the place of delivery, and there exploding, is liable for the injury produced by the explosion? Had the carrier known, or had he been in a position in which it was his duty to know, that the package was in this dangerous condition, then he would become liable, on the principle that he who negligently meddles with a dangerous agency is liable for the damage. But if he was non-negligently ignorant of the contents of the package, he is no more liable than is the car by which they are carried. No matter how numerous may be the agencies through which such a package is transmitted, the original forwarder, continues liable, while the carrier, in case of their being ignorant and innocent, are free from liability.\(^2\) Thus a person who is guilty of negligence in manufacturing a dangerously inflammable oil is liable for the damage done by it, no matter how numerous may be the agents by whom it is innocently passed. "Certainly one who knowingly makes and puts on the market for domestic and other use such a death-dealing fluid cannot claim immunity because he has sent it through many hands.\(^3\) When, however, a vendee or agent knows the explosive or otherwise perilous character of a compound, and then negligently gives it to a third person, who is thereby injured, the causal connection between the first vendor's act and the injury is broken.\(^4\)

So with regard to the negligent sale of poison. If B. negligently sells poison, under the guise of a beneficial drug, to A., he is liable for the injury done to A.; or to those to whom A. innocently gives the poison.\(^5\) He is not liable for the negligent act of a person to whom he gives the poison, advising him of its properties.\(^6\)

\(^1\) On this point compare observations in Want. on Neg. §§ 854-856; and see Snow v. R. R., 8 Allen, 441. \(^2\) supra, § 166, 346. \(^3\) supra, § 226. \(^4\) supra, § 226.  

CHAP. VII. CAUSAL CONNECTION.  

The same distinctions apply to the giving of a loaded gun to another. If the gun be given by B. with due warning to A., a person experienced in the use of fire-arms, who so negligently handles the gun that it explodes and injures C., then A., and not B., is liable. But if the loaded gun be given to an unconscious child, and the child not knowing what the gun is, handles it so that it explodes, and injures a third person, then the liability is attached, not to the child, but to the person giving the loaded gun.\(^1\)

That a person committing a crime through the agency of an insane medium is responsible, we will hereafter have occasion fully to see.\(^2\) The same rule exists when the agent is compelled to commit the crime.\(^3\)

§ 162. The fact that another person contributed either before the defendant's interposition or concurrently with such interposition in the damage is no defence.\(^4\)

Indeed, this proposition, instead of conflicting with the last, goes to sustain it. A. negligently leaves certain articles in a particular place. B. negligently meddles with them. Supposing B.'s negligence to be made out, and he be a responsible person under the limitations above expressed, he cannot set up A.'s prior negligence as a defence. A. fortiori, he cannot set up the concurrent negligence of D., a third person, who may simultaneously join him in the final negligent act.\(^5\)

§ 163. It has been said that contributory negligence is no defence to a criminal prosecution.\(^6\) This, however, is not correct, since a person who negligently hand into danger, such action not being incident to a lawful business, cannot afterwards prosecute either criminally or civilly, the person producing the danger? A common illustration.\(^7\)

\(^1\) infra, § 344. \(^2\) infra, § 344. \(^3\) infra, § 522. \(^4\) infra, § 522. \(^5\) supra, § 206. \(^6\) supra, § 345. \(^7\) supra, § 345.
of this principle will be found in the cases, elsewhere noticed, of prosecutions for malpractice, in which it is held a defense that the patient’s misconduct was the immediate cause of his injury. On the one side, we can conceive of cases where a party, after his wound, commits suicide; and in which, as the death was caused by the suicide, and not by the wound, the allegation in the indictment, that the deceased died of the wound, could not be sustained. On the other side, cases constantly occur in which a wounded person neglects some precaution which might have contributed towards his recovery, but in which no one doubts but that the death is chargeable to the wound. The true line is this: if the deceased, in full possession of his senses, caused either deliberately or negligently his own death, then he and not the person inflicting the wound is chargeable with the death, though the latter is indictable for an attempt to kill. But where the deceased’s negligence contributed to his death, such negligence is no defense, when either (1) it was one of the ordinary incidents of the conduct of a person in his situation; or (2) when the wound would otherwise have been fatal. And so, under similar circumstances, the negligence of an attendant physician or surgeon is no defence. It is enough if the wound induced the death. The same distinction may be followed in other cases of negligence. A carriage is driven recklessly along a road and kills a drunken man, who, if he were sober, could have got out of the way. The deceased’s drunkenness is in this case no defence, because the defendant had no right to drive recklessly along the road. But if, though there may have been some negligence on the defendant’s part (e.g., in the equipment of his carriage) the injury was primarily due to the deceased having flung himself recklessly in the defendant’s path, such contributory negligence is a defence.

§ 164. At the same time it is an equally familiar rule that a party cannot shield himself by setting up as a defence contributory negligence, the result of fright or paralysis, caused by his own misconduct. The same rule applies mutandis to neglect by physicians. He, therefore, who causes another, under influence of fright, to run into a river, from which drowning ensues, is responsible for his death. He who by like process causes another to leave the house and to die in the frozen fields on a stormy night is in like manner responsible. He who causes another,
§ 164. CRIMES. [BOOK I.

under the effect of fright, to open his safe, cannot set up this submission as a defence. And the same distinction applies to the numerous cases already cited, in which a party, under fright, submits to spoliation or assault. 2

On the other hand, it may be argued that an indictment does not lie against A. for killing B. when the death was the result of fright produced by mere threats, there being no such physical lesion as may be implied from any subsequent catastrophe or concussion induced by the fright. And so, although A. may die of a broken heart caused by the unkindness of B., B. is not on this ground indictable for killing A. Doubtless there is moral guilt in such cases proportionate to the degree of malice. But there is no technical guilt which the law can punish, for the reason that the law has no test to measure the relation of cause and effect in matters purely psychological. How much of the terror or "broken-heartedness," for instance, was due to the patient's own folly or wrong? What legal proof is possible of such terror or "broken-heartedness"? How can the death be, beyond reasonable doubt, traced to either? Hence it is that the law, when the case consists of these bald elements, declines to interpose. 3

facilities to save himself; but if in the confusion and terror of the moment he loses his self-command and is drowned, the person throwing him in the water is liable. L. 3. § 7. D. and Log. Aquil. And if a person who has his clothes taken from him on a cold night is so numb and enfeebled that he cannot seek refuge, and hence is frozen to death, the assistance is as liable for his death through freezing as he would be if the deceased had been tied to a stake in the open air in such a way that escape was impossible. L. 14. § 1. D. 19. 5. See R. v. Martin, 11 Cox C. C. 138. The same rule is to apply where a seaman, forced aloft when unfit for the work, falls from the mast and is drowned. U. S. v. Freeman, 4 Mason C. C. 655. As to indictment, see infra, § 531.

1 See supra, §§ 146-60; and see State v. Hardie, 47 Iowa, 547.

2 Suppose A., when on a coach, jumps off to avoid danger, acting unwisely in so doing, yet from confusion of mind produced by a reckless driving. Or suppose that A., on a railway track, loses his presence of mind through the unexpected and irregular course of a train which is negligently driven; and suppose, that when thus confused, he unwisely but unintentionally runs into instead of out of danger? Is A., in either of these cases, the judicial cause of an injury thus produced, or is B., the negligent driver or engineer, the cause? Certainly the latter; for A., on the assumption that he is at the time incapable of judging, is not a responsible independent agent, capable of breaking the causal connection between the defendant's negligence and the injury. It was B.'s negligence that put A. in this dangerous position, and thus forced him to make a choice between perilous alternatives when he was in a condition incapable of cool judgment; and B. is liable for the consequences. Wharton on Negligence, § 377; R. v. Longbottom, 3 Cox C. C. 430; Conkle v. Am. Un. Exp. Co., 5 Lansing, 47; Buel v. N. Y. Cent. R. R., 31 N. Y. 314; Princ v. Potter, 17 Ill. 406; Adams v. Lancaster R. R., 37 Weekly Rep. 884; Sears v. Dennis, 165 Mass. 90; Stevens v. Rockford, 10 Allen, 26; Eason v. Rockport, 101 Mass. 93; Lund v. Tyngsboro, 11 Cush. 653; Indianapolis R. R. v. Carr, 35 Ind. 510; Greenleaf v. Ill. Cent. R. R., 29 Iowa, 14; Snow v. Henshaw Co., 8 Allen, 441; Reed v. Northfield, 13 Pick. 94; and see, to some extent, R. v. Evans, 10 B. & C. Sept. 1812—MS. Bayley, J.; 1Russ. on Cor. 458; R. v. Hickman, 5 C. & P. 151; R. v. Pitts, C. & Mars. 284, cited in Wharton on Neg. § 374.

Where the defendants carelessly overloaded a ferry-boat, and where the passengers, in a sudden fright, rushed to one side and upset the boat, in consequence of which A. was drowned, it was held that the carelessness of A. and the other passengers was no defence to an indictment for manslaughter of A. R. v. Williamson, 1 Cox C. C. 97.

Yet we must remember that if the deceased, in encountering the danger, acted, not convulsively or deliberately, and if, at the same time, the danger was not a natural and probable consequence of the defendant's misconduct, then the causal connection is broken. This view has been properly held to govern a woman, not convulsively, or in fear, or through force, but of her own will, leaves her husband's house at night and is frozen to death; State v. Proctor, 3 Jones (N. C.) Law, 421; where a traveller voluntarily or negligently, and not in fear caused by the defendant, collides with a railway car; see Wharton on Neg. § 362; and where a person assaulted in a boat, not in fright or from necessity, but as a means of stealing himself, seizes another boat and is thus swept overboard. R. v. Waters, 6 C. & P. 328.


2 See R. v. Kew, 13 Cox C. C. 353;
§ 166. Contributory negligence, it is to be added, is to be determined from the standpoint of the party to whom it is imputed. 1

§ 166. A party who places poison in such a position that in the ordinary course of things it is likely to be unconsciously and non-negligently taken by passers-by is liable for the consequences. 2 But he is not responsible for the acts of an assassin, who, independently of him, takes and administers the poison to the deceased; for here again, though the preparing of the poison is a condition of the killing, it is not its judicial cause. 3

The master of a house who leaves powder unlawfully and carelessly on his premises is not liable for his negligent misuse by his servants, who are capable of judging as to the danger, 4 though it would be otherwise if the powder were left in a place frequented by children, who ignorantly meddle with it, and thereby produce damage, 5 or if it were left in such a disguised state that a person of ordinary intelligence would not be able to detect its character; 6 or if a dangerous substance were given to a party compulsorily.


2 1 Supra, § 448.


5 R. v. Bennett, Bell C. C. 1; 8 Cox C. C. 74.

6 Wharton on Neg., § 151.

7 See 1 Hale, 431; R. v. Michael, 9 C. & P. 266; 2 M. C. C. 120. Infra, § 346.

8 Blackburn v. State, 23 Ohio St. 146. See infra, §§ 210, 226.

9 If B., as suggested in another work (Wharton on Neg. § 91), negligently sells poison, under the guise of a beneficial drug, to A., he is liable for the injury done to A.; or to those to whom A. innocently gives the poison. But suppose that A. has ground to suspect that the drug is poisonous, and then, instead of testing it, he still or gives it to C.? Now, in such a case there can be no question that A. is liable for the damage caused by his negligence. But if A. is unconscious of the mistake, and acts merely as the unconscious agent of B., then there is no causal connection between A.'s agency and the injury, and B. is directly liable to C. Norton v. Sewall, 106 Mass. 145.

Beyond this it is not safe to go. It is true that in a New York case, Thomas v. Winchester, 2 Bagley (C. N.Y.), 307, the liability was pushed still further; but wherever an intelligent third party comes in, and negligently places the poison to another, this breaks the causal connection, and makes such intervening negligence the judicial cause. 1

A more difficult question arises when poison intended to kill A. is voluntarily taken by B., who has notice that the drink is suspected to be poisonous. Agnes Gore, in an old case (2 Co. 11; 1 Hale P. C. 50; Plowden, Com. 574), was proved to have mixed poison in an electrolyte, of which her husband and her father and another took part and fell sick. Martin, the apothecary who had made the electrolyte, on being questioned about it, cleared himself of part of it and died. On this evidence a question arose whether Agnes Gore had committed murder; and the doubt was because Martin, of his own will, without incitement or procurement of any, had not only eaten of the electrolyte, but had, by stirring it, incorporated the poison with the electrolyte that it was the occasion of his death. The judges resolved that the prisoner was guilty of the murder of Martin, for the law confines the murderous intention of Agnes in putting the poison into the electrolyte to kill her husband with the event which thence ensued: Quis est Deus qui ex advocato sequitur et dicatur exKKKKKEX KKKEXX KKKKEX

1 See an article on spiritualism and jurisprudence in Lippincott's Magazine for 1873, p. 427.

2 Exco. in the Preparation for the Union of Laws, or, as we should call it, Draft of a Proposed Code, introduces the following clauses:

"Where a man doth use or practice any manner of witchcraft, whereby any person shall be killed, wretched, or preached in his body, it is felony." 1

"Where a man practiceth any witchcraft to discover treasure hid, or to discover stolen goods, or to provoke unlawful love, or to impair or hurt any man's cattle or goods, the second time, having been once before convicted of like offence, it is felony." 2

Coke's authority is to the same purpose. Indeed, by statute 33 Hen. VIII.

167. The old English lawyers went great lengths in assigning responsibility to magical, or as it might now be called spiritualistic, causation. Even Lord Hale gave his high authority to the position

voit of water. The reservoir freezes, and remains frozen during winter. In the spring the ice melts, and the water flows through a series of channels until it is drunk by a child, who is killed. Here there is a continuous natural sequence which, however long, presents an unbroken chain. See also, infra, § 346.

Suppose A., in exercise of a moral (as distinguished from physical) power over B., constrains B. to take poison, whereas B. dies, is A. responsible as principal in B.'s murder? If B.'s free agency is at the time extinguished, either by terror or by mental disease, then in such cases A. is principal in the first degree. Blackburn v. State, 23 Ohio St. 146. If B.'s free agency is not extinguished, but he voluntarily commits suicide, then A., under the English common law, is indictable as principal in the second degree to B.'s self-murder. See infra, § 216.
that a witch can produce death by incantations, and if so, is to be convicted of murder. But in 1750 the statutes against witchcraft were swept away, and in 1765 Blackstone, in his Commentaries, rejects the hypothesis as absurd.

At the beginning of the present century we have the current opinion, expressed in the following passage in Mr. Edward Livingston's Penal Code:

"If [homicide] must be operated by some act; therefore, death, although produced by the operation of words on the imagination or the passions, is not homicide. But if words are used which are calculated to produce, and do produce, some act which is the immediate cause of death, it is homicide. A blind man or a stranger in the dark directed by words only to a precipice where he falls and is killed; a direction verbally given to take a drug that it is known will prove fatal, and which has that effect, are instances of this modification of the rule." In this line may be cited a Massachusetts case, in which it was held that a person who shoots a gun at a wild fowl, with knowledge and warning that the report will affect injuriously the health of a sick person in the neighborhood, and such effect is produced by the discharge, is guilty of an indictable offence. And in New York it has been held that a death from

Chap. VII. Causal Connection. [§ 167.

fright produced by the defendant standing over the deceased with a deadly weapon, which he threatened to use, is imputable to the defendant as murder."

..."effect of the evidence in a particular case, not by the legislature in framing the general law. It will require strong evidence to prove that an act of a kind which very seldom causes death, or an act which has caused death very remotely, has actually caused death in a particular case. It will require strong evidence to prove that such an act was contemplated by the person who did it as likely to cause death. But if it be proved by satisfactory evidence that death has been so caused, and has been caused voluntarily, we see no reason for exempting the person who caused it from the punishment of voluntary culpable homicide."

..."Mr. Livingston, we observe, except from the definition of homicide cases in which death is produced by the effect of words on the imagination of the passions. The reasoning of that distinguished jurist has by no means convinced us that the distinction which he makes is well founded. Indeed, there are few parts of his Code which appear to us to have been less happily executed than this. His words are these: 'The destruction must be by the act of another; therefore, self-destruction is excluded from the definition. It must be operated by some act; therefore death, although produced by the operation of words on the imagination or the passions, is not homicide. But if words are used which are calculated to produce, and do produce, some act which is the immediate cause of death, it is homicide. A blind man or a stranger in the dark directed by words only to a precipice where he falls and is killed; a direction verbally given to take a drug that it is known will prove fatal, and which has that effect, are instances of this modification of the rule.'"

Sir James F. Stephen, in his testimony in 1874, before the Homicide Committee of the English House of Commons, proposed the following additional illustrations:

"Suppose a man wants to murder his wife, and supposes that she is ill, and the doctor says to him, 'She is..."
§ 188. It is not necessary, to constitute negligence, that the specific damage should have been foreseen as probable. If it were,
in a very critical state; she has gone to sleep, and if she is suddenly disturbed she will die, and you must keep her quiet. Suppose he is overheard repeating this to another man, and saying, 'I want to murder her, and I will go and make all the noise I possibly can for the purpose of killing her.' You may imagine the evidence to be quite conclusive on that point; he goes into the room, makes a noise, and wakes her up with a sudden start, and frightens her, and she does die according to his wish. It seems to me that that act is as much murder as if he had cut her throat. Or suppose a case like this: a man has got an eructum of the heart, and his heart, knowing that, and knowing that any sudden shock is likely to kill him, suddenly goes and shouts in his ear, and does so with the intent to kill him, and does so kill him. It seems to me that if that man is not punished it is a very great scandal, for the act is just as bad as if he had killed him in any other manner. The fact is, that the objection to treating such cases as either murder or manslaughter arises from this, that in a general way, in such a case as kindlessness, or many other cases of the same kind, you could never prove that the man intended either to kill or cause harm, or that it was common knowledge that there would be harm or death caused; and therefore in all those cases in which you would not wish to punish the person would escape on account of the difficulty of proof. The only cases in which you would ever want to punish would be cases in which the difficulty of proof, by some such means as I have suggested, would be got over." See, however, Fairless v. People, 21 Ill. 1.

"With this we may consider the remarks of Judge Blackstone (a son of Lord Chancellor Blackstone) some years since, when charging a jury in a homicide trial: 'A man may throw himself into a river under such circumstances as render it not a voluntary act — by reason of force applied either to the body or the mind. It becomes then the guilty act of him who compelled the deceased to take the step. But the apprehension must be of immediate violence, and well grounded, from the circumstances by which the deceased was surrounded; not that you must be satisfied that there was no other way of escape, but that it was such a step as a reasonable man might take.' R. v. Pitts, C. & M. 198. But the last qualification cannot be sustained. No one can doubt that it would be murder to enter an insane man over a precipice, and thus to kill him. Indeed, as we shall see, what is done through an insane agent is regarded as done directly by the principal."

The doctrine of nervous breakdown was advanced to a questionable extreme in an English case, tried before Deneen, J., in the Northern Circuit, in February, 1874. R. v. Towers, 12 Cox C. C. 530. The evidence was that T., the defendant, unlawfully and violently assaulted G., a young girl, having in her arms H., the deceased, a child four months and a half old. The child, which was previously very healthy, was greatly alarmed at the defendant's violence, accompanied as it was by the screams of G., its nurse; and it became "black in the face, and ever since that day it had convulsions, and was sitting generally from a shock to the nervous system." It died thirty-two days after the assault. Medical testimony was adduced to show that the death was traceable to the sudden fright. Denman, J., said, that he "should leave it to the jury to say whether the death of the child was caused by the unlawful act of the prisoner, or whether it was not so indirect as to be of the nature of accident. The case was different from other cases of manslaughter, for here the child was not a rational agent, and it was so connected with the girl that an injury to the girl became almost itself an injury to the child." In charging the jury, he said: "Mere intimidation, causing a person to die from fright, by working on his fancy, was not murder. But there were cases in which intimidations have been held to be murder. If, for instance, four or five persons were to stand round a man, and so threaten him and frighten him as to make him believe his life was in danger, and he were then to back away from them and tumble down a precipice to avoid them, then murder would be committed. Then, did or did not this principle of law apply to the case of the tender years as the child in question. For the purposes of this case he would assume it did not; for the purpose of to-day he should assume that the law about working upon people by fright did not apply to the case of a child of such tender years as this. Then arose the question which would be for them to decide, whether the death was directly the result of the prisoner's unlawful act — whether they thought that the prisoner might be held to be the actual cause of the child's death, or whether they were left in doubt upon that under all the circumstances of the case. . . . If the men's act brought on the convulsions, or brought them to a more dangerous extent, so that death would not have resulted otherwise, then it would be manslaughter." The verdict was not guilty, so that the case was not submitted to further judicial consideration. But in harmony with the views herebefore expressed on this topic, I must come to a conclusion different from that expressed by Judge Deneen on both the points raised by him.

1. I can see no difference between an infant and an adult so far as concerns physical injury self-inflicted in consequence of fright. If the child, frightened by the attack, convulsively jumped from the nurse's arms and was killed, then the defendant was as much responsible for the child's death as he would have been for the death of the nurse, if, in the terror of the shock, she had jumped convulsively from a window, and had been killed. In either case the question would be whether the deceased's death was a natural consequence of the defendant's violence. And the inference that it would be stronger in the child's case than in the nurse's.

2. If, however, the child's death was produced by merely nervous causes—
immediate case. The consequences of negligence are almost invariably surprises. A man may be negligent in a particular matter a thousand times without mischief; yet, though the chances

e. g., fright, operating at a period long subsequent to the shock—then such should have been a verdict of not guilty, for the reason that the law has no means of determining the causal connection between a shock purely nervous and physical death. It would have been otherwise, however, had a blow struck at the nurse been communicated through the nurse's body to the defendant, as a blow to the nearest in a series of attached tubes communicated itself to the farthest. Then, if this blow threw the child into convulsions, causing its death, the case was one of manslaughter.

3. If the convulsions were caused by the nurse's screams, then, if these screams were not the natural results of the defendant's violence, the causal connection between these violence and the death, even supposing such connection existed, was broken.

In Kirkland v. State, 43 Ind. 146, it was held that the beating by the defendant of a horse which the prosecutor was driving was not assault and battery on the prosecutor. See infra, §§ 669, 615.

On the topic in the text, Sir J. P. Stephen thus writes, Dig. C. L. art. 221: "Lord Hale's reason is that secret things belong to God; and hence it was that before 3 Jac. I. c. 18, witchcraft or fascination was not felony, because it wanted a trial (i. e., I suppose, because of the difficulty of proof). I suspect that the fear of encouraging prosecutions for witchcraft was the real reason of this rule. Dr. Wharton rationalizes the rule thus: 'Death from nervous causes does not involve penal consequences.' This appears to me to substitute an arbitrary quasi-scientific rule for a bad rule founded on ignorance now dispelled. Suppose a man were intentionally killed by being kept awake till the nervous irritation of sleeplessness killed him; might not this be murder? Suppose a man kills a sick man, intentionally, by making a loud noise which wakes him when sleep gives him a chance of life; or suppose, knowing that a man has an aneurism of the heart, his heir rushes into his room and roars in his ear, 'Your wife is dead!' Intending to kill and killing him, why are not these acts murder? They are no more secret things belonging to God than the operation of arsenic. As to the fear that by admitting that such acts are murder, people might be rendered liable to prosecution for breaking the hearts of their fathers or wives by bad conduct, the answer is that such an event could never be proved. A long course of conduct, gradually breaking a man's heart, could never be the direct or immediate cause of death. If it was, and it was intended to have that effect, why should it not be murder?" In R. v. Towers, 12 C. C. 530, a man was convicted before Deeman, J., of manslaughter, for frightening a child to death. See Whart. on Homicide, § 372, on this case.

"Lord Hale doubts whether voluntarily and maliciously inflicting a person of the plague, and so causing his death, would be murder, i. e., it is hard to see why. He says that 'infection is God's arrow.' A different view was taken in the analogous case of R. v. Greenwood, 1 Russ. Cr. 100; 7 Cox C. C. 404."
CHAPTER VIII.

ATTEMPTS.

I. OFFENCE GENERALLY.

An attempt is an unfinished crime and is indictable at common law, § 173.

More words do not constitute an attempt, § 174.

Not an offence to attempt to commit a non-indictable offence, attempt to commit suicide when indictable, § 175.

Attempt at negligence not indictable; intent is necessary to offences, § 176.

And so of attempts at police offences, § 177.

Attempt must have causal relation with act, § 178.

 Solicitations not indictable, § 179.

Mere preparations not indictable as attempts, § 180.

The attempt must have gone so far that the crime would have been completed but for extraordinary intervention, § 181.

Means must be apparently suitable, § 182.

If means are apparently and absolutely unfit, there can be no attempt, § 183.

Must be apparent physical capacity, § 184.

Need not be capability of success, § 185.

Must be probable object within reach, § 186.

Abandoned attempts not indictable, § 187.

Where attempt is resisted, it may be independently tried, though consummation is yielded to, § 188.

Acquiescence through fraud or incapacity no bar, § 189.

II. INDICTMENT.

In indictments for attempts the intent permitted in assaults will not be maintained, § 190.

Nor do statutory rulings affect question at common law, § 191.

Indictment must aver circumstances of attempt, § 192.

Calculation of facts not duplicity, § 193.

III. JURISDICTION.

Attempts cognizable in place of consummation, § 195.

IV. EVIDENCE.

Intent to be inferred from facts, § 196.

Adaptation makes a prior fact case, § 197.

V. PRINCIPALS AND ACCESORIES.

All confederates are principals, § 198.

VI. VERDICT.

At common law no conviction of attempt on indictment for consummated crime, § 199.

VII. PUNISHMENT.

Punishment should be less than that of consummated crime, § 200.

§ 173. An attempt is an intended apparent unfinished crime. It must be intended, since it is of its nature that it should be
committed in order to effect a specific criminal result. It must be apparent, since if it be obviously not likely to effect the result at which it aims (e. g., where a popgun is levelled at a ship, or a witch is employed to enchantments), it is not indictable. It must be unfinished, as otherwise the indictment would be for the complete crime, but there must be at least some appreciable fragment of the crime committed, and it must be in such progress that it will be consummated unless interrupted by circumstances independent of the will of the attempter. On the other hand, there can be no attempt at negligence, because negligence precludes the idea of intention, which is essential to attempt.

By the English common law it is a misdemeanor to attempt to commit either a felony, or a malicious misdemeanor, whether common law or statutory. Hence it is an indictable attempt falsely to accuse another of crime, if any step be taken which, in the usual course of events, would lead to a conviction, even though the accusation take not the form of libel. In this view, the fabrication of

1 The word "apparent," it should be observed, has been the subject of much controversy. On the one side, it is maintained that unless the attempt is one capable of success it is not indictable; and by those who urge this view the word "apparent," which covers cases where the means are apparently fit but are really unfit, is rejected. On the other side it is insisted that as we can never predicate infallible success of any attempt, the most we can say in any case is that the attempt is apparent, and that to say that merely apparent attempts should not be indictable would be to say that there should be no indictable attempts.

See infra, §§ 152 et seq.


3 R. v. Boyes, 1 Mood, C. C. 29; State v. Keyes, 8 Vt. 57; Common v. Martin, 17 Mass. 359; McKay v. State, 44 Tex. 43; infra, § 176.

4 1 Hawk. F. C. 55; R. v. Higgins, 204


§ 174. Mere words, unless they are libellous, seditious, obscene, or provocative of breaches of the public peace, are not the subject of penal judicial action. Even when they express illegal purposes, they are often merely speculative; are uttered often by weak men as braggedocio; and always belong to a domain which criminal courts cannot invade without peril to individual freedom, and to the just and liberal progress of society. This liberty to express thought is recognized in all systems of civilized jurisprudence. "Cogitationes poenam nemo patitur," was a maxim of the Roman law, which is now accepted as part of the judicial system of all Christendom, and is adopted in the codes of the most arbitrary nations of Europe. And by the Roman common law, even talking about a criminal intent, and thus giving to it public expression, does not constitute, unless there be treason, an attempt.

1 R. v. Simmons, 3 Wils. 329.

2 Infra, § 1332.

3 According to Sir J. F. Stephen (Dig. art. 49), an "attempt to commit a crime is an act done with intent to commit that crime, and forming part of a series of acts which would constitute its actual commission if it were not interrupted." This definition has two defects. In the first place it does not include attempts with unsuitable and yet apparently effective means, which would not, even if uninterruptible, result in a consummated crime.

Infra, § 152. In the second place, it includes attempts voluntarily abandoned.


5 L. 18, D. de Poitev., xlviii. 19.

6 See this shown in Holzendorf's "Versuch."
§ 175. Where a statute makes indictable attempts to commit indictable offences, this has been held not to include an attempt to commit suicide, consummated suicide being beyond the jurisdiction of the courts. But at common law an attempt to commit suicide is indictable.

§ 176. To constitute an attempt, it is essential that there should be an unlawful coincident intention to do the thing attempted, which intention must be logically inferrible from the facts. On the other hand, as we have seen, there can be no indictment for an attempt at negligence, for, from the nature of things, the attempt to neglect a duty is in itself, if successful, a malicious offence, and ceases to be a neglect. Hence comes the just principle of the Roman law, that where there is no dolus there can be no attempt.

There is, however, no arbitrary measure of intent to be inferred from any particular act. Thus an attempted killing may be an attempt to commit murder or an attempt to commit manslaughter. The attempt to kill in hot blood, but not in self-defence, is an attempt to commit manslaughter; to attempt to kill coolly on an old grudge is an attempt to commit murder. An attempt to kill an officer, also, knowing him to be such, may be an attempt to commit murder; an attempt to kill him, not knowing who he is, may be only an attempt to commit manslaughter.

Intention formed subsequent to the attempt will not be enough, as where a party having in his possession indecent prints (not procured for publication) takes it into his head to publish them, but does not actually publish.

§ 177. It has been further held that an attempt to commit a mere police offence, involving no malice, is not indictable. And this principle covers the attempting to sell liquor in illegal measures. When an attempt is made maliciously to violate the law in this respect, and when the attempt is put into such a shape as, by the natural course of events, to produce a violation of such law, then the attempt is indictable. But when between the attempt and the execution is interposed the volition of both buyer and seller, then, by stress of the definition just given, an indictable attempt is not made out.

§ 178. The distinction between conditions and causes has been already largely discussed, but a recurrence to the principles heretofore expressed is essential to the elucidation of this branch of jurisprudence. To enable a gunshot wound to be inflicted, an almost innumerable

Diss. cit. pp. 13-24. 81. See supra, § 178, for cases.
Com. v. Dennis, 105 Mass. 165.
Infra, § 216.

1 Jer. C. J., Robert's Case, Dears. C. C. 353.
2 Com. v. Willard, 23 Pick. 476;
Dohkev v. State, 2 Humph. 424;
Infra, § 192. See Pulso v. State, 5 Humph. 108. In Taylor v. State, 11 Lee, 708, this is extended to statutory misdemeanors; but unless under the peculiar terms of the applicable statute, this cannot be sustained.
Infra, § 152 et seq.
§ 179. CRIMES. [BOOK I.

A series of conditions is necessary. It is necessary that the gun should be procured by the assailant. It is necessary that that gun should have been made by the manufacturer. It is necessary that the stock of the gun should have been properly tapered; that the bullet should have been properly cast; that the materials from which bullet, tube, and trigger were made should have been dug from the mine and duly fashioned in the factory. It is necessary that the assailant should be in a position to be shot, and that the assailant should be in a position to take aim. All these are necessary conditions to the shooting, without which the shooting could not take place. No one of them, however, is in the eye of the law the cause. A juridical cause is such an act, by a moral agent, as will apparently result, in the usual course of natural events, unless interrupted by circumstances independent of the actor, in the consequence under investigation. Hence preparations, as will presently be more fully seen, unless they are put in such a shape as by the usual course of events to produce the consequence in question, are not attempts.

§ 179. Are solicitations to commit crime independently indictable? They certainly are, as has been seen, when they in themselves involve a breach of the public peace, as is the case with challenges to fight and seditious addresses. They are also indictable when their object is interference with public justices; as where a resistance to the execution of a judicial writ is counselled, or perjury is advised, or the escape of a

warehouse, and having a key made to it, was an indictable attempt, though it was not shown whether the defendant intended to use the key himself. But this was a matter of inference for the jury. See infra, §§ 132, 156.


infra, § 150.

3 In R. v. Cheeseman, 1 L. & C. 140, Blackburn, J., said: "There is no doubt a difference between the preparation antecedent to an offence and the actual attempt; but if the actual transaction has commenced, which would have ended in the crime if not interrupted, there is clearly an attempt to commit the crime." In State v. Griffin, 26 Ga. 493, it was held that taking an impression of the lock of a

prisoner is encouraged; or the corruption of a public officer is sought, or invited by the officer himself. They are indictable, also, when they are in themselves offences against public decency, as is the case with solicitations to commit sodomy, and they are indictable, also, when those constitute necessary antecedents before the fact. But is a solicitation indictable when it is not either (1) a substantive indictable offence, as in the instances just named, or (2) a stage towards an independent consummated offence? And the better opinion is that, where the solicitation is not in itself a substantive offence, or where there has been no progress made towards the consummation of the independent offence attempted, the question whether the solicitation is by itself the subject of penal prosecution must be answered in the negative. For we would be forced to admit, if we hold that solicitations to criminality are generally indictable, that the propagandists, even in conversation, of agrarian or communistic theories are liable to criminal prosecutions; and hence the necessity for speech and of the press would be greatly infringed. It would be hard, also, we must agree, if we maintain such general responsibility, to defend, in prosecutions for soliciting crime, the publishers of Byron's "Don Juan," of Rousseau's "Emile," or of Goethe's "Elective Affinities." Lord Chesterfield, in his letters to his son, directly advises the latter to form illicit connections with married women; Lord Chesterfield, on the reasoning here contested, would be indictable for solicitation to adultery. Undoubtedly, when such solicitations are so publicly and indecently made as to produce public scandal, they are indictable as nuisances or as libels. But to make bare solicitations or allurements indictable as attempts, not only unduly and perilously extends the scope of penal adjudication, but forces on the courts psychological questions which they are incompetent to decide, and a branch of business which would make them despots of every intellect in the land.

infra, § 167.

1 People v. Washburn, 10 Johns. R. Schofield, Cald. 400; R. v. Gregory, L. R. 160.

infra, § 152.

2 Walsh v. People, 56 Ill. 58; contra, Hutchinson v. State, 36 Tex. 293.


infra, § 225.

6 See Higgins's Case, 2 East, 5; R. v. infra, § 225.

7 See Cox v. People, 32 Ill. 131.

infra, § 153, 159 et seq.

infra, §§ 125, 156.

infra, §§ 132, 156.

14

209
What human judge can determine that there is such a necessary connection between one man's advice and another man's action, as to make the former the cause of the latter? An attempt, as has been stated, is such an intentional preliminary guilty act as will apparently result, in the usual course of natural events, if not hindered by extraneous causes, in the commission of a deliberate crime. But this cannot be affirmed of advice given to another, which advice such other person is at full liberty to accept or reject. Following such reasoning, several eminent European jurists have declined to regard solicitations as indictable, when there is interposed between the bare solicitation, on the one hand, and the proposed illegal act, on the other, the resisting will of another person, which other person refuses assent and co-operation. To this effect are decisions that indictments do not lie in our own law for solicitations to commit adultery; and solicitations to commit incest. It has also been held that a mere effort, by persuasion, to produce a condition of mind consenting to incest, without any act done towards actual consummation, is not an attempt. To the same purport is the reasoning of other tribunals in references to solicit to sell liquor. On the other hand, we have from the Supreme Court of Connecticut a direct decision to the contrary, on the question of soliciting adultery, which in that State is a statutory felony. We must, however, remember that such solicitations, when in any way attacking the body politic, either by way of treason, scandal, or nuisance, are, as has already been seen, under any view of the case, indictable as independent offences. And we must also keep in mind that if the solicitation involves the employment of illegal means to effect the illegal end, it may become substantively indictable.

§ 180. In answering the interesting question whether the mere preparations for a crime are indictable, we must first put aside those preparations which by statute or otherwise are substantive crimes (delicta sui generis); among which we may mention the carrying of concealed weapons, the unlawful concealment or secreting of poison or powder, and the collection of materials for forging. These acts, when prosecuted, should be charged as consummated offences. Their punishable is independent of the existence of any subsequent conditions. For instance, the carrying of concealed weapons, under the statutes, is equally indictable, whether or no the weapons were used for unlawful purposes.

1 Mittermayer, in note iii. to Fuerbach, 42; Burner, Strachan, 1871, § 102; Schwarzs, Commentair, §§ 43-46. See, also, the elaborate argument by Bar, Zur Lehre von Versuch. And see infra, § 1738.

2 Smith v. Com., 54 Penn. St. 390. See, also, Kelly v. Com., 1 Grant (Penn.), 484, and infra, § 1738. In Stabler v. Com., 95 Penn. St. 318, it was held that A.'s hanging poison to B., and soliciting him to put it in C.'s spring, is not an "attempt to administer poison" under the statute.

3 Cox v. People, 22 Ill. 191.

4 Cox v. People, 22 Ill. 191.

5 Com. v. Willard, 22 Pick. 475. Infra, § 1592. In Com. v. Flagg, 135 Mass. 145, it was held that solicitation to arson is indictable; but in this case money was paid to the solicited agent in order to fix and prepare him for the work, and the mode of execution explained. The case was, therefore, one not of bare solicitation but of preparation.

6 State v. Avery, 7 Conn. 264. See U. S. v. Lyles, 4 Cranch C. C. 469, where it was held by one judge that a solicitation to commit a battery is indictable. As maintaining the indictability of solicitation, see opinion of court in State v. Hayes, 78 Mo. 367, relying on Com. v. Jacobs, 9 Allen, 374, where, however, the question was adequacy of preparations.
poses. So also, as to the possession of implements of forgery, and preparations for treasonable acts.

But if the preparation is not of itself indictable, or will not of itself, if uninterrupted extraneously, result in crime, the weight of reasoning is that it cannot be made per se indictable as an attempt.1 For, first, there is no evidence, as a general rule, that can prove that a particular preparation was designed for a particular end. Thus a gun may be bought as well for hunting as for homicide. Nor can we lay down any intelligible line between preparations which betray more clearly and those which betray less clearly a felonious purpose.2 Secondly, between preparation and execution there is a gap which criminal jurisprudence cannot fill up so as to make one continuous offence. There may be a change of purpose, or the preparation may be a vague precautionary measure, to which the law cannot append a positive criminal intent, ready to ripen into guilty act.

Yet we must again recur to the fact that some preparations for crime are of themselves of such a character, from their inherent illegal perniciousness, as to afford the subject matter for independent indictment,3 such, for instance, as the procuring of dies for the purpose of coming bad money,4 and procuring indecent prints with intent to publish them.5 And eminently is this the case when, as has been said, the preparations in question, by themselves, by force of ordinary natural laws, will, if undisturbed, result in crime.6 When such an attempt, if not interrupted by extraordinary

natural occurrences, or by collateral human intervention, is likely to result in crime, then the defendant is indictable.

§ 181. Certainly mere preliminary preparations, in character indifferent, cannot, as has been seen, be regarded as guilty attempts. Thus, walking down a street to a druggist’s where poison is sold would not be indictable as an attempt to poison; but purchasing the poison and putting it in the way of another human being would be so indictable.1 So purchasing a gun is not indictable as an attempt,2 but aiming it is.3 So owning a false weight is not itself indictable, but using it as a means of cheating is evidence, when connected directly with the proposed wrong, of an attempt to cheat.4 So to purchase iron to use in making false keys is not an attempt at a particular larceny; but it is otherwise when an impression is taken of a particular ware house key, and a key, counterfeiting it, is, made, with the intent to steal from such warehouse.5 In other words, to make the act an indictable attempt, it must be a cause as distinguished from a condition.6 And it must go so far that it would result in the crime unless frustrated by extravagant circumstances.7

1 R. v. Egleton, Dears. 515; R. v. Monthith, R. 8 49; S. C. 8. 629; R. v. Heath, R. 8 114; R. v. Woodrow, 15 M. & W. 404; R. v. Ranshaw, 2 Cox C. C. 285; U. 8. v. Stephens, S Sawyer, 118; 8 Cr. Law Mag. 556; Bruce v. State, 24 Me. 91; Conn. v. Moro, 2 Mass. 138; Randolph v. Conn., 8 S. 8. 390; People v. Brockway, 2 Hill. N. Y. 491; People v. Lawton, 56 Barb. 128; Cox v. People, 22 Ill. 193; Ohio v. Conn., 8 Orat. 705; Clark’s Case, 8 Grant. 275; State v. Colvin, 90 N. C. 717; Cunningham v. State, 49 Miss. 655; People v. Hope, 63 Cal. 292. In U. S. v. Stephens, stis., it was held that purchasing liquor in a place where the sale is legal for the purpose of introducing it into another place where the sale is illegal, is not an indictable attempt in the latter place.

2 See Rossi, Traité du droit pénal, 1855, t. 12, 121.
3 Supra, § 179.
4 See supra.
5 See supra, § 179.
6 See supra.
7 See supra. 8 See supra, § 197.
9 See supra, § 178.
10 See supra, § 187.
11 See supra, § 197.
12 See supra, § 197.
§ 182. If the means are apparently adapted to the end, then public peace, so far as the attempt is concerned, is as much disturbed as if they should be so actually; and hence the indictment for the attempt on such evidence can be sustained.† Were it otherwise, we would be

† In Schwarze's comp. "Vermischte Volksgedichte," incorporated in Holtzendorff's Strafges. I. 270, we have an elaborate examination of the objective and of the subjective theory of attempt. By the first of those theories an attempt derives its punishability from the real character of the instrument used; by the second theory, from the intent which the instrument was employed to effectuate. From a condensed translation of this essay, published by me in the Central Law Journal for July 18, 1879, I relieve the following:

As to this distinction, it may be observed that there is no agency of which it can be absolutely said that it will produce necessarily the intended effect; there is no cup between which and the lip there may not be a slip.

‡ See Williams v. State, 61 Ga. 417; Hutchinson v. State, 82 Ala. 3.

Proportions, which, unless made substantive crimes by statute, are not indictable as attempts, have been classified by a high authority as follows:

1. Acts whose object is to ward off contingent discovery, or to secure to the perpetrator the undisturbed enjoyment of the fruits of the crime.

2. Acts undertaken by the perpetrator as experiments to determine the possibility of the crime, or to arrange an opportunity for its commission.

3. Acts consisting in securing the agencies necessary for the execution of the crime.

4. Acts conducing to the perpetrators' physical and mental training for the offense. Zacharias in Meyer, 6 299.

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certainly effect any particular end? The best laid plans, we all know, are frustrated. The best of rifles loaded, capped, primed, arsenic, a harmless drug. Is not the purchaser, supposing an intent to kill to be established, indictable for the attempt? Whether, when the means are utterly unsuitable to the end, we may infer a want of intent to hurt, is a question as to the amount of evidence requisite to prove the offence; it assumes that the attempt with unsuitable means may be proved, the dispute being as to the evidence necessary to prove it. Even assuming that at the outset means for the realization of the object are not wanting, this is the case with all kinds of attempts.

It is further objected that it is absurd to assume that there can be a "beginning" of an undertaking of which there cannot possibly be a "completion." But of many human notions we must not say that they can have no "completion!" yet can we say of those that they have no "beginning!" It is of the very essence of an attempt that the initiatory act has not worked the intended result. The reason of the non-occurrence of the result is indifferent; the only requisite is that the result should not have occurred. The opposite view would establish the immunity of all attempts, since the interruption of the offender's purpose in all cases of attempt shows the inadequacy of the means. A shot which fails because the intended victim is in armor is on this reasoning as little of an attempt as is a shot which fails because the gun is unloaded. It is said, indeed, that when there is no possibility of success in the attempt, then the attempt is not indictable. But how as to the shot at the man in armor, or as to poisons administered to a person who has taken antidotes, and is therefore poison proof?

The answer is, that in such cases the intent to kill is that which makes up the offence. But is this not abandoning the objective standpoint, upon which the adherents of this view rest? It is arguing in a vicious circle to say, as do the advocates of the objective theory, that the attempt is only indictable when the object is attainable; and yet that whether the object is attainable depends upon what was the intent. Suppose that the defendant, with intent to kill, used a poison which has lost its strength by time. He will not succeed in poisoning, and if the objective theory be strictly carried out, cannot be convicted. If it be replied that because he intended to kill he must be convicted, then the objective theory must be abandoned.

Other practical difficulties stand in the way of this view. A gun is loaded with a charge of powder too slight to carry the ball the required distance. Is this an attempt? If not, how many additional grains of powder are necessary to make the offence? If it be, why is not shooting without powder (supposing the offender believed the gun to be loaded) an offense, and if shooting without powder be no offense, and shooting with inadequate powder be an offense, at what point between the two is the line to be drawn? Or an attempt to poison with an insufficient dose is said to be no offense, though if the dose be repeated day after day the poison would be fatal. See infra, § 598. Hence three or four times administering poison in doses, each by itself insufficient to hurt, would be an attempt, though neither particular administration would constitute an attempt. In other words, four doses would constitute a unit. Where, also, are we to find a test as to the efficiency of the poison? Suppose that, with intent to sweep away a whole family, poison is introduced into a tureen of soup of which the family in common is about to partake. The poison would be sufficient to kill the children of the family, but not the adults. Shall we say, supposing the attempt to be frustrated, that the offender is indictable for an attempt to kill the children, but not for an attempt to kill the adults? Or at what age of a child does an attempt to poison cease to become indictable? Or how can we determine, if the test be capacity to resist poisons, what is the capacity in any particular case?

The true theory, it is therefore insisted, is the relative subjectivity; that is to say, the test is, did the offender intend to hurt, and did he take means apparently calculated to effect his end. If so, the unprofitableness of the means makes no defence. To this rule an exception is to be made, excluding cases where unavailing superstitions are employed. And the validity of this exception is conceded in cases in which the agency of supernatural beings is invoked it being left discretionary with such beings to intervene or not. Hence the adherents of the subjective theory concede that it is not an indictable attempt for a person, intending thereby to kill another, to resort to incantations or invocations of supposed magickal or malevolent spirits.

1 See, fully, infra, §§ 606, 607; and see Comm. v. White, 110 Mass. 207.
necessarily successful if employed. On the other hand, the offence is not an attempt if the party threatened knew the gun was unloaded and incapable of doing harm. The same distinction is applicable on principle to indictments for attempts to poison, and attempts to administer drugs with intent to produce an abortion. And

As sustaining the argument of the text, see R. v. St. George, 9 C. & P. 463; R. v. Lallembon, 6 Cox C. C. 204; R. v. Chircley, 1 Den. C. C. 510; 2 & K. 907; R. v. Gamble, 10 Cox C. C. 545; U. S. v. Bott, 11 Blatch. 346; Com. v. McDonald, 5 Cush. 363; Com. v. Jacobs, 9 Allen 274; O'Leary v. People, 4 Parker C. R. 187; Slater v. People, 58 N. Y. 384; People v. Lawton, 56 Barb. 126; Mullen v. State, 45 Ala. 43; Tarver v. State, 45 Ala. 394; Henry v. State, 18 Ohio, 32; Kauble v. State, 55 Ind. 220 (overruling State v. Swalls, 8 Ind. 524); State v. Shepherd, 10 Iowa, 128; Allen v. State, 28 Ga. 232; Tyra v. Com., 2 Meck. (Ky.) 1; State v. Hampton, 63 N. C. 13; State v. Davis, 1 Ind. 125; State v. Rawles, 65 N. C. 334; State v. Hinson, 82 N. C. 597; People v. Yakas, 27 Cal. 620; Leng v. State, 34 Tex. 566. See also, infra, § 906. We have a parallel rule laid down in cases of forgery. Infra, §§ 700 et seq. In apparent conflict with the text is a group of English cases on statutes. In one of these it was held that "shooting at another person" does not take place when the "other person" is not in the place shot at; R. v. Lorp, 2 M. & R. 39; and that there can be no shooting with "loosed arms" when a gun is so satisfied that it cannot fire. R. v. Harris, 5 C. & P. 139. See R. v. Lewis, 9 C. & P. 533; or when it does not contain an efficient charge; R. v. O'Connell, R. & R. 377; R. v. Whitham, 1 Lew. C. C. 133; R. v. James, 1 C. & K. 630; R. v. Gamble, 10 Cox C. C. 545. These decisions may be right; but they do not trench on attempts for attempts to kill, as the ground on which they rest is that the statute uses terms (e.g., "loosed arms") which are incorporated in the indictment, and the averment of which must be substantially proved. Infra, § 945 a. See, as open to more general exception, R. v. Sheppard, 11 Cox C. C. 592; Vaughan v. State, 3 Sm. & M. 660.

The defence of such connection between the attempt and the consummation that palliates violence on the party assaulted in arresting the assailant before he goes further; and it is this appearance which the law, when there is guilty intent, makes indictable, in order to prevent breaches of the peace. But when the means used are so preposterous that there is not even apparent danger, then an indictable attempt is not made out. This distinction is appreciated by several thoughtful German commentators, who hold that absolute inadequacy of means is a defence, while relative inadequacy is only a plea in mitigation of sentence.

§ 384. Whether there must be physical ability to complete the attempt on the part of the attemptor is a question which has already been touched upon in its general relations. It is enough now to view it simply in relation to rape. If there be juridical incapacity for the consummated offence (e.g., infancy), there can be no conviction of the attempt;

It means are apparently and absolutely useless, there is no attempt.

$183. But if the means are both absolutely and apparently inadequate, as where a man threatens another with magic, or aims at him a child's pop-gun, then it is plain that an attempt, in the sense of an apparent invasion of another's rights, does not exist. For to constitute such an attempt there must be such a preliminary overt act as may, by the course of usual natural laws, apparently result, if not interrupted, in crime. It is the appearance of such connection between the attempt and the consummation that palliates violence on the party assaulted in arresting the assailant before he goes further; and it is this appearance which the law, when there is guilty intent, makes indictable, in order to prevent breaches of the peace. But when the means used are so preposterous that there is not even apparent danger, then an indictable attempt is not made out. This distinction is appreciated by several thoughtful German commentators, who hold that absolute inadequacy of means is a defence, while relative inadequacy is only a plea in mitigation of sentence.

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and therefore, a boy under fourteen cannot, according to the prevalent opinion, be convicted of an attempt to commit a rape, as principal, in the first degree.\textsuperscript{1} It is otherwise when the incapacity is merely nervous or physical. A man may fall in consummating a rape from some nervous or physical incapacity intervening between the attempt and execution. But this failure would be no defence to the indictment for the attempt. At the same time there must be apparent capacity.\textsuperscript{2}

\section*{§ 185.}

That capability of success is essential to an attempt has been proclaimed by high English authority,\textsuperscript{3} Lord Chief Justice Cockburn saying \textquoteright\textquoteright{}that an attempt to commit a felony can only be made out when, if no interruption had taken place, the attempt could have been carried out successfully, and the felony completed of the attempt to commit which the party is charged.\textquoteright\textquoteright{} This limitation, however, has already been shown to be erroneous, it being clear that apparent adaptation may constitute the attempt.\textsuperscript{4} And in conflict with the above expressions of Chief Justice Cockburn is a subsequent case, in which the same court held that an attempt to produce miscarriage can exist when the attempt was made on a woman not pregnant.\textsuperscript{5} Certainly an attempt to enborn a witness would be indictable, though such witness was of a character so high as to make success impossible, or though the witness was incompetent.\textsuperscript{6} And so it has been ruled expressly that the taking a null false oath before an incompetent officer is an indictable attempt,\textsuperscript{7} and that it is no defence to an indictment for mailing drugs with the intent of producing abortion, that the drugs were harmless.\textsuperscript{8} It has also been held that destroying a ship with intent to defraud the insurers is indictable, though the vessel was not insured.\textsuperscript{9} And in forgery, which is in the nature of an attempt, absolute potency in the forged instrument is not necessary to sustain the indictment. It is enough if there is a possibility of fraud.\textsuperscript{10} If there be no possibility of success, and this was at the time known to the party attempting, it has been argued that no indictment lies.\textsuperscript{11} Yet this is not an absolute principle. A man may throw himself, from sense of duty, right or wrong, into an unlawful enterprise, which he knows must fail; but which does not cease to be indictable, because it never ceased to be desperate.

\section*{§ 186.}

We turn next from the actor to the object in view, and take up the question whether it is essential to an attempt that the object really exists.\textsuperscript{12} In England, in 1846, in a case just noticed, it was held that it was error to convict within reach of an attempt to steal from the pocket, without proof that there was something in the pocket to steal;\textsuperscript{13} but this decision is not in accordance with the line of American authority,\textsuperscript{14} nor with the reason of the thing, for the offence is not private simply, against merely the person whose goods are imperilled; but public, indictable as a scandal and breach of public peace, irrespective of the question of personal loss. Independently of this consideration who can say

\textsuperscript{1} *Infra*, § 551; R. v. Eldershaw, 3 C. & P. 396; R. v. Phelps, 8 C. & P. 736; State v. Hardy, 4 Harring. 586. See, however, Com. v. Green, 2 Pick. 386; People v. Randolph, 2 Park. C. R. 218; Williams v. State, 14 Ohio, 223; Smith v. State, 12 Ohio, St. 466. And see supra, §§ 69, 175; *infra*, § 551.

\textsuperscript{2} *Infra*, § 554; State v. Eichok, 7 Jones N. C. 3; Lewi v. State, 32 Ala. 356. See McMull v. State, 32 Ind. 220; State v. Swalls, 3 Ind. 524; supra, § 182; *infra*, §§ 501, 506.

\textsuperscript{3} R. v. Collins, 8 C. & G. 471.

\textsuperscript{4} *Supra*, § 182.

\textsuperscript{5} *Infra*, § 556; R. v. Goodall, 2 Cox C. 220.


\textsuperscript{7} *Infra*, §§ 1344, 1571.

\textsuperscript{8} *Infra*, § 1328.

In New York, on the trial of an indictment under the statute for an attempt to commit arson, it was shown that the prisoner solicited one K. to set fire to a barn, and gave him materials for the purpose. This was held sufficient to warrant a conviction, though the prisoner did not mean to be present at the commission of the offence, and K. never intended to commit it; People v. Bush, 4 Hill, N. Y. 133. The New York statute, however, goes beyond those of England and Pennsylvania in incorporating the words: \\textquoteright\textquoteright{}and in such attempt shall do any act toward the commission of such offence.\textquoteright\textquoteright{} See criticism in Stabler v. Comm., 23 Penn. St. 538.

\textsuperscript{9} *Infra*, § 1381. See State v. Fitzgerald, 49 Iowa, 339.

\textsuperscript{10} U. S. v. Cole, 5 McLean, 516. That it is no defence to an assault to commit rape on a child, that the child was put in a position in which rape was impossible; see Com. v. Shaw, 134 Mass. 221, cited *infra*, § 576. As to analogous rulings in forgery, see *infra*, §§ 650-659.

\textsuperscript{11} *Infra*, § 556.

\textsuperscript{12} See R. v. Edwards, 6 C. & P. 515.

\textsuperscript{13} See *supra*, § 136.

\textsuperscript{14} R. v. Collins, L. & C. 471.

Sir J. F. Stephen, Dig. C. L. art. 49, argues that in such case there is an assault with intent to commit a felony.

As to attempts to steal, see R. v. Saunders, 2 Moody, 29: 8 C. & P. 293; R. v. Choereman, L. & C. 160: 9 Cox C. 100; State v. Real, 37 Ohio St. 108; Wolf v. State, 41 Ala. 412; State v. Citron, 82 N. C. 556.


221
that the object of the thief was exclusively to take one particular article? If the pleading indeed, so put it to the court, as was the case in R. v. Collins, and if it appear that the object thus stated is wanting, then this argument fails; but in ordinary cases, when a thief attempts to go to a place to steal, then the presumption is that if he cannot get the object primarily in view, he will content himself with another. This presumption was invoked in a German case, in which the assumption was that the object the thieves had in view, in an attempted entrance in a building, was some grain they believed to be stored there, which grain had been previously removed. It was held, however, that the attempt was to steal, and that when there is such an attempt the thief would look forward to taking whatever he could get. 2

But more difficult questions arise when the object is absolutely non-existent. Suppose a man takes aim at a shadow or a tree, imagining it to be an enemy. The guilty intent here exists; but is there such an overt act as to make up an attempt? According to the definition of attempt heretofore given (a deliberate crime which is begun, but through circumstances independent of the will of the actor is left unfinished), we must answer this question in the negative.

1 See R. v. McPherson, Dears. & B. C. C. 137, where the prisoner was indicted for breaking and entering a dwelling-house and stealing therein certain goods specified in the indictment. It appeared that at the time the house was being broken into the goods specified were not in the house, but there were other goods there belonging to the prosecutor. The jury found the prisoner guilty of breaking and entering the dwelling-house and attempting to steal the goods therein. But the Court of Criminal Appeal held that the conviction could not be sustained. Cockburn, C. J., said: "I think attempting to commit a felony is clearly distinguishable from intending to commit it. An attempt must be to do that which, if successful, would amount to the felony charged. Here the attempt never could have succeeded, as the goods which the indictment charges the prisoner with stealing had been removed." Compare R. v. Collins, L. & C. 471; Rescue's Cr. Ev. § 364; People v. Jones, 46 Mich. 441. In State v. Beale, 27 Ohio St. 189, the question in the text was discussed, and it was held that an indictment for burglary with intent to steal from a safe could not be defeated by proof that the safe was not used as a place of deposit for valuables. The distinction taken in McPherson's Case was disapproved. See infra, § 820.

2 See Schwartz, at supra; and see remarks of Coleridge, J., in R. v. Clarke, 1 C. & K. 421, as sanctioning this; and Spears v. State, 2 Ohio St. 565; Hamilton v. State, 36 Ind. 280, and cases cited infra, § 590.

222

CHAP. VIII.]

ATTEMPTS]

[§ 186.

tive. 1 To shoot at a shadow or a tree is not an indictable offence, unless under circumstances disturbing public peace. 2

This reasoning, however, does not apply where there is an actual injury attempted to the person or property of another, though, from circumstances exterior to the actor's will, this injury does not produce its immediately contemplated result. Thus, as has been seen, an attempt at miscarriage may be proved, though it turns out the woman was not actually pregnant; 3 and so, no doubt, an attempt at forgery could be sustained, although the forged paper attempted to be made could not by any possibility defraud. 4 And so, if the shooting be at a shadow sufficiently near another person as to put the latter in peril; or if the shooting be at an empty carriage, the offender supposing it to be occupied, then the attempt is made out, on the ground that it is a misdemeanor to shoot into any place usually frequented by human beings. 5 It need scarcely be added that where a person shoots at a crowd generally, intending to hurt any one who may be hit, he may be indicted for an attempt to hurt A., the face turned out to be an English manufactured article, of little value, but of course not subject to duty. Lady Elton had bought it at a price vastly above its value, believing it to be genuine, intending to smuggle it into England. Here was an attempt to smuggle, though the object was one not susceptible of being smuggled.

In Re v. Malin, 1 Dal. 33 (infra, § 1802), it was held that it was not treason when a subject, who starts to join the enemy, joins by mistake a troop of his own country. Though treason is in the nature of an attempt, the statute makes an actual adhering to an enemy essential.


1 See supra, § 190; infra, §§ 319, 820.

2 See supra, § 130; infra, § 590.
one of the crowd. So where A. shoots at B., mistaking him for C., if there is an actual assault on B., though under a mistake as to who he is, A. may be indicted for attempting to kill B., or for wounding B. with intent to kill.  

§ 187. Of abandoned attempts we have, in our criminal practice, few illustrations, unless it be in cases of attempts at treason, of which the English state trials give instances, where the defence was that the defendant withdrew from the traitorous conspiracy before an overt act. This defence, however, has been more than once overruled, for though it constitutes an appeal to clemency, it is no defence to the charge of traitorous combination.

Abandoned attempts not indictable.

The true line of distinction is this: If an attempt be voluntarily and freely abandoned before the act is put in process of final execution, there being no outside cause prompting such abandonment, then this is a defence; but it is otherwise when the process of execution is in such a condition that it proceeds in its natural course, without the attempt's agency, until it either succeeds or miscarries. In such a case, no abandonment of the attempt, and no withdrawal from its supersintendence, can screen the guilty party from the result.

§ 187. But how, if in addition to abandoning the attempt, the guilty party takes means to cause it to effectually miscarry, as when he endeavors on the life of William III, the assassin, as they approach, see in the distance a regiment of cavalry encroaching on their intended victim. Or suppose that the pickpocket, just as he is inserting his hand, is arrested by a police officer. No one would doubt that in all these cases the consummation of the offence was hindered by causes outside of the will of the offender. He was physically prevented from effecting the purpose. He could not have penetrated the wall, or broken through the line of cavalry, or picked the pocket when in the policeman's grasp.

But a much more difficult question arises when the attempt is not physically interrupted by extraneous conditions, but where those conditions are such as to induce the offender to withdraw. Suppose that instead of finding the window walled up he sees some slight disarrayment in the premises which leads him to suspect that he is watched. Suppose that instead of seeing the line of cavalry in his way, he finds a chance has taken place in the appointments of the palace, from which he infers that the plot has been discovered. Suppose that instead of being caught by the policeman he sees somebody in the distance, a good deal like a detective, curiously inspecting him. Certainly we cannot consider his withdrawal under such circumstances voluntary. And so speak the cases cited. But suppose the hindrance which caused the offender to back out was imaginary. It was not a cause outside of himself. It was a cause inside of himself. Here, again, we are entangled in a metaphysical discussion. Are what we see in any case real existences, or can our impressions of them be at the utmost anything more than mirrors within ourselves? But if all abandonment is voluntary when produced by impressions within ourselves, there can be no involuntary abandonments, since there are no abandonments not so produced. Such is the reply we may make, taking even the most realistic metaphysical theorems as our guides, to those who argue that an unreal impression of danger is not an effective condition. It is enough, however, to say that as in other cases (e.g., self-defence) unreal impressions are regarded as effective conditions, they may be so regarded in this case.

1 See R. v. Taylor, 1 P. & D. 311; R. v. Sharp, 3 Cox C.C. 298; Com. v. Tobin, 105 Mass. 426; State v. Blair, 13 Rich. 22. Thus in treason, which is a high grade of attempt, where the attempt is frustrated by extraneous interruption, that such frustration is no defence. U. S. v. Pryor, 3 Wash. C. C. 234. But in such case (e.g., an abortive attempt to communicate intelligence, or to furnish supplies to an enemy) the proper course is to indite for the attempt. But see case, E. B. v. Pryor, supra, in which it was held that such attempt was treason; compare R. v. Henney, 2 La. Kenyon, 366; 1 Burr. 642; and see infra, § 235. So an attempt to commit rape may be abandoned after the first approach, yet nevertheless such attempt is indictable. See Lewis v. State, 35 Ala. 380, cited infra, and see, also, infra, § 275 a.

[BOOK I]

CRIMES.

[CHAP. VIII.

ATTEMPTS.

§ 187.]

VOL. I.—16

225

224
§ 187. CRIMES. [BOOK I.

Informs a person to whom a poisoned dish has been sent that the dish is poisoned; and the mischief is stopped? Here, so far as concerns the actor, the attempt is abandoned before it has been virtually put in process of final execution; and hence this abandonment is a defence. The offender has retreated in such a way as to render it impossible for evil consequences to ensue.

For the doctrine that abandonment of an attempt not yet put in process of final execution is a defence, two reasons are given. First, the character of an attempt is lost when its execution is voluntarily abandoned. There is no conceivable overt act to which the abandoned purpose could be attached. Secondly, the policy of the law requires that the offender, so long as he is capable of arresting an evil plan, should be encouraged to do so, by saving him harmless in case of such retreat before it is possible for any evil consequences to ensue. Neither society, nor any private person, has been injured by his act. There is no damage, therefore, to redress. To punish him after retreat and abandonment, would be to destroy the motive for retreat and abandonment.

It is to be noticed, however, that as the attempt is only provable by some overt act, so the abandonment of the attempt cannot be proved by mere conjectural tests or by declarations of mental change. As declaring an intention to do a thing is not an indictable attempt, so declaring an intention to give up an attempt is not an abandonment of the attempt. If it were otherwise, criminal attempts, especially political, would cease to be indictable, for there are few cases in which such criminal attempts, when in process of execution, are not discovered. There must be substantive acts showing that the abandonment was real, just as there must be substantive acts showing the attempt was real.

It should be remembered, also, that if such abandonment is caused by fear of detection it is no defence, if the attempt progress

§ 188. ATTEMPTS.

Sufficiently towards execution to be per se indictable before such abandonment. Thus if a thief, when moving his hand towards a pocket, desists on seeing a detective, the offence is made out. To the same effect, perhaps, may be cited two American decisions, in which attempts at rape, abandoned before consummation, were held indictable. It is true that it may be observed that in these cases the offence of felonious assault was complete, prior to the period of abandonment. More exactly illustrative of the principle is an English case tried before Chief Baron Pollock, in which it appeared that the defendant, having lighted a lucifer match to set fire to a stack, desisted in discovering he was watched. It was held, and properly, that this abandonment of purpose was no defence. It must also be remembered that if an attempt—e.g., an assault—is frustrated by force, such frustration is no defence.

§ 188. Where the attempt is resisted at first, but the consummation of the crime is assented to, the offender may be indicted for the attempt. In rape and robbery we can conceive of cases of this class. A man assaults a woman with intent to ravish. She resists; but ultimately yields. Here, if his intention was to use force to the end, he is

When attempt is resisted it may be independent.

1 Lewis v. State, 27 Ala. 380. State v. Block, 7 Iowa N. C. 68. See also, State v. McDaniell, 1 Winston, 249. And see, as qualifying above, Kelly v. Corn, 1 Grant (Paum.), 464. See infra, § 179.


In an Upper Canada prosecution for an attempt to commit burglary, it was proved that two defendants agreed to commit the offence on a certain night, together with C. who, however, was detained at home by his father who suspected the design. The defendants were seen about midnight entering a gate fifty feet from the house; they came towards the house to a picked fence in front, in which there was a small gate, but there was no proof that they came nearer the house than twelve or thirteen feet, nor did they pass the picked gate. They went, as it was supposed, in the rear of the house, and were not seen afterwards. It was held by the Queen's Bench that there was no sufficient establishment of a persistence in the attempt to justify a conviction, the attempt appearing to have been voluntarily abandoned before any mischief was done. It was added, however, that if it appeared that such abandonment was not voluntary, but caused by surprise and interruption from others, and that but for such surprise and interruption they would have carried out their bargains, design, there was ground for a conviction. B. v. McNaun, 28 Up. Can. Q. B. 617.
§ 191. **CRIMES.**

Indictable for the attempt, though it is otherwise where he did not intend to use force.

§ 189. Where the attempt is acquiesced in by the party injured, through fraud or incapacity, the acquiescence does not bar the prosecution.

Acquiescence through fraud or incapacity no bar.

It is clear that when the person injured is incapable of giving assent, such assent cannot be set up as a defense.

II. **INDICTMENTS.**

§ 190. In indictments for attempts the laxity permitted in assaults will not be maintained. No doubt it is enough to charge that A. did "make an assault" on B. But the reason is that "assault" is a term which describes an act easily defined; which asserts a consummated offense; and which is always indictable, no matter in what sense the term may be used. But "attempt" is a term peculiarly indefinite. It has no prescribed legal meaning. It relates from its nature to an unconsummated offense. It covers acts of some of which are indictable and some of which are not.

§ 191. Nor do decisions under statutes rule the question at common law. It is within the power of the English parliament, and, as it has frequently been ruled, of the legislatures of our American States, to pass statutes declaring a particular act to be indictable, and providing that it shall be enough to describe such act in the statutory terms. When this is done by direction or implication, it is proper for the courts to hold, as has been done, that an indictment, charging that the defendant did "attempt" to feloniously steal from the house of A. B., or "to commit a rape" on A. B., is good. But this does not touch the question at common law.

2 Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. § 151.
3 See supra, § 146. That the attempt may be indicted even though the woman after first resisting ultimately yields, see People v. Bransby, 32 N.Y. 529; State v. Cron, 12 Iowa, 99; supra, §§ 566, 577.
5 See supra, § 146. That the attempt may be indicted even though the woman after first resisting ultimately yields, see People v. Bransby, 32 N.Y. 223.

§ 192. At common law such facts must be set forth as show that the attempt is criminal in itself. Attempts may be merely in conception, or in preparation, with no causal connection between the attempt and any particular crime; in which case, as has been seen, such attempts are not cognizable by the penal law. On the other hand, when an attempt stands in such connection with a projected, deliberate crime, that the crime, according to the usual and likely course of events, will follow from the attempt, then the attempt is an offense for which an indictment lies. Now it is a familiar principle of criminal pleading, that when an act is only indictable under certain conditions, then these conditions must be stated in the indictment in order to show that the act is indictable. Nor does it make any difference that the offense is made so by statute. Thus statutes make indictable revolts and obtaining goods by false pretenses; yet an indictment, charging simply that the defendant "made a revolt," or "obtained goods under false pretenses," would be quashed by the court. On the same reasoning, in an indictment for an attempt to commit a crime, it is essential to aver that the defendant did some act, which, directed by a particular intent, to be averred, would have apparently resulted, in the ordinary and likely course of things, in a particular crime.

2 Whart. Cr. Pl. & Pr. § 151.
3 See supra, § 146. That the attempt may be indicted even though the woman after first resisting ultimately yields, see People v. Bransby, 32 N.Y. 529; State v. Cron, 12 Iowa, 99; supra, §§ 566, 577.
5 See supra, § 146. That the attempt may be indicted even though the woman after first resisting ultimately yields, see People v. Bransby, 32 N.Y. 223.

The question, it should be remembered, depends largely on the construction of the statute. In Massachusetts, it is not necessary, in an indictment for an attempt to commit a crime, within the Rev. Stat. c. 133, § 12, that it should be directly charged that the act attempted was a crime punishable by law, provided it appear to be so easy from the facts alleged. In an indictment for an attempt to burn a building, it is not necessary to describe the combustible materials used for the purpose. Com. v. Flynn, 3 Cush. 352. See Com. v. Melchon, 5 Cush. 395; Com. v. Sherron, 105 Mass. 149. An indictment has been sustained which


CRIMES.

§ 193. The cumulation of facts, therefore, to show the criminal character of the intent, is not duplicity. Thus a Massachusetts indictment under Rev. Stat. 133, § 12, is not bad for duplicity, when, besides setting forth an "attempt" to set fire to a building, it avers a breaking and entering of the building. Hence the attempt may be alleged to be to commit more offences than one.

III. JURISDICTION.

§ 195. The question of jurisdiction, when an attempt is pursued through two or more distinct sovereignties, is elsewhere discussed. It is clear that such attempt is cognizable in the place where, if not interrupted, it would have been executed; and from the very nature of things, it must be cognizable in the place where the preliminary overt acts constituting the attempt are committed.

IV. EVIDENCE.

§ 196. As in consummated crimes the intent, which is here essential, may be inferred by the jury from facts. Thus when an indictment alleges that a party attempted to set fire to a dwelling-house, with intent to burn it, by attempting to set fire to another building, the jury are authorized to infer the alleged intent from the evidence of the attempt to set fire to the other building. It has been ruled, however, where an attempt to burn a hole in the guard-house where he was confined, in order to escape, and with no intent to consume or generally injure the building, that this was not an attempt to burn the house. And it is settled that there can be no conviction of an attempt to murder, unless an intent to kill be specifically shown.

ULLEY, 82 N. C. 555. And so in Missouri. State v. Hughes, 70 Mo. 329; Coxe, State v. Wilson, 30 Com. 556; Clark's Case, 6 Grat. 676. In State v. Womack, 31 La. An. 635, it was held not enough to aver that the defendant "attempted" to commit a larceny. If a person burned a hole in the guard-house where he was confined, in order to escape, and with no intent to consume or generally injure the building, that this was not an attempt to burn the house. And it is settled that there can be no conviction of an attempt to murder, unless an intent to kill be specifically shown.
§ 199. CRIMES. [BOOK I.

Whether when the intention is to hurt B., and the hurt falls on C., the defendant is indictable for an attempt to hurt C., has been already incidentally noticed. But whatever may be said on this difficult question, we may regard it as settled, that when the indictment avers an attempt to do a particular act, there is a fatal variance if the act proved does not logically fall within the range of the act laid.  

§ 197. If the instrument by which an attempt is effected is apparently adapted to the end (e.g., a gun to shooting), this is a sufficient præter facie case. The defendant must prove that the gun was not loaded and known not to be so.

V. PRINCIPALS AND ACCESSORIES.

§ 198. All confederates in the attempt, whether present or absent at the overt acts, are responsible as principals, when the attempt is a misdemeanor.

Hence an averment that three joint defendants, in an indictment for an attempt at larceny, “put their hands” into the prosecutor’s pocket, may be sustained by evidence that while all participated in the act, only one put his hand in the pocket.

If the attempt is a felony, co-defendants are responsible according to the laws of principal and accessory.

VI. VINDICT.

§ 199. The topic of verdict, in cases where an assault or attempt is proved on an indictment for a greater offence (e.g., felony), is elsewhere noticed. It may now be specially stated, that while by an old common law there can be technically no conviction of an attempt on a count for felony, this power is given to juries in many jurisdictions by statute. But unless the attempt be averred in the indictment, there can be no conviction of the attempt on statutes which simply give power to convict of minor offences included in major.

It has been held in England, that under an indictment charging H. with rape, and U. with aiding and abetting, H. could be convicted under the statute 32 & 33 Vict. c. 29 of attempting to commit the rape, and U. of aiding him in the attempt.

Whether an attempt merges in a consummated crime is hereafter considered.

VII. PUNISHMENT OF ATTEMPT.

§ 200. For the reasons heretofore given, the punishment of an attempt should be less than that of the consummated crime. The attempt involves neither the duration of premeditation, nor the obduracy of purpose, which belong to the crime when complete. And the policy of the law is, by assigning more lenient punishment to the incomplete offence, to arrest offences in the process of completion. This view, so long neglected in English law, and which English and American judges, acting on what is called the preventive policy, even now sometimes lose sight of, is essential to a sound ethical jurisprudence.


* See R. v. Hapgood, L. R. 1 C. C. 221. At supra, § 10.

283
CHAPTER IX.
ACCESSORYSHIP, AGENCY, MISPRISION.

I. STATUTORY CHANGES.
Common law recently modified by statutes, § 205.

II. PRINCIPALS.
Principal in first degree is actual perpetrator, § 206.
Presence is not necessary when causal connection is immediate, e.g., when agent is respon- sible, § 207.
Accessory before the fact cannot be convicted as principal, § 208.
Non-resident party may be liable for agent's acts, § 209.
Wife not ordinarily co-principal with husband, § 210.
Principals in the second degree are those present aiding and abetting, § 211.
Presence does not involve complicity, § 211 a.
Capacity to execute not always essential, § 211 b.
Confederacy must be real, § 211 c.
More sympathy not confederacy, § 211 d.

If principal is irresponsible, indictment should not be for aiding and abetting, § 212.
Confederacy with constructive presence may constitute principal, § 213.
But act must result from confederacy, § 214.
In duels all are principals, § 215.
Persons abetting suicides are principals in murder, § 216.
Persons executing parts of crimes separately are principals, § 217.
Persons outside keeping watch are principals, § 218.

III. ACCESSORIES BEFORE THE FACT.
Commanding and counselling constitute accessoryship before the fact, § 222.
Several instigators may be combined, § 223 a.
Must be causal connection, § 223 b.
Silent acquiescence is not counselling, § 227.
Considered advice does not implicate, § 228.
Accessory not liable for collateral crime, § 229.

Relative guilt of accessory and principal, § 230.
Assistance must be rendered knowingly and actively, § 231.
Defensive not accessories, § 231 a.
May be necessary before the fact to manslaughter, § 232.
Accessory before the fact not original, § 233.
Quantity of aid immaterial, § 234.
Conditions of time immaterial, § 235.

424.

CHAP. IX.] ASSISTANCE: INSTIGATION. [§ 205.
Grade of guilt not necessarily the same, § 236.
Conviction of principal no longer a prerequisite, § 237.
Indictment must specifically charge principal, § 238.
Verdict must specify grade, § 239.
Acquittal, § 240.

IV. ACCESSORIES AFTER THE FACT.
Accessory after the fact is one who subsequently aids or commences the crime, § 241.
Knowledge of principal's guilt is essential, § 243.
Wife is not liable, § 243.

I. STATUTORY CHANGES.
§ 205. By the English common law, whenever there is a statutory distinction of punishment between principals in the first and principals in the second degree, a party charged as principal in the first degree cannot be convicted on evidence showing him to be principal in the second degree.
By the same common law, there can be no conviction of an accessory on an indictment charging him as principal. The obstructions of justice caused by these subtleties have long been deplored; and while in several of the States of the American Union it is already provided by statute that accessories before the fact are to be proceeded against as principals; in other States, and in England, the change will probably not be long delayed. So far as concerns principals in the first and principals in the second degree, the distinction is now almost universally obliterated. In the present chapter, however, in view of those jurisdictions in which the common law in this relation remains, the topic will be discussed as at common law.

4 According to Sir J. P. Stephen, "there was (by the old law) no distinction between principals and accessories in treason and misdemeanor, and the distinction in felony made little difference, because all alike, principals and accessories, were felons, and as such punishable with death." 2 Hist. Cr. L. 231.
II. PRINCIPALS.

§ 206. A principal in the first degree, at common law, is one who is the actual perpetrator of the criminal act.¹

§ 207. To constitute, however, this grade of offence, it is not necessary that the party should have committed the act with his own hands, or be actually present when the offence is consummated;² for, if one lay poison purposefully for another, who takes it and is killed, he who lays the poison, though absent when it is taken, is a principal in the first degree.³ Such also, is the case with a party who maliciously turns out a wild beast intending to kill any one whom the animal may attack.⁴ A party, also, who acts through the medium of an innocent⁵ or insane medium,⁶ or a slave,⁷ is guilty, though absent, as principal in the first degree;⁸ while he would be guilty only as accessory before the fact at common law were the agent a responsible and conscious confederate.⁹ Thus, in Sir William Courtney's case, Lord Denman, C. J., charged the jury: "You will say whether you find that Courtney was a dangerous and mischievous person; that these two prisoners knew he was so, and yet kept with him, aiding and abetting him by their presence, and conferring in his acts; and if you do, you will find them guilty, for they are then liable as principals for what was done by his hand."¹¹

If, therefore, a child under the age of discretion,⁵ or any other person excused from the responsibility of his actions by defect of understanding, ignorance of the fact, or other cause, be invited to the commission of murder or any other crime, the inciter, though absent when the act was committed, is an accessory liable for the act of his agent, and a principal in the first degree.² So if A., by letter, desire B., an innocent agent, to write the name of "W. S." on a receipt on a post-office order, and the innocent agent do it, believing that he is authorized so to do, A. is a principal in the forgery; and it makes no difference that by the letter A. says to B. that he is "at liberty" to sign the name of W. S., and does not in express words direct him to do so.⁴ But if the agent be aware of the consequences of his act, he is a principal in the first degree, and the employer, if he be absent when the act is committed, is an accessory before the fact.⁵

§ 208. At common law, one indicted as principal cannot be convicted on proof showing him to be only an accessory before the fact,⁶ nor the converse.⁷

§ 209. A non-resident party, though at the time an inhabitant of a foreign State, may be at common law responsible as principal for his agent's criminal acts not amounting to felonies, in a particular jurisdiction,⁸ while as to felonies he would be an accessory before the fact. And a party who, thirty miles off, and in another county, Accessory before the fact cannot be convicted as principal. Non-resident party may be liable for agent's acts.

1 Haw. e. 1, s. 7; R. v. Mears, 1 Park C. R. 119; or, if he be present, a principal in the second degree.

2 State v. Learned, 41 Vt. 586;see R. v. Manley, 1 Cox C. Blackburn v. State, 23 Ohio St. 145.


§ 211.]

CRIMES. [BOOK I.

signals to another, by fire on a mountain, when to commit a highway robbery, is principal in the robbery. ...§ 211. Principals in the second degree are those who are present aiding and abetting the commission of the offence. As has been elsewhere shown, the assistant (principal in the second degree) is distinguished from the principal in the first degree in this, that the latter directs the unlawful act; the former assists it; the action of the latter is primary, that of the former is subsidiary. Hence the principal in the first degree is spoken of by the old writers as causa principalis, while the principal in the second degree is spoken of as causa secundaria, or secondary cause. The principal in the second degree, or assistant, is distinguished from the accessory before the fact, not merely because the former is present, and the latter absent, at the commission of the offence, but because the accessory before the fact, or instigator, acts deliberately; and so, with preméditation, though it may be not so cool and long, does the principal in the first degree; while the idea of such extended preméditation is not necessary to the principal in the second degree, or assistant, who is not supposed, as is the instigator, to exert an organizing influence on the principal in the first degree, and who may be employed or induced to assist the latter without any previous conception of what the criminal act is intended to be. But unless the distinction is imposed by statute, it has ceased to be of practical interest, since principals in the second degree may be convicted on indictments charging them in the first degree. 8

[CHAP. IX.]

ASSISTANCE: INSTIGATION. [§ 211 a.

§ 211 a. Merely witnessing a crime, without intervention, does not make a person a party to its commission, unless his interference was a duty, and his non-interference was one of the conditions of the commission of the crime; or unless his non-interference was designed by him and operated as an encouragement to or protection of the perpetrator. A person, for instance, in order to produce a collision on a railroad, starts a car on the top of a high grade. A switch-tender, appointed to watch and adjust a particular switch, could avoid a collision by turning the switch, but intentionally refuses to do so. In such case he is an assistant in the homicide, if a homicide ensues. A watchman appointed to guard a bank sees burglars approach, and lets them pursue their work without interruption. By so doing he becomes assistant in the felony. But unless this abstention from interference removes a check which would otherwise prevent the commission of the crime, and is therefore equivalent to a positive act of assistance, the person so abstaining does not become a party to the crime. He may be indicted for his neglect in not assisting the officers of the law in arresting the offenders. But he is not indictable as concerned in the offence which the offender in question commits. Hence, although a man be present while a felony is com-

1 Infra, § 214: 1 Hale P. C. 439; Rex v. Corbin, 3 Beav. 259.
2 As to how far presence at a prize fight involves complicity, see Rex v. O'Brien, 1 K. & B. 725.
3 Rex v. Corby, cited infra, § 214.
4 9 Cent. L. J. 303.
5 Rex v. Corby, cited supra, § 214.
6 9 Cent. L. J. 303.
7 Infra, § 221.
8 [888]
9 Supra, §§ 221 et seq. See R. v. Smith, 3 Cox C. C. 27; R. v. Wardrop, ibid. 284.
10 Infra, § 214.
mited, yet if he take no part in it, and do not act in concert with those who commit it, he will not be a principal in the second degree merely because he does not endeavor to prevent the felony or apprehend the felon. Something must be shown in the conduct of the bystander, which indicates a design to encourage, incite, or in some manner afford aid or consent to the particular act; though when the bystander is a friend of the perpetrator, and knows that his presence will be regarded by the perpetrator as an encouragement and protection, presence alone may be regarded as an encouragement. Where presence may be entirely accidental, it is not even evidence of aiding and abetting. Where presence is primum facie not accidental, it is evidence, but no more than evidence, for the jury. It is not necessary, therefore, to prove that the party actually sided in the commission of the offence; if he watched for his companions in order to prevent surprise, or remained at a convenient distance in order to favor their escape, if necessary, or was in such a situation as to be able readily to come to their assistance, the knowledge of which was calculated to give additional confidence to his companions, in contemplation of law he was aiding and abetting.

§ 211 b. Nor is it necessary that the principal in the second degree should be personally capable of committing the offence. Thus a person incapable of rape may be principal in the second degree to rape; an unmarried man 737; L. R. 8 Q. B. D. 534; 15 Cox C. 48; Infra, § 372. See R. v. Young, 8 G. & C. P. 644; E. v. Perkins, 1 C. & P. 437; R. v. Taylor, cited infra, § 227.


CHAP. IX.] ASSISTANCE: INSTIGATION. [§ 213.

may be principal in the second degree to bigamy; a cripple decaying into a trap one whom he could not even strike, may be guilty of homicide; and one who cannot write, but supplies knowingly the materials, may be guilty of forgery.

§ 211 c. The confederacy must be real. Thus if one of the parties to a proposed burglary enter the house, not in order to steal, but to entrap the other party, the latter, who has not entered the house, is not indictable for burglary; and as has been just seen, mere presence at the commission of a crime does not imply complicity.

§ 211 d. Mere sympathy, also, even by a bystander, does not by itself constitute confederacy. Hence mere consent to a crime, when no aid is given, and no encouragement rendered, does not amount to participation. It is otherwise in respect to such silent assent to a statement of another to a third party as amounts to an approval.

§ 212. We have already seen that he who acts through an irresponsible agent is liable as principal. It follows, therefore, that a person so acting is not liable as principal in the second, but as principal in the first degree. Hence, if a principal in a transaction he not liable under our laws, another cannot be charged merely for aiding and abetting him, unless such abettor do acts which render him liable as principal.

§ 213. Any participation in a general felonious plan, provided such participation be concerted, and there be constructive presence, is enough to make a man principal in the second degree, as

2 Infra, § 227.
3 People v. Collins, 23 Cal. 185. That a detective is not a confederate, see supra, § 149; Frone v. People, 100 Ill. 102.
4 supra, § 221.
5 infra, §§ 237, 1472; R. v. Taylor, L. R. 2 C. C. 147; 13 Cox C. C. 681; Com. v. Cooley, 6 Gray, 586; Plummer v. Corn., 11 Bush, 75; Clem v. State, 23 Ind. 418; Connaughton v. State, 1 Wis. 188; Griffin v. State, 24 Ga. 315; Martin v. State, 2d Ill. 315; State v. Cox, 65 Mo. 20; People v. Leith, 52 Cal. 521. As to sympathetic spectators at prize fights, see infra, §§ 372, 373, 1465 a. As to sympathetic neutrals, infra, § 1902.
6 White v. People, 51 Ill. 333; Taylor v. State, 42 Tex. 916.
7 infra, § 1717.
8 supra, § 267. See, also, R. v. Taylor, 8 C. & P. 616.

VOL. I.—16 241
§ 214.]  

CRIMES.  
[BOOK I.

to any crime committed in execution of the plan. Thus, if several act in concert to steal a man's goods, and he is induced by fraud to trust one of them in the presence of others with the possession of the goods, and then another of the party entice the owner away so that he who has the goods may carry them off, all are guilty as principals. So, it has been ruled, that to aid and assist a person to the jurors unknown, to obtain money by ring-dropping, makes the party principal in the second degree, if the jury find that the prisoner was confederate with the person unknown to obtain the money by means of this practice. And so confederates watching outside, the object being to effect a murder, incur the same guilt as the confederate by whom the blow is struck.

§ 214. But the act, in order thus to be imputed to all the confederates, must be the result and in execution of the confederacy, and if the crime is committed by a confederate as collateral to an escape after the plot is exploded, as when several are out for the purpose of committing a


3 In R. v. Jeffries, 3 Cox C. C. 84, Crewe, J., after confessing with Paterson, J., hold that if A., one of two confederates, unlock the door of a room, in which a robbery is to be committed, and then go away, and B., the other confederate, comes, and steals the goods, the

former is not a principal in the theft. This, however, is dissipated in State v. Hamilton, 13 N.Y. 385, and, supposing that the aid rendered by A. promoted the execution of the felony, it is in conflict with cases above stated.


5 See infra, §§ 229, 397; R. v. Hodgson, 1 Leach, 7; Defoe's Case, 1 Leav. 104; R. v. Crow, 5 & 6 P. 641; R. v. Fricke, 3 Cox C. C. 56; R. v. Taylor, L. 2 C. C. 147; U. S. v. Gilbert, 2 Surr. 19; Comm. v. Campbell, 7 Allen, 511; State v. Lucas, 55 Iowa, 317; People v. Knapp, 26 Mich. 112; People v. Woodward, 45 Cal. 293; Meroon-smith v. State, 9 Tex. 398. See Breese v. State, 12 Ohio St. 136, and cases cited infra, §§ 218, 220; supra, § 211.


7 There can be no criminal responsi-

ility for anything not actually in the common enterprise, and which might be expected to happen in course of it. In other words, the principle is quite analogous to that of agency, where the liability is measured by the express or implied authority, and the authorities are quite clear, and reasonable, that any act done for some done in escaping, which were not within any joint purpose or combination. Campbell, J., People v. Knapp, 23 Mich. 112.

An interesting question, already discussed in some of its relations (see supra, § 157), arises where one confederate abandons the enterprise before the homicide is committed. Such abandonment, it has been held, is no defense where notice of it is not given to his associates before the blow is struck. State v. Allen, 37 Conn. 421.

B. is indicted for inflicting on C. an injury dangerous to life, with intent to murder. A. is indicted for aiding and abetting B. A. must be shown to have known that it was B.'s intent to murder C., and it is not enough to show that A. helped B. in what he did.


1 R. v. White, Russ. & R. C. 99; R. v. Sked, 4 F. & P. 651; R. v. Collins, 4 C. & P. 565; R. v. Howell, 3 C. & P. 457. In State v. Abney, 4 Port. 397, the main question was part of an attack which the defendants were concerned in making; and the court erred in holding that the majority was not imputable to all the defendants.

2 State v. King, 2 Hare's S. C. Dig. 106. See infra, §§ 470, 474.


§ 215. In the case of murder by duelling, in strictness, all parties, as will be more fully seen, are technically principals. And all persons present at a prize-fight, having gone thither for the purpose of encouraging the prize-fighters, are principals in the breach of the peace.  

§ 216. If one encourage another to commit suicide, and is present aiding him while he does so, such person is guilty of murder as a principal; and if two encourage each other to murder themselves, and one does so, the other being present, but the latter fail in an attempt upon himself, he is principal in the murder of the first. Whether the influence of the defendant was the exclusive cause of the suicide is immaterial. All present at the time of committing the offence are principals, although only one acts, if they are confederates, and engaged in the common design of which the offence is a part. Where, however, the act is done in the absence of the party who incites it, the latter has been held in England not to be amenable to indictment as a principal, because he was not present; nor as an accessory before the fact at common law, because the principal cannot be convicted; nor as guilty of a substantive felony under 7 Geo. III. c. 64, s. 9, because that statute is to be considered as extending to those persons only who, before the statute, were liable either with or after the principal, and not to make those liable who before could never have been tried. But by subsequent statutes the English law in this respect is materially changed. That an attempt to commit suicide may be indictable at common law is elsewhere.  

A party who compels another to take poison, so as to produce death, is responsible for the murder as principal in the first degree.  

§ 217. Where one assailant strikes a blow which is not fatal, and a confederate follows it up with a fatal blow, both are principals in the homicide. If part of a crime also be committed in one place and part in another, each person concerned in the commission of either part is liable as principal. Hence if several combine to forge a document, and each executes, by himself, a distinct part of the forgery, and they are not together when the instrument is completed, they are nevertheless all guilty as principals. And if A. counsel B. to make the paper, C. to engrave the paper, D. to fill up the names of a forged note, and they do so, each without knowing that the others were engaged in the crime, all are principals.  

[1] See R. v. Collison, 4 C. & P. 508; and see other cases cited infra, § 297.  

That a mere sympathetic cognizance does not constitute complicity, see State v. Cox, 65 Mo. 22; Comnaugh v. State, 1 Wis. 169; People v. Leith, 52 Cal. 251. See supra, §§ 1040, 1062; supra, § 211 d.  


are employed for that purpose, B. C., and D. may be indicted for forgery, and A. as an accessory; for if several make distinct parts of a forged instrument, each is a principal, though he do not know by whom the other parts are executed, and though it is finished by one alone in the absence of the others.

§ 218. It has been already seen that actual immediate presence at the injury is not necessary; (1) when the defendant acts through an irresponsible agent (e. g., through a lunatic or infant); and (2) when he acts through a material agent, such as poison, which does not require the presence of a guilty director to make it effective. Nor is it necessary that the party should be actually present, an ear or eye-witness of the transaction, in order to make him principal in the second degree; he is, in the construction of law, present aiding and abetting, if, with the intention of giving assistance, he be near enough to afford it should the occasion arise. Thus, if he be outside of an inclosure, watching, to prevent surprise, or for the purpose of keeping guard, while his confederates are inside committing the felony, such constructive presence is sufficient to make him a principal in the second degree. No matter how wide may be the separation of the confederates, if they are all engaged in a common plan for the execution of a felony, and all take their part in furtherance of the common design, all are liable as principals.

Actual presence is not necessary if there is direct connection between the actor and the crime. Turning out a wild beast with intent to do mischief, so that thereupon death ensues, involves, as we have seen, the guilt of a principal; and the same grade of

3 See R. v. Kolly, 2 Cox C. C. 171.

§ 219. But persons not actually assisting are not principals at common law. Thus, where Brighton uttered a forged note at Portsmouth, the plan was concerted between him and two others, to whom he was to return, when he had been concerned in uttering another forged note; but at the time this note was being uttered in Portsmouth, the other two stayed at Gosport. The jury found all three guilty, but, on a case reserved, the judges were clear that the other two were not present, nor sufficiently near to assist, they could not be deemed principals, and, therefore, they were recommended for a pardon.

Going towards the place where a felony is to be committed, in order to assist in carrying off the property, and assisting accordingly, will not make a man a principal, if he were at such a distance at the time of the felonious taking as not to be able to assist in it. And although an act be committed in pursuance of a previous concerted plan between the parties, those who are not present, or so near as to be able to afford aid and assistance at the time when the offence is committed, are not principals in cases where the felony is immediately executed by responsible agents, but are accessories before the fact. Presence, however, during the whole of the transaction, is not necessary; for as we

1 See supra, §§ 161, 166; infra, § 207.
2 State v. Hamilton, 13 Nev. 386, cited infra, § 220; see supra, §§ 14; infra, § 220; see supra, §§ 14; infra, § 220.
5 R. v. Soares, Atkinson & Bright, supra, §§ 14; infra, § 220.
have already seen, if several combine to forge an instrument, and each execute by himself a distinct part of the forgery, and they are not together when the instrument is completed, they are, nevertheless, all guilty as principals. And presence is not to be determined by mere contiguity of space. A man who, on a mountain top at a distance of thirty miles, assists a highway robber, by a signal, in making an attack, is a principal in the robbery.

§ 220. All those who assemble themselves together, with an intent to commit a wrongful act, the execution whereof makes probable in the nature of things a crime not specifically designed, but incidental to that which was the object of the confederacy, are responsible for such incidental crime. Thus, if several persons come armed to a house with intent to commit an affray or a personal outrage (such affray or outrage having bloodshed as a probable incident), and a homicide ensues while the assailants are engaged in such illegal proceedings, then those who may not actually participate in any overt act of outrage, will be principals in the homicide. And where persons combine to stand by one another in a breach of the peace, with a general resolution to resist to the death all opposers, and in the execution of their design a murder is committed, all of the company are equally principals in the murder, though at the time of the fact some of them were at such a distance as to be out of view.

So where a number of persons combine to seize with force and violence a vessel, and run away with her, and, if necessary, to kill any person who should oppose them in the design, and murder ensues, all concerned are principals in such murder. Hence it is not necessary that the crime should be part of the original design; it is enough if it be one of the incidental probable consequences of the execution of that design, and should appear at the moment to one of the participants to be expedient for the common purpose. Thus where A. and B. go out for the purpose of robbing C., and A., in pursuance of the plan, and in furtherance of the robbery, kills C., B. is guilty of the murder. In such cases of confederacy all are responsible for the acts of each, if done in pursuance of, or as incidental to, the common design.

Where, however, a homicide is committed collaterally by one or more of a body unlawfully associated, from causes having no connection with the common object, the responsibility for such homicide attaches exclusively to its actual perpetrators. When, also, the offence is only manslaughter in the person striking the blow, it is only manslaughter in those engaged with him with the like temper and purpose; though if there be malice proved as to any one party, he may be separately found guilty of murder. It must also be remembered that a rioter is not responsible, on an indictment for murder, for a death accidentally caused by officers engaged in suppressing the riot; nor, in an affray, are the original parties responsible for a death caused by strangers wantonly and adversely breaking

1 See cases cited infra; and see R. v. Taylor, 8 C. & P. 616; R. v. Bernard, 1 F. & F. 240; R. v. Cooper, 1 Cox C. C. 266; Ferguson v. State, 22 Ga. 656; Bowes v. State, 106; supra, § 217; infra, § 297.
1 R. v. Murphy, 6 C. & P. 103.
1 2 Dall. 110; 1 Hale, 439; Hawk. 2, 2, 20, s. 8; Simonds v. State, 61 Miss. 244; Peden v. State, 61 Miss. 268.
1 R. v. Jackson, 7 Cox C. C. 357, and cases cited infra, § 225.
1 R. v. Murphy, 6 C. & P. 103.
1 R. v. Atoll, 12 Cox C. C. 624. In this case there was an agreement to fight with fists. One of the party took a deadly weapon with him and used it without his associate's knowledge. It was held that the latter was not guilty of murder. This may be conceded, supposing that the object of the agreement was simply fighting with fists. But if the weapon was one likely to be carried and used in such a conflict, he ought to have been held guilty of manslaughter.
§ 221. The distinction between principals in the first and second degree, it has been said, is a distinction without a difference; and, therefore, it need not be made in indictments. Such is only the case, however, where the only punishment is the same for both degrees. But where, by particular statute, the punishment is different, then principals in the second degree must be indicted specially, as sides and abettors. Where no such statute exists, in an indictment for murder, if several be charged as principals, one as principal perpetrator, and the others as aiding and abetting, it is not material which of them be charged as principals in the first degree, as having given the mortal blow; for the murder given by any one of those present is, in contemplation of law, the injury of each and every of them. An exception to the rule just stated, however, may be found in rape, in which assistants, though present, can be charged only as principals in the second degree.

1 R. v. Murphy, 6 C. & P. 103. See fully supra, § 214, and infra, § 387.

The parties on both sides of a riot are responsible for the homicide of a stranger shot in the collision, see Com. v. Dare, 4 Penn. Law Journ. 257.

2 Supra, §§ 387, 214; infra, § 224.


2 Hare v. 9, 96, n. 64; Macaulay's Cases, 9 Co. 67 b; Post, 345.

1 1st P. C. 548, 350; R. v. Henskar, 1 Leech, 473. See Nashville's Case, 2 Walsh, 8; Archbold's C. P. 64; Brown v. State, 29 Ga. 218; State v. Ross, 29 Mo. 32.


1 State v. Fley, 2 Rice's S. C. Digest, 160; 2 Prevar. 338.


5 Com. v. Major, 6 Danes' Ky. 293; infra, §§ 247, 1508; supra, § 138.

260
set the malt-house on fire, although A. was not present at the time of the attempt. A man who, though at a distance, is concerned in the furnishing of lottery tickets to another, to be sold in a place where their sale is prohibited, is guilty as principal in such sale.

In jurisdictions, also, where petit larceny is regarded either as a misdemeanor or as a minor felony subjected to a light penalty, all parties concerned in it are principals. An exception, however, to the rule, that in misdemeanors all parties concerned are principals, is taken in liquor cases, where it is held that a vendee is not indictable under the statute; and, generally, accessories to police offenses are not indictable. In negligences, also, there can be no accessories, since accessoryship is conditioned on joint intent.

§ 224. The old text-writers above cited unite in holding that in treason, also, there are no accessories. Under the Constitution of the United States, however, it has been argued that the reason of the common law doctrine that in treason all are principals, fails, and therefore that a person counselling or advising treason against the United States is an accessory before the fact, though it is hard to conceive, in an executed treason, of an accessoryship before the fact, that is not in itself a substantive act of treason. The principle, on the other hand, is said by an elementary writer of much learning to be in force in the several States; and he consequently argues that, in treason against the State of Virginia, accessories do not exist. But where the Constitution provides, as does the Constitution of the United States, that treason shall consist only in levying war against the State, or adhering to its enemies, accessoryship after the fact, which contains neither the element of levying war nor that of adhering to a public enemy, which is construed to mean exclusively a foreign power, cannot be claimed to constitute treason.

1 R. v. Clayton, 1 Car. & Kir. 128.
2 Com. v. Gillispie, 7 Serg. & Rawle, 469.
3 LasILING’S Case, Cro. Eliz. 760; Ward v. State, 4 Hill, N. Y. 359; E. Hill, N. Y. 144; Shay v. Pape, 22 N. Y. 375; State v. Goode, 4 Hawke, 465; State v. Hart, 7 Mo. 321. In North Carolina the rule is extended to all thefts; State v. Gaston, 73 N. C. 93.
4 Infra, § 1539.
5 See supra, § 23 a.
6 See 1 Hale P. C. 233, 263; 3 Inst. 165; though see 2 Hale P. C. 223.
7 U. S. v. Burr, 9 Cranch, 472, 501; though see U. S. v. Hamway, 2 Wall. 139; charge on treason, ibid. 139.
8 Davis’s Criminal Law, 36. Infra, § 1812.
9 See infra, § 1703.

III. ACCESSORIES BEFORE THE FACT.

§ 225. An accessory before the fact is one who, though absent at the commission of the felony, procures, counsels, or commands another to commit said felony subsequently perpetrated in consequence of such procuring, counsel, or command. To constitute such an accessory, it is necessary that he should have been absent at the time when the felony was committed; if he was either actually or constructively present, he is, as has been seen, principal. The accessory is liable for all that ensues as incident to the execution of the unlawful act commanded; as, for instance, if A. command B. to beat C. so as to inflict grievous bodily harm, and he beat C. so that C. dies, A. is accessory to the murder, if the offence be murder in B. So if A. command B. to burn the house of C., and in doing so the house of D. is also burnt, A. is accessory to the burning of D.’s house. And if the offence commanded be effected, although by different means from those commanded, as, for instance, if J. W. hire J. S. to poison A., and instead of poisoning him he shoot him, J. W. is, nevertheless, liable as accessory.

As we have already seen, the common law has recently been changed in several States so as to treat accessories before the fact as principals. In many jurisdictions, however, the offences continue distinct, so that acquittal as a principal does not bar a prosecution as accessory.

1 For indictments under this head see Whart. Proc. Bail. Tit. Accessary.
2 1 Hale, 615. The meaning of the word “command” will be more fully considered in note to § 226. See State v. Mann, 1 Hayw. N. C. 4; Willoughby, ex parte, 14 Nov. 451. The question as to the place where the accessory is liable, is discussed infra, §§ 245, 278, 279; see State v. Ayers, 3 Exch. 96.
3 A. supplies B. with corrosive sublimate, knowing that B. means to use it to procure her own abortion, but being unwilling that she should take the poison, and giving it to her because she threatened to kill herself if he did not. B. does so use it, and dies. Even if B. is guilty of murdering herself, A. is not an accessory before the fact to such murder. Steph. Crim. Dig. citing R. v. French, L. & C. 121; compare R. v. Cooper, 5 G. & P. 350; R. v. Gordon, 1 Leach, 515; 1 East P. C. 332.
4 4 Bl. Com. 37; 1 Hale, 617.
5 Ibid.; Rul. 570.
6 Ibid. 388; State v. Tazwell, cited infra, § 226.
7 Supra, § 205.

The complications in the law of accessoryship is in some sense attri-
§ 225 a. As has been elsewhere noticed, cases frequently occur in which two or more instigators cooperate in procuring one or more agents to act in the perpetration of a crime. Such cases may be classified as follows: (1) The instigators may act concurrently with the perpetrator. In such case the ordinary law of conspiracy applies. The parties must be intentional participants in a common unlawful design. It is not enough that they are casual, incidental cooperators. To charge a party with an intentional cooperation, he must know that

the others are working with him for the same criminal purpose, and he must contribute some thing to the common effort. If this is not done, he cannot be regarded as an instigator, or accessory before the fact. (2) Instigation may not be concurrent, but successive. In other words, A. may instigate B. to instigate C. In such case, supposing the causal relation be established, and C. is really induced to act by A. through B.'s agency, A. is as much responsible as if he induced C. to act by letter.

When procurement is by an intermediate agent, the accessory leaving it to such agent to find a perpetrator, it is not necessary that the accessory should be cognizant of the name of the perpetrator.

§ 226. The procurement need not be actual, it being sufficient if one or more persons become the medium through whom the act is done. It makes no matter how long a time or how great a space intervenes between the advice and the consummation, provided that there is an immediate causal connection between the instigation and the act. In cases,

1. Mclanahan's Case, Fost. 131; Com. v. Glover, 111 Mass. 335.
4. Supra, § 225 a.
5. Supra, § 226.
7. In Saracee's Case, Fownd. 475; 1 Hals P. C. 431, as condemned by Sir James F. Stephen (Steph. Dig. art. 41).
8. A. advises B. to murder C. (B.'s wife) by poison. B. gives C. a poison apple, which C. gives to D. (B.'s child). D. permits B. to eat the apple, which it does, and dies of it. A. is not necessary to the murder of D. This decision, says Sir James F. Stephen, "is of higher authority than Foster's dicta, and marks the limit to which they extend, if it does not throw doubt upon them." The proper solution in such case is that A. is indiscernible for an attempt to kill C.; but that there is no causal connection between his act and the killing of D., see Whart. on Neg. §§ 36, 91; supra, §§ 160, 181. 

Medico of Instigation. "Preparation" is the first term used in the ordinary definition of our old accessory before the fact. The most obvious mode of preparing is by hiring. The instigator takes the agent into his service, and engages him for a reward to commit the proposed crime. The "preparing," however, must be before the act. It has been much discussed whether promising a reward to a person already resolved on the act constitutes an instigation. But the better opinion is that it does in cases where the perpetrator is strengthened in his purpose by the reward.

"Counseling," to come up to the definition, must be special. More
however, where the instigation consists in the furnishing aid, it is not necessary that the specific materials or machinery contributed
general counsel, for instance, that all property should be regarded as held in
common, will not constitute the party
offering it necessary before the fact to a
larceny; "true-love" publications will
not constitute their authors technical
parties to several offences which these
publications may have stimulated.
Several youthfull highway robbers have said that they were led into crime
by reading Jack Sheppard; but the
author of Jack Sheppard was not an
necessary before the fact to the rob-
bers to which he then added an im-
pulsion. Under the head of "counsel"
may be included advice and instruc-
tion as to the modes of committing
particular crimes, e. g., pocket pick-
ing. General instruction, it is true, could not be "counseling" in the sense
before us; though it is otherwise with
special instructions as to the manage-
ment of a particular case—Persuading
and tempting to a particular crime falls
under this head. The modes in which
this kind of counseling may be mani-
fested are numerous. The counsel need
not be exclusively in words. It may
consist, at least in part (e. g., Faunt
and Mephistophiles), in the exhibition
of some object of desire. It is possible,
also, to conceive of cases in which
there is no immediate communication
between the seducer and the seduced.
Third persons may be used as innocent
or compulsory go-betweens. In re,
§ 221.
"Command" is a term borrowed from
the Roman maxim, which is fre-
quently used in this connection. View-
ing the term nakedly, it describes for
cases of accessoryship. Men are rarely
to be found who would commit a crime
because they are "commanded" to by another,
unless they are under special obliga-
tions to such other. Among such ob-
ligations we may primarily notice that
of wife to husband, which the law recog-
ises in some cases as a duress to
the wife when on trial. Next to this
may be considered the obligation of
child to parent, or servant to master,
of subordinate to superior. These
obligations do not constitute a legal
excuse unless the perpetrator acts
under compulsion—is compulsory—or
unless the command generates in him
an error of fact which induces him to
regard the act as innocent. Military
command, also, may be an excuse to
the subject who acts under the command,
and not in satisfaction of any special private
desires of his own. Supra, § 94. A
police officer is in the same way protected,
provided he acts within the range of his office,
and executes what he believes to be an
official duty for a public end. It is
otherwise when he knowingly executes
a command under his oath or under
other unlawful purposes. A command
need not be in words. It may be in
signs. See ibid. supra. 3323.
"Advising" may be by a process of
deception, by a misrepresentation of
facts. A. contrives to induce B. to
believe he has received an injury from
C., which is B.'s duty to avenge by
taking C.'s life. Supposing A. to act
in this way with the malicious purpose
of killing C. by the agency of B., and
to then specifically advise the killing
of C., A. is guilty at common law as
necessary before the fact, or, under our
recent statutes, as principal. 2 Cal.
L. J. 294.
Suppose, for instance, A. tells B.
of facts which operate as a motive to
B. for the murder of C. It would be
an abuse of language to say that A.

by the necessary should have been used by the principal. Nor
does it matter whether the instigator counselled the perpetrator
directly or through an intermediate agent.
§ 227. Counselling is said in the old books to be either direct
or indirect; direct consisting in express counsel, indirect
in the intimation of approval or desire. But con-
celment of the knowledge that a felony is about to be coun-
seled does not constitute such accessoryship, nor
does more momentary acquiescence in the proposed felonious plan.
But any specific contribution of advice, afterwards acted on, consti-
tutes the offence. It is necessary, as has been seen, that the solic-
tion be made either directly or indirectly, to the person
committing the act. But knowingly to invite a person to a place so that
he may be there murdered constitutes, when he is murdered
accordingly, the offence. Accessoryship cannot be based on negligence.
That sympathy does not constitute cooperation has been already said.
§ 229. If the advice of the necessary be countermanded before it operates in any way, he is relieved from responsibility; and if an instigator, when withdrawing, not merely expresses his disapproval of the crime, but takes all the measures in his power to prevent its consummation, and such measures fail because of casus, or some new intermediate impulse, then his criminality ceases. But it does not cease simply because, after starting the ball, he changes his mind, and tries, when too late, to stop it. To emancipate him from the consequences, not only must he have acted in time, and done everything practicable to prevent the consummation, but the consummation, if it takes place, must be imputable to some independent cause. On the other hand, it is plain that when the instigator changes his mind, after having gone as far as an attempt, and abandons a further prosecution of the design, he is indictable for the attempt. It has been argued that if the frustration of the attempt is due to his interposition, consequent upon his repentance, he is relieved from all prosecution. But it is hard to see how his repentance, subsequent to the attempt, can cancel his responsibility for the guilt of the attempt; though it would be otherwise if he intervened prior to the attempt.

§ 229. While an accessory before the fact (or instigator) is responsible for all crimes incidental to the criminal misconduct he counsels, or which are among


The question in the text is considered by me in the Central Law Journal for 1879, where the views of the later German authorities are given. From this I condense the following:

Suppose the instigator, undertaking to execute the purpose of the instigator, commits acts, while performing his mandate, in excess of such purpose. Is the instigator responsible for the excess?

If we relied solely on the analogies from the civil side of the law, we would say that the principal or master is liable for all such acts when done in the discharge of the agency or service, though those acts were expressly forbidden by the principal or master. This rule holds good on the criminal side of the law, so far as concerns indictments for negligence. But it cannot be extended to indictments for malicious acts. A. counsels B. to commit a specific crime. B., in committing this crime, maliciously commits another collateral crime, not within the scope of A.'s counsel, and it may be, forbidden by A. A. cannot, at common law, be convicted of doing intentionally and maliciously this collateral crime, not within the scope of A.'s counsel, and, it may be, forbidden by A. A. A. A. cannot, at common law, be convicted of doing intentionally and maliciously this collateral crime, which he never intended, and which he had even forbidden. Of negligence in putting these powers in his agent’s hands, or of negligence as incidental to the working of the illegal instrumentality he put in motion, he may be convicted, but not of designing something he did not design. Of negligence he may be certainly convicted, if the crime, though unforeseen by him, is incidental to one procured by him: as when he sends a servant out to steal property in the night, and the servant, in striking a match, sets fire to the house.

Quantitative variations in the mode of executing a crime are not to be viewed as excesses in the sense above stated. A. homicide, for instance, is imputable to the instigator, though executed with a cruelty in excess of that commanded. So if A. directs B. to inflict on C. an injury whose probable consequences will be death, A., as we have seen, is as chargeable, if death ensues, as is B., with the homicide. See supra, § 214. As to lesser crimes, instigation to commit a greater crime includes instigation to commit a lesser crime. If A., for instance, counsels B. to commit highway robbery, which results in larceny, A. is necessary before the fact to the larceny. But it is otherwise as to minor offenses not included in the major. Thus counseling to commit larceny would not involve accessorialship to the offense of cheating by cards, though part of the same transaction.

As is seen above, the necessary before the fact is not liable for any malicious excursions made, outside of the range of the employment, by the perpetrator. It should be remembered, however, that the instigator may often use ambiguous terms: “Get me this thing anywhere.” or, “Bring me this man alive or dead.” If so, the instigator is chargeable with any misconduct. The ambiguity may prejudice. It is in this sense that James II. and Louis XIV. are chargeable with instigation in the attempted assassinations of William III.
§ 230. The question of the relative guilt of the necessary before the fact and the instigator has been elsewhere discussed.\(^1\) It is argued on the one side that instigation, from the nature of things, involves more design, premeditation, coolness, and intelligence than does perpetration. The instigator bears to the perpetrator the relation of the seducer to the seduced. The instigator would have perpetrated the crime anyhow; the perpetrator would not have perpetrated it without the instigation. To this it is answered that instigation does not necessarily involve premeditation, but that premeditation is necessarily involved in perpetration.\(^2\) Instigation may consist in the expression of a momentary petulant desire, as was the case with Henry II., when saying he wished he was rid of Becket, or of advice which the adviser himself never expected to have embodied in action. Perpetration, on the other hand, when in obedience to a plan previously entertained, involves not merely premeditation, but action as a realization of this premeditation. Not only is the criminal design harbored, but it is unfinishingly matured and executed. Nor is the relation of instigator and perpetrator always that of seducer and seduced. The relation may be that of confederate with confederate. Each enters into the partnership of crime; and the chief difference between the two is that the instigator is not present at the act which the perpetrator commits. The perpetrator may be as much the seducer of the instigator, as the instigator of the perpetrator. Henry's barons, in taunting him with Becket's insults, and offering themselves as the avengers of those insults, may have been the tempters who led Henry to utter the fatal wish, and thus have been the original planners as well as the final perpetrators of the crime to which he gave a hasty intermediate assent. Instigation, therefore, does not necessarily involve origination.\(^3\) The necessary before the fact may be really the agent of the principal. To this it is rejoined that what we have to do with is instigation in its logical sense, as the origination of a crime to be effected through another; and that this involves a double criminality, that of the instigator himself and that of the perpetrator; that the instigator is

\(^1\) See Central L.J. for 1879, p. 183.  

in this respect a free agent, bringing into effect an act doubly criminal as infringing the rights of the object of the crime, and as steeping in guilt its agent. At common law, the assumption is that the guilt of the perpetrator (principal) is imputable to the instigator (necessary before the fact), and hence the conviction of the latter is to depend on the conviction of the former, as a condition precedent, and must be of the same grade of offence. Where under recent legislation, however, the instigator (necessary before the fact) is treated as principal, there principal and necessary before the fact (or instigator and perpetrator) may, as we will presently see more fully, be convicted of different grades.\(^4\)

§ 231. The assistance must be rendered knowingly. It is not necessary, indeed, that the principal should know all the conditions of the help rendered to him, but it is necessary for the necessary to know the guilty purpose he contributes to help. The chief of a plot, for instance, is not bound to know a cooperator in order to implicate the latter as necessary; but the cooperator cannot be convicted unless he is shown to have been acquainted with the character of the plot.\(^5\)

§ 231 a. A detective entering apparently into a criminal conspiracy already formed for the purpose of exploding it is not an accessory before the fact.\(^6\) For it should be remembered that while detectives, when acting as decoys, may apparently provoke the crime, the essential element of dolus, or malicious determination to violate the law, is wanting in their case. And it is only the formal and not the substantive part of the crime that they provoke. They provoke, for instance, in larceny, the asportation of the goods, but not the ultimate loss by the owner. They may be actuated by the most unworthy of motives, but the animus furandi in larceny is not imputable to them; and it is in larcenous cases or cheats that they are chiefly employed. They may, however, become liable for negligence in their conduct, when it leads to injuries which prudence on their part might have avoided; as when they instigate an ambush which results in a homicide;\(^7\) or when the cheeks they look forward to as likely to explode a plot, whose execution they advise, are not properly applied. Nor should it be
§ 234. For if one who silently watches a crime until it ripens is an accessory, then the guilt of accessoryship falls on a parent who watches anxiously but silently a child's course until the period when interposition and warning would be likely to be successful, and on a specialist in science, who, suspecting that there may be some wrongful purpose in preparations in a neighboring laboratory, forbears to give notice of the danger until he sees that it assuredly exists. Evidently is this the ease with persons who, from a sense of duty, or under the direction of the public authorities, watch even as apparent members the progress of conspiracies which could in no other way be exposed.¹

§ 232. It has been doubted whether there can be an accessory before the fact to manslaughter, since accessoryship presupposes premeditation, and premeditation is incompatible with manslaughter.² But, as will be seen, an instigator may, in hot blood, stimulate a person incensed with another to execute a deed of vengeance on such other, when the offence of the perpetrator would be only manslaughter; and we may also hold that an instigator may be guilty of murder in instigating another to commit manslaughter by the rash use of dangerous instrumentalties.³ A fortiori there may be an accessory before the fact to murder in the second degree.⁴

§ 233. It is not material that an accessory should have originated the design of committing the offence. If the principal had previously formed the design, and the alleged accessory encouraged him to carry it out by stating falsehoods, or otherwise, he is guilty as accessory before the fact.⁵

§ 234. The quantity of aid rendered is of no consequence. A counterfeiting raid, for instance, may have a hundred persons concerned as accessories, some contributing very little aid. All, however, are technically guilty.⁶ What distinguishes the act of the accessory from that of the principal is that the accessory, while concerned in facilitating the execution of the guilty purpose, takes no part in this execution, leaving it to the principal.¹

§ 235. There is no particular period of time as accessoryship is limited. It may take place when the guilty act is concocted, when it is prepared, or when it is executed, provided that in the latter case there is not actual presence.⁸ And it may be coupled with accessoryship after the fact.⁹

§ 236. A question of considerable interest has arisen as to the extent to which the principal's personal relations are to be imputed to the accessory. A public officer, for instance, committing a specific act, is liable to a severer punishment than would be a private citizen. Is a private person, who is an accessory to an officer in such an offence, chargeable with the same grade of guilt? Or is an accessory to a trustee, who is guilty of embezzlement, to be charged with the same grade of guilt as would the trustee? On this question we have the following possible theories:—⁴

(1) The accessory is absorbed in the principal, so that the principal's personal relations, in respect to the crime, are imputable to the accessory.

(2) Each offender is chargeable only for what he really is. Thus, the non-public officer cannot be punished as a public officer, and the non-trustee cannot be punished as a trustee. Hence, according to this view, where a principal in a homicide, from the fact of his bearing a particular relation to the deceased, would be guilty of murder in the first degree, an accessory not bearing this relation would be guilty only of murder in the second degree.

(3) We may distinguish, as do several codes, between those qualities which establish or cancel, and those which increase or diminish, punishability. As to the first, the personal relations of the principal are the standard. As to the second, each offender is to be judged according to his own peculiar relations. Hence, to take up the last case, an accessory to a murder, whose grade is de

§ 237.]

CRIMES.

[BOOK 1.

termined by the personal qualities of the perpetrator, is to be judged from his own and not his principal's relations. A non-officer, also, who aids an officer in an offense, whose grade is increased by the official relation, is liable only for the lower grade of the offense. On the other hand, a non-officer who aids in a purely official crime (e.g., acceptance of a bribe by a judge) is, by the force of the distinction before us, liable as accessory to the crime.

Another question arises in homicides when the accessory and the principal are acting under different degrees of passion. Under the old law, the defendant was first convicted, and then the accessory was charged with being accessory to the offense which the conviction covered. But now that instigation is a substantive offense, it must be remembered that the offense of the instigator is not necessarily of the same grade as that of the perpetrator. The instigator may act in hot blood, in which case he will be only guilty of manslaughter, while the perpetrator may act coolly, and thus be guilty of murder. The converse, also, may be true: the instigation may be cool and deliberate, the execution in hot blood by a person whom the instigator finds in a condition of unreasoning frenzy. A person desiring coolly to get rid of an enemy, for instance, may employ as a tool some one whom that enemy has aggrieved and who is infuriated by his grievance. Hence an accessory before the fact (or to adopt the terms of recent codes, an instigator) may be guilty of murder, while the principal (or perpetrator) may be guilty of manslaughter; or the accessory before the fact (instigator), acting in hot blood, may be guilty of manslaughter, while the perpetrator (principal), acting with deliberate malice, may be guilty of murder.

§ 237. At common law, the conviction of some one who has committed the crime must precede or accompany that of one charged as accessory. A prisoner does not waive his right to call for the record of such conviction, by pleading. Conviction of the principal is not admissible evidence, until judgment has been rendered on the verdict; and, when the trials are concurrent, there can be no judgment against the accessory until there is a sentence of the principal. The record must be proved in the usual mode. But even at common law, where there are two principals, and only one convicted, the other being dead, the accessory must answer notwithstanding the non-conviction of the deceased. By statutes, however, now almost universally adopted, the offense of an accessory is made substantive and independent, and consequently the accessory may be tried independently of the principal, though in such case the guilt of the principal must be alleged and proved. And the principal may be avouched to be unknown.

1 East, 360; 1 Hale, 623; U. S. v. Barr, 4 Cranch, 502.

In North Carolina, the principle has been somewhat expanded, it having been there held that the accessory is not liable to be tried while the principal is amenable to the laws of the State and is still unconvicted. State v. Groff, Murphy's R. 370; State v. Goode, 1 Hawks, 463; Hart v. State, 3 Blackford, 386.

2 State v. Duncan, 6 Irrell, 234.

3 2 Corw. Hawk. § 41.

4 People v. Gray, 25 Wend. 405.


6 At common law an accessory is discharged by the acquittal of his principal on those charges wherein the indictment against himself is founded. U. S. v. Crane, 4 McLean, 317.

7 Even in a case where the principal was indicted for burglary and larceny in a dwelling-house, and the accessory charged in the same indictment as necessary before the fact to the said "joins and burglarly," and the jury acquitted the principal of the burglary, but found him guilty of the larceny, the judges, it is said, were of opinion that the accessory should have been acquitted; for the indictment charged him as accessory to the burglary only, and the principal being acquitted of that, the accessory should be acquitted also. R. v. Daunelly, R. R. 310; 2 March, 571.


264
§ 238. When principal and accessory are tried separately, conviction of the principal is prima facie evidence of his guilt, on the trial of the accessory, but may be collaterally disputed when the issue is the guilt of the accessory.1

Under the recent statutes, which treat principals and accessories before the fact as confederates, the declarations and acts of the one, in furtherance of the common plan, are admissible against the other.2 It is otherwise when the conspiracy is terminated,3 the accessory being tried for a substantive offence, and the principal's

guilty, they are not to inquire of the accessory. 1 Hale, 624; 2 Inst. 184.


In Massachusetts, an accessory before the fact may be tried in the county of the consummated act, though the act of accessoryship was committed elsewhere. Com. v. Pettey, 114 Mass. 307.

See infra, § 279, 337.

In Virginia, an accessory cannot be prosecuted for a substantive offence, but only as necessary to the principal felon. The guilt of the principal felon must be proved, but not his conviction. Hatchett v. Com., 75 Va. 325.

In Tennessee, where a principal to a murder was sentenced to imprisonment for life, in accordance with the statute of 1838, c. 29, an accessory before the fact, subsequently tried and convicted (the jury bringing in a general verdict of guilty, without finding mitigating circumstances), was held to be properly sentenced to imprisonment for life. Nuthill v. State, 11 Humph. 247.


An accessory cannot take advantage of an error in the record against the principal. State v. Dunnuck, 6 Irrell, 236; Com. v. Knapp, 10 Pick. 477.

2 See infra, § 1395.


Confessions, after the joint action is closed, not being receivable against him.1

§ 238. At common law it is not necessary, in an indictment against an accessory before the fact in a felony, to set out the conviction or execution of the principal. It is enough to aver the latter's guilt.2

The indictment must show the commission of the offence as particularly as is necessary in an indictment against the principal.3 In States where this law prevails, an accessory before the fact, though by statute punishable as principal, must nevertheless be indicted, not as principal, but as accessory before the fact.4

§ 239. At common law, the verdict must specify the grade; and under a verdict of "guilty as accessory," the defendant cannot be sentenced as accessory before the fact.5

Verdict in cases of accessory.

As has just been seen, accessory and principal (or instigator and perpetrator) may, as under recent codes, be convicted of different grades.

1 Ibid.; Ogle v. State, 12 Wis. 552.

See, as taking a less restricted view of notoriety, U. S. v. Hartwell, supra; R. v. Blake, 4 C. & P. 377.


6 Porter v. Com., 123 Mass. 241; People v. Campbell, 40 Cal. 125. See People v. Cassayou, 23 Cal. 404; People v. Scott, 48 Cal. 189. Infra, § 245; Williams v. State, 41 Ark. 173. In all, move and proceed, aid, counsel, hire, and command the said person as aforesaid unknown, the said felony and abortion in manner and form aforesaid to do and commit," has been sustained in Massachusetts as sufficiently describing the offence of an accessory before the fact. Com. v. Adams, 127 Mass. 15.

§ 240. If the felony is not committed, he who counsels or commands its commission is not liable as accessory before the fact, but he may be convicted for the attempt as a substantive misdemeanor, if steps were taken to consummate the offence.

VI. ACCESSORIES AFTER THE FACT.

§ 241. Although in other jurisdictions he who directs or counsels a specific offence is involved in the same penalty as the actual perpetrator, the English common law stands alone in assigning the same grade of guilt to those who conceal or protect the perpetrator after the commission of the offence. That such persons should be punished is eminently just; but it is eminently unjust that they should be punished in the same way as the criminal whom they shelter.

By the English common law, however, a person, according to the text-books, who, when knowing a felony to have been committed by another, receives, relieves, comforts, or assists the felon, whether he be a principal or an accessory before the fact, is an accessory after the fact, involved in the same penalty as the principal. When

1 2 East R. 5; Ch. C. L. 264. supra § 173.

2 What we call accessoryship after the fact is one who subsequently aids or assists the felon.

3 What is meant by accessoryship after the fact is punishment in Germany and France as an independent offence, in the nature of our Escape, or Prison Break. See Hervey, Lehrbuch, 1877, pp. 196, 197.

In England, the old common law has been modified by stat. 24 & 25 Viet., which limits the punishment to imprisonment for four years. See R. v. Fallon, L. & C. 217; 9 Cox. 242.

Receiving stolen goods does not, at common law, constitute accessoryship after the fact to the larceny. It was otherwise by the statutes Will. & Mary. In most jurisdictions, however, the reception of stolen goods is now an independent crime. See infra, §§ 982 et seq.

Receiving money, knowing that it was obtained by robbery, does not constitute accessoryship after the fact at common law. Williams v. State, 35 Ga. 391.

4 1 Hale, 618; 4 Bl. Com. 37; Rence's Cr. Br. 184; see R. v. Lee, 6 C. & P. 336.

5 A man who employs another person to harbor the principal may be convicted as an accessory after the fact, although he himself did not act to relieve or assist the principal. R. v. Jarvis, 2 Meo. & R. 40. So it appears to be settled that whoever rescues a felon imprisoned for the felony, or voluntarily suffers him to escape, is guilty as accessory. Hawk. P. B. 2, c. 29, s. 27. See Ronceo's Cr. Br. 184; and see generally as to how far "concealing or assisting accessoryship after the fact," White v. People, 51 Ill. 533.


we examine the cases given, however, we find that the assistance to a felon, which constitutes this form of accessoryship, is such assistance as to some extent shelters the principal from prosecution, as, for instance, where the alleged accessory concealed the principal in his house, or shut the door against his pursuers, until he should have an opportunity of escaping, or took money from him to allow him to escape, or supplied him with money, a horse, or other necessaries, in order to enable him to escape, or where the principal was in prison, and the accessory, before conviction, bribed the jailer to let him escape, or supplied him with materials for the same purpose, or in any way aided in compassing his escape. Merely suffering the principal to escape, however, it is held, will not impute the guilt of accessoryship to the party so doing. And it is conceded that if a person supply a felon in prison with victuals or other necessaries, for his sustenance, or succor and sustain him if he be bailed out of prison, or professionally attend a felon sick or wounded, although he know him to be a felon, or speak or write in order to obtain a felon's pardon or deliverance, or advise his friends to write to the witnesses not to appear against him at his trial, and they write accordingly, or even if he himself agree, for money, not to give evidence against the felon, or know of the felony and do not disclose it; these acts will not be sufficient to make the party an accessory after the fact. There must be some independent criminality to make them an offence. Statutes, also, now exist, making accessoryship after the

404; 2 Hawk. c. 29, s. 1; P. Wms. v. Brannen, London Law Times, Feb. 25, 1869, p. 310.

1 Dalt. 330, 531. infra, § 612, and cases there cited.

2 1 Hale, 620. See R. v. Chapple, supra.

3 R. v. 615.

4 9 R. 4, 1.


6 1 Hale, 621; Hawk. b. 2, c. 29, s. 26; Archbold, by Jervis, 9.

7 See infra, §§ 1572, 1777, as to prison breach.

8 4 Inst. 139; 1 Hale, 620.


10 1 Hale, 371, 615. State v. Harn, 40 N. J. L. 228; State v. Giles, 52 Ind. 336; State v. Fries, 53 Ind. 469; White v. People, 51 Ill. 833.

11 Taylor v. Com., 11 Bush, 154. See R.


269
fact substantively indictable. Even interference with public justice by promoting the escape of a criminal is now tried as an independent offence.\footnote{Infra, §§ 622, 1672, 1677: Com. v. Miller, 2 Asm. 61. That presence at the crime is not necessary, see Pinkard v. State, 39 Ga. 797.}

§ 242. Three things are laid down in the books as necessary to constitute a man accessory after the fact to the felony of another.

1. The felony must have been committed.\footnote{1 Ch. C. L. 364; 1 Hale, 622; 2 Hawk. 29, 36; Harrod v. State, 39 Miss. 762; Ponton v. State, 12 Tex. Ap. 408.}

2. The defendant must know that the felon is guilty.\footnote{1 Hale, 622; Hawk. b. 2, c. 29, s. 32; Com. Dig. Justices, T. 2. See R. v. Butterfield, 1 Cox C. C. 93; R. v. Greenacre, 8 C. & P. 35; Wren v. State, 26 Ga. 952. That such knowledge is to be inferred from facts, see White v. People, 61 III. 553; Tully v. Com., 13 Bush, 142.}

3. The felon must be to some extent sheltered from pursuit by the defendant.\footnote{Hawk. b. 2, c. 29, s. 33.}

§ 243. The only relation, so it is said, which excuses the harboring a felon is that of a wife to her husband, because she is connected with arrangements to receive the goods obtained by a projected larceny. If he does not act in concert with the principal offender,—in other words, if the principal does not know that he is thus acting,—he is an accessory after the fact. But it is otherwise if his reception is in consequence of a previous arrangement. If he should say, "Go ahead; I will stand by you, and take care of the things after you get them," he is necessary before the fact, or instigator, and hence, by recent legislation, principal. He encourages the thief, and becomes therefore a party to theft.\footnote{Dyer, 356; Staffm. 41 b.}

\footnote{1 Hale, 622; 2 Hawk. 29, 36; R. v. Barridge, 3 P. Wms. 472; Tully v. Com., 13 Bush, 142.}

\footnote{R. v. Chapple, 9 C. & P. 355; Loyd v. State, 42 Ga. 221.}

\footnote{Infra, §§ 287, 258.}

\footnote{Ray v. State, 13 Neb. 55.}

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\footnote{Ray v. State, 13 Neb. 55.}

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§ 246. When the agent performs the illegal act under an absent principal's direction, either express or implied, this imposes responsibility on the principal. In misdemeanors the act may be charged to have been done by the principal himself, without reference to an agent. Such, also, is the case in felonies, where the agent is innocent, insane, or a slave, in which case the party commanding the felony to be done, though absent at the time of its commission, is principal in the first degree. In felonies, where the agent is responsible, the absent principal is at common law accessory before the fact. As we have seen, an agent, when physically free, is not relieved from responsibility by the fact that he is acting under his principal's directions.

(b) Where the Agent is acting at the Time in the Line of the Principal's Business, but without Specific Instructions.

§ 247. A principal is prima facie liable for the illegal acts of an agent done in a general course of illegal business authorized by the principal, and this is eminently the case in indictments for nuisances, which could not be abated if the master was not liable for the servant's acts, if in general furtherance of the master's plan. And the rule applies to all cases where a master inflicts indictable injury through a servant. Thus, where a barkeeper in a hotel sells liquor, or a salesman in a bookstore in the usual course of business sells a

1 See Felton v. U. S., 36 U. S. 669; Lathrop v. State, 51 Ind. 192; infra, § 1509; supra, § 205 et seq.

a felony, the employer and not the agent is accountable criminally." R. v. Blandford, 2 C. & K. 764.

4 infra, §§ 94 et seq.; Play v. People, 86 Ill. 147.

5 supra, §§ 94 et seq.; Play v. People, 86 Ill. 147.


272
§ 248. When the Principal resides out of the Jurisdiction.

Non-resident principal intra-territorially liable.

§ 248. When the principal resided out of the jurisdiction in which the offence was consummated, he is chargeable in such place of consummation, notwithstanding his non-residence.1

VI. MISPRISION.

§ 249. At common law a party is guilty of misprision of felony who stands by the commission of the felony without endeavoring to prevent it, and who, knowing of its commission, neglects to prosecute the offender.2 Misprision, as a substantive offence, however, is practically obsolete. The same end, so far as is consistent with the general policy of society, is reached by the rule noticed in another work, which makes it incumbent on all persons present when an unlawful act is attempted to take part with the officers of the law in the prevention of such act.3


2 Hawk. P. C. b. 1. c. 59, s. 2; 1 Hale P. C. 433-448.

According to Sir J. F. Stephen, Dig. C. L. art. 136, "Every one who knows that any other person has committed high treason, and does not within a reasonable time give information thereof to a justice of assize or a justice of the peace, is guilty of misprision of treason, and must, upon conviction thereof, be sentenced to imprisonment for life, and to forfeit to the queen all his goods and the profits of his lands during his life."

274