

Phil. I am surprised to hear you say that, for it is a bad look-out for religion. Besides, there are also academies which make it a secret condition in submitting their questions that the prize should be given to the competitor who best understands the art of flattering them. If we, then, could only get a statistician to tell us how many crimes are prevented yearly by religious motives, and how many by other motives. There would be very few of the former. If a man feels himself tempted to commit a crime, certainly the first thing which presents itself to his mind is the punishment he must suffer for it, and the probability that he will be punished; after that comes the second consideration, that his reputation is at stake. If I am not mistaken, he will reflect by the hour on these two obstacles before religious considerations ever come into his mind. If he can get away from these two first safeguards against crime, I am convinced that religion _alone_ will very rarely keep him back from it.

Demop. I believe, however, that it will do so very often; especially when its influence works through the medium of custom, and thereby immediately makes a man shrink from the idea of committing a crime. Early impressions cling to him. As an illustration of what I mean, consider how many a man, and especially if he is of noble birth, will often, in order to fulfil some promise, make great sacrifices, which are instigated solely by the fact that his father has often impressed it upon him in childhood that "a man of honour, or a gentleman, or a cavalier, always keeps his word inviolate."