

## QUOTATION

ON THE TOKEN ECONOMY, 1846-STYLE

### PRINCIPLES OF THE MARK SYSTEM

NOW SOUGHT TO BE INTRODUCED INTO  
TRANSPORTATION, IMPRISONMENT, AND OTHER FORMS  
OF SECONDARY PUNISHMENT

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The constituent elements in secondary punishment are labour and time. Men are sentenced to hard *labour* for a given *time*:—but the time is here made to measure the labour,—and the first proposal of the Mark System is, that instead of this the labour be made to measure the time. This idea is not peculiar to it. In his letter to Earl Grey the Archbishop of Dublin uses these words: “The best plan, as it appears to me, would be, instead of sentencing men to imprisonment for a certain time, to sentence them to render a certain amount of labour. A fixed daily task may be imposed on them, but with power to exceed this at their own discretion, thereby shortening their period of detention. The effect would be, not only that criminals would thus acquire habits of labour, but of attaching an agreeable idea to labour. . . .

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Labour being a vague term, the system next proposes that it be represented by marks,—the earning of so many thousand of which, in a prison or penal settlement as the case may be, to be made the punishment of all offenses according to their degree. A proportion of these marks to be credited to individuals daily, according to the exertion made in whatever labour is allotted them,—all supplies of food and clothing to be charged in them,—all misconduct to be punished by fines in them—and only the clear balance to be carried to account towards liberation. By this means both wages and savings’ banks would be introduced into prisons—wages to stimulate labour, and give an interest in it—and savings’ banks to give a similar interest to habits of economy and self-command. To make the resemblance to ordinary life still closer, and at the same time promote kindly and social, as opposed to selfish, feeling, it is further proposed that during a portion of their entire period of detention criminals be distributed into parties or families of six, with common interests and accounts, rising or falling together, and thus all interested in the good conduct of each.

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*From: Maconochie, Captain. (1846). Crime and punishment. The Mark System, framed to mix persuasion with punishment, and make their effect improving, yet their operation severe. London: J. Hatchard and Son, pp. 41, 44.*

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