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Sir George Onesiphorus Paul

by F. A. Hyett
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SIR GEORGE ONESIPHORUS PAUL

by Sir FRANCIS HYETT

AS Gloucestershire prisons, which in 1812 were said to have reached 'the highest pitch of perfection in polity'¹ are in a state of decay or have been pulled down as out of date, a short notice in these pages of the man to whom their excellence was solely due may not be deemed out of place. Gloucestershire has had many administrators of her affairs whose work has been conspicuous, but I doubt if any one of them held more enlightened views on public duty or endeavoured to give effect to them with greater thoroughness than Sir George Onesiphorus Paul. His father, Sir Onesiphorus Paul, was a wealthy cloth-manufacturer, who carried on business at Southfield Mill in the parish of Woodchester, where he made the 'fine woollen cloths for which that neighbourhood is distinguished, and which owe much of their present unrivalled excellence to his ingenious and spirited improvements'.² He had been knighted in 1760, when, as High Sheriff of the county, he had presented an address to George III on his accession, and he was created a baronet in 1762. He died at Hill House, Rodborough, in 1774. He was three times married. By his first wife, Jane Blackburn, he had one son—the subject of this paper—and two daughters, Jane and Elizabeth. He had no children who survived him by his second or third wives.

Sir George Onesiphorus Paul, his eldest son, was born in Woodchester in 1746. He was baptized Onesiphorus but added as prefix the name of George in 1780.³ He

¹ Neild's *State of Prisons* (1812), p. 249.

² Playfair's *British Family Antiquity*, 1811, vol. 7, app. p. ix.

³ R. E. C. Waters, *Parish Registers*, 1883, p. 44.

matriculated at St. John's College, Oxford, in 1763, and an M.A. degree was conferred on him in 1766. He spent 12 or 13 years on the continent between 1767 and 1780. We do not know what were his pursuits or interests whilst on his travels nor whether he went abroad for any special reason. It is said that he was 'living in 1767-8 at the courts of Brunswick and Vienna, and after visiting Hungary, Poland, and Italy' he returned through France.⁴ He took up his abode at Hill House, Rodborough, which was then, according to Fosbrooke, 'a superb residence'. It is now known as Rodborough Manor House, a name that was given to it when in the possession of Lord John Russell. He had not been at home a year before he was appointed High Sheriff of Gloucestershire, and it was probably while he held this office that he first became aware of the deplorable condition of Gloucester gaol. It may well have been that it was this knowledge which led him to turn to the pages of Howard's *State of Prisons*, a book which he had certainly read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested, before 1783. It is believed that he never made Howard's acquaintance, but no single individual did more to cure the abuses disclosed in the pages of Howard's great work than he did.

If Paul visited Gloucester gaol in 1780 it must have been much the same as it was when Howard reported on it in 1777 and 1779. In the former year he found in it 'about twenty Fines (*i.e.* persons imprisoned for non-payment of fines) who not having the county allowance, nor any employment, were in September very pitiable objects indeed; half naked and almost famished'. In 1779 he found in it 'No alteration. Eight persons died about Christmas 1778, of small pox. No proper separation of the sexes . . . From the magistrates inattention to this important point, there is most licentious intercourse . . . Five or six children have lately been born in this gaol'.

⁴ Dict. Nat. Biog. XLIV, 71.

Bad as the condition of Gloucester gaol was, it was no worse than that of many other prisons in the country. The inhumanities to which prisoners were subjected less than 150 years ago are now hard to credit. They were starved, they were robbed, and (the number of deaths occasioned by a condition of prisons that was both insanitary and illegal justifies the expression) 'they were slaughtered'. Many of these iniquities are touched upon by Sir G. O. Paul in his addresses, but a glance at them here will, perhaps, make the magnitude of his work and the crying necessity for it, more readily realized. All classes of prisoners, untried persons, and habitual criminals, debtors and felons, men and women, were huddled together in rooms, the atmosphere of which was poisonous, and kept there for from 14 to 16 out of every 24 hours. Into these dens magistrates and gaolers were often afraid to enter, and Howard tells us that an apothecary stipulated in a contract for a supply of drugs to a prison that he should not be required to do so. The floors of some prisons were an inch or two under water and of others they were in such a ruinous condition that they could not be washed. In some gaols there were no sewers, in some there was no water, and in some windows were blocked up to avoid the payment of tax. It is small wonder that virulent diseases were prevalent and the havoc made by them was not confined to inmates of the prisons. Sir G. O. Paul tells us that in 1783, within 4 miles of his house and within 10 days of the date on which he was speaking, five persons had died of fever contracted in prison, and eight others were infected by them, of whom one had died and seven were dangerously ill.⁵

Debtors and 'Fines' were dependent on their friends and relations for food, and sometimes they would have starved but for the kindness of felons who shared their own

⁵ *Proceedings of the Grand Juries . . . of the County of Gloucester*, 3rd ed. 1808, p. 64.

scanty rations with them. In some prisons debtors were not allowed to work in order to pay off their debts as, it was thought that, if entrusted with tools they might escape.

One of the most iniquitous features in prison-management was the appointment of a gaoler without a salary, and allowing him to obtain remuneration by extorting fees from the prisoners. Sometimes he kept a tap and sold beer. In most gaols the pernicious system prevailed of demanding a fee from every prisoner on admission, known as 'garnish', 'footing' or 'chummage', which was to be spent in drink for the whole community.

Prisoners who were admittedly innocent—*i.e.* those who had been found not guilty by a petty jury, or the bill against whom had been thrown out by a grand jury, or the prosecution against whom had been withdrawn—were sometimes kept for many months in prison until fees demanded by gaolers, clerks of assize, or clerks of the peace had been paid. 'There is nothing more scandalous in the history of England in the eighteenth century than the neglect by legislators and statesmen of these abuses'.⁶

The first step that Sir G. O. Paul took towards remedying these evils was embodied in a presentment which he had drafted, and which was made by a grand jury of which he was foreman, on 29 March, 1783. In it he insisted that 'little reform can be expected from the most active exertions of the Magistrate unless they are seconded by providing proper places of confinement and discipline, similar to those recommended by the humane and intelligent Mr Howard. It was further recommended that, if the public approved of the proposal, it should be reconsidered by the grand jury at the next assizes. Accordingly, at the Summer assizes of 1783, the whole situation was explained to them by Sir G. O. Paul at great length

⁶ Lecky's *History of England*, 1887, vi, 249.

and with much ability.⁷ They were asked to consider the subject under the following headings:—

- (1) How far the spirit of the law of England implies a principle of discrimination, and an attention to humanity, in its various sentences of imprisonment.
- (2) Whether the Statutes have enjoined such a principle and such an attention.
- (3) In what manner prisons should be constructed, to be in accordance with the spirit and letter of the law.
- (4) The actual state of prisons in the country.
- (5) A plan for their reform.

Some of his remarks are very effective, and shall be referred to under their respective headings.

I. Under the British Constitution, he contends ' it is indispensable to justice, that criminality, proved by forms of law. should precede punishment. The proof obtained, CONFINEMENT TO PUNISH should also be confinement to reform . . . But CONFINEMENT ON SUSPICION, justifiable as a mode of security of the person for that trial . . . is not justifiable in means which go beyond that purpose. It is, therefore, a palpable inattention to distributive justice, to place these two classes of prisoners in similar circumstances . . . No legal means should be neglected to render that custody [of prisoners confined on suspicion] secure ; but every suffering from neglect or abuse, which exceeds such intent, is an oppression . . ., not only unwarrantable by law, but totally repugnant to the spirit of the constitution '. He points out that the grand jury system was devised ' to the intent, that, if any defect should appear in the evidence, the doubtfully accused person shall not even be arraigned before his country.

⁷ *Proceedings*, 3rd ed. 1808, p. 15 ff.

What an humane attention of British legislation ! yet how absurd ! unless the present management of our prisons be a monstrous abuse. It frequently happens, that the verdict of our honourable acquittal, is announced to a wretch expiring in a pestilential disease, or so reduced by hunger and despair, that the freedom we award him is become a thankless boon '.

Turning to another subject, he reminds his hearers that although ' under the greatest authority of the law . . . the habitual use of fetters, is illegal . . . there is rarely an Assize, but, on this jury, we admit evidence to be given by men in chains . . . In receiving his testimony, we suppose him unconvicted of crime, and yet see him standing before us, suffering a corporal punishment '. If fetters are used because a prison is insecure, it was the duty of the magistrates to build the prison wall higher. That exemptions from fetters might be purchased in every prison was proof that they were unnecessary. In fact, irons, with their various assortments, and prices of dispensation, constitute a system of official tyranny for the purpose of extortion, or to supply the defaults of duty '.

' The law has decreed imprisonment for debt ; but the law has not intended, by the loss of liberty, that the health, perhaps the life, of the debtor should be destroyed by disease and famine ; it has not ordained to debtors the humiliating situation, of being indiscriminately associated with men, guilty of the foulest crimes . . . Regarding prisoners convicted of the lesser crimes . . . it is clear, that the purpose of the law is to reform their idle habits, and to restore them to society, in an improved state of morals . . . It is notorious, that the only prison of secure custody within this county, is that in which it will not be contended there is any prospect of amendment of morals, or any possible means of acquiring habits of industry . . . Regarding the prisoner, an attention to his health is due on the ground of justice, as well as by the common claim of humanity. You are, in fact, not more justified in

adding the sufferings of disease to that specific punishment which is the sentence of the law, than you would be in inflicting a punishment on the absolutely innocent'.

II. He next called his hearers' attention to the statutory powers which they already possessed, and to prohibitions which they had disregarded. Under Acts passed in the reigns of Elizabeth and William III they could build new prisons and charge the expense on the county rate. They could provide materials for setting poor prisoners to work (19 Car. II). 'No licence shall be granted for retailing spirituous liquors within any gaol'. (24 Geo. II, c. 40). 'A gaoler shall not keep or lodge prisoners for debt and felons together' (22 and 23 Car. II). 'Whereas the malignant fever, commonly called the Gaol Distemper, is owing to want of cleanliness and fresh air' the Justices were ordered to have the walls and ceilings of cells white-washed at least once a year, and to provide hot and cold baths for the prisoners and to appoint a surgeon or apothecary to attend to the health of the prisoners (14 Geo. III, c. 59). 'Every prisoner against whom no bill is found by the Grand Jury, or who shall be acquitted on trial, shall be set at liberty in open court, without paying any fee, or sum . . . to sheriff or gaoler, in respect of such discharge . . .' (14 Geo. III, c. 20). By 32 Geo. II, c. 2 a more humane treatment of debtors was enacted. 'General Penitentiary-houses shall be built according to the plan and directions therein enacted . . . Each cell shall be furnished with an iron bedstead, a matting, hempen sheets and coverlid. Yards shall be provided for air; surgeons and apothecaries to visit the sick in hospitals' (19 Geo. III, c. 74). Justices of the Peace were required to obtain reports on Houses of Correction within their districts and in all plans for new buildings 'they are required to provide separate apartments for persons committed for felony, and convicted of theft, and other prisoners; separate apartments for women and proper rooms and accommodations for labour'. (22 Geo. III, c. 64).

III. Under this heading he observes that 'having regard to the spirit and letter of the law it is clear that a prison should be a place of safe custody, but its safety must be attained by its construction and its regulations, and not by means unwarranted by law. Next to security, the health of the prisoners, and the separation of the different classes of prisoners and of the sexes, both by day and night, are most important. In the construction of every prison, attention should be paid to means of industry'.⁸

IV. Since the date of Howard's report Gloucester gaol had been put into a much better state of repair, but in it 'the whole herd of Prisoners, those committed for trial and those convicted, the young and the old offender, are indiscriminately driven at night into one dark pen. A want of security, which is said to exist in this general receptacle, has produced a contrivance, which is worthy of observation . . . A ponderous chain crosses this *place of rest*, and, passing the middle link of each man's fetter, it is made fast at each end, and the whole number are threaded together. Thus, with an additional burthen on their daily misery, are they left to pass the hours destined by nature to ease and refreshment'. In the daytime 'this entire indiscriminate number of prisoners are crowded (*sic*) into one room, 12 feet by 11; so that there being now 65 prisoners, each man has a space of less than two square feet to stand in'. 'The state of our Bridewells is certainly not better than when Mr Howard made his report regarding them. In three, at least, of the five there is a total absence, of every necessary to security, to industry, or to existence'.

V. Sir G. O. Paul tactfully refrained from making a specific proposal respecting prison-reform, but it was obvious from the whole course and tenour of his remarks

⁸ On another occasion he said 'the operation of the law seems rather to *resent* the injury, than to *correct*. There is little hope of amendment where there is no possibility of industry'. *Gent. Mag.*, Nov. 1804, p. 993.

that he advocated nothing less than an entire reconstruction of the prison buildings, and this his hearers evidently understood.

‘ I cannot conclude ’ he said at the end of his speech ‘ without craving your favourable construction of my earnestness, in a cause which has impressed itself strongly on my mind as a moral duty ’.

He carried the grand jury with him, and they unanimously passed the following resolutions :—

- (1) That it appears that the Gaols and Bridewells⁹ of this County are inadequate to the purposes of correction, humanity, or industry ; and that a reform is absolutely necessary, upon the general principle of separation.
- (2) That it is highly expedient that the Bridewells should be entirely separate from the County Gaol.
- (3) That it is recommended to the Magistrates . . . (to consider their powers for the erection of new Bridewells) and also the most proper places for erecting them.
- (4) That we request the High-Sheriff to call a General Meeting of the nobility, gentry and clergy of the County, to take these resolutions into their consideration ; and to adopt the most effectual means of carrying the same into execution.

Sir G. O. Paul’s address to the grand jury on this occasion, though, as he tells us, ‘ originally designed for the use of a particular county ’ was printed by him at the request of many Members of Parliament, because it was common knowledge that the defects in Gloucestershire prisons prevailed in a greater or less degree throughout the kingdom.

⁹ Bridewells were intended for the reception of vagrants, and persons summarily convicted of small offences.

A public meeting was called to consider the above resolutions on 6 October, 1783, at which Sir G. O. Paul delivered a second address.

He argued that the reform which he was advocating, to be effectual, must be on a most extensive scale ; ' on a plan which may effect a total change of the system which has hitherto been suffered to exist. New prisons, new regulations, and new attention to their operation. Nothing less can establish a police, prevent pestilence, and produce an amendment of morals '. He added that although he knew that his scheme was an immense undertaking, it involved no new system, as it amounted to no more than ' executing laws hitherto neglected '. He recommended that the cost should be borne by a loan secured by a county rate.

Sir George's proposals were approved and a committee were appointed to carry them into effect. He did not let the grass grow under his feet for the committee met on the day after their appointment. They elected him as their chairman and they resolved that a new gaol should be erected at Gloucester with accommodation for 190 prisoners, and so constructed that eight classes of prisoners could be separately imprisoned. They decided that five new bridewells should be built at or near Dursley, Bristol, Gloucester, Little Dean and Northleach respectively. The committee subsequently found that their powers were insufficient, and they obtained a special Act of Parliament under which the work desired was entrusted to commissioners, of whom Sir G. O. Paul was chairman. The building of the prisons was finished in March 1792, and on the 9th of July following Sir George addressed a public meeting, respecting their completion. Most of his remarks related to the cost, which had amounted to £46,437. He ended his address as follows :— ' If, by attention to the object of your commission, I have been instrumental in destroying the source of a desolating pestilence ; if I have alleviated the mass of human misery ;

if I have sheathed the sting of law from the aggravation of official neglect, and from the effects of a corrupt and mercenary administration . . . I shall have obtained the end I sought in your employment'.

While Paul was superintending the construction of new prisons he found time to hasten the improvement of prison-management by law. The Act of 25 Geo. III, c. 3, which was passed in 1785 'on the solicitation' of the county of Gloucester, constitutes the first parliamentary authority that ever existed in this kingdom for charging a county rate with the expense of allowing sustenance to poor debtors, for employing and clothing necessitous prisoners of all descriptions, and 'for making such rules orders and regulations as shall be requisite as well for enforcing amongst prisoners cleanliness, temperance, and a decent and orderly behaviour, as for securing to them a just and humane treatment by the gaolers and their servants'. There is no direct evidence connecting Sir George with the passing of this Act, but it may be safely assumed that any proposal for prison-reform that emanated from Gloucestershire in 1785 was due to his influence. And there can be no doubt that the regulations for the management of prisons which he was framing would have been far less effective if the Act had not been passed. A year before the completion of the new prisons Sir George Paul laid before the magistrates a copy of 'Rules, Orders, and Bye-Laws for the Regulation and Government of the Gaol' which, at their request, he had drafted, and he addressed them on the subject. He made many sage remarks on the propriety and effects of certain punishments. He disputed the legality or the desirability of solitary confinement for untried prisoners, and he thought that even on hardened offenders it might have a corroding influence. 'Total, uninterrupted, solitude will (he thought) either distract or stupify the mind, it will seldom reclaim it'. He urged that certainty of punishment had a more deterrent effect than its severity. He thought that the success of the present

reform depended largely on the choice of prison officers, and quoted a remark of Howard's 'that gentlemen should make rules for the conduct of gaolers as well as prisoners'. He trusted that his hearers would feel the necessity of annihilating the system of emolument by fees. He recommended that the keeper should receive a liberal salary, but its amount should have no relation to the fees he had been receiving—it should be estimated as a reward for services rendered, not as compensation for extortion. He considered the choice of the right type of man as chaplain was of the highest importance. These regulations had evidently been drafted with the greatest care, and they were subsequently adopted by other counties. But as was only to be expected, in a work of this character they were imperfect, and he was asked in a few years time to revise them. He willingly undertook the duty, and he visited every prison in the county in order to obtain personal knowledge of the failures which he was called upon to rectify.

At Epiphany sessions, 1809, he presented a copy of revised regulations for adoption and reviewed, at some length, the system of prison management which had been in operation for the past ten years. He said that they had established too many Houses of Correction, and that he had endeavoured to persuade the Government to abolish the one at Little Dean, but without success. He admitted also that the system of treatment in Houses of Correction had failed in so far as it depended on keeping the prisoners employed and teaching them trades. It was therefore proposed to establish a system of discipline of a different character. The system of treating debtors under the existing regulations had not succeeded as well as he had expected, and was to be replaced by a new one. The rules regulating the penitentiaries had succeeded beyond his most sanguine hope and were submitted for adoption almost unaltered.

He commented at some length on the injustice of keeping

persons in prison any longer than was necessary before the charge on which they had been apprehended had been heard, and advocated summoning special meetings of magistrates to mitigate the hardship.¹⁰ He pointed out, in connexion with this matter, that two of their Houses of Correction were so constructed that the regulation 'that persons detained on suspicion should be kept in a manner consistent with their usual habits' could not be observed. He said that he had found a large number of women undergoing a term of one year's imprisonment for having given birth to illegitimate children who had become chargeable on the rates, and he comments at some length on the Act (7 Jas. c. 4) under which they had been sentenced. He quotes the preamble of the Act, which recites that 'because great charge ariseth upon many places within this realm by reason of bastardy . . . besides the great dishonour of Almighty God', and describes the last reason for the Act 'as a sort of codicil' to the first. Nor is he less sarcastic on the substantive part of the Act. It is not the misconduct of the woman, he asserts, but her poverty which is the *corpus delicti* that is said to dishonour Almighty God. Nor would her destitution have occasioned a charge on the rates but for the misconduct of the father of the child. He tells us that he was asked by a young woman who was nursing her baby why the man who had seduced her was not also suffering imprisonment, and the only answer he could give was 'because women were not legislators, and men were parish officers'.

Sir G. O. Paul's activities were not confined to the reformation of prisons. Between the middle and end of the eighteenth century it was beginning to be realized that the provision of institutions in which insane persons, whether in affluent or indigent circumstances, could receive care and medical treatment had become a

¹⁰ In some counties the gaol delivery was but once a year. At Hull it was but once in three years. Lecky's *History of England*, 1887, VI, 257.

necessity. Such institutions, then called asylums, had been established in Manchester in 1766, in York in 1777, and in Liverpool in or about 1792. On 12 January 1792 the governors of the Gloucester Infirmary resolved 'To extend the utility of the Infirmary to insane persons', but the resolution was rescinded for want of funds. The matter was, however, again considered in the following year, when the rise and progress of the York lunatic asylum were described to the governors at some length, from which it appeared that that institution was unconnected with the infirmary, that it had been built by public subscription, and that it was maintained by payments by patients or their friends. The governors accordingly decided to make an attempt to raise subscriptions for the purpose of building an asylum of the same character in Gloucester. On the day on which a subscription list was opened more than £1000 was subscribed, and in less than a year over £4000 had been promised. The subscribers subsequently appointed an executive committee to select a site and draft a scheme for the constitution and management of the asylum. Although Sir G. O. Paul was not a member of this committee, they asked him to draft the scheme, which he consented to do. They no doubt took this step on account of the trust in his ability and judgment which his recent reformation of the prison-system in the county had inspired.

When the scheme was completed it was submitted to a meeting of subscribers on 14 July 1794. His explanation was a masterly performance. He commenced by telling the subscribers something about York asylum (which he had visited) as it was on the experience of the governors of that institution that his scheme was founded.¹¹ At first their asylum was maintained by payments, by all patients, of 8 shillings a week for board and medicines, but after a few years 'it was thought that *equal* payments from persons in *unequal* circumstances, was not duly to apportion

¹¹ He had also visited Manchester and Liverpool asylums.

the benefits of such an institution (and it was ordered) that persons in easy circumstances should be admitted on paying a weekly sum, proportioned to their ability; and that the overflowings of their weekly payments should be applied in aid of those persons who might be in narrow circumstances, and paid for themselves'. This principle had been approved by the subscribers to the building fund of an asylum at Gloucester, and Sir George had been requested to embody it in his scheme. In pursuance of this instruction he proposed that the Gloucester asylum should provide accommodation for three classes of patients:—

- (1) Persons in easy or superior circumstances.
- (2) Indigent persons supported by the parishes to which they belonged.
- (3) Indigent persons not dependent on parish relief.

Sir G. O. Paul produced estimates which he had made in accordance with two alternative plans which had been prepared under his direction and at his expense, and a list of the officers and servants which would be required. The scheme ran to 24 clauses, and it contained an appendix in which the gradual growth of the receipts and payments as the number of patients increased from 10 to 67 (the number of patients then in York asylum) was estimated. He did not think that the money in the hands of the subscribers would justify them in attempting to carry out their scheme at once, and he advised them to postpone doing so until the fund had been augmented by accumulations of interest.

The address at this meeting, together with the scheme, and list of subscribers was at their request printed in 1796, and a copy was forwarded to every subscriber of £5 and upwards.¹² It runs to over 120 pages and is a monument

¹² Minutes of Proceedings relative to the Establishment of A General Lunatic Asylum, near the City of Gloucester. Including a Digest of a Scheme for such an Institution: Addressed to a General Meeting of Subscribers, held at the Gloucester Infirmary, on the 14th of July, 1794. By Sir G. O. Paul, 1796.

to the thoroughness with which Sir George performed public work that had been entrusted to him. As he had anticipated, before many years had elapsed the sum in the hands of the subscribers was sufficient to enable them to carry out their scheme, but no step in that direction was taken till 1812. This probably arose from knowledge that legislation on matters to which it related was pending.

In 1808 the duty of providing accommodation and treatment of pauper lunatics was cast on counties and municipalities by 48 Geo. III, c. 96. The subscribers, seeing that they were thereby relieved of responsibility in respect of class II of their scheme, entered into an agreement under which an asylum was to be built at the joint expense of themselves and the county and city of Gloucester for housing all three classes, but for the maintenance of inmates under classes I and III they were to be alone responsible. Paul disapproved of this arrangement, and he spoke against it at a meeting of a few of those who had subscribed to promote the scheme of which he was the author, held at the Infirmary on 26 October 1812, and at Quarter Sessions when it was submitted for adoption, on 12 January 1813. On the first occasion he urged that an institution under a joint-administration was less likely to be efficient than one controlled by a single authority. If it was decided to have an asylum under a body of managers appointed from one centre, he should prefer to have one provided by voluntary subscriptions than out of the rates. He did not, however, advise the subscribers whom he was addressing, to embark on the provision of such an institution for financial reasons, and in support of that opinion he compared the number of patients and the cost of the establishment at the York asylum in 1792 with those in 1802. His opposition to the agreement, when submitted to the Court of Quarter Sessions for adoption, was based on various grounds. He pointed out that it had been estimated that there were 84 lunatics in the county and city of Gloucester, and that there was only

accommodation for 60 in the proposed asylum. The raising of a county rate would, he feared, postpone indefinitely the erection of a new Shire Hall, the need of which he considered more pressing. He also thought that the proportion which the county was required to pay was excessive. Reading between the lines it seems pretty clear that Sir George distrusted the magistrates as visitors of public institutions. Nor is this surprising, after their laxity in the supervision of prisons had been disclosed. It was of course impossible for him to realize that they had been rudely awakened, and that their lethargy was a thing of the past. Nor did he know the extent to which they had imbibed his own devotion to public work. The proposal was carried by eight votes to six. Sir George had spoken at considerable length, and seeing that there were forty-nine members present when the Court opened, it looks as if many magistrates had left the room before the question was put. Could Sir G. O. Paul have looked into the dim and distant future he would have seen that the scheme on which he had expended so much thought was destined to succeed (as he said of his penitentiaries) 'beyond his most sanguine expectation'. The agreement adopted by Quarter Sessions continued in operation for 43 years. Under it the lunatic asylum (now called the Gloucester County Mental Hospital) had been built and its inmates maintained at the expense of the three contracting parties, but in 1856 it was terminated by the county and city on account of the increased number of pauper lunatics. The representatives of the subscribers under the scheme of 1794 received about £17,000 for their share in the undertaking, and they realized that a duty had fallen upon them of providing accommodation for lunatics who could pay the cost or a part of the cost of their maintenance and treatment. They appointed an executive committee (of which the late William Henry Hyett was chairman), who out of the money in their hands purchased and enlarged Barnwood House, and

adapted it for the purpose for which it had been acquired. On 6 January 1860, Barnwood House Hospital for the Insane was opened. It developed slowly, but it has now become one of the very finest institutions of its kind in the kingdom. The main cause of its success was the adoption of a scale of payments by patients varying with their means, which had proved successful in the York asylum, and had been incorporated by Sir G. O. Paul in his scheme of 1794.

There remains one class of sufferers, in whose relief Sir George Paul, to our knowledge, took an active and intelligent interest. In 1796 the governors of the Gloucester Infirmary were in financial difficulties and they turned to him for assistance. At one of their meetings he analyzed the situation with his usual skill, pointing out that the subscribers were getting larger benefits than the amounts which they respectively contributed entitled them to, and he submitted a revised table showing the number of nominations to which subscribers of given amounts should be entitled. His address to the governors and his statement of the receipts and expenditure of the Infirmary were printed in a pamphlet entitled *Observations on the State of Gloucester Infirmary*.

There was another institution of a kindred character in which Sir G. O. Paul took an active interest during many years of his life, but the only record of it with which I am acquainted is scanty. In 1783 he was elected President of the Stroud Dispensary and he presided at every annual meeting of its subscribers from 1783 to 1818.¹³

Sir George Onesiphorous Paul died on 16 December 1820, aged 74. He was buried in Gloucester cathedral, where a monument to his memory by Sievier, on which his bust in marble rests, was erected on the south side of the nave. It bears the following inscription:—

To the Memory of Sir GEORGE ONESIPHORUS PAUL,

¹³ Fisher, *Notes and Recollections of Stroud*, p. 180.

PEDIGREE OF PAUL

NICHOLAS PAUL, M.A. = MARY BOND, of Lutton,
of Berkeley (Hutchins' *Dorset*,
ped. of Bond, 1, 603-4); ad-
mitted curate of King Stanley,
19 Oct. 1663; instituted vicar
of Frampton on Severn,
22 Jan. 1667-8; d. 1680

JOHN PAUL ONESIPHOROUS PAUL = JONATHAN PAUL OBADIAH PAUL SAMUEL PAUL

b. 8 March 1639, matric. Magdalen
Hall, Oxon. 29 Oct. 1657; B.A. 1661;
M.A. 1664; vicar of Leysdown 1668;
and of Sellinge, Kent 1669; rector of
Lawshall, Suffolk 1675; vicar of Wanborough,
Wilts 1676. (Foster, *Alum. Oxon.*)

NICHOLAS PAUL = ELIZABETH, d. of THOMAS DEAN
clothier, of Woodchester of Woodchester; d. 11 August
1739, aged 54

(1) ELIZABETH = DEAN PAUL =
d. of JOHN d. 11 Nov.
ANDREWS, of 1761, aged 51
Stonehouse;
d. 4 May 1741

(2) ANNE,
d. of JOHN
SELFE, of
Cirencester;
d. 7 Sept. 1745
aged 41

(3) MARGARET,
d. of PHILIP
HAMPTON; d.
11 March 1764

(1) JANE BLACKBURN =
d. 26 May 1748

Sir ONESIPHOROUS PAUL =
1st bart. d. 21 Sept.
1774, aged 69

(2) CATHERINE FREEMAN
d. 20 Oct. 1766
(3) SARAH TURNER
(*née* PEACH)
d. April 1801

Sir GEORGE ONESIPHOROUS PAUL
2nd bart.; b. 9 Feb. 1745-6,
d. 16 Dec. 1820

ELIZABETH = GEORGE SNOW
of Langbourne,
Dorset; d. 7 Jan.
1772.

JANE = THOMAS PETTAT
of Stanley Park
(living in 1811)

JOHN PAUL, M.D., = FRANCES
of Salisbury, d. d. of ROBERT
15 June 1815 SNOW, d. 19
July 1794

Sir JOHN DEAN PAUL = FRANCES ELINOR SIMPSON
1st bart. b. 1775; d. 15 April 1833
of London, banker;
d. 16 Jan. 1852

ROBERT PAUL
Captain R.N.
b. 1776; died
Jan. 1805, aged 27
(*G.N. & Q.*)

Sir JOHN DEAN PAUL
2nd bart., b. 27 Oct. 1802;
of London, banker;
d. 7 Sept. 1868

Baronet, who died Jany. 16th¹⁴ 1820; aged 74 years. A man endeared to his friends by many virtues, both public and private but who claims this mark of local respect by having first reduced to practice the principles which have immortalized the memory of Howard. For to the object of this memorial, it is to be ascribed that this county has become the example and model of the best system of criminal descipline in which provident regulation has banished the use of fetters and health been substituted for contagion thus happily reconciling humanity with punishment, and the prevention of crime with individual reform.

The Rev. James Dallaway (who assisted Richard Bigland in editing his father's Gloucestershire Collections) wrote some verses on Paul's work, entitled :—

' Verses addressed to Sir G. O. Paul, Bart. On his benevolent Scheme for the Improvement of the County Prisons . . . Gloucester : Printed by R. Raikes. 1785 '.

The verses occupy 23 quarto pages. They are of the same character as much that was passing for poetry when they were written, but we cannot now regard them as worthy of their subject. It is, however, significant that they should have been written at all.

Of Sir G. O. Paul's private life we know next to nothing. He certainly left no son as the baronetcy became extinct on his death. He was unmarried in 1808 and it is probable that he was never married. Nor do we know much of his relations. Of his father, who was evidently a man of some prominence in his county, mention has already been made. His mother, who was the daughter of Francis Blackburn, of Richmond, Yorkshire, died when he was only two years old. His sister Elizabeth married George Snow, of Langbourne, Dorset, and died in 1772. His sister Jane married Thomas Pettat, of Stanley Park, and

¹⁴ The date on this tablet is a mistake. It should be ' Dec. 16 '.

was living in 1811. After his death the baronetcy was revived in the person of John Dean Paul, who was his first cousin once removed. The son of the new baronet (who bore the same name as his father) was a member of a firm of London bankers, Messrs. Snow, Paul and Paul, who in 1855 obtained unenviable notoriety.¹⁵

Paul was a common name in Gloucestershire in the 17th and 18th centuries, as is evidenced by the monumental inscriptions in King's Stanley and Woodchester churches.¹⁶ They probably belonged to a common stock, as the same Christian names (*e.g.* Nathaniel, Obadiah, Onesiphorus) are of frequent occurrence, and not a few of them were clothiers.

As far as is known Sir George never took any part in the management of his father's mill, but if he had not acquired them by training he had inherited methodical and businesslike habits, and his advice on questions of finance was often sought. Towards the end of his life, however, he took an active interest in a matter affecting the clothing industry, as he played a prominent part in putting down 'slingeing', as the fraudulent embezzlement of clothing materials was called. It was very prevalent at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries, when it was often necessary to entrust operatives with wool and yarn for carding, spinning, and weaving, and they had great facilities for purloining these materials, which, when stolen, were popularly known as 'slinge'. It is not unlikely that Sir George, while engaged on his work of mercy, had been frequently brought into contact with inmates of prisons who had been sent there for 'slingeing', and he was more probably working to save the class from a fate which fear of punishment had failed to avert than to augment the profits of a trade.

The only glimpse we have of Sir G. O. Paul when off duty is gleaned from Lockhart's *Life of Scott*.¹⁷ The great

¹⁵ Dict. Nat. Biog. XLIV, 71.

¹⁶ *Glos. N. & Q.* I, 171-2, 352-5, 439; IV, 357-8, 475.

¹⁷ Vol. 2, 1837, pp. 315-16.

novelist and 'the great philanthropist' (as Sir Walter calls Sir George in a letter) were not exactly congenial spirits, and it will surprise no one to hear that Scott did not find Paul attractive.

'Sir George Onesiphorus Paul (writes Sir Walter) was at Inchkenneth with the same party of which I was a member. He seemed to me to suspect many of the Highland tales he heard, but he showed most incredulity on the subject of Johnson's having been entertained in the wretched huts of which we saw the ruins. He took me aside, and conjured me to tell him the truth of the matter. "This Sir Allan", said he, "was he a *regular baronet*, or was his title such a traditional one as you find in Ireland"? I assured my excellent acquaintance that, "for my own part, I should have paid more respect to a Knight of Kerry, or Knight of Glynn; yet Sir Allan M'Lean was a *regular baronet* by patent"; and, having given him this information, I took the liberty of asking him, in return, whether he would not in conscience prefer the worst cell in the jail at Gloucester (which he had been very active in overlooking while the building was going on), to those exposed hovels where Johnson had been entertained by rank and beauty. He looked round the little islet, and allowed Sir Allan had some advantage in exercising ground; but in other respects he thought the compulsory tenants of Gloucester had greatly the advantage. Such was his opinion of a place, concerning which Johnson has recorded that "it wanted little which palaces could afford"'

A few pages further on we read,¹⁸ 'Mrs Apreece was of our party. Also

Sir George Paul for prison-house renowned,
A wandering knight, on high adventures bound.

'We left this celebrated philanthropist in a plight not unlike some of the misadventures of "Him of the

¹⁸ pp. 319-20.

sorrowful figure". The worthy baronet was mounted on a quadruped, which the owners called a pony, with his woful valet on another, and travelling slowly along the coast of Mull, in order to detect the point which approached nearest to the continent, protesting he would not again put foot in a boat, till he had discovered the shortest possible traject'.

But though we know little of the individual we know much of the public servant, as a glance at the bibliography which is appended to this paper, will adumbrate. The greater part of his life was spent in devising and superintending organizations for the relief of suffering humanity and he did his work with consummate skill and unremitting industry. In superintending the building of new prisons, and in remodelling their management, as has been well said, he was 'the head and heart of the committee, the draftsman of the bill, the financier who raised the funds, clerk of the works at all the five new buildings, the author of the reformed system of discipline, the general visiting justice of the county, and the scapegoat on whose head were laid all the stupid anathemas that the scheme provoked'.¹⁹

The tact with which he handled subjects which might readily have occasioned acrimonious debates was remarkable. As readers of these pages are aware, many of the abuses which he had made it his life's work to remove had been aggravated, and some had been occasioned by the neglect of the magistracy.²⁰ He never attempted to disguise this. Those whom he was addressing were for the most part magistrates, and he told them what he had seen and what was the law. But he refrained from censuring their misfeasance, and he never presumed to apportion blame between the Legislature and the Court

¹⁹ *The Prison Chaplain*, by W. L. Clay, 1861, p. 64.

²⁰ 'The immobility and stupidity of country justices had, in fact, been the great stumbling-block to prison reform throughout the country'. W. L. Clay, p. 66.

of Quarter Sessions. He had the enviable gift of being able to state an unpleasant truth without giving offence. He had, too, a rarer and yet more valuable gift—he could impart to his hearers some of his own enthusiasm. Without more knowledge of his personality than we possess it is difficult to say how he did it. It certainly was not the result of impassioned eloquence, not a trace of which is to be found in his speeches. It may have been the effect of his example, the consciousness on the part of his audience of his unquestionable integrity and sincerity, coupled with the intensity of his avowed belief that this work was a moral duty, which conjointly made his words inspiring. However this may be, he succeeded by influence and argument in ‘overcoming, step by step, the indifference and inertia of his colleagues’. He may, perhaps, have had ‘an almost childlike delight in self-advertisement. But among his fellow-Justices he stands out, for a whole generation, as an energetic and beneficent Leader of the County’.²¹

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE WORKS OF SIR G. O. PAUL

The titles are shortened as they are given in full, with other information, in ‘The Bibliographer’s Manual of Gloucester Literature’, 1895 (*M*), and in the ‘Catalogue of the Gloucestershire Collection’, 1928, in the Gloucester public library (*C.G.C.*).

GLOUCESTERSHIRE PRISONS

- 1783 A State of Proceedings on the Subject of a Reform of Prisons, within the County of Gloucester. pp. 57. (*M* 1, 172; *C.G.C.* 1710)

Other copies of (?) another edition (pp. 52) have been seen and it is probable that this was issued earlier the same year. Later editions: (1) Considerations on the Defects of Prisons (with a second address), 1784, (*M* 1, 172, and *C.G.C.* 1711); (2) Proceedings of the Grand Juries, Magistrates, and other Noblemen and Gentlemen of the County of Gloucester. Third edition, 1808. (*M* 1, 172-3, and *C.G.C.* 1712).

²¹ Webb, *The Parish and the County*, 1906, p. 369.

- 1784 Thoughts on the Alarming Progress of the Gaol Fever.
pp. 40. (*M* 1, 173; *C.G.C.* 14913).
- [? 1785] Proceedings of a Committee appointed by a General Meeting of the County of Gloucester, convened and held for the purpose of taking into consideration a plan of reform of the Gaol and other Prisons of the said County. pp. 10. (*M* 1, 173; *C.G.C.* 1713).
- 1789 Address to the Justices of the County of Gloucester [on the subject of regulations for the government of prisons]. pp. 42. (*M* 1, 173; *C.G.C.* 1719).
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- [? 1792] An Address delivered at a General Meeting of the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and others . . . for the purpose of receiving a Statement of the Proceedings of the Committee appointed to carry into execution the Resolutions of the said County, to rebuild the Gaol and Bridewells thereof. pp. viii, 72, and abstract of cost, 1 leaf. (*M* 1, 174; *C.G.C.* 1725).
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- 1810 Rules, Orders, and Regulations, for the Controul and Government of the Prisons of the County of Gloucester, Revised and Recommended to the Magistrates of the said County. pp. 75. (*M* 1, 176 ; *C.G.C.* 1732).
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GLOUCESTERSHIRE LUNATIC ASYLUMS

- 1794 An Abstract Of Proceedings relative to the Institution of a General Lunatic Asylum in or near the City of Gloucester. pp. 24. (*M* 1, 175).
- 1796 Minutes of Proceedings relative to the establishment of A General Lunatic Asylum, near the City of Gloucester, including a Digest of a Scheme for such an Institution: Addressed to a General Meeting of Subscribers, held at the Gloucester Infirmary, the 14th of July, 1794. pp. 70. (*M* 1, 175 ; *C.G.C.* 1164).
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- 1812 Observations on the subject of Lunatic Asylums, addressed to A General Meeting of Subscribers to a Fund for building and establishing A General Lunatic Asylum, Near Gloucester, Held at the Gloucester Infirmary, On the 26th day of October, 1812. pp. 55. (*M* 1, 177).

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GLoucester INFIRMARY

- [? 1796] Observations on the State of the Gloucester Infirmary, as reported by the Committee of Governors appointed to examine into the income and expences of the same; and on the Propriety and Expediency of adopting The Regulations, proposed by the Committee, and recommended by The Quarterly General Court, Held on the 6th of October; offered to the consideration of The Special General Court Held on the 22d November, 1796. pp. 64. (*M I*, 269).

- 1796 Observations on a Bill before Parliament, 'For facilitating the Division and Inclosure of Waste Lands and Commons, by Agreement amongst the Parties interested, &c.'. Addressed to the Chairman of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, to whom the same was referred on the 29th March, 1796. pp. 61. (*C.G.C.* 14914).

- 1801 Communication of the Method invented for the Ventilation of Hospitals, etc. *Trans. Society for the Encouragement of Arts*, xix, 299-330, 1 plate.

- 1803 An Address delivered at a General Meeting of the County of Gloucester: convened by the High Sheriff, and held on Tuesday, January 11, 1803; for the purpose of considering the necessity or expediency of Erecting a New Shire-Hall for the said County. pp. 128. (*M I*, 176; *C.G.C.* 1142).