

abuses, that the Legislature ought to authorize Grand Juries, or Committees to forcibly enter and inspect private houses on suspicion that these abuses did exist. Such a proceeding would not be tolerated in any free government.

Nor was it intended that Grand Juries or Orphans' Courts should act the part of Grand Inquisitors. That function has been established in other Countries by ecclesiastical and civil laws, and the result has been such as to prevent your Committee from recommending any such course in this State.

Nor is it submitted to this Committee to inquire whether any further legislation should be had as to the *property* of persons who may choose to enter those Institutions. The single matter referred to them is the *personal protection* of those entering Convents, and whether there be, under the existing laws sufficient remedy for illegal restraint upon such persons.

Your Committee would, therefore, respectfully suggest, in the first place, that no allegation has been substantiated, nor has proof been exhibited that any person is now unlawfully confined in any religious house or Convent within the limits of the State.

There is a general charge that such a state of things does exist, and the statement is also made that unsuspecting females are decoyed into such places and there detained against their will; but it is necessary to justify the interference of this Body that the petitioners should state some particular case, and the facts in the case wherein a wrong is committed, or a right violated, so that the House could, as the Grand Inquest of the State, act, as all other Grand Inquests do upon oath or statement in regard to the particular facts.

But even admitting, for the sake of argument, that the charge be true, and that certain persons are confined against their will, still your Committee are of the opinion that the laws of the land, and those now in force in this State, furnish an effectual and complete remedy for all such cases as have been reported for their consideration.

It would indeed be an outrage were it not so, and if, in fact, it were permitted to any religious sect or persuasion to erect private houses or Convents, with intent to confine persons unlawfully within their walls, and if, in a single instance properly authenticated, such an intention were carried out with impunity, it would not only be a flagrant violation of all law, but an outrage upon the feelings of any civilized community.

But your Committee need only remind the House that that great safeguard of personal liberty, the writ of Habeas Corpus, throws ample protection around even the humblest citizens of our Commonwealth; and that if any person, whatever, has reason to believe that any individual is detained unlawfully, or against his will, in any