

House of Refuge should fully remunerate for the cost of maintenance. This is done in but very few penitentiaries, even with adult labor and a full days work. At the first glance the folly of any such expectation is at once seen. The majority of our inmates are under thirteen years of age. The average of age of the whole number in the several kindred institutions in the country is twelve and two-thirds years, and the average of daily labor is six and one-half hours, the remainder of the day being consumed in school for an average of, say four and one-half hours, and the balance at meals. Now, it has been satisfactorily ascertained that with the boy under fourteen years of age, his reform may be generally secured with about two years' detention and discipline; with those over fourteen, when committed, and especially over sixteen, a longer time on an average is required. With these data it will be noted, first, that the age of the majority of inmates and the time set apart for labor, preclude any thing like pecuniary remuneration for any available employment; and again, that the term of detention which should never be beyond the point of what is considered as a safe reclamation, is too short to attempt teaching an inmate a trade, while the only class of whom could be expected any thing like a return of the cost of maintenance, are the very few over the age of sixteen years; and under existing circumstances, many reasons make it desirable to place these out of the House whenever a favorable opportunity occurs.

Notwithstanding all these difficulties however, as constant and systematic employment is one of the most important essentials in the successful management of the Refuge, every endeavor is used to secure appropriate labor for the inmates. To engage in any manufacture by investing a capital for the purpose, has been found to be bad policy in a financial view, and hence the only mode now adopted in other institutions, is employment by hiring out the labor of the boys by contract. With us, the obstacle to the availing ourselves of this measure, has hitherto been the comparatively small number that could be profitably set apart for the purpose, and thus no inducement could be offered to manufacturers sufficiently attractive to secure an engagement. And besides, if a good home is offered to a boy and he can be safely recommended, it is felt to be our first duty to secure it for him. This may happen just as he is beginning to be profitable to his employer, and hence another difficulty arises which interferes materially with the making of contracts. As a counterbalance to these things, and as employment is the chief thing desired, the rate of wages demanded is necessarily small. But the most of these discouragements will gradually disappear as the institution becomes better understood and the number of inmates increases, inasmuch as a better and larger selection of capable lads can then be made, and mechanics will discover how their interests may be subserved