

tion to him who ponders wisely upon the evil existing, the class among whom this evil prevails, and the incalculable importance of reforming the vicious habits and perverted tastes of this class while yet their minds are in the formative state. The whole system upon which reform schools like the Refuge are based, is simply, that the prevention of crime is cheaper than its punishment, so far merely as the pecuniary cost to the community is concerned, and that as a higher question of morals, it is easier and a far more hopeful labor to turn the perverted mind while yet in its ductile state into the path of rectitude, than when continued crime with its degradation, has hardened the heart against all appeals of virtue and conscience—of moral feeling and religious impression. These positions are such familiar truisms, that no argument is needed to enforce the conclusions necessarily deducible from them. The fireside philanthropists from an unpracticable imagination, may hatch out other theories, or cavil at details, or set himself astride of some favorite hobby, but we are satisfied, that from the special organization of these institutions for the reform of juvenile delinquents, the right track has been struck, and perseveringly followed, must lead on by the most effective way to the most effective good. It is not professed that the system, now so generally adopted in the United States, is yet perfected beyond improvement, but the basis is sound, and upon this, far-seeing practical minds, giving more to action than to idle theorizing, and hearts given more to the dictation of sound heads than to the impulses of empty sentiment, and all governed by the true spirit of a Catholic Christianity will, in the end, correct all defects, and secure, as far as is possible for a mere human institution, the best practicable means for the reclamation of the young delinquent and his restoration to society, where in manhood he may take his place among the good and the virtuous, and become a useful and honest citizen; and where, if he had been deprived of the influences here exerted, he might, as thousands of others have done, become a pest to the community—a curse to himself and his friends—and a life-long expense to the State as an inmate of its jails and penitentiaries.

In judging of the peculiar characteristics of our Institution, it is well to impress upon the mind, and, indeed, it cannot be too often repeated, that the House of Refuge is not a prison. Our charter specifically designates its design to be "for reform and not for punishment." It is true, the inmates are separated by legal commitment from the outside world to some extent, but this is more to protect them from the influence of bad example at home, or to break up old and evil associations and habits in the streets and away from home, than to make them, in any sense, to feel that they are under penal confine-