

than any other. Into an institution of this kind let the youthful criminal be placed for his first offence, as into a moral infirmary for a heart and mind diseased by vicious associations—let him be gently and kindly treated, instructed in a useful occupation by which he can support himself when released—let his tutors remove by instruction the fibres of ignorance, which envelope him in gross darkness—let him be often reminded of the mother who “watched o’er his childhood,” and of the father, who gave his days to hard toil for his support, when both may be in the grave, and we cannot doubt that in most instances, reformation would follow, and a useful citizen be returned to society; whereas if he had been thrust into a (so called) Penitentiary, observation and experience confirm the fears that he would return to the world a hardened villain, graduated in all the arts of vice and sin.

We take leave solicit to solicit the attention of the General Assembly to the state of the county prisons, which all our enquiries led us to believe are defective in their organization, and we suggest for consideration, that instead of conventional visits from grand juries, it be made the duties of the orphans’ courts in every county, to report annually to the Legislature, the state of the jails in their respective counties, that such legislation may be had thereon, as their condition, and the interests of community may require.

We cannot dismiss the subject of our inquiry, without a notice of the Alms House of Baltimore, which we visited in pursuance of a request from the President of the Board of Trustees, and found it a well conducted institution. The unfriended poor, “who have not received their consolation in this world” there find their sorrows soothed, their diseases healed, and all the comforts of which they can be the recipients. With the exception of the great Eastern Penitentiary of Pennsylvania, we have seen no public institution, which commanded our admiration to the same extent as the Baltimore county and city Alms House.

We deemed it not improper to examine into the state of such institutions, whose reputation entitled them to the character of models, in order that such recommendations might be made, and such action taken upon our suggestions as would tend to the decrease of pauperism, and the consequent diminution of crime. Were the alms houses of the several counties of the State, to be made to partake more of the character of houses of refuge for the poor and destitute, the orphan and the widow, they would no doubt be efficient auxiliaries in the great work of freeing the world from vice and crime.

In this connexion, we urge upon the Legislature the all important subject of universal education, as a means of preventing crime. The history of the world proves most clearly that ignorance and crime are generally found together. This opinion we find concurred in by some of the most philanthropic and talented men of our age. It would only be repeating trite maxims and acknowledged truths, were