

by the Act chartering that Institution, to report annually to the Legislature. There being no session of that Body last year, the report for that year was made to this Department, and is herewith communicated.

The object for which this charter was attained has been vigorously pressed under circumstances of embarrassment greatly discouraging. It affords me pleasure, however to say that obstacle after obstacle, however disheartening, has given way before the energy and perseverance of its projectors, and they now have the felicity to reap, in the consummation of their purposes of humanity and mercy, the rich reward of all their care and efforts. By the liberal aid of private citizens, and the munificence of the corporate authorities of Baltimore, the friends of the measure have at last succeeded in erecting, in the vicinity of that city a place of refuge for juvenile delinquents. The opening of the Institution was duly inaugurated the fifth day of December just passed, and I sincerely congratulate the friends of humanity upon so auspicious an event. An Institution whose end and aim is to reclaim the erring youth of the State, by withdrawing them from the circle of vicious influences to which their poverty or their will may lead them, before their hearts shall have become hardened against virtuous precept, is among the most ennobling of the charities that mark the advancing civilization of our age. Indeed, I know of no scheme of mercy within the province of Government, which can claim so great a degree of public utility, or commends itself more forcibly to popular favor.

The only mode of punishing crime, now known to our criminal jurisprudence, is by a confinement which secludes from all vigorous exercise and active out-door employments those who offend against the laws. It is a well known physiological fact, that youths cannot be deprived of these with the same safety as adults. Necessary as they are to a healthful, physical and moral development, in both minors and adults, they are conceded to be much more essential in the case of the former than the latter. But this mode of punishment is liable to further, and even much greater objections, which have led to a well grounded belief that our State Penitentiaries and Jails are so many seminaries of vice and crime, to those of tender years who may be, from time to time confined within them. At present the young and the old, the comparatively uncorrupted and the conscience seared criminal are thrown together. A youth, too often it may be for some trivial and first offence, finds his way into one of these prisons, and is, at once introduced to a daily association with felons of the worst description. Instead of being reformed he is but emboldened and confirmed in a proclivity to viciousness. Every inducement to a depraved existence is held up before his ardent gaze, his imagination is inflamed by recitals of criminal adventure ; the whisperings of conscience are silenced in the mockery and derision of his associates, until at last the feebleness of youthful resistance gives