

way before the power of the tempter, and his character may be said to be formed, and his destiny shaped. He serves out his term of incarceration and leaves with his heart turned at an early age against mankind; and starting anew with his most malevolent affections awakened or strengthened upon a career of crime, he advances by regular gradations of guilt, from petty offences to those of greater enormity, until at last he is detected in some dark and bloody deed, and soon the scaffold, or a felon's cell resounds with his mournful tread.

This great defect in our system of punishment has long been a source of the most anxious solicitude to the Legislator and the philanthropist. Much thought has been bestowed upon the subject, and public opinion in our own, and other States, seems to have settled upon the House of Refuge scheme as the most available substitute. The experience of those communities where the experiment has been tried has seemed to demonstrate the wisdom of this conclusion. Poverty, idleness and the want of proper parental care, are the most fruitful of all sources of depravity among the young. Indeed, a dependence upon precarious charity, and the want of even a moderately comfortable home, has been the ruin of thousands of youths, who might have been saved by an institution such as this, where by a happy combination of the influences of the work shop, and some degree of moral training, habits of industry are taught, and the deficiency of proper parental oversight are in a measure supplied. How far such an establishment may be successful in its work of reclamation and reformation it is not of course in our power to determine. That must depend on time and the degree of encouragement it may receive. There is, however, good ground for the opinion, so generally entertained, that its influence must be powerfully felt within the field of its operations.

It is to be deeply regretted that by an act of the last General Assembly, all connection between the State and this noble charity was severed, and the original design of making it a State institution thus abandoned. It is to be hoped, however, that this determination will now be reconsidered, in order that its benefits may not be confined to the corporate limits of the city of Baltimore, but extended to every section of the State. From the report herewith sent you, I infer that a plan for permanent support has been digested, which, it is expected, you can "aid in carrying out by available means and in such a manner, and from such sources, as will be shewn to make but comparatively small drains upon the stated revenues of the State." Such an enterprise must, in the early stages of its existence, stand much in need of pecuniary support, but I have no doubt that in time it will be abundantly capable of sustaining itself. If the State now parsimoniously withholds its aid she cannot surely expect, when it can exist independently of public appropriations, to be allowed a participation in its advantages. With these observations I commit the subject