

Report of a committee appointed by the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism in the City of New York : on the expediency of erecting an institution for the reformation of juvenile delinquents.

Contributors

Society for the Prevention of Pauperism in the City of New York.

Publication/Creation

New-York : Printed by Mahlon Day, 1823.

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REPORT

OF A COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY

THE SOCIETY

FOR THE

PREVENTION OF PAUPERISM,

IN THE CITY OF NEW-YORK,

ON THE

EXPEDIENCY OF ERECTING

AN

INSTITUTION FOR THE REFORMATION

OF

JUVENILE DELINQUENTS.



New-York :

PRINTED BY MAHLON DAY,

NO. 372, PEARL-STREET.

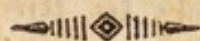
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1823.

At a Meeting of the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism, held the 12th of June, 1823, on motion, the following Managers were appointed a Committee to prepare a Report on the subject of establishing a House of Refuge, or Prison for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents :—

JOHN GRISCOM,
ISAAC COLLINS,
CORNELIUS DUBOIS,
JAMES W. GERARD,
HIRAM KETCHUM,
DANIEL E. LORD.



REPORT, &c.



It will be admitted by every person conversant with human nature, and with the great objects of political association, that there are few judicial considerations of greater importance, than the wise adaptation of punishment to crime. The safety of life and property; the enjoyment of personal liberty; the blessings of social intercourse; and the strength and stability of governments themselves; are essentially interwoven with those penal regulations, which coerce the refractory, and operate as dissuasives from the indulgence of passions, hostile to the general good. Of the various institutions of civil government, there are none, perhaps, which more clearly mark the progress of refinement, and the growth of enlightened feeling, than the meliorations which are visible from time to time in the criminal code of nations. In the savage and barbarous state, vengeance is the ruling principle in the infliction of punishment, and death is seldom decreed without the accompaniment of lingering and merciless torture. As knowledge increases, men learn to discriminate more clearly between actions and their motives: and although the divisions of the statute

book become more artificial, there is an obvious attention to the natural distinctions of crime; a more cautious inquiry into the *quo animo*—the nature and force of the temptation; and more humanity in the retributions of legal justice. But the most important step in the enactment and administration of penal laws, is the full admission of the principle, that it is not revenge which stimulates society to the infliction of punishment, and arms the law with its severest denunciations;—that neither in the prescriptions of the Legislature, nor in the progress of juridical investigation and decision, are the vindictive passions to be allowed to operate;—but that the great ends of punishment are to deter others from crime, to prevent the aggressor from the repetition of his offences, and, if possible, to effect the moral reformation of all those who become amenable to the laws.

It cannot but afford the highest gratification to every humane individual, to witness the solicitude which now prevails in relation to this subject. The zeal which is observable in various countries with respect to the improvement of prison discipline, to the reformation of abuses, to the perfection of criminal laws, and to the more discreet and consistent treatment of those whom offended justice visits with its severe but needful inflictions, is an indubitable indication of that expansive benevolence which is the genuine fruit of christianity. It is creditable to this country, young as it was in experience, to have given to the world one of the first effective impulses in this new sphere of wise and charitable regulation—the Penitentiary System of Prison Discipline. Had that system been pursued

among us with the same intelligent and disinterested zeal with which it was commenced, our prisons would at this time exhibit the best models for the world to imitate ;—their influence would be far more decisive upon the public welfare ; and we should not now have to lament that disrepute into which the Penitentiary System has partially fallen, in consequence of doubts of its superiority.

Among the evils and abuses which obstruct the operation of this system, and most powerfully counteract the reformatory influence of imprisonment, is the want of classification among prisoners, the indiscriminate assemblage of persons of all ages and degrees of guilt, and the inevitably corrupting tendency of such an intercourse. The very imperfect structure, and the crowded state of our prisons, absolutely forbid the application of an adequate remedy for this deplorable evil. So notorious is the demoralizing nature of some of those institutions which are called Penitentiaries,—so generally do those who are liberated from them come out more vile and corrupt, and more skillful in the various modes of depredation than when they entered ;—and so seldom do they manifest any signs of reformation, that these places have acquired the appellation of *Schools* and *Colleges* of crime. The amount of injury sustained by the lamentable defects in the regulations of our city and state prisons, is so great,—to such an extent is the younger class of prisoners initiated in the mysteries of wickedness, by this exposure, it is a questionable point, in the estimation of many persons, whether the present system, with all its expensive apparatus, and all its show of lenity and moral treat-

ment, is not more inauspicious to public tranquillity, than the simple incarceration and corporal chastisements, the whipping posts, pillories, and croppings, of former times. The experience, nevertheless, of some of the prisons in the United States, whose discipline is the most exact, and where classification is an object of careful attention ; and the growing experience of England, and other countries of Europe, where the sanguinary codes which have been for ages in operation, are beginning to yield, in practice, to the more rational and humane substitution of hard labour, restricted diet, solitary confinement, and judicious classification ; afford unquestionable evidence, that the energies of the law in the suppression of crime, are most potent and availing, when directed with a constant reference to the moral faculties of our nature ; and when clothed with that spirit, which seeks to restore, in order that it may safely forgive.

The great object of the institution of civil government, is to advance the prosperity, and to increase the happiness of its subjects. The agents of the government, become, in this point of view, the fathers of the people ; and it may surely be ranked among the duties incident to this paternal care, not only that those who are guilty of crime should receive the chastisement due to their offences, but that no pains should be spared to remove the causes of offence, and to diminish, as far as possible, the sources of temptation and corruption. This obligation applies with peculiar force to the case of juvenile offenders ;—a class whose increasing numbers, and deplorable situation in this city, loudly call for the more effective interposition

of its police, and the benevolent interference of our citizens in general.

To this class of guilty unfortunates, the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism, beg leave to solicit the attention of their fellow-citizens, in the earnest hope, that means may be devised to rescue from the lowest degradation, and from the danger of utter ruin, hundreds and thousands of the youth of this city, of both sexes, whose crimes and misery arise, in a very marked degree, from the neglect of those who ought to be their guardians and protectors.

Every person that frequents the out-streets of this city, must be forcibly struck with the ragged and uncleanly appearance, the vile language, and the idle and miserable habits of great numbers of children, most of whom are of an age suitable for schools, or for some useful employment. The parents of these children, are, in all probability, too poor, or too degenerate, to provide them with clothing fit for them to be seen in at school; and know not where to place them in order that they may find employment, or be better cared for. Accustomed, in many instances, to witness at home, nothing in the way of example, but what is degrading; early taught to observe intemperance, and to hear obscene and profane language without disgust; obliged to beg, and even encouraged to acts of dishonesty, to satisfy the wants induced by the indolence of their parents,—what can be expected, but that such children will, in due time, become responsible to the laws for crimes, which have thus, in a manner, been forced upon them? Can it be consistent with real justice, that delinquents of this character, should

be consigned to the infamy and severity of punishments, which must inevitably tend to perfect the work of degradation, to sink them still deeper in corruption, to deprive them of their remaining sensibility to the shame of exposure, and establish them in all the hardihood of daring and desperate villainy? Is it possible that a christian community, can lend its sanction to such a process, without any effort to rescue and to save? If the agents of our municipal government stand towards the community in the moral light of guardians of virtue,—if they may be justly regarded as the political fathers of the unprotected, does not every feeling of justice urge upon them the principle, of considering these juvenile culprits as falling under their special guardianship, and claiming from them the right which every child may demand of its parent, of being well instructed in the nature of its duties, before it is punished for the breach of their observance? Ought not every citizen, who has a just sense of the reciprocal obligations of parents and children, to lend his aid to the administrators of the law, in rescuing those pitiable victims of neglect and wretchedness, from the melancholy fate which almost inevitably results from an apprenticeship in our common prisons?

In order to arrive at a more correct understanding of the amount of the evils alluded to, the committee have to state, that they have been furnished by the District Attorney, H. Maxwell, Esq. with an abstract of those persons who were brought before the Police Magistrates, during the year 1822, and sentenced either to the City Bridewell, from 10 to 60 days or

to the Penitentiary from 2 to 6 months. The list comprehends more than 450 persons, all under 25 years of age, and a very considerable number of both sexes between the ages of 9 and 16. None of these have been actually charged with crime, or indicted and arraigned for trial. It includes those only, who are taken up as vagrants, who can give no satisfactory account of themselves;—children, who profess to have no home, or whose parents have turned them out of doors and take no care of them,—beggars and other persons discovered in situations which imply the intention of stealing, and numbers who were found sleeping in the streets or in stables. These miserable objects are brought to the Police Office under suspicious circumstances,—and, according to the result of their examinations, they are sentenced as before mentioned. Many of these are young people on whom the charge of crime cannot be fastened, and whose only fault is, that they have no one on earth to take care of them, and that they are incapable of providing for themselves. Hundreds, it is believed, thus circumstanced, eventually have recourse to petty thefts; or if females, they descend to practices of infamy, in order to save themselves from the pinching assaults of cold and hunger. The list furnished us affords numerous instances, especially of females, who request to be sent to the Penitentiary, as a favour,—as their only resource and refuge from greater evils.

The District Attorney, in the explanations which accompany his abstract, observes, “that many of each
“description might be saved from continued trans-
“gression, no one can doubt, who will examine the

“ statement that I have made from the records of the
 “ Police Office for the year 1822. This abstract con-
 “ tains the names of more than 450 persons, male
 “ and female, none over the age of 25, many much
 “ younger, and *some so young as to be presumed incapa-*
 “ *ble of crime.*

“ All these have been convicted by the Police
 “ Magistrates as disorderly persons and imprisoned
 “ as such.

“ Many others, not mentioned, have been discharged,
 “ from an unwillingness to imprison, in hope of re-
 “ formation, or under peculiar circumstances.

“ Many notorious thieves, infesting the city, were at
 “ first, idle, vagrant boys, imprisoned for a short period
 “ to keep them from mischief. A second and a third
 “ imprisonment is inflicted, the prison becomes fa-
 “ miliar and agreeable, and at the expiration of their
 “ sentence, they come out accomplished in iniquity.

“ I have already mentioned,” observes the District
 “ Attorney, that this statement does not include prisoners,
 “ indicted and tried,” at the Court of Sessions. “ At
 “ each term of the Court (the terms are once a month)
 “ the average number of lads arraigned for petty thefts,
 “ is five or six; and I regret to state, that lately high
 “ crimes have been perpetrated in several instances,
 “ by boys not over 16, who, at first, were idle, street
 “ vagrants, and, by degrees, thieves, burglars and
 “ robbers.”

From further information it appears, that about 60
 persons are, upon an average, indicted and arraigned
 at each term of the Court of Sessions, for misde-
 meanours and felonies; and that out of this number,

four or five are boys under sixteen years of age. A large proportion of them, amounting to fifty or sixty per annum, are found guilty and condemned, either to the City or State *Penitentiary*, there to associate with others more hardened in crime, and who are ever ready to impart their instructions in the arts of deception and wickedness.

It is now generally admitted, that in none of our prisons,—in the Bridewell—the City Penitentiary—or the State Prison—as they are at present constructed, and conducted, is it possible to introduce those subdivisions, and restrictive regulations, which are absolutely essential to the prevention of mutual contamination, and independently of which, the prospect of reformation is really preposterous.

In the City Prison or Bridewell, it is not only impossible to separate the juvenile offenders from those that are old in crime, but the rooms are so small and very often so crowded as to produce an atmosphere both physically and morally disgusting in a high degree, and certainly adapted to the debasement of every virtuous sentiment, and almost inevitably ruinous to the natural sensibilities of youth. The condition of this prison, in our estimation, calls loudly for the attention of the police; and were its actual condition, known to the citizens of the neighbourhood, we think the notice of Grand Juries would be often directed to it, as a nuisance, disreputable to the character of the city. In rooms about eighteen feet square, there are often thirty or forty persons, confined together without any discrimination except that of sex and colour,—boys of nine years of age, and upwards, sharing the same dis-

mal fare, and mingling in conversation with aged villainy,—and girls of ten or twelve exposed to the company and example of the most abandoned of the sex. This prison has no yard excepting for the use of the keeper. The prisoners' rooms have no outlet whatever, not even by pipes or conduits, and no ventilation excepting by the door and windows. The convicts in these small, close rooms, are employed in picking oakum. The period of confinement is from a few days to a year or more, and it is not unusual for them to remain several months. The present keeper, Mr. *Thorpe*, evidently conducts the prison with as strict an attention to cleanliness and order, as the construction of the house and the nature of his charge, will admit; but both in verbal and written communications to the committee, he states unequivocally his opinion of the impossibility of classifying the prisoners in the present confined and very imperfect building, and the consequent injury to the morals of juvenile offenders. “The number of boys,” he observes, “committed to this prison, as nearly as it can fairly be estimated, is from three to four hundred in the course of a year, and at one time from six to nine. They are committed generally for trifling offences, such as vagrancy, misdemeanors, &c. and some for petit and very few for grand larcenies. The proportion, that are committed here for the second or third time, is about two thirds of the whole, chiefly owing to a want of residence, or a return from transportation, or an escape from the Alms-House. This prison,” he adds, “is so constructed that there can be no suitable place for the confinement of this class of prisoners, separate from old

“and hardened offenders, with which it generally
 “abounds; and what induces or leads them to the
 “commission of crime, is the education they receive
 “from the before mentioned offenders. There have
 “been a multiplicity of instances where boys have been
 “sent here as vagrants, destitute of parents, &c. and
 “have either been discharged, transported, or sent to
 “the Alms-House, and have returned charged with
 “crime, and when examined, they have proved to
 “have had or received their education in this prison.
 “They are confined with old and hardened offenders,
 “by day and night, because the prison is so con-
 “structed that it will not admit of keeping them oth-
 “erwise.”

It may well be submitted to the judgment of a
 discerning public, whether an exposure of a few weeks,
 or even of a few days, to such company and fare as are
 here represented, is not sufficient to suppress, in youth-
 ful minds, all virtuous emotions; to reconcile the feel-
 ings to a life of guilt, and even of suffering, shame, and
 degradation. Sleeping upon the bare floor, without
 covering, or at best with only a coarse and dirty blan-
 ket, they soon learn to brave the exposure, and to dis-
 regard the privation.

That an institution of this nature, in a building so
 entirely inadequate to its object, and exhibiting so
 much that is repulsive to the senses, and deplorable
 in moral regulation, should be suffered to occupy one
 of the most prominent and beautiful situations in the
 city, we cannot but consider as a reflection upon the
 humanity and public spirit of our citizens; and we
 indulge the hope, that the period is not distant, when

the city prison will be removed to a situation of greater seclusion, and erected upon a plan which will admit of every facility for cleanliness, ventilation, classification, employment, and perfect inspection.

The Penitentiary at Bellevue, three miles from the City Hall, is destined for convicts from the city, whose period of confinement does not exceed three years.— This prison, though comparatively of modern erection, does not, we regret to say, possess those requisites for convenient distribution, employment, instruction, moral government and easy inspection, which the present improved plans for prisons so readily afford. The boys, it is true, are here separated from the old offenders; but this, though it is the first important step in classification, is entirely insufficient to answer the desired end of reformation. No principle of our common nature is better established, than that “evil communications corrupt good manners.” It is certainly as necessary, in order to preserve the moral sensibilities of youth, to keep them from the society of corrupt persons of their own age and class, as it is from the company of older criminals. Boys imitate each other, both in virtue and in vice, more naturally, and more rapidly than they do those who are much their superiors in age. They may not, indeed, receive from each other, such profound lessons in the science of crime, nor hear from the lips of their equals, observations which will tend so effectually to blast every germ of compunctive feeling, and establish the guilty soul in the principles of infidelity and misanthropy; but with associates of their own cast, they will more readily assimilate, and their initiation

in depravity may prove the more certain. It is well known, that when vagrant children are taken up, on their first offence, and threatened with imprisonment, they frequently evince great penitence and contrition, entreat forgiveness on the promise of better conduct, and deprecate a confinement in gaol with cries of distress and horror. But a familiarity with the company they find there, soon wears off this repugnance, and renders a second conviction a thing of comparative indifference. Hence, to convert a prison into a real Penitentiary, there ought to be, in a collection even of juvenile offenders, at least half a dozen different classes; not regulated by age; for it is obvious that a prisoner of eighteen may be far less guilty, less hardened, and more open to the visitations of remorse and shame, than others of twelve or fourteen. The divisions should therefore depend upon an experimental enquiry into their moral character and dispositions, and a knowledge of their previous habits.

The most important facts relative to the Bellevue prison, as connected with the objects of this report, will be best understood from the following answers of Arthur Burtis, Esq., superintendant of that extensive establishment, to questions sent to him from this committee.

Ques. 1. What number of boys are sent to the Penitentiary in the course of a year, and of what ages; and what is the average number at one time in the prison?

Ans. The average number of boys sent to the penitentiary for the last three years, has been seventy-five

per year, from twelve to sixteen years old. The average at one time in the house is about thirty-five.

Ques. 2. For what offences generally are they imprisoned?

Ans. Most generally for petit larceny and vagrancy.

Ques. 3. What proportion of them are sent there for the second or third time?

Ans. About one half are in for the second and third time; but it is impossible to be exact, as the same boys come in by so many different names.

Ques. 4. How far are the boys instructed?

Ans. They are taught the catechism, and to read and write.

Ques. 5. How far are they put to labour, in the Penitentiary?

Ans. We have not put them to labour, except a part in the Pin factory.

Ques. 6. What effect has the present treatment upon them, in reference to their reformation and future usefulness?

Ans. The effect of their present condition is *deplorable*. Instead of reformation, they must become worse, as we are compelled to put a boy for his first, perhaps small crime, with the old offender, if not in years, *in crime*, in the same room.

Ques. 7. What proportion of them are destitute of parents, or other persons to take charge of them?

Ans. About two thirds have one or more parents, but in almost every case their parents have taken very little or no care of them.

Ques. 8. As far as you have experience, what is the origin, or what leads to the commission of offences by boys of those ages ?

Ans. The principal cause of Juvenile Delinquency, is, first, the bad example they have from their parents and guardians ; when small, they are allowed to run at large without restraint. No child will be a vagrant, if put and kept steadily to a well-regulated school, but for a few years.—But the reason why their parents will not send them, is, the encouragement which our citizens give, (and no doubt from the best motives,) *to begging*. When a poor child calls at a gentleman's house for a little cold victuals, who can refuse, when they have it, and especially, since, if not given, it must be thrown away ? But if our citizens were aware of the evil, I am sure they would make a universal stop. I can not learn of one child that has been in the habit of begging, who has not turned out a prostitute, or vagrant ; and their begging serves only to keep their parents in idleness and profligacy : for they find it so profitable, that, if they have one or two good begging children, (as they term it,) it is all they want ; all they can get by other means, goes for drink. Another cause, is, sending small children round the docks, under the pretence of picking chips, and whatever they can find ; in peddling small articles on board of sloops, and through the streets, &c. These habits introduce them into bad company, and prove an almost certain cause of their ruin. It is hoped that they may be discountenanced by all good citizens.

Ques. 9. What proportion of them can read and write, at the time of their committal ?

Ans. About one in eight.

Ques. 10. How far are the boys separate from old offenders by day and by night ?

Ans. They are kept entirely separate, except a few that are in the Pin Factory, and they are under the care of a keeper.

From the exposition thus given of the subjects referred to their consideration, the Committee cannot but indulge the belief, that the inference which will be drawn by every citizen of New-York, from the facts now laid before him, will be in perfect accordance with their own,—that it is highly expedient that a HOUSE OF REFUGE FOR JUVENILE DELINQUENTS, should, as soon as practicable, be established in the immediate vicinity of this city.

The subject presents itself to the minds of your Committee, as one of the deepest importance. Such a proposition appears to us to come forward at the present time, clothed with all the authority which can be derived from considerations not only of humanity, of mercy, of christian tenderness, and parental feeling ; but of a due regard for the honour and reputation of this metropolis. To suffer such a building as the present Bridewell to remain in activity for a single year, after the appalling facts have been fairly disclosed of its total inadequacy to the purposes of such an institution, and the inevitable corruption of our youth, which results day by day, and hour by hour, from its continuance,—what is this but to view with complacency, and even to sanction by our apathy, a school, whose lessons of moral turpitude

and of dark iniquity, must assuredly render its pupils adepts in crime, and lost to all rational expectations of happiness as social and accountable beings. What parent or guardian, who has had to contend in the execution of his charge, with the innate perversities of human nature, and to enlist in the struggle between the powers of light and darkness, but must shudder at the bare possibility, that the child of a near and valued connexion, should, through the enticements of wicked associates, chance to fall into the hands of the officers of justice in this city, and be placed as an apprentice in this school!

The present is emphatically an age of humanity,—of unusual sympathy, on the part of the wise and virtuous, not only for those who are suffering from the unavoidable calamities of the world, but for those who, untaught and unprotected, are left to struggle with its manifold temptations. It is a period in which science is displaying its vast and increasing resources, not only in the conveniences and embellishments of life, but in advancing the interests of humanity and facilitating the means by which men may become wiser and better. Prisons and hospitals have felt, and are feeling its benign influence. The diseases of the body, and the maladies of the mind, have experienced its relieving hand,—and even the moral disorders of our corrupt nature have fallen within the circumference of its beneficent energies. Abroad and at home, there is a spirit of more than ordinary benevolence, seeking for the means by which it may invade more effectually, the domains of prejudice and folly, and relieve the sufferings which they

have entailed for ages upon their victims. In that quarter of the field which it has been our object to explore, much has been done in other places, and unless this city shall speedily renew its efforts, we shall soon be left greatly in the rear in this progress of humanity.

That the views of your committee, in relation to a House of Refuge, are not unsupported by the opinion of many of their fellow-citizens, who have had the most extensive opportunities of forming a correct estimate of its importance, they can confidently affirm. The District Attorney, in reference to a House of Refuge, remarks, in his communication to the committee, "That many of each description might be "saved" by it, "from continued transgression, no "one can doubt who will examine the statement "which I have made from the records of the Police "Office for 1822. This abstract contains the names "of more than four hundred and fifty persons, male "and female, none over the age of 25, many much "younger, and some so young as to be presumed incapable of crime. Many others not mentioned "have been discharged; from an unwillingness to "imprison, in hope of reformation, or under peculiar "circumstances. Such facts," he adds, "must satisfy "every one of the necessity of a House of Refuge. "It would be indeed difficult to determine who would "and who would not be influenced by such an institution, to leave the paths of vice: unworthy objects might "be received,—imposition practiced; yet surely out of "three or four hundred miserable beings, some would "be found worthy of protection, and desirous of "amendment.

“ Legislative interference must be had to carry into full effect the objects of your institution.

“ The law under which the Police Magistrates convict as vagrants, &c., ought to be amended to authorise them in proper cases, when the culprit consents, to deliver the party to the directors of the House of Refuge. The court ought to be empowered, when boys under fourteen shall have been acquitted of a theft, on account of their tender years, to dispose of them in like manner ; always consulting the views of the persons who may have charge of your proposed institution.” Thus far the District Attorney.

The keeper of the City Prison (Bridewell,) says in his letter ; “ The proposition of the society for erecting a House of Refuge, meets my warmest approbation. Of the boys who are committed here, I presume there might be, with care and attention, about one-third received in a House of Refuge, with hopes of reformation. The expense of supporting boys in a House of Refuge would not materially vary from 15 to 20 cents per day.”

The Superintendent of the Bellevue establishment thus replies to the queries of the committee in reference to this immediate object :—

Ques. 11. What is your opinion of the expediency of establishing a House of Refuge for Juvenile Delinquents.

Ans. I believe it feasible and necessary ; or we must continue to have our city thronged with young, idle vagrants. I think it charitable, humane, and economical.

Ques. 12. Of the boys who are in general committed to the Penitentiary, what proportion do you think might be received into a House of Refuge with a fair prospect of their reformation?

Ans. I think two-thirds may be made useful to themselves and the public.

Ques. 13. To what mechanical, or other employments could boys be put, in a House of Refuge, to the most advantage?

Ans. What mechanical employment will be the most advantageous, it is impossible for me to say. I should however suggest that they be put to different trades as application is offered for their labour.

Ques. 14. Would it be more economical to hire out their services by contract, to labour in the Establishment, or to procure raw materials, and work them on account of the House of Refuge?

Ans. I have no doubt that hiring them out by contract would be the most economical.

Ques. 15. What is the expense of supporting a boy per day in the Penitentiary?

Ans. About 9 cents per day.

Ques. 16. What do you think would be the expense of supporting them in a House of Refuge?

Ans. In a Temporary Refuge it will cost at least 12 cents per day, but in a Permanent, I should hope they would maintain themselves.

Ques. 17. Would it be necessary to deprive them of their liberty by restraints of walls or otherwise?

Ans. They must be kept secure, until the keeper and committee are well acquainted with their wishes and character.

Ques. 18. What proportion of them do you think would consent to be bound by indentures to go to sea, or to the country.

Ans. *They will all consent ;* that must be left to the judgment of the committee.

In answer to your general inquiry, I should suggest a Temporary and a Permanent Refuge: the Temporary to receive all Juvenile Offenders—to contain separate apartments for Classification ; there to have them taught and employed at such trades as may be found convenient, and not burthensome, with proper rewards and punishments, and from these bind out all that, after a proper acquaintance with their characters and wishes, give a reasonable hope of reformation, to merchants, farmers, or as seamen ; with an assurance, if they should behave improperly again, they will have to go into the Permanent Refuge.

The Permanent Refuge should receive all those in whom there is no reasonable hope of reformation, and those that should return to bad practices, after being put out of the Temporary Refuge ; these should be taught such trades as will be found most useful and convenient, as applications may offer.

JULY 3, 1823.

Thus supported in their views of the importance of a House of Refuge, by a mass of interesting facts, and by men, whose opportunities of practical information and judgment entitle their opinions, to much respect, the committee cannot but indulge the belief that the proposition of the society will meet with the prompt and cordial support of their fellow-citizens, with the

unhesitating patronage of the Corporation, and the approval of the Legislature. It remains for them to state more particularly their views of the plan of such an institution, and to enter into a few details, relative to its arrangement, and to advert to the success which has been obtained in some other countries, in the erection and progress of similar establishments.

The design of the proposed institution, is to furnish, in the *first place*, an asylum, in which boys under a certain age, who become subject to the notice of our Police, either as vagrants, or houseless, or charged with petty crimes, may be received, judiciously classed according to their degrees of depravity or innocence, put to work at such employments as will tend to encourage industry and ingenuity, taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, and most carefully instructed in the nature of their moral and religious obligations, while at the same time, they are subjected to a course of treatment, that will afford a prompt and energetic corrective of their vicious propensities, and hold out every possible inducement to reformation and good conduct. It will undoubtedly happen that among boys collected from such sources, there will be some, whose habits and propensities are of the most unpromising description. Such boys, when left to run at large in the city, become the pests of society, and spread corruption wherever they go. To expect the reformation of such, by the ordinary chances of Sunday schools, churches, or admonitions from Magistrates, would be vain and fruitless. There may be some, who, in the best regulated institution, would prove altogether incorrigible. But if placed in a situation in which their

dress, their food, their labour, their privations, and enjoyments, are all made to depend on their conduct; and in which every important step in the progress of improvement, advances them into a better class and greater comforts,—when they learn to know that a daily register is made of their conduct, that this register is inspected by the governors of the Institution, and by respectable visitors,—that the public eye is thus fixed upon them, and their future welfare has become the subject of public concern—is it not probable that in a majority of cases, the latent sparks of emulation may be elicited, and fanned into a goodly desire that they may yet live to honour their country, and to reward the assiduity which thus labours to save them? Such an Institution would in time exhibit scarcely any other than the character of a decent school and manufactory. It need not be invested with the insignia of a prison. It should be surrounded only with a high fence, like many factories in the neighbourhood of cities, and carefully closed in front. In addition to the class of boys just mentioned, the committee have no doubt that were such an institution once well established and put under good regulation, the Magistrates would very often deem it expedient to place offenders in the hands of its Managers, rather than to sentence them to the City Penitentiary. The gradations of crime are almost infinite; and so minute are the shades of guilt, so remote, or so intimate the connexion between legal criminality, and previous character, it would often be judged reasonable to use all the discretion which the law would possibly admit, in deciding upon the offence and the destination of

Juvenile Delinquents ; and every principle of justice and mercy, would point, in numerous cases of conviction for crime, to such a refuge and reformatory, rather than to the Bridewell or City Prison.

A third class which it might be very proper to transplant to such an establishment, and to distribute thro' its better divisions, are boys, (some of whom are of tender age,) whose parents, either from vice or indolence, are careless of their minds and morals, and leave them exposed in rags and filth, to miserable and scanty fare, destitute of education, and liable to become the prey of criminal associates. Many of such parents would probably be willing to indenture their children to the managers of a House of Refuge ; and far better would it be for these juvenile sufferers, that they should be thus rescued from impending ruin. The laws of this state, do not, as in Massachusetts and some other places, authorize magistrates to use compulsory measures with parents who thus grossly abuse their charge, and, at the same time absolutely refuse to resign their children to the hands of the guardians of the poor ; but it is surely presumable, that were suitable provision made for the economical support and instruction of such children, a law for this purpose might readily be obtained.

There is still a fourth description of youthful delinquents for whom the contemplated establishment would afford a most seasonable and essential refuge from almost inevitable suffering and deterioration : that is those youthful convicts, who, on their discharge from prison, at the expiration of their sentence, finding themselves without character, without subsistence, and igno-

rant of the means by which it is to be sought, have no alternative but to beg or steal. They may perhaps be provided for at the Alms-House during a few days, or they may receive the admonitions and advice of the superintendents how to conduct themselves, but this can avail them but little, and with their previous habits unaltered, and their vicious propensities aggravated by corrupt intercourse, they again become depredators, and are again consigned to the same, or to some other prison, and most probably under a different name. Your committee cannot but consider a house of refuge for such outcasts from society as a desideratum called for by every principle of humanity and christian benevolence. Here they will be put to work and treated according to their dispositions and behaviour; their capacities for useful service will become known; habits of industry will be acquired; moral precepts will be implanted; and suitable places will be eventually obtained for them, in which they may have every opportunity of becoming honest and useful members of the community.

There remains to be noticed but one more class, for whom a House of Industry and Correction, under the management we contemplate, would be an appropriate place for reformation and improvement. We allude to that class of delinquent females, who are either too young to have acquired habits of fixed depravity, or those whose lives have in general been virtuous, but who, having yielded to the seductive influence of corrupt associates, have suddenly to endure the bitterness of lost reputation, and are cast forlorn and destitute upon a cold and unfeeling public, full of compunction for their errors, and anxious to be restored to

the paths of innocence and usefulness. That there are many females of tender age just in those predicaments in this city, none can doubt who surveys the list of last years culprits, furnished by the District Attorney. In this list, are the names of thirteen females, of 14 years of age, fourteen others of 15 and 16, and about forty of 17 and 18. The ages of a considerable number in this appalling catalogue have not been inserted, and it is by no means to be supposed that even a majority of those unhappy females who are in the predicament we have alluded to, have become the subjects of police investigation.

It is very far from the intention of the Committee, to propose, that the contemplated Refuge should become the receptacle of females whose ages and habitudes in the paths of guilt, render their restoration to society a question of dubious result. However desirable it may be, that an institution should be formed for the special purpose of affording the means of reformation, to those who are sincerely desirous to abandon a life of such debasement and wretchedness, we have no hesitation in expressing the belief that it ought to be altogether detached from every other concern, and conducted by a separate association and with the most prudent attention to delicacy and retirement. But within the ages and under the circumstances we have alluded to, it is our decided opinion,—an opinion founded not only upon the reasonableness of the proposition, but upon the result of similar institutions in Europe, that destitute females might form one department of the establishment, with the greatest benefit to themselves, and with advantage to the institution. Oc-

cupying apartments entirely distinct from those of the other sex, and separated from them by impassable barriers, the females might contribute by their labour to promote the interests of the establishment, and at the same time, derive from it their full and appropriate share of benefit. On this point however, the committee only mean to express their opinion, without urging it as an indispensable part of the concern.

The idea suggested by the Superintendent of the Alms-House of two distinct institutions, a Permanent and a Temporary Refuge, seems naturally to have sprung from the consideration of a distinction which will doubtless be found to prevail among the inmates of such a Penitentiary, viz:—a separation of those who are obviously susceptible of reformation, and those whose vicious propensities appear to be incorrigible. But we do not conceive it necessary to carry this principle to the length of having two distinct erections ;—nor is it apprehended that two classes will by any means be sufficient. Even if there should be no more than forty or fifty inmates of the House of Refuge we believe that there ought to be at least six classes, in order to form such a separation of character, and establish such a gradation of treatment, as to afford a perpetual and powerful stimulus to improvement and reformation. We would make a distinction in each of these classes in their dress, diet, lodging, hours of labour, recreation, &c., and we doubt not that these and other modes of treatment, would be found quite sufficient to break down the most stubborn dispositions, without having recourse to flagellation, or other personally degrading modes of punishment. The mid-

dling and lower classes, should in no wise differ in appearance from a decent and well ordered school and manufactory. But we should rely above all in the reformation of our subjects, upon a careful, unabated, and judicious course of moral and religious instruction. The Bible should become familiar,—the admirable events which it records, and the Divine precepts which it contains, should be the subject, not merely of weekly but of daily enforcement; and, in order to render the moral and also the economical government of the institution more efficient, your committee would strongly recommend that a suitable number of ladies should be appointed to take a share in its administration. Of the special and very important advantages of associating the skill, the discretion, the tenderness, and fidelity of females, in concerns of this nature, we have not the least doubt. In those countries of Europe, in which penitentiary institutions, and establishments for the support of the poor, are under the best management, women are associated in the direction. In Holland, there is not, perhaps, an alms-house or a house of correction, in which females do not take an active share; and in no part of the world, it is believed, are the concerns of charity, and economical government, more wisely managed. In England, Scotland, and Ireland also, since the illustrious example of Mrs. Fry and her associates in Newgate, the humane design of ladies' associations has been greatly encouraged, and accordingly we are informed by the late reports, that female visiting committees have been formed in the prisons at Bedford, Bristol, Carlisle, Chester, Colchester, Derby, Durham, Dumfries, Exeter, Glasgow,

Lancaster, Liverpool, Nottingham, Plymouth, York, and Dublin.

The Committee would therefore deem themselves very deficient, did they not hold up, in a prominent point of view, the benefits to be derived from an enlistment of the services of judicious females in this moral warfare against the vices of society ; and they would beg leave further to express the opinion, that if an association of ladies were once formed for this purpose, essential benefits might result from inviting them to appoint a committee for the regular visitation and inspection of our City Penitentiary and Alms-House. Their influence and assistance would, we presume, prove acceptable and grateful to the superintendents of those departments.

With respect to the location of a House of Refuge, the Committee are of opinion, that it ought to be within an easy walk from the centre of the city, but so isolated from the dense parts of its buildings and population, as to admit of a distinct enclosure, and of space sufficient for exercise and recreation in the open air. It would be also desirable to annex, if possible, a large garden, not only for the advantage of furnishing the boys with instruction in horticulture, but for the economy it would produce in the expenses of the establishment.

In regard to a building, it may possibly be found, from considerations of expense, to be more advisable to purchase than to erect. But should a prudent regard to the future, as well as the immediate interests of the institution, dictate the expediency of at once erecting a building, adapted in all its parts to easy and effi-

cient government, no pains should be omitted to examine the most approved plans of prisons, and to decide upon that which the experience of this and other countries would show to be the best adapted to the exigencies of such an establishment. On this point, the publications of the London Society for the improvement of Prison Discipline, would afford important aid.

The introduction of labour would constitute an important feature in the concern, not only as a means of diminishing its expense and promoting its moral influence, but in order to supply its subjects with that instruction and with those habits which would enable them, on leaving the house, to procure a decent and honest livelihood. Various kinds of manufactories and trades might, doubtless, be introduced with advantage, and experience would soon enable the managers to decide upon the most profitable and eligible. The Committee are aware, that a public feeling has been excited against the admission of manufactories into Prisons and Penitentiaries, from the alleged injury which it inflicts upon the honest and indigent mechanics of the city ;—that “to set poor people, (and of course rogues and vagrants,) at work on the same thing that other people were employed on before, and at the same time not to increase the consumption, is giving to one what you take from another, and putting a vagabond in an honest man’s employment.”* To this objection, we cannot do better than to reply in the language of a committee on the

* Defoe, alms no charity.

management of the poor, in the city of Glasgow. They remark, that, “as a principle of political economy—as ‘attracting toward a particular trade, that stock which would not otherwise come to it,’ the objection is certainly well founded, if directed against a general system of providing for the poor in work-houses. But it is carried to a most impolitic length, if it be meant to exclude compulsory labour as an instrument of reformation. For let the loss on the one hand be fairly estimated. Let it be considered that the total quantity of work thus artificially created in a Penitentiary or School of Industry, is of so trifling an extent, compared to the total supply of the country, that its influence can scarcely be felt in the diminution of price ; that the articles produced are of so simple a kind, as not to compete with the regular manufactures ; and that, even if the capital and labour of the public were to a small degree displaced, they would soon find another vent. On the other hand, let the advantage of such work be duly weighed—the reformation of delinquents ; the improvement of police ; the peace, the order, and the ultimate happiness of society,—and even if a trivial loss could be substantiated on the maxims of political economy, it is not for a moment to be compared with the corresponding benefit.” The London Committee also of last year, have the following observations on this subject :—“ The
 “ introduction of trades into prisons is not a subject of
 “ just complaint to the honest and industrious. It is,
 “ surely, in every point of view, politic and wise, to
 “ convert the idle into labourers, and plunderers into
 “ honest men. Society may be benefitted by their

“ employment; it must be injured by their idleness.
 “ If the prisoner had not pursued a course of crime,
 “ he would have been occupied at a trade, or in labour.
 “ How is the case altered, but for the better, when the
 “ same individual abandons a system of plunder, by
 “ which all classes are directly or indirectly sufferers,
 “ and assumes or returns to honest employment? The
 “ fatal alternative—the discharge of the criminal with-
 “ out the means of subsistence—is obvious and inevi-
 “ table. He must be dependent on parish alms, or
 “ recur to depredations for support: he must be either
 “ a burden or a pest to the community.” We may
 add that it happens also very fortunately, that the ob-
 jection to Penitentiary labour, may be very much
 removed from the minds of the city manufacturers
 themselves, by hiring out to them the work of the
 prisoners or vagrants, or in other words, procuring
 work from the established manufactories, at fair prices.
 This procedure, we believe, is also found to be the
 most advantageous to the interests of such institutions.
 By pursuing a course of this kind, the intelligent
 superintendent of the Bridewell in Glasgow, was ena-
 bled, as he proved to one of your Committee, who
 visited that prison in 1819, to support for one year, a
 daily average of 210 prisoners at an expense to the
 institution of only £96. The whole disbursements of
 the house for the year was£1873=\$8324
 And the whole amount of labour£1777=\$7898

 Balance against the Bridewell£96= \$426

It will not unreasonably be expected that your
 Committee, in support of the measure which they thus

propose to the Society to bring before the public, should adduce, if possible, the example of similar institutions in other places, and shew their effects upon the character and habits of those who have been the objects of such bounty. Experience is certainly a very desirable test of every scheme for promoting general good, and especially of plans which necessarily involve a considerable amount of pecuniary expenditure in their support, and of time and labour in their management.

Although we are not apprized of there being any where in the United States a House of Refuge established and conducted upon the principles now proposed; yet it is known to your Committee that philanthropic individuals, in various places, have deemed such an establishment a desideratum in each of our large cities. In Boston there is an institution approximating in its object, to that under consideration. It consists of a house, to which are sent those children, whose parents, through culpable and vicious neglect, leave them to roam through the streets untaught and unprotected. By the laws of Massachusetts, children thus neglected, may be taken from their parents, at the discretion of persons duly authorized, and placed at school, or at trades with suitable masters. In this asylum their time is divided between the exercises of a school and manufactory, and when they have attained to a sufficient degree of skill and learning, places are obtained for them as apprentices at some useful art or trade.

But London and Dublin afford examples, quite in unison with that which your Committee is anxious to see erected in this City. In London there are several establishments of this nature; but the one

instituted by the "Philanthropic Society," in the borough, appears to come nearest in its general system to that which we would recommend. It "originated from the extent of Juvenile Depredations in the metropolis, and from a desire to ascertain the causes and arrest the progress of this great and growing evil. A large committee is appointed who meet every fortnight; and subcommittees, with confidential agents, are employed to investigate the cases of individuals, and to register the particulars. The building consists, first of a range of work-shops of one floor, upwards of 500 feet in length, under which is a rope walk, where every kind of lines, twines, and cord are manufactured; secondly of a separate enclosure, used as a house of probation or reform, for the criminal classes of boys; thirdly of a similar receptacle for the same description of girls; fourthly, of a chapel for religious worship; fifthly, of an eating-room, and also for an evening school-room; sixthly, of a warehouse, for the reception, delivery, and sale of the manufactured articles; seventhly, of the general kitchen, bakehouse, and dormitories; and, lastly, of the requisite accommodation for the superintendents. The quality of the food is proportioned to the gains of the youth, or the hardness of their labour. The boys are bound apprentices for a certain number of years to the master workmen employed within the institution. They have a particular dress, and a badge, which is left off after a certain period. The hours of work are from six in the morning till six in the evening in summer, and from day light till half past seven in winter. The school is open four evenings in the week for reading,

writing, and arithmetic. The elder boys are allowed to go out one day in the month, and the younger, one day in three months, to return before dark. If any one escapes and is retaken, he is treated as a refractory apprentice. The task assigned, is such as can easily be performed ;—and of the extra labour, one-half is allowed as a reward, a small part being given in money, and the rest placed to his credit, to be paid at the end of his apprenticeship. Work of almost every trade is done by the boys. The girls are employed in making, mending, and washing the boys' clothes, and in different kinds of needle-work ; and at the age of about 16, they are placed out as house servants, receiving a quarterly gratuity afterwards for good behaviour during a certain period. There are about 200 boys and girls in the place, and the result, as to conduct, is extremely gratifying."

Some modifications of this plan would be requisite to adapt it to the local circumstances of this city ; but in its general character it exhibits a cheering evidence of the blessings which flow from well-directed efforts to inure young people to habits of industry, regularity, sobriety, and morality. One of your Committee who went through the various wards of this institution, confirms the account which has been here given. The cheerful animation of the youthful labourers, and the neatness of their manufactured articles, were, in the highest degree, encouraging. Who can duly appreciate the importance of taking from the streets, boys who are under no parental or guardian control, who are "exposed to every temptation, addicted to every vice, ignorant of all that is good, and trained by their

“ associates to the perpetration of every crime,” and training them during several years in such an institution, and then providing them with situations, in which their corrected habits will, in all probability, render them examples worthy of the imitation of others ?*

As this society is very much limited with respect to the classes and ages of the children admitted within its walls, there are several others in London of an analogous character. The Society for the improvement of Prison Discipline, abundantly sensible of the distressing consequences of discharging young offenders from the prisons, altogether friendless, ignorant of the means of support, and literally not knowing where to lay their heads, or procure a single meal, established, soon after the commencement of its labours, a “Temporary Refuge” for such necessitous objects. “But for the seasonable assistance which this refuge affords,” the Committee remark, “the greater part of these lads must have again resorted to criminal practices for support. On admission into the Temporary Refuge, they have been instructed in moral and re-

* The chapel of this institution, a large and elegant building, was built by a loan of 120 shares of £50 each. Several of the decorations were from voluntary beneficence. Its funds are kept distinct, and the chapel accommodates a large congregation, besides the inmates of the institution. A portion is set apart for the poor, and a portion let off in pews, but the greater part is open to such as are disposed to contribute.

In 1803 the collection amounted to.....	£1060
Pew-rents, to.....	260
Donations.....	21
	1341
Ordinary expenses.....	657
Surplus in favour of the Institution.....	684

This, in a short time, will discharge the debt, and will then contribute to the Society's benefit.

"ligious duty, subjected to habits of order and industry,
 "and after a time disposed of, with a reasonable pros-
 "pect of their becoming useful members of society."
 The annual reports of the committee detail at length,
 numerous striking cases of the efficacy of this Refuge,
 in producing an entire change in the character of indi-
 vidual boys and girls, and of their obtaining situations
 of comfort and respectability.* Yet, they observe,
 "what has been done in the Temporary Refuge,
 "amidst many disadvantages, may be effected with
 "greater facility in a prison, where the authority of the
 "law can be exercised to enforce personal detention,
 "and the observance of the rules." The committee
 state, that they "are more happy to allude to the
 "success of this establishment in reclaiming the youth-
 "ful character, as much difficulty is stated to be felt
 "in managing juvenile offenders in ordinary prisons.
 "But boys in fact require a species of discipline distinct
 "from that of men; and as the gaols of the metropolis,
 "from their crowded state, and imperfect construction,
 "do not admit, without considerable alterations, of
 "such arrangements as are necessary to reclaim these
 "delinquents, it becomes of great importance, that, at
 "a period when crime is making such rapid progress
 "among the rising generation, a prison should be built
 "solely for the confinement of such offenders. It is not
 "the wish of the Committee that one of these boys
 "should escape correction; on the contrary, they
 "would inflict a punishment that would be severely
 "felt as such, but of an opposite character and ten-

* See Appendix B.

“ dency from that now experienced ; imprisonment in
 “ the gaols of the metropolis, being at present regarded
 “ by youthful criminals, with comparative indifference.”

It will doubtless be acknowledged by the society, that these important truths apply, with almost equal pertinency, to the state of the prisons and of juvenile criminality in the city of New-York ; and our authorities, and our citizens at large, may echo the sentiment contained in another part of the same report, that, “ it
 “ is the ordination of Divine Wisdom that man cannot
 “ suffer from the neglect of man, without mutual injury ; and, by a species of moral retribution, society
 “ is punished by the omission of its duties to the ignorant and the guilty. The renewed depredations
 “ of the offender, when discharged from confinement,
 “ the crimes which he propagates by his seduction and
 “ influence, spread pollution among all with whom he
 “ associates, and the number of offenders thus become
 “ indefinitely multiplied.” The report of the succeeding year, (1822,) also adds great confirmation to the valuable effects of the Tempory Refuge.*

Your Committee are by no means disposed to advocate the abrogation of severe punishment against those who commit offences against the peace and order of society. They would be far from expressing the desire, to introduce such a train of comforts into our prisons as to take off the disgrace and the sting of punishment. Their views on this subject and on the nature and design of legal punishments, accord so well with those of the London Committee

* See Appendix B.

on the improvement of Prison Discipline, that they cannot do better than to quote a paragraph of the last year's report of that Committee. "It is the conviction
 " of the Committee, that the security and welfare of
 " society demand the uniform punishment of crime, and
 " that, as nothing less than penal inflictions will ensure
 " public protection, punishment becomes a sacred
 " duty ; but the measure of the punishment must be
 " regulated by the character of the offence, the feelings of humanity, and the spirit of religion. The
 " design of imprisonment is not solely to inflict pain ;
 " suffering is only allowable, inasmuch as it is essential
 " to the correction of the prisoner, and the melioration
 " of his character. No vindictive or unnecessary
 " punishment is justifiable. The Committee are,
 " however, of opinion, and have always contended,
 " that severe punishment must form the basis of an
 " effective system of Prison discipline. The personal
 " suffering of the offender must be the first consideration, as well for his own interest, as for the sake of
 " example : he must be made to feel that this suffering attends the infringement of the laws, and the
 " violation of the peace and property of the community. Now, what is the nature of the discipline
 " which the society recommend ? It is a system of
 " hard labour, and regular employment. It is a system
 " in which spare diet, occasional solitary confinement,
 " and habits of order and silence, are steadily enforced.
 " It is a system in which seclusion from vicious associates is rigorously observed. It is a system of
 " religious instruction and moral restraint. The Committee would ask, what temptations to crime a prison

“ conducted on such principles can present ? Is it
 “ apprehended that the depredator will continue his
 “ courses, that he may encounter a life so irksomely
 “ painful, and opposed to all previous habits ? Will
 “ the idle steal that he may become industrious ; the
 “ intemperate, that he may be trained to sobriety ; the
 “ ignorant, that he may acquire moral and religious
 “ impressions ; and the disorderly, that he may be
 “ subject to seclusion and restraint ? Such conduct
 “ would be at variance with every known principle of
 “ human action. It is, in fact, a discipline above all
 “ others calculated to deter, as well as to reform. It
 “ habituates to thought and industry ; it breaks up
 “ old, and creates new associations ; and experience
 “ confirms, what reason suggests—that this discipline
 “ is regarded with perfect abhorrence by criminals of
 “ every description.”

These views of the London Committee, we believe
 to be perfectly just : but it is obvious that they apply
 only to the reformatory system of punishment in a
 state of complete and perfect management, and not to
 such penitentiaries as our Bridewell and State Prison.
 To confine criminals in such places as these are, in
 their present crowded state and extremely imperfect re-
 gulation, for the purpose of reforming them, is indeed
 a mockery of charity ; and to undertake to draw
 inferences against the utility of a Penitentiary System,
 from such examples, is, to found an argument
 against a principle, on the palpable abuse of that
 principle : it is illogical and absurd.—But the question
 of preference between the Penitentiary System, even
 as practiced in the different prisons in this country, and

a recurrence to the old plan of increasing the number of capital crimes, and inflicting corporal punishment by whipping, cropping, branding with a hot iron, pillories, stocks, &c., has been so minutely and ably discussed in a former report of this Society, it is needless, we think, to dwell longer on this point. We shall only remark, that the last report, (1822,) of the London Committee, contains a most satisfactory statement of the improvements which are taking place in the prisons of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and of various parts of the Continent of Europe,—all affording evidence of the vast importance of meliorating the condition of prisons; of the immense benefits of introducing classification, cleanliness, labour, industry, and moral instruction;—of adopting in short the Penitentiary System, on its true principles—severity and privation, mingled with a constant desire to reform the habits and to mend the heart. Were all our prisons judiciously constructed, properly supported, and wisely managed, we doubt not, that in every case, their annual reports would be of the same favourable nature, as that of the general penitentiary in Dublin, which has been recently established. “I am happy to inform “you,” says the reporter, “that as far as the system “has been tried in the (Richmond) general Peniten- “tiary, the results have been most satisfactory. With- “out specifying particular instances, it may be affirm- “ed, with the strictest regard to truth, that the moral “discipline enforced at the Richmond general Peni- “tentiary has been attended with very salutary effects. “The Penitentiary has been opened somewhat more “than a year and a half,—many of its present inmates “were at the first very idle and refractory, but for

“ some months, we have had nothing, generally speak-
 “ ing, but a scene of good order and continued in-
 “ dustry. About fourteen have been liberated, and
 “ we are not aware, that any of them have returned
 “ to their former evil courses. The governor has kindly
 “ permitted me to express, what is his conviction as
 “ well as my own, from the little experience that we
 “ have had, that the Penitentiary System enforced,
 “ will prove the greatest prevention to the commission
 “ of crime.”*

From the views which they have thus laid before
 the society, your Committee cannot but cherish the
 lively expectation, that when the public mind comes
 to be impressed with the nature and importance of
 these various considerations, there will be but one
 opinion of the necessity and expediency of providing
 a place in this city, which shall serve as a real peni-
 tentiary to the younger class of offenders ; as a refuge
 for the forlorn and destitute, who are on the confines
 of gross criminality ; and as a temporary retreat for

* This Penitentiary, we may add, is faithfully attended by a Committee of
 ladies, and it affords a most striking evidence of the good effects of female
 instruction. “In the course of eighteen months,” says the report, “during
 “ which the ladies have visited the prison, *not one female has been recommitted.*
 “ To afford relief to destitute prisoners, who, on their liberation, have evinced
 “ feelings of penitence, a House of Refuge has been established in Dublin,
 “ under regulations admirably adapted to promote reformation.” In Russia
 also, encouraged by the success of the example in Newgate, ladies have come
 forward in the task of visiting the prisons with the happiest effects. “The
 “ ladies Committee, under the personal influence of the Princess Mestchersky,
 “ is indefatigable in this christian work. This distinguished female daily visits
 “ the prisons, and reads a portion of the scriptures to the convicts. From a
 “ report of the state of the town prison, (St. Petersburg,) in September last, it
 “ appears that, of upwards of two hundred prisoners, there was not one sick
 “ person in the hospital, although before the present regulations were in force,
 “ nine or ten persons were usually sick in each ward.”

the discharged criminal, where he may find shelter, labour, and religious instruction, until some way can be pointed out to him of obtaining subsistence, without a recurrence to dishonesty and crime. If the actual situation of these several classes of criminal and destitute beings in this city, does not open a door for christian benevolence, as inviting in its promises of good, as any of the various kinds of charity, either at home or abroad, which claim the attention of our citizens, your Committee think they might in vain seek to explore the miseries of their fellow-creatures, with the hope of exciting the feelings of commiseration, and the energies of active and unwearied humanity. Can it be right that we should extend our views to the wants of those that are thousands of miles from us, and close our eyes upon the condition of the worse than heathen, that wander in our streets?—Shall our hands be opened, with distinguished liberality, to the means of civilizing and reforming whole nations in the remotest quarters of the globe, and closed to the obvious necessities of the outcasts of our own society? Your Committee mean no reflection whatever on the schemes so actively prosecuted of doing good in distant parts of the earth;—but surely, if this we ought to do, the other we ought not to leave undone. As members of this great community, we ought assuredly, to be vigilant in applying the most effective remedies to our own evils, ere our strength is wasted in healing the moral diseases of those whom we do not know. Shall it be said, in objection to the erection of another public edifice, that the funds of the corporation are inadequate to the undertaking,—that the city is embarrassed with a debt which its income is insufficient to extinguish?

Is there no resource then in the public spirit of our citizens?—Is the safety of our persons and property,—is the tranquility of our streets,—are the decency and good order of our population,—are the wisdom and humanity of our penal statutes,—the promptitude with which crimes are justly punished, and the guilty made to atone by penitence and labour for the injuries they have committed,—are these no motives to the liberality of our offerings,—no stimulus to wealth, to impart from its superfluous stores that which will diminish nought of its own enjoyment, but which will stand as a monument of its beneficence to future ages? Shall it be said of the city of New-York that it is either too poor, or too contracted, to erect such a monument to justice and humanity? Shall the metropolis of a state which stands foremost in the great American confederacy, for its enlightened and liberal policy, and at a period too, when its high toned munificence is the theme of universal applause; shrink from such a discharge of duty to its poor, and of duty to itself? Your Committee cannot but believe that there are many, very many of their fellow-citizens, whose worldly exertions have been blessed with success, and who, regarding themselves as stewards of the gifts which a bountiful Providence has bestowed upon them, need only be convinced of the beneficent nature of such an institution, to bring forward, with unstinted sufficiency, the means of its ample establishment. Neither can we have a doubt, that when this question is proposed to the guardians of our city, and to the Legislature of the state, those bodies will promptly perform all that to them belongs, to encourage a measure, fraught with the salvation of hundreds and thousands of our common race!

We have no belief that the contemplated institution need to be very costly. But whatever might be the expense of its erection and maintenance, we cannot doubt that in a short time it would prove to be a source of real economy to the city. No less a sum than \$85,000 was last year expended in the support of the poor, and in the conviction and maintenance of criminals. Every culprit, convicted in our courts, and confined during twelve months in the prisons, subjects the city to an expense of \$150 ; and while we have before us the fact that 200 children are annually arrested and confined, and reflect for a moment on the inevitable connexion which subsists between public vice, and public poverty and misery ;—no one, we think, who duly considers the proposition in all its bearings, will question the soundness of the opinion, that few of the eleemosynary institutions of the city, will more positively tend to alleviate the increasing burden which pauperism is enforcing, than an asylum, in which those degraded outcasts from society—the juvenile depredators upon the property and the morals of the innocent, are coerced into habits of industry,—where their bodies and their minds may be so trained, as to justify the hope, that when discharged, they will become useful and respectable characters.

We venture upon those remarks and indulge these anticipations, under the strongest impression of the importance of the subject upon which we have undertaken to dilate. Much more might be said in the way of elucidation and argument, but this is deemed unnecessary;—and we cannot terminate our report more to the satisfaction of our own minds, than by quoting the conclusion of the last year's report of the **London**

Committee for the improvement of Prison Discipline and the reformation of Juvenile Offenders. “ We live
 “ in times in which extraordinary efforts are in action
 “ for the moral welfare of mankind ; when the state
 “ of Europe opens channels of extensive usefulness,
 “ and presents occasions for immediate exertion, which
 “ could scarcely have been anticipated, and which it
 “ would be criminal to neglect. There seems, too,
 “ at the present time, to prevail among the benevolent
 “ of different nations, a unity of thought and design,
 “ which cannot fail to strike a considerate beholder :
 “ and he must be dead to sensibility, who can con-
 “ template, without emotion, the intercourse which
 “ now subsists between men of various countries who
 “ are labouring for the public good, and whom national
 “ differences have too long kept asunder. Enlightened
 “ principles and practical benevolence are taking deep
 “ root. Associations, originating in public feeling, and
 “ sanctioned by public authority, are forming in coun-
 “ tries, where co-operation in deeds of mercy, has
 “ hitherto been but little known. The moral effects of
 “ these institutions will be vast, and indeed incalculable,
 “ not only by the accomplishment of that which it is
 “ their professed object to promote ; but such associa-
 “ tions call into action the latent seeds of public virtue,—
 “ bring together the pious and the good of every reli-
 “ gious sentiment and political opinion, and eradicate
 “ those prejudices which too often alienate affection,
 “ and separate man from man. In the exercise of their
 “ duties, prison societies bring into benevolent contact
 “ the educated and the enlightened, with the ignorant and
 “ the debased ; the great and the powerful, with the lowly
 “ and the oppressed ; the pure and the elevated, with

“ the abject and the guilty. They supply an impor-
 “ tant chasm in the widely extended circle of human
 “ charities ; connecting those who most need, with
 “ those who most effectually can dispense mercy.—
 “ To behold nation after nation thus catching the spirit,
 “ and engaged in the arduous struggle, of self-improve-
 “ ment ; to trace the progress of civilization and refine-
 “ ment, by the establishment of institutions which have
 “ for their direct object the reformation of the vicious
 “ and the succour of the oppressed ; to observe the ri-
 “ gour of antiquated custom, and the relics of barba-
 “ rism yielding before the advancement of knowledge,
 “ and the humanizing influence of christian principles—
 “ this is a moral spectacle which it is indeed a privilege
 “ to witness, and in which it is a glory to share.

“ To diffuse principles, and cherish feelings, which are
 “ directly calculated to insure respect and obedience to
 “ the laws,—meliorate the state of society, and promote
 “ the present and eternal well-being of man—is the aim
 “ of the society for the improvement of Prison Disci-
 “ pline ; and surely an object of greater importance can-
 “ not engage the attention or impress the heart. Of the
 “ various obligations due to the community, the preven-
 “ tion of crime, may be ranked among the most sa-
 “ cred :—whether regarded as a duty enjoined by reli-
 “ gion, urged by enlightened policy, or impelled by be-
 “ nevolent feeling, it is one which involves the great
 “ interests of human nature, and demands exertions
 “ from which no man is entitled to consider himself
 “ exempt.”

APPENDIX,

A.



The following list affords specimens of the four hundred and fifty cases of Juvenile Offences, furnished by the District Attorney, from the Records of the Police Office, for 1822.

Henry H. aged 15, came out of Bridewell, now charged with stealing, vagrant thief; sentence 6 months to Penitentiary.

David B. aged 12, brought up by the watch, charged with stealing, vagrant thief; 6 months Penitentiary.

William H. goes about begging, no house or business, a vagrant; 6 months Penitentiary.

John T. aged 12, no parents, boards with a woman in Thomas-street, cannot tell her name, came from Newburgh a week ago, arrested in coming out of a house where he went to steal, vagrant thief; 6 months Penitentiary.

Henry M. aged 12, no place to live at, goes out to beg, charged with stealing fat, vagrant thief; 6 months Penitentiary.

Joseph P. aged 13, no parents, no home, goes a begging, charged with stealing, vagrant thief; 6 months Penitentiary.

Oliver R. aged 14, father lives in Flushing, stays with a woman in Mulberry-street, no home, vagrant thief; 6 months Penitentiary.

George D. aged 14, father dead, mother in Baltimore, picks up chips, begs for victuals, and steals, vagrant thief; 6 months Penitentiary.

Thomas Y. & James M'D. boys, wandering about idle, no home, and thieves; 6 months Penitentiary.

Thomas H. C. aged 12, father is dead, mother lives at service, never went to school, been twice in Bridewell, once in Penitentiary, charged with stealing; 6 months Penitentiary.

Martha Van C. aged 22, taken up by the watch, out of Penitentiary last week, often in Bridewell, three or four times in Penitentiary, no means of living, a vagrant; 6 months Penitentiary.

Eliza M. aged 15, has no parents, came out of Penitentiary in December last, been there twice, charged with stealing, 4 months Peniten'y.

Hetty S. aged 13, goes to beg, found in a house with another stealing; 6 months Penitentiary.

Francis J. aged 17, has no money, no clothes, no residence; 4 months Penitentiary.

Jacob B. aged 17, came out of Penitentiary in October last, is now indicted for burglary; 6 months Penitentiary.

Jane Ann S. aged 14, has been twice in Bridewell; 6 mo's Peniten'y.

Alexander G. aged 18, no occupation, no particular place of abode, vagrant thief; 6 months Penitentiary.

Peter W. & John W. ages 19, both noted vagrants, and idlers, vagrant thieves; 6 months Penitentiary.

Phebe Ann M. aged 19, no honest means of living; 60 days City Prison.

Mary Ann T. aged 18, has no honest means of support; 60 days ditto.

John C. aged 19, no particular place of residence, charged with stealing; 60 days City Prison.

Samuel S. aged 14, has no means of support, came out of the Alms-House, vagrant; 6 months Penitentiary.

Sally B. brought up by the watch, was taken from under the stoop, of the Alms-House; 60 days City Prison.

John B. brought up by the watch, has no place of residence, and is very filthy

Hannah M. has no home, and has lodged in the watch-house for two nights past; 60 days City Prison.

George, *alias* Rodolph T. aged 19, has no particular place to live at, no money, no clothes, charged with stealing; 6 months Penitentiary.

Alfred C. aged 13, was bought up, having been found sleeping in some shavings, destitute, and no home; 6 months Penitentiary.

Samuel C. was found drunk in the street, without clothes to cover his nakedness, no means, no money; 60 days City Prison.

Jane B. aged 18, came from Penitentiary a year ago; 6 mos. Pen'y.

Thomas P. aged 15, had just come out of Bridewell, has been in the Penitentiary, has no particular place to live at; 6 months Penitentiary.

Charles M., John B., & Jacob B., ages 14, were found sleeping at night in a boat, no homes, no parents; 6 months Penitentiary.

William S. aged 11, his father turned him out of the house, was found sleeping in a boat at night; 6 months Penitentiary.

Sophia H. aged 14 years, was charged with stealing, goes about begging, has been in Bridewell six times, no means; 6 months Penitentiary.

Alexander C. has no money, no business, just come out of prison, no particular place to sleep at; 6 months Penitentiary.

Etienne S. aged 21, came from Canada five months ago, first offence, has no place to live at; 60 days City Prison.

Rachel S. aged 18, has no particular place to live at, is poor and ragged, was found in the street, said she was sick; 3 months Peniten'y.

Susan J. aged 18, has no home or means of taking care of herself, very filthy, and nearly naked; 3 months Penitentiary.

Mary B. aged 16, has been a vagant about two years; 30 days City Pr.

Harriet B. aged 18, has no clothes, most of those on her back are borrowed; 60 days City Prison.

Edward Van C. aged 13, was found at night sleeping on the sidewalk, has been once in Bridewell, no parents; 6 months Penitentiary.

John H. aged 13, was found at night sleeping on the side-walk, no parents; 6 months Penitentiary.

Lucinda D. aged 16, came out of Bridewell about two months ago, is a prostitute, no home; 6 months Penitentiary.

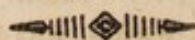
Robert T. a boy, brought up charged with stealing, has been in Bridewell, and Penitentiary, no home; 6 months Penitentiary.

John C. aged 14, has no parents, was found sleeping in a yard on some shavings; 6 months Penitentiary.

Maria W. aged 18, lives with her parents at the hook, has been a prostitute for six months; 4 months Penitentiary, &c. &c.

B.

Extracted from the London Reports.



TEMPORARY REFUGE.

The following Cases are given, as an outline of the description of characters which have been relieved by the Committee :—

1.—A. B. aged fourteen, was discharged from the New Prison, Clerkenwell. When received under the care of the Society, he had been in the commission of crime for eight months. During this period, he had plundered to a considerable amount, and had been engaged in purchasing and passing forged notes, picking pockets, and shop-lifting. He was in the Temporary Refuge for four months, and his conduct satisfied the Committee of the sincerity of his professions, and the earnestness of his desire to amend his life. He was consequently admitted into the Permanent Establishment, where his conduct continued to afford great satisfaction. He was discharged to his father-in-law, who is by trade a weaver, and who is teaching the lad his own trade. The accounts of his conduct are extremely favourable, and such as to justify the expectation, that he will become an honest and industrious member of society.

2.—C. D. aged seventeen, was discharged from the Borough Compter. He had been apprenticed to a paper-stationer, but having mis-conducted himself, left his master, and engaged himself as a gentleman's servant. He was tried in horsemonger-lane, for stealing lead, in company with other bad characters, and sentenced to one month's imprisonment. When in his master's service, he defrauded him to a considerable amount. On the discharge of the boy from prison, he applied to one of the visitors of the Society, who placed him in the Temporary Refuge, where his general conduct and demeanor have given general satisfaction. He has been bound apprentice for seven years; and the accounts received of his conduct are very favourable.

3.—E. F. aged twelve, was discharged from the Borough Compter. The father of this youth deserted his wife, and left her with five children to maintain, entirely destitute. This boy defrauded his mother, from whom he stole the implements of trade, which his father had left at home. For this offence, the mother caused him to be committed to the Borough Compter for a week. On his discharge, he was admitted into the Temporary Refuge; and after conducting himself with propriety for six months, he was received into the Permanent Establishment. He has been bound apprentice to a captain in the merchant service, and has lately returned from a voyage of eight months, and presented himself to the Committee, with an excellent character from his master.