

cannot indeed escape the conviction that we have been systematically manufacturing criminals in our jails, and that hitherto our prisons, instead of being reformatory institutions, have been simply nurseries of vice and hotbeds of crime. It may indeed be said with melancholy truth that we have provided a complete system of education for this portion of our population; but in that system the jails have been our normal schools, and the penitentiary our university.

True, indeed, we have not been singular in our neglect of these helpless and unfortunate children. Older and wealthier communities than ours, even England and France, the nations foremost in the van of civilization in Europe, have, until within the last few years, been as sinfully indifferent to the fate of the pauper children in their midst as we have been in Canada.

Within the last few years, however, a great change has come over the public mind in France and England on this great social question; and in these countries, and also in the neighbouring States, institutions under the names of "Homes," "Industrial Farms," "Refuges," or "Reformatories," have been established—all intended, in a greater or less degree, to meet the wants of this large and unfortunate class.

In our own country, reformatories for juvenile offenders have, within the last few years, been established. These establishments go some way to meet the great social want. They afford an admirable moral, religious, and industrial training to the youths who enter them; but these youths are but a small fraction of the class to which they belong, who have need of such a training. To qualify himself for the reformatory, the boy must be a convict; he must have passed through a jail, and undergone the disgrace of a trial. Reformatories are therefore not available for boys who have not entered upon a course of actual crime, and made themselves amenable to the law. They, in fact, are remedial, but not preventive; their object is to reform the boy who has become criminal, not to train and instruct the pauper boy while yet innocent of crime. This is, of all others, a case where prevention is better than cure. It is better because it is more agreeable, more hopeful, more economical, more humane, and more Christian.

Homes or Refuges, such as I have briefly sketched, would form a kind of intermediate link between our common schools and our juvenile reformatories. While they partake to some extent of the character of both, they are entirely distinct, and properly distinct from both, and form, in fact, their natural and necessary supplement.

CLASSES OF CHILDREN FOR WHOM "HOMES" ARE INTENDED.

From what has preceded, it is evident that "Homes" are intended for the benefit of destitute and neglected pauper children; for children who, but for the intervention of such extrinsic aid, would receive no training or education, and who, from the circumstances in which they are placed, would be drifted, as it were, into a career of vice and crime. This class of pauper children would be found to consist principally of

1. Vicious and incorrigible children.
2. Vagrants.
3. Children without parents or protectors, or children whose parents or natural protectors, from poverty or other causes, are unable or unwilling to afford them that education which they require, and to which they are entitled.

As it is my intention to present here an outline merely of the scheme which I have submitted for the consideration of the Board and of the Government, I do not think it necessary to discuss the objections which have been urged against such a scheme. Those objections I have endeavoured to meet in the report submitted to the Government. Nor is it desirable that I should enter into any details as to the management and support of the "Homes." Upon these and all other matters of detail much valuable information can be obtained from the reports of analogous institutions in other countries, and more particularly from the reports of the refuges, which have for upwards of twenty years been in successful operation in the neighbouring States.

In concluding this brief memorandum, I am anxious to record my own strong conviction that it is not to our penitentiaries, nor yet to our jails, nor even to our admirable reformatories, but to "Homes," or some such institutions, that we must mainly look if we hope with God's blessing to "stand between the living and the dead and stay the plague" of immorality and vice around us.

8. EXTRACT FROM THE PRESENTMENT OF A KENT GRAND JURY.

The Jurors for Our Lady the Queen, upon their oath present:—That we have great pleasure in congratulating this honorable Court, ourselves and our noble country generally, upon the evident diminution of crime, amongst us, of late years. * * * Other and

more pleasing causes, are our unlimited elements of material prosperity, the industry, perseverance and success of our sturdy people; our excellent school system, and our advancement in civilization. * * * An indispensable condition from which Divine protection is to be expected, being purity of morals, we cannot doubt but increased facilities for moral and religious training in our schools, particularly in the cities and towns, may be of the highest importance.

9. EVILS OF STREET EDUCATION.

One cold, rainy day in the year 1850, a stranger came to my father's door. "Never," said my mother, "Shall I forget his countenance. He wore a look of sorrow such as I have never seen upon man before." The wind was howling mournfully down the street, and the rain beating furiously down, in fit keeping with his sorrow, and the tears that inwardly were falling upon his heart.

He said not a word, but with a trembling hand reached out to my father a paper. It was a petition, signed by many of the citizens, to delay, for a few months, the execution of his son. Young A—— was a lad of only eighteen years, who then lay in prison, under sentence of death. His crime was arson.

Night after night had the city been alarmed by fires. Fire after fire followed in rapid and terrible succession that winter. So frequent did they become that no citizen retired at night without leaving everything in readiness for a fire, expecting before morning that his house would be wrapped in flames. The watch of the city was doubled, and doubled again, but seemingly to no purpose. Still factories, stables, stores, churches, and even dwelling houses were laid in ruins by the terrible torches of incendiaries. Thousands of dollars were offered for their arrest, but, undiscovered, they continued their work of destruction. At last the vigilant eye of one of the police caught young A—— in the very act of setting fire to a building. He was arrested, tried, and sentenced to be immediately hung.

During the course of his trial another young man, of twenty-three years of age, was found to be his accomplice in crime, and received the sentence of death, which was executed in the fall of 1851.

The parents of A——, dressed in the deepest mourning, went with their petition to the Governor. He mercifully granted their request. The sentence was not only delayed, but was eventually commuted to "state prison for life." And, for aught I know, he is to-day dragging out his miserable life within the walls of a prison.

These young men were both members of fire companies. None worked harder than they to extinguish the fires their own hand had kindled. It was the excitement of the fire and the carousal which always followed, but most of all, their street education, which led them to their course of crime. "O," said A——, while under sentence of death, "had I listened to the entreaties of my godly mother to stay at home in the evenings I should not be here!"

In our large towns and cities thousands of young men are annually ruined by their street education. Beyond the restraints of home and in contact with the vile characters who walk our streets in evil idleness through the watches of the night, what wonder that so many perish, and perish so young! There is no place where a young man is so free from temptation as at home, and nothing will sooner lead him to ruin than a street education.—*Christian Advocate and Journal.*

10. THE POWER OF ONE GOOD BOY.

"When I took the school," said a gentleman, speaking of a certain school he once taught, "I soon saw there was one good boy in it. I saw it in his face. I saw it by many unmistakable marks. If I stepped out and came suddenly back, that boy was always studying, just as if I had been there, while a general buzz and the roguish looks of the rest showed there was mischief in the wind. I learned he was a religious boy and a member of the church. Come what would, he would be for the right.

"There were two other boys who wanted to behave well, but were sometimes led astray. These two began to look up to Alfred, and I saw, were much strengthened by his example. Alfred was as lovely in disposition, as firm in principle. These three boys began now to create a sort of public opinion on the side of good order and the master. One boy and then gradually another sided with them. The foolish pranks of idle and wicked boys began to lose their popularity. They did not win the laugh which they used to. A general obedience and attention to study prevailed.

At last, the public opinion of the school was fairly revolutionized; from being a school of ill-name, it became one of the best behaved schools any where about, and it was that boy Alfred who had the largest share in making the change. Only four or five boys held out, and these were finally expelled. "Yes," said the teacher, "it is in the power of one right minded, right hearted boy to do that."