

INSTITUTIONAL LIFE.

Institutions for children abound, not because that is the best method, but because it is the easiest. Ordinary children who are left homeless and dependent from any cause are better provided for in village and farm homes. A hot house existence does not produce a thrifty, industrious type of citizen nor does it supply the freedom of action and simple pleasure that the period of childhood requires. The safe rule to follow is: first, to keep children in their natural homes if at all possible; and second, to replace such as are unavoidably homeless in family homes, under careful supervision. Even for delinquents boarding in country homes would be better for the average child than the herding together that is inevitable in the institution. Such children always learn more badness from each other than they can possibly learn good from their teachers. In the family home, with its great variety of interests and occupations, the thoughts are diverted from evil and the examples of those around them help to reshape the life and character.

But as there is no likelihood that institutions for children will ever be entirely abandoned, they should be built and conducted on the family plan, imitating, as nearly as may be, the natural home.

SLUMS AND PLAYGROUNDS.

The congested slum districts in large cities are responsible for much youthful wrongdoing. Deprived of their reasonable share of home comfort and happiness, parents as well as children become discouraged. Discontent leads to carelessness and drunkenness. The streets are more attractive than the hovel or crowded flat. The saloon and the cheap theatre cater to the craving for sociability and amusement, and an indifferent community pays dearly for its neglect of the poor. Decent sanitary homes on streets and not in lanes and alleys; playgrounds and recreation centres; fair wages and shorter hours of labor; more friendly intercourse between rich and poor—these and other social advantages, will, when systematically undertaken, lessen very materially the work of the juvenile and criminal courts. Many more small neighborhood playgrounds in charge of responsible persons are needed in towns as well as large cities. Numerous social settlements should be established where educated and devoted men and women of unselfish purpose could live with and among the poor, to inspire them by noble example. Churches everywhere should lend their great organization, wealth and influence to a more practical study of social needs, and to a defence of the poor against the aggressions and tyranny of avarice and greed.

PROBATION.

In order to bring about the reformation of law-breakers without the necessity of imprisonment a system of probation in all criminal law courts is advocated and has been successfully tried in many countries. Probation means the conditional release of the offender after conviction in order to enable him by restitution and