

they have been in operation for very many years—but as to the qualification for admission, or in other words whether these institutions should be used as places of light punishment for boys who have been guilty of trivial offences—“who have stolen pease, or pulled up a mill dam, or made a hole in a wall or gap in a hedge, carried off a duck, or spoiled an apple tree, or knocked off a door handle, or unhinged a gate, or committed some other minor trespass upon the rights of man;” or whether they should be places of hard discipline for the same classes of the community—such discipline as requires a criminal nature for its subject, and a certain period of time for its test. It is not a little singular that the advocates of the latter view are men who, either as inspectors or managers, have been connected with, and may therefore be supposed to know something about, the working of reformatories. Mr. Sidney Turner in a recent “Report of the Inspector,” condemns the sending of young persons to a reformatory who have not been guilty of some very serious offence than the wild freaks of many a boyish nature; and suggests that the cause of the incarceration of these juvenile delinquents is not always of a nature which has their reformation for its principal object. “We cannot wonder,” says he, “that the temptation to get the child well trained and clothed and fed at the public expense should be found more powerful than a parent’s natural instinct to avoid the disgrace and pain of the child’s conviction and separation from her.” A Mr. Kynnersley, of Birmingham, makes the same complaint, and warns the public that “it is absolutely necessary that reformatory schools should be reserved for those children only who, either from having previously been convicted, or from other circumstances, appear to be so far gone in crime as to afford little hope of being curable by any less expensive and less protracted system of treatment.” We apprehend that the views of these gentlemen will be considered somewhat novel in this country. Here, at least, there are not two opinions as to what a reformatory should be—what the nature of its discipline—what the object it should have in view. A reformatory should not be a jail. Its name implies its character. A jail seldom has a reforming effect upon any criminal, be he or she young or old, who is once confined within its walls. In nine cases out of ten, it has the very opposite effect, rendering even more confirmed in sin and more sunk in the slough of degradation than before, those criminals who once become its inmates. Many a young lad, whose higher instincts and whose better qualities have been little more than blunted by his first transgression, has been plunged deep into the mire of wickedness and depravity by being confined with criminals of more advanced years. It may, indeed, be said, there is no absolute necessity for keeping prisoners of all ages together. Perhaps there is not; but it is too frequently the case that it cannot be avoided. If it can—if a proper system of classification is possible—then, according to the views of the English authorities we have just quoted, reformatory institutions would be altogether unnecessary. This is the rational conclusion from such premises. Yet it can hardly be supposed that these persons desire to be understood as favouring such a conclusion. We must naturally revert to the old idea—that which is the most generally conceived, and the most consistent with common sense—that reformatories have a purpose distinct from that of a jail; that the object is to take the oversight of juvenile delinquents, who, by moral example, and the exercise of industrial habits should be led, as far as possible, from the ways of crime, and so set out on the highway of life as that they may grow up good and useful citizens. The principle, that it is the duty of the State to take care of such a class of the community, will be generally concurred in. “Prevention is better than cure.” It is much better to take a young lad by the hand, and lead him away from the paths of wickedness, while he has a mind susceptible of good impressions, than be under the necessity of treating him, at a later period of his life, as a criminal. The Canadian government, acting on this principle, has established a reformatory in each section of the Province—one at Penetanguishine, and another at Isle-aux-Noix. The reports of these institutions show, that so far as they are provided with the means of fulfilling the ends for which they were established, they have done some good. But it must at once be apparent, how very limited is their field of operations, and how many hundred instances of juvenile offences there are that never come within the purview of the managers of the reformatories. The institutions are too distant to be made available for the entire country. And to ask a government to establish such a number of these houses as would meet the requirements of the entire population of the Province, is out of the question. The thing is simply impossible. Under such circumstances it is a question how far the larger cities are justified in neglecting to provide for the care of that class of their inhabitants who, at no great cost, may be prevented from becoming hardened criminals. A House of Refuge was at one time built in this city, which might have included in the circle of its operations these little offenders; but the building is uninhabited, save by rats and mice. It ought certainly to be turned to some account, and in

no way could it be better used than in that we have now indicated. In Lower Canada, something of the same kind might be done. Municipal Corporations cannot, righteously, shake themselves free of the obligation which rests upon them, of taking care of the juvenile offenders, who, from time to time, appear before the judicial authorities. We by no means desire to remove from the shoulders of the supreme legislative body of the country the obligation which rests upon them. The attention of Parliament might profitably be directed to the subject, and municipal fathers would be doing a good service in rising above the petty squabbles, and the little trivialities in which they too frequently indulge, and take into their consideration so important a subject as that which has been broached by the journals of Lower Canada.—*Leader.*

3. LOWER CANADA REFORMATORY SCHOOLS.

The director of this Provincial Institution, Mr. Prieur, communicates in a communication to the *Minerve*, that it is not sufficiently known nor appreciated in the country. The school was removed some time since from Isle-aux-Noix to St. Vincent de Paul, to a building which, we believe, was formerly occupied by nuns. The number of pupils has increased from 22 in January last to 49. The establishment could accommodate 150, without increasing the number or salary of the teachers,—the only additional expense being food and raiment. Mr. Prieur thinks that pupils who serve in the school short terms are but little benefitted and not reformed; they soon come back by relapse. He recommends judges to sentence young offenders to long terms, as the most merciful course to be pursued towards them. Long terms are preferable, not only in a moral but also in an economical point of view. The culprit has time to be apprenticed, within the institution, to a trade: this generally takes three years: then his labour becomes more and more profitable, and he is thus made to pay fully for his expenses. Finally, when he leaves the school, he is not only reformed in his habits, but able at once to obtain an honest and comfortable livelihood. The pupils are reported happy; and, as an instance of the excellent discipline they have attained, it is stated that the fruit on trees in their play-ground have been left untouched by them.—*Witness.*

4. ROMAN CATHOLIC REFORMATORIES.

Six Roman Catholic reformatory schools in Britain receive £15,154 from Government. The schools contain 882 pupils, with 87 officers, or one officer to every ten children.

5. BRITISH REFORMATORY SCHOOLS.

Mr. Sidney Turner, the inspector appointed to visit the reformatory schools of Great Britain, has presented his annual report. He has to state that the number of young offenders in the 62 certified reformatories increased in the course of the year 1861 from 3,803 to 4,337, including 186 placed out on license and not yet finally discharged. In estimating the value and results of the reformatory system, we look naturally to the number of young offenders committed to prison year by year. Now, the commitments of persons under 16 will be found to have decreased since 1856 about 43 per cent. in England, allowing for increase of population. The number steadily diminished from 1856 to 1860, but in 1861 increased above 9 per cent. over the previous year; and the number of adult commitments increased still more. Various circumstances may have contributed to this increase. There is scarcity of employment, which affects especially the class of discharged criminals—a class which is every year augmenting, and the increase tells very seriously on the amount of juvenile delinquency. The returns of reconvictions show how large a proportion of this class defy the efforts made for their reformation in our convict as well as our ordinary prisons, and Mr. Turner again expresses his hope that some means will be found for the more effectual surveillance of at least the habitual criminal offenders, the men who have lived for years on the produce of their criminal or vicious habits, and have made violence or theft their profession; it is perhaps to be regretted that their sentences are often so short. Another cause of the increase of the number of juvenile commitments in 1861, is probably the over-use of reformatories. Of the whole number sentenced to reformatories in the year, more than five-eighths were sent on a first commitment, nearly a fourth were under 12 years of age, and the commitments in a large number of cases were for very petty offences, the sentence being apparently passed rather in reference to what the child was likely to become from the bad example or neglect of its parents, or from its destitute circumstances, than to its actual criminality or viciousness. Reformatories are for those who are not curable by a less expensive and less protracted system of treatment. Until the parent is made to contribute to the child’s maintenance in every