

permitted to become novices in crime before being committed, still a careful examination of the homes, surroundings and training of the boys will scarcely warrant this conclusion. True we have a few who may be called *bad* boys, and yet even these are not intentionally so. Some of them have inherited tendencies in certain directions. Thieves they are and will continue to be long after they leave the school; the best training that experience and observation can suggest, seems to be inadequate to check them. But these are the very few. The majority of those committed for stealing are the creatures of circumstances. Their home training has been of the poorest description. They have been allowed to form evil companionships and to lead a somewhat vagrant life. I have not yet found a lad who intended to be bad. He has become the companion of older boys who have led him into sin. Usually when removed from these associations and placed under firm discipline and training, from one to three years, he yields to the better nature within him.

The statement has sometimes been made that there is a danger that by the intermingling of boys in large numbers, more evil might be learned by some than good in a Reform School. In order to reduce to a minimum the evils that seem inseparable from such associations a

CLASSIFICATION

was made early in the year. There can be but two methods of classification, one based on size and age and the other on character. In a very few schools the latter method prevails; but a careful examination of the character of the boys committed to our school and of the facilities at our disposal for the training of these boys, would indicate that a classification according to character is neither desirable nor practicable. In a cottage of forty boys there will seldom be found more than two or three who may be called bad boys, and under careful supervision in the cottage, the influence that these may exert is very slight; especially is this true when all the boys in a cottage are nearly uniform in size and age. On the other hand if all the admittedly bad boys were placed in a cottage by themselves it would speedily be known as the "bad boys' cottage." So far as these boys are concerned they might as well be confined in a prison for any good that may accrue to them in a Reform School. True, society would have some protection from this undesirable element,