

and I sincerely congratulate the friends of humanity upon so auspicious an event. An Institution whose end and aim is to reclaim the erring young of the State, by withdrawing them from the circle of vicious influences to which their poverty or their will may lead them, before their hearts shall have become hardened against virtuous precepts, is among the most enviable of the the charities that mark the advancing civilization of our age. Indeed I know of scheme of mercy, within the province of Government, which can claim so great a degree of public utility, or commend itself more forcibly to popular favor.

The only mode of punishing crime now known to our criminal jurisprudence, is by a confinement which secludes from all vigorous exercise and active out-door employments those who offend against the laws. It is a well known physiological fact, that youths cannot be deprived these with the same safety as adults. Necessary as they are to a healthy, physical and moral development, in both minors and adults, they are conceded to be much essential in the case of the former than the latter. But this mode of punishment is liable to further, and even much greater objections, which have led to a well grounded belief that our State Penitentiary and Jails are but so many seminaries of vice and crime, to those of tender years who may be, from time to time confined within them. At present the young and the old, the comparatively uncorrupted and the conscience seared criminal are thrown together. A youth, too often it may be for some trivial and first offence, finds his way to one of these prisons, and is, at once, introduced to a daily association with felons of the worst description. Instead of being reformed he is but emboldened and confirmed in a proclivity to viciousness. Every inducement to a depraved existence is held up before his sedate gaze, his imagination is inflamed by recitals of criminal adventures, the whisperings of con-