

THE RAPID INCREASE OF THE DANGEROUS CLASSES IN THE UNITED STATES.

The Dangerous Classes of New York City. By C. L. Brace, New York, 1872.

EVERY sincere lover of his country, who has given more than a passing attention to the moral condition of our people, must experience alarm at the general lowering of the moral tone of the whole community, the increase of vice, the decline of commercial honesty and integrity in men intrusted with legislative, judicial, executive, and financial positions.

Looking lower down in the social scale we find the old body of honest yeomen and solid artisans disappearing, and a vast army growing up of men, women, and children even, who constitute a perpetual menace to the wellbeing of society.

These dangerous classes, the cockle sowed while men slept, are growing with such rapidity as to threaten to suffocate the good grain.¹ Dangerous in all countries, these classes are doubly dangerous with us, inasmuch as the men who belong to them are endowed with the right to vote, and surpassing honest electors in numbers or activity, succeed, and will succeed, in placing in the highest offices men at heart as unprincipled and unscrupulous as themselves, though the vice is gilded with the dress, the manners, the religious tone, of even the healthier portion of our community.

Fifty years ago pauperism was almost unknown in America. The cases were isolated, comparatively few, and not apparently hereditary. Now in every State the poorhouses are crowded with inmates, the country swarms with vagrants and those who, disinclined to work, or failing to secure it, swell their numbers. From this school come by the thousand criminals of every kind, only the opportunity and the knowledge being necessary to transform the tramp into the thief, burglar, incendiary, ravisher, or murderer. Every city has its organized gangs, every member of which has committed a series of crimes, all known more or less to the police force, permitted to exist, to thrive, to influence elections, escape indictment,

¹ The number of persons who live in crime and make a vocation of some line of criminal life in the city of New York, and in several of the cities of this State, increases more rapidly than the population. "Now it is a fact that the numbers, the fearlessness and the defiant organization of criminals against property have been increasing these several years past in the city of New York." Thirty-second Annual Report of the Prison Association of New York, pp. 92-3. "The increase of crime is shown by the census of the penal institutions to be assuming very serious aspects." "A statistical summary of the returns from courts of record in the year 1877 shows the important fact that there has been an increase of the classes of crime against property accompanied with violence." Thirty-third Report, p. 6.

trial, conviction, punishment, and constantly to recruit from the idle vagrants.

Every few years public attention is called to some of these ulcers of society. There will be public agitation, meetings will be held, associations formed, and an attempt made to obtain our usual panacea for all evils—new legislation. We have “Societies for Improving the Condition of the Poor,” “Prison Aid Societies,” “Liquor Prohibition Movements,” “Seamen’s Aid Associations,” “Midnight Missions,” “Female Guardian Societies,” “Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,” as more important, and “to Children,” as of less consequence.

We have at this time movements against Chinese heathenism and vice, against Mormonism, against the Oneida Community, against tenement houses.

In all cases we find the idea to be simply to effect moral reformation by natural means—means which have in all times and all countries proved inadequate. The strange crusade of women against intemperance is almost solitary in its recognition of man’s inability to redeem man, and his necessity of God’s grace to enable him to rise.

The project to “put God into the Constitution,” seems to have sprung from a glimmering of the real truth, that as a people we are living without God in the world; but the remedy is not to put the name of the Creator into the paper Constitution, but to imbue the whole social system with the supernatural, the idea of God, its need of Him, its accountability to Him, and a loving desire to fulfil His will.

The wisest of the ancients, in considering the condition of mankind under the rule of paganism, hopelessly confessed the utter inadequacy of all human means of raising it to a better degree. They saw that it was like a man trying to soar in the air by tugging at his own belt; unless a God came to lift man out of the mire and misery into which he was fallen he must perish.

Christianity did this. It took that very heathen world, the polished pagan of Rome and Greece, the barbarous pagan of Britain, Gaul, Germany, and Scandinavia, changed their moral nature, so to say, extirpated vices, elevated the whole tone of Europe, freed the woman and the bondman, established Christian marriage, checked the inordinate pursuit of wealth and pleasure, and by creating higher aspirations gave examples in every condition of life which proved that God gave his graces to those who sought to do His will, enabling human nature by their aid to do what unassisted it must ever fail to accomplish.

For some centuries men have been steadily endeavoring to shake off this idea of Christian influence. The self-sufficiency of man is

the main thought that imbues most modern ideas, and the daily practical refutation it encounters does not seem to weaken in the least the popular belief. The consequence is the gradual undoing of the work of Christianity and the relapse of the nations into the condition of the old heathen world, without even the distorted idea of divine dependence which pervaded it.

The Reformation was a revolt against the idea of the supernatural. All radicals, free-thinkers, infidels, point to it as the commencement of man's disenfranchisement. The Protestant denominations, as they took form and cohesion, had to retain at first much that their doctrines did not include, and much of doctrine and practice that was gradually cast aside by succeeding generations.

In our own country we all know how strong the religious element was in forming the various little communities out of which our Republic grew, and how completely it has ceased to be a potency in our present State and General Governments, except so far as it is kept alive for the purpose of annoying Catholics or proselytizing. But for the presence of Catholicity in the country there would not be a sign of Christianity left.

With this general religious decline in America, came the steadily increasing worship of worldly prosperity and success. This has become in the minds of the masses of our countrymen the great test of true religion. We could cite volume after volume, in which the thrift, prosperity and wealth of Protestant communities are adduced as proof that Protestantism is the true religion, while poverty stamps the Catholic communities as being far from Christ.

That the view is utterly untenable and absurd, if the life and conduct of our Lord is considered, seems to make no difference. Although He chose poverty in His birth, poverty in life, the poor as His Apostles and disciples, secured not even comfort, much less wealth, for the mother whom He loved with a love no human heart can fathom; although every discourse breathes detachment from earthly things, and warnings against the accumulation of wealth, we are called upon by men who profess to be guided by the Scripture alone, to make this very devotion to this world's goods the highest test of virtue. Benjamin Franklin was in his day the great propagator of these ideas, and they have permeated our whole national life.

The fruit has been as pernicious as the tree. As the religious idea implanted in the colonies declined this took its place. In New England, for instance, in the old time, each town was a little community, contented, self-supporting. Distinctions of wealth were little regarded; the articles of clothing and food, furniture, vehicles, implements, were manufactured on the spot; the son was

content to follow the business of his father; the daughter did not expect to rise higher socially than her mother.

Now, the rural population depends on the great cities. Nothing is woven or spun on the farm; no furniture or implements made in the village. All come from some large city. Even supplies of food raised in the same county must come from town. With none of the old avenues of employment open, with the yearning for wealth that is inculcated almost from the cradle, the sons of the farmer and the mechanic disdain to follow the avocations of their fathers. They aim at something higher. The daughters, in the same spirit, vie with the butterflies of fashion in the cities and shrink from marriage with one of their own position. Of course, with this result, the education of a family becomes a fearful burden compared with former days. Children are dreaded, not welcomed. With the religious sentiment weakened crime begins in the household to prevent large families, thus deadening still more the moral sense.

As the sons would no longer till the soil, ply the plane or the sledge, or the shuttle, or maintain the fisheries, for which New England has always had a kind of idolatry, foreigners have flocked in to do the work which young Americans would not do, and girls came from other lands to do the work which the American born will no longer touch. Where some had attempted to hold on to the old customs, they found it impossible to compete with the new-comers, trained to harder work, poorer fare, and more slender remuneration.

The young men, all more or less educated in the common schools, feel above trades. They crowd our cities, overstock the professions and the houses of commerce. With little moral strength they enter the race where scheming, craft, cunning, and sharp dealing take the lead. The failures are more numerous than the successes.

Where moderate success is the lot of the young man, his desire to appear well increases, and as competition lowers his income, temptation comes. Debts are dishonestly incurred, contracts made with no intention of fulfilment, speculation, defalcation, fraud, and forgery lure many on deeper and deeper, and until exposure comes suddenly in middle life or as age approaches; and they sink to the lowest depths of moral degradation, even if they escape the punishment.

The multiplication of machines, the erection of factories, has contributed to the same result, and has doubtless by numerous failures sunk immense amounts of capital. These factories, seeking to reduce cost to the lowest possible amount, pay wages that offer no adequate inducement to the young people of the country, and again emigration supplies the unskilled labor. Irish, Cana-

dians, and Germans run New England factories, and Portuguese conduct her fisheries.

Our new States, the rich mines developed in California and the Rocky Mountain ranges, draw off many of the native rural population, of the disappointed class, or of those who shrink from earnest, steady labor, but hope to succeed by hook or crook. Yet numbers remain, numbers of vicious and apathetic, sinking lower and lower, till they become criminals by inheritance, or criminals by habit, all the more dangerous as they retain national characteristics of aptness, readiness, and persistency.

Even in comparatively new States, like Indiana, we are startled to find hereditary crime entailed through several generations. One of the journals of the capital of that State, entering into horrifying details, resulting from a thorough study of several cases in that city, says: "These people can hardly be said to have the intellect of the human family, but are like four-footed animals, guided more by instinct than intelligence." "Everything has been done that can be done by various benevolent institutions and societies, in hope of bettering their condition, but to no avail; they are still with us, spreading disease, pauperism, and crime."¹

Reports of prison associations contain a mass of evidence in regard to the growth and entailment of crime in degenerating and degraded families and communities in interior counties of New York and other States. Mountain districts exist where no word of religious instruction seems ever to penetrate, where families live in a state of crime that can find no parallel in the most savage nations.

Similar reports come from all sections of the country, admitting alike the fact of the existence of this class, their increase and the utter failure of mere human means of remedy.

In the South, in times of slavery, the failures in society created the class of poor whites, shrinking from work that was done by slaves, becoming more ignorant and more debased with each generation, ignorant of religion to an extent that would scarcely be credited. In more northern States a rural population almost as bad has grown up, with an almost utter ignorance of the natural and revealed truths, and with scarcely a single aid against temptation to vice.

The churches, catching the spirit of the time, become more costly and luxuriant; the clergy are more men of the world; the poorer classes find that they are out of place in the new fine structures, or that they are not well-dressed enough to attend. The

¹ Indianapolis Saturday Herald, March 1, 1879.

Protestant churches have thus gone on isolating themselves from the poorer classes, exercising less and less influence over them; while at the same time they fail to win the young men even of the more wealthy, in whom the want of moral training is too evidently seen.

The Methodists and Baptists arose about the time these various causes began to act upon the population of this country. Their field was mainly among the poorer classes, and they undoubtedly contributed to keep alive a feeling of religion where the less sympathetic systems had lost all power. But they too have yielded to the influence of the times; the plain, earnest preachers have given place to better educated and more polished men, who do not reach the hearts of the poorer classes; over whom they are gradually losing all influence. Their plain meeting-houses are replaced by costly structures, to maintain which requires the cultivation of wealthy members; men are drawn in to take an active part, not in view of their religious and moral character, but in view of what they may give.

All these causes have tended to increase rapidly the comparative numbers of poor Americans, and leave them morally and religiously as destitute as they are in a worldly sense. With the decay of family devotion and religious instruction in families, the breaking up of marital and family ties by divorce, and the permitted growth of licentiousness, as well as the utter absence of religious influence in the schools,¹ the generations trained in these latter years are almost without either ideas or principles, as the prevalence of juvenile crimes but too sadly attests.

Thus church and school alike fail to exercise any salutary influence over this class of poor, who with every incentive to vice held out to them have nothing to help them to resist temptation. The Protestant churches in fact repel them. In the more prosperous American churches, in the regions to which modern styles of dress and living have extended, there are now but few poor people, and these feel more and more each year that the church is no home for them. There is for them, usually, no fraternal association with their more fortunate neighbors in the church, no wholesome, natural, cordial relation between them as human beings or breth-

¹ The truth is, that the multiplication of "educated criminals," so-called, shows the urgency of moral as well as mental training in our schools and colleges. Had "California Jack," who recently argued his own case so ably on appeal to the Supreme Court as to obtain a new trial, known as much about the Ten Commandments as he knows about the State statutes, he might not now be in prison on a charge of burglary. The trouble is, not that men are uneducated, but that the moral and religious sentiments are too much neglected in our modern educational system.

ren. And there is a very large class, who are not extremely poor, but who are obliged to dress plainly and to practice rigid economy in order to obtain the necessaries of life.¹

This is so true that the Protestant church member falling into poverty and want, feels that he has lost all claim to spiritual care. The poor constantly feel their spiritual want. A Jesuit priest temporarily giving aid in a crowded city parish, had a sick-call just as he was about to retire, after a day spent in laborious visitations of the sick and distressed. It was long past the hour fixed by the rules of the parish, and he was about to direct inquiry as to the urgency of the case, when the servant told him that the person at the door was a colored man. As he knew no colored Catholics in the parish his curiosity was excited and he went to the door, where he found a very intelligent colored man.

He said that there was a lady dying at his rooms, who wished to see a clergyman, and that he had called to see whether one of the priests would not come.

"Is she your wife or sister?"

"Oh, no, sir, she is a lady—she is a white lady."

"Are you Catholics?"

"No."

"Then why do you come here?"

"Well, sir, this lady has been sick a good while; when her husband was a rich merchant down town, I was porter in his store; but he failed and died. She was very poor, and her friends all left her. She tried to make a living by sewing, but got paralyzed, and when I found it all out, I took her home and have done all I could for her. She is very low now, and wants a clergyman. She said 'it would be of no use to send to the minister of the church she used to attend on Fifth Avenue, and she did not suppose any of the ministers she used to know would come to her, now that she was so poor.' 'Well,' said I, 'Catholic priests go anywhere, they do not care how poor a person is, or how poor the place is,' and as she said she would like me to try, I have come here."

The priest went, of course, and Father Soderini's account is given only to show the feeling of isolation in the hearts of a large class of Protestant poor.

This alienation from the churches of the poorer American, and to some extent of the class who are struggling rather than poor, has been highly injurious. "Many," says the writer we have already quoted, "who are thus separating themselves from the churches, are injured by the change. They enjoy greater freedom from restraint, and often sink to a life of less strenuous effort at self-direc-

¹ Atlantic Monthly, October, 1878.

tion. They do not feel bound to resist temptation or deny appetite its gratifications."

A curious proof of the alienation of the lower strata of society from the Protestant churches, was seen in the general censure of a Brooklyn clergyman, who personally investigated the criminal classes.

His object was, perhaps, merely to afford a new sensation, but the censure bestowed upon him, revealed the fact that his associates in the ministry generally prided themselves on knowing nothing, and resolved by determining to know nothing, of the great ulcer of vice which is striking at the very vitals of our American social system. That any clergyman should have attempted to see what sin was, seemed unpardonable. Strange moral physicians! How blind, indeed, must be their treatment!

The Catholic priest, the Sister of Charity or Mercy, goes to the bedside of the repenting sinner, no matter how poor, no matter how fallen. How their hearts shrink within them God alone knows, as passing amid incarnate vice they reach the sufferer, enveloped in an atmosphere of their own that seems to leave its fragrance behind, and often leads to conversions, amendment, a total change in hearts that seemed utterly depraved, as in the case of Francis of Hieronymo, where a shameless woman, who openly mocked at him and his preaching, fell at his feet a sincere penitent, on beholding her pet dove fly from her arms and nestle on the mission cross, with its head turned to the Saint, as if listening to the words she despised.

Thus the Protestant churches have lost or are rapidly losing all hold on the poor. Religion in practice and theory is fast dying out among them. Without religion to guide them by her light and strengthen them by her ordinances, crime must make vast inroads among them. And it has done so in spite of all the advantages which our government and our social system are supposed to afford.

Had the standard of morality in the more cultivated classes been maintained, there would be a potent force of good example influencing those less liberally endowed with means and education, but unfortunately this is not the case. The higher class is itself gradually falling, and falling rapidly, in a moral point.

"Multitudes of Protestants who are professedly religious are not honest nor trustworthy. They declare themselves fit for heaven, but they will not tell the truth nor deal fairly with their neighbors. The money of widows and orphans placed under their control, is not safer than in the hands of highwaymen." . . . "They are not usually scrupulously truthful or conscientious, and do not believe

it possible to maintain a very high standard of justice or honesty in business life."

While all these causes were exercising their deleterious influence on the lower strata of American society, the higher were becoming more and more godless.

A writer in a leading New England periodical, treating on the subject a few months since, says: "There are still, of course, many truly religious people in the churches, who sincerely believe the old doctrines embodied in all the creeds. But these are everywhere a small minority, and they are mournfully conscious that the old religious life and power have departed from the church. . . . These people, who thus represent the better element of a former state of things, are the real strength of the evangelical Protestant churches, so far as religion is concerned. . . . They live pure and good lives. They speak the truth, a rare virtue now, and they can be trusted with anybody's money. . . . But they are too few to regenerate the American church, . . . and their number and strength diminish from year to year."

"The influence of the churches and of religion upon the morals and conduct of men has greatly declined, and is still declining. There is yet, as I have said, a large amount of moral force and healthful life in the churches. Religion is not extinct. But the really significant fact here is that it is constantly losing ground. The empire of religion over human conduct, its power as a conservative moral and social force, is so far lost, that some things which are indispensable to the existence of society can no longer be supplied from this source without a great increase of vitality in religion itself. The morality based upon the religion popularly professed has, to a fatal extent, broken down."¹

Protestantism in reality never was able to live except by employing the power of the State to enforce its doctrines and discipline. When that power is taken away, it must decline; it has no doctrine which it can infallibly say men must believe, nor ordinances which it can say men must practice to be saved.

As it is left to each one to decide for himself, less and less is done, and the interest dies out. The earlier colleges in the country, like the early schools, were all deeply religious. The New England Primer contained many of the truths necessary for salvation, and they were impressed on the mind from the youngest class in school to the highest in college.

Now, religion is banished from the schools; the colleges of old date are rapidly throwing aside religious influence and becoming

¹ Atlantic Monthly, October, 1878.

• rationalistic; the new collegiate institutions established under the auspices of the State, and not of Protestant denominations, especially at the West, are absolutely unchristian in their tendency, and send out young men imbued with all the scientific objections to Christianity, without any definite ideas of what the fundamental truths of Christianity are.

Thus throughout our social system there is a sweeping away of the religious basis of life. The commandments of God are scarcely known, and do not come to the mind as something that must be obeyed.

There is no guarantee of moral conduct: men avoid vice from absence of temptation, not from any love of God and virtue or from desire for a higher and better life.

Prayer is becoming something unknown. Whether a person of some education or one of the poorer and more ignorant class sees death suddenly menace him, there seems to be an utter absence of all idea of the responsibility of man to his Creator.

The lingering idolatry of the Bible, makes him call for some one to read a passage taken at random, as though it could act as a kind of charm; another is asked to pray, and searches his memory for some words of prayer learned in childhood. That the man himself should awaken sorrow in his heart for sin, love for that God who has so long spared him in his disobedience, and who still gives him time to repent and return, is rarely the case. In fact, the fundamental ideas of religion, of man's responsibility to God, of the enormity of sin and its punishment seem lost. And if they cannot be aroused in the face of death, they surely can exercise little moral influence in ordinary life.

Thus our whole social system tends to increase vice and crime. The more cultivated classes, trained more or less to rationalism or indifference, with a religion that has lost all power for good, are kept within bounds only by human considerations, and these are but frail barriers against vice. The poor, isolated more and more from religious influence, are fast losing all ideas of Christianity, and laying aside every vestige they have hitherto retained.

We cannot, therefore, wonder at the increase of dishonesty and profligacy in the higher classes, or the grosser vices of those beneath them.

Let us now consider the foreign element in this country, and its moral condition.

The first great emigration here was Irish and Catholic. It was in the main pure, virtuous, healthy in body and mind, industrious, anxious for work. Its faults arose from a convivial disposition, making it easily led to excess in drink, and then quarrelsome and noisy. That its good qualities far counterbalanced the bad, cannot be

disputed. Every sound principle of political economy dictated that the community into which the immigrants came should do all to increase every moral influence tending to control the evil and augment the good. Unfortunately, a mingled hatred and contempt for the Irish character had been fostered from early days in New England, and spread more or less through the country. One need but read the "Simple Cobbler of Agawam" to see how unchristian and almost diabolical feelings were nurtured in the hearts, not of ignorant New England colonists, but of the clergy who considered themselves the "salt of the earth." A writer who has inherited no little of this old feeling, although he cloaks it through policy, Brace, admits that "the Irish are at home one of the most law-abiding and virtuous of populations;" and he says truly: "There is no question that the breaking of the ties with one's country has a bad moral effect, especially on a laboring class. The emigrant is released from the social inspection and judgment to which he has been subjected at home, and the tie of Church and priesthood is weakened. If a Roman Catholic, he is often a worse Catholic, without being a better Protestant. If a Protestant he often becomes indifferent. Moral ties are loosened with the religious. The intervening process which occurs here between his abandoning the old state of things and fitting himself to the new, is not favorable to morals or character."

To make the new-comer in time a useful citizen sound reason would dictate to strengthen as far as possible the influence of religion over him, to shield him from temptations peculiar to his condition as a stranger, and to make him confide in those who had been his trusted and best guides. But unfortunately the very opposite course was adopted; Protestant clergy and laity, individually and by means of societies, often ostensibly for charitable objects, but always proving to be proselytizing when you come to scrutinize their work, as well as by means of schools, by ridicule, mockery, caricatures, and sneers, sought first and foremost, at all times and seasons, to weaken the faith of the Irish Catholic, to make him ashamed of his religion, unmindful of the dictates of his own conscience and the counsels of his clergymen, indeed, as Brace says, "a worse Catholic without being a better Protestant." The influence of this system on our separated brethren themselves has been mischievous. It has led them to hesitate at no falsehood or calumny where Catholics are concerned, to falsify statistics, to give a false coloring to the most innocent things, in fact to lower the standard of truth in an incalculable degree, and in the lower classes to produce much vice and crime. Men and women who prided themselves on their exalted Christian character gave time, money, influence to this terrible work, which has wrought incalculable evil to the

country. While they congratulated themselves in their coteries and reports on the good they were doing, they were, in fact, building up a criminal class, devoid of religion and conscience, who though they lost religion yet kept through life a deadly hatred of those to whom they ascribed its loss.

We speak of their work as past; but it is still going on, as it has gone for years. In many States the penal and eleemosynary institutions are proselytizing houses where every Catholic is deprived of means of worshipping God according to the dictates of his conscience, deprived of means of instruction in his own faith, and of the consolation afforded by the ordinances of his Church, compelled to learn a system of religion repugnant to him, and to join in its exercises. This makes the victims certainly worse Catholics or no Catholics at all, but it never makes them sincere Protestants, and they escape or are discharged from these houses, at last, with a sense of wrong and a desire of vengeance.

Thousands of emigrants with their moral sense thus dulled, taught hypocrisy, or finding themselves objects of contempt, met two temptations. First, the unchecked and unlimited sale of liquors, of the worst and most dangerous character, was urged on them at every turn, and at last it was as a lethean draught to stifle what conscience remained. Their convivial character, ignorance of the real nature of the liquors, all led them on. Brawls, assaults, petty riots, degradation followed, and these offences, great in numbers though not in degree, make the Irish present a formidable appearance in our criminal returns. Unfortunately the influence of liquor extended to their poor homes, and the result was terrible. Among a people naturally affectionate and kind the wife would be struck down in death by her husband. The innocent girl whom he wooed in an Irish village with a heart as guileless as his own, whom he married before the altar, seeking strength from God through the Sacraments of the Church, lies murdered at last in America by his own hand.

And yet before the judgment-seat of God, some of that blood-guilt rests on those who bent all their higher cultivation, their wealth and social influence to weaken the religious influence in that man's soul, and expose him to unguarded temptation.

The elective franchise proved another bane. Politicians welcomed him and used him; while cajoling him with high-sounding phrases, they degraded him into a mere party tool, and unprincipled men without conscience or religion were raised to office by the votes of Irish Catholics, giving deep offence to the better portion of the community. The political meetings, the inevitable bar-room, the corruption of our whole system, with its primary meetings, its caucuses, its false registries, ballot-stuffing, falsifica-

tion of returns, all tended to deaden every sense of virtue and honesty. Men trained in this school soon ceased to approach the Sacraments or even to enter the Church to hear Mass. Religion and its ministry became powerless to control or guide them, till perhaps grace in some moment of trial touched their hearts.

While these causes tended to destroy the male emigrant, the female portion of the new-comers had their special dangers. Though even their enemies admit that "the Irish female laboring class are well known to be at home one of the most virtuous in the world," their very innocent and unsophisticated nature made them more easily duped. Most of them were young inexperienced girls, exposed on shipboard, in the boarding-house where they sought a temporary home, and in the houses where they sought service, to the wiles and even violence of unprincipled men. That some would fall was to be expected, but the number on the whole was comparatively small.

The German emigration, which came later, was not to so great a degree of the poorer peasant class; it contained a far greater number of families, and of trained artisans, persons of some education, entitled in their own country to practice certain trades or branches of commerce. Fewer girls came apart from their families. United in language the German Catholic and non-Catholic supported each other, and were less easily influenced by the proselytizer, who excited the scorn of the German free-thinker, and found himself what he too often made the Irish Catholic, the butt of ridicule. The unprincipled politician found it less easy to manage a German than an Irish body of voters.

The German Catholics have shown more eagerness for knowledge, supporting schools, periodicals, and papers to an extent that is not only creditable to them, but really a reproach to English-speaking Catholics.

An Italian emigration, which, since the new order of things has obtained in the peninsula, flows in upon us, is by no means healthy. It contains a large element that belonged to the dangerous class in their own country; that has introduced a new kind of bondage, the *padrone* system; is imbued with the communistic theories and vices, and is utterly at variance with the principles of order and submission to divine authority, on which the communities forming this country were founded.

In fact, besides the regular emigration of honest people seeking to secure by industry comfortable homes in this country, there is a steady criminal emigration. New York, the great centre of emigration, sought to check this invasion, but its system has been declared unconstitutional, and the country is comparatively unprotected. Some European states at one time endeavored actually

to empty their prisons on our shores. Even now, to cite the words of the Prison Association of New York: "The professional criminals of the whole civilized world would make New York a rendezvous. The British cracksmen and thieves, the professional thieves from France, Italy, and Germany, and various classes of persons who have lived by crime in Europe, organize crime and live by it in New York."¹

The increasing method and system in Europe for watching those known to be inclined to commit crime, with the constant supervision exercised over suspicious characters, make them readily seek a refuge in this country, where the criminal classes enjoy such immunity, and so easily escape the punishment due their misdeeds.

Yet, although New York has a larger proportion than many States of foreign population, nearly sixty-one per cent. of the prisoners in the penitentiaries during the year 1877 were native born, showing, says an official report, "that the foreign born inhabitants are no longer chargeable with the great excess of common crimes which is sometimes attributable to them in this State."

In California and on the Pacific coast generally, the children of the poorer classes find themselves cut out from employment by the introduction of Chinese labor. This element has the attractiveness of cheapness, but it will be excessively dear to the country, if it increases, as it has, the native born idle and criminal class. Were it a pure element, healthy in body and in morals, it would be bad enough, but it is essentially demoralizing, if we are to credit those who have studied it in California, and who base their judgment on what they have seen there with their own eyes—a very different criterion from acquaintance with better classes in China. Congress recently passed a law to check to some extent the future emigration of Chinese, and though the act was returned by President Hayes with his veto, the subject will certainly come up again.

It is a difficult question to deal with under our system of government, but the fact remains that the Chinese element introduces new forms of vice, and tends to augment the number of the unemployed, and increase their temptations to crime.

Our great cities have corrupting influences of their own, and none perhaps greater than the overcrowded tenement houses.

¹ Records show that the proportion of foreign-born criminals is not only in excess; but the crimes against property are connected with that class of prisoners that seem to have floated into this State as criminals, that is, the cracksmen and burglars.—Thirty-second Annual Rep. P. A. of N. Y., p. 83.

The high prices of real estate of late years, caused by the inflation of paper money, made it impossible for the poor to secure any homes except in these houses. Their work was in the cities and they had to reside there. Even at the lowest rates of commutation, it took too much money and too much time for the workingman to venture to live in the country where he could have a small cottage, for what two rooms cost him in New York. Philadelphia, Chicago, and some other cities encouraged the erection of cheap houses for the working class, by offering premiums for the best and most reasonable plan; but the movement has not been general.

Although there are cases, and by no means few, where families living in these conditions retain their early religious and moral tone, and bring up their children properly, we must on the whole admit that tenement-house life has been the great hotbed of vice. Where these structures abound liquor saloons abound, in which the vilest compounds are sold. Intoxication and the vices that follow in its wake, are a constant spectacle. Men, women, and children, who enter these houses, soon become habituated to vice in every form. Women, girls lose all modesty and shame, and in a few years sink to the lowest depths.

It need not be said that with overcrowding such as this, there is always disease and, as naturally, crime. The privacy of a house is undoubtedly one of the most favorable conditions to virtue, especially in a girl.

But in New York, in 1868, the number of the tenement-houses was 18,582, containing a population estimated at five hundred thousand, one-half of all living on the island.

If a female child be born and brought up in a room of one of these tenement-houses, she very early loses the modesty which is the great shield of purity. Personal delicacy becomes almost unknown to her. Living, sleeping, and doing her work in the same apartment with men and boys of various ages, it is wellnigh impossible for her to retain any feminine reserve, and she passes almost unconsciously the line of purity at a very early age.

The boys thrown with thieves, and pickpockets, and criminals of deeper dye, hear their vaunts, and begin to admire them. The police authority becomes something to be defied. Many become petty thieves, truants, street-rovers, beggars.

Of the younger criminals in our prisons, a very large percentage begin life in the crowded tenement-houses, where the only home was a room, and the only play-ground the streets.

The public schools are maintained by the taxes levied on all, and should, it might be supposed, afford a means for the children of the poor occupants of such places to acquire an education, and fit them for self-support; but in point of fact the public schools repel as far

as possible the children of the very poor. They have become schools for the children of the wealthier classes, whose parents do not wish them to associate with the children of tenement-houses. What is done for this class is done almost entirely by the Catholic parochial schools; and in New York within a few years Trinity Church has extended widely its schools to take in those virtually excluded from the public schools.

The course of study in these State institutions is peculiarly unfitted to the children of the poor. It is adapted to the children of the middle and wealthy classes, and is in no respect a suitable preparation for a life of toil.

It makes the young discontented, ashamed of their parents, and eager for show and display, and is all the more dangerous as no religious influence exists, no word of heavenly things, of higher or nobler aims than this world, is ever imparted.

The son of the mechanic trained there is ashamed to learn a trade. He has been taught to look higher. If even better influences have prevailed, and he seeks at last to learn a trade, new difficulties await him. Trades-unions exist in almost every branch of business, and these dictate to employers, and prevent the engagement of apprentices. Union men cannot, by the rules of these tyrannical associations, work in a shop where more than a certain number of boys are kept. The consequence is that in many trades the willing boy finds the door closed upon him. Anxious to acquire the means to enable him to earn a livelihood, he finds that no one will or dare receive him. He has perhaps learned to play on the piano, or has acquired a smattering of so-called intellectual philosophy or the derivation of words at the public school, but he has not learned how to handle a tool, or acquired a single idea that will enable him to earn his living by the labor of his hands. The boy who has learned his trade in his foreign home, steps into the shop as a worker, while the boy born among us, though eager and willing to work, has to stand idle, and in this idleness falls a prey to vice. Thus the public school becomes as regards this class of boys a school for tramps and desperadoes.

One who has labored among the homeless boys of one of our large cities, says that the task of reformation was for a time disheartening, difficulties presenting themselves that were unexpected in boys of tender years. "There seems to be a spirit of adventure among them that will not hesitate at incendiarism, and will at times prompt them to present a loaded revolver for some fancied offence. Their ideas are communistic to an extreme degree, and they will assuredly pull down houses about our ears, if not repressed seasonably and with determination." "These boys are not acquainted

with fear, have sometimes to learn the sanctity of an oath, and look on the laws of society as enacted for their oppression."¹

This result has been gradual. The boy who is spirited and full of adventure, has the elements which ought to make him a good and valuable member of the community; but, trained in a school where religion is excluded, finding avenues for self-support cut off, his aspirations to help a widowed mother perhaps checked, he feels that he and she are alike wronged by society, and, leaving her in her wretched room in a tenement-house, he takes to the street. In many cases he plunges into vice; occasionally he falls under the control of those who will endeavor to save him by implanting sound religious principles in his head and heart, but if a Catholic he frequently here becomes a prey to the hypocritical proselytizer. Children's Aid Societies and similar associations which, when seeking money, disclaim all sectarian or proselytizing intentions, boast among themselves, and occasionally in their reports betraying their inborn hate of the Catholic religion, of the number of Catholic children whom they have removed from all Catholic influence. Benevolence is only a mask, proselytism is the soul, kept alive by an undying hatred of Catholic truth. Let any one collect the reports of the various so-called benevolent associations, and go through them carefully, and he will at once see distinct indications.

So convinced are Catholics of the bad faith of all these movements, of the utter want of principle underlying them, as criminal in itself as the crimes they pretend to remedy, that they are compelled to stand aloof and do what they can in their own way, forced to combat the increasing vice and crime and at the same time counteract as far as they can the efforts of those who, sooner than see a Catholic on the downward path saved by the influence of his religion, move heaven and earth to extirpate all sense of that religion from his heart.²

The civil war, which so recently desolated our land, contributed in no small degree to a general increase in crime. The hundreds of thousands of workmen called away from factory and bench to the excitement of army life, with its long periods of inactivity, underwent a training that made to many the old life of steady habits, dull and insupportable. Many there acquired habits of vice, and a dis-

¹ Report of St. Vincent's Home for Boys. Brooklyn, 1878.

² Brace, in his "Dangerous Classes," attempts to deny the charge of proselytizing brought against the Children's Aid Societies, and says: "Both Catholic and Protestant homes were offered freely to the children," but his work and the reports teem with violent abuse of the Catholic clergy and Church, and in all the correspondence given as from children sent West, we have been unable to find one from a Catholic child in a Catholic family; and we may well hesitate to believe until lists are given that we can examine.

regard of the lives and property rights of others. Many came back who had passed through the ordeal unscathed, yet with seeds of disease enervating their system, rendering steady work impracticable. During the war, as the currency was inflated, there was great activity in many branches of trade, artisans from other parts filled the places of those who were enlisted or drafted, and when they returned, many could not find employment; then as money resumed its old channels, years of financial distress came, and factory and workshop stood idle, leaving two sets of workmen unemployed. Men roamed from place to place seeking work. Accustomed to be away from their families, domestic ties were broken, men became alienated from their wives and children, and easily caught at any pretext to escape responsibility for their support. Failing to secure work they became tramps and vagrants, and the whole country is overrun by armies of these men, who grow more lawless day by day, often congregating in numbers sufficient to plunder railroad trains or small communities.

“As we utter the word *tramp* there arises straightway before us the spectacle of a lazy, shiftless, sauntering or swaggering, ill-conditioned, irreclaimable, incorrigible, cowardly, utterly depraved savage,” says Professor Wayland. “He fears not God, neither regards man. Indeed he seems to have wholly lost all the better instincts and attributes of manhood. He will outrage an unprotected female, or rob a defenceless child, or burn an isolated barn, or girdle fruit trees, or wreck a railway train, or set fire to a railway bridge, or murder a cripple, or pilfer an umbrella, with equal indifference, if reasonably sure of equal impunity. Having no moral sense he knows no gradations in crime. He dreads detection and punishment, and he dreads nothing else.”

“Recent investigations by the State detective force of Massachusetts have led to the conclusion that the great body of tramps are professional thieves. Moreover, these officials have reason to believe that such vagrants are formed into organized gangs, under the direction of skilful leaders, with general headquarters in the western part of the State, where their plunder is deposited and divided.”¹

In the railroad riots a few years since the country was appalled to see what armies of tramps seemed to gather, as if by magic, ready for any deed of violence; and a general sense of the danger menacing society prevailed. Yet the matter has been allowed to drop out of sight, and no adequate remedy has been undertaken.

¹ Papers on Outdoor Relief and Tramps, pp. 10, 15.

The war threw upon their own resources the slave population of the South, which, in bondage, had been compelled to labor while able, and in sickness and age was supported. Emancipation left them free to avoid labor, and they had never felt any obligation to support their aged or infirm relatives. Crime increased among them to a fearful extent, and some forms, especially of violence to women, seemed to come from some organized system, directing it either from the South or the North. Politics, too, drew even those disposed to work away from the paths of industry, and the harangues of unscrupulous politicians inflamed their minds, while liquor freely given contributed to ruin them. A criminal class, or criminal-breeding class was at once formed, which is increasing and at times overawes the well-disposed colored men.

The increasing irreligion of the poorer classes is seen to be at the bottom of almost all the increase of vice. It is due to the vicious nucleus, to the unchecked selling of liquor, to the corrupting influence of politicians, to the license given to houses of ill-fame, to the crowding in tenement houses, and to the course of unscrupulous proselytizers.

If any clearheaded social scientist ever puts to himself the question, "Does proselytizing pay?" his answer will be that it is sowing the storm to reap the whirlwind, and that it is one of the greatest curses of the American social system.

This hostility to our faith, and the proselytism which this hostility engenders and which in turn engenders it, must also be taken into consideration as one of the causes of crime. That we Catholics suffer by it is not all. It blinds many of our separated brethren to all considerations of truth and honor, to respect for the good name and property of others. Led away by this hatred, which so far as they personally are concerned is baseless, for they have no wrongs suffered at our hands, they think everything allowable, so long as it is employed against the Catholic Church, and that everything done or attempted by Catholics must be thwarted.

The facility with which men and women of education, and one would suppose animated by some feelings of Christianity, were led to countenance, circulate, and defend such impostures as *Maria Monk*, *Six Months in a Convent*, *The Escaped Nun*, and similar books, replete with falsehood and immorality, shows that respect for truth and morality was for the time lost. They injured us in our good name, but they injured those who circulated them far more. To connive at falsehood, in one case, lowered their general respect for truth. It made social and commercial falsehood all the more easy. A man who can aid in circulating a lie will easily tell one.

The constant use of insulting names applied to us, "Romanist,"

“Romish,” “Popish,” and the like, shows a disregard for our good name, in that it endeavors to degrade us in the eyes of our fellow-men. Those who use these epithets will soon go further; they will prevent a Catholic from getting employment solely on the ground of his religion, and will strain a point to lower his good name to effect the end. The point is soon reached where the robbery or burning of Catholic property, if not stimulated by words and connived at, is secretly exulted over. And these cases are not rare. A million of dollars probably will not cover the amount of Catholic property destroyed in this country by open violence or midnight incendiaries, within comparatively few years. Yet we are not to look upon the coarse and illiterate creatures of the lower classes as the real criminals. We must, in truth, look to church-going people, from whom the impulse came. And here, again, the loss we sustain is not all. Those who give the impulse, and those who do the deed, alike have made a terrible step in disregarding the rights of property and of life. What they feel justified in doing to Catholics they will soon feel justified in doing to any one.

And the poor wretch who, hounded on by “No Popery” harangues, puts the torch to a Catholic church or convent, will be ready to apply it to the house or factory of any one whom he is led to regard as an oppressor of him or his class.

Those who lend their influence to deprive Catholics of the right of attending their own worship and receiving instruction from clergy of their own faith, have lost much of their respect for the rights of others, and will be ready to join in some other scheme for depriving men of those liberties for which our ancestors fought a century ago.

In this way this spirit has been a source of crime, begetting a disregard for the right of every man to his good name, his property, and his life. Lower the moral tone of a community in regard to one point, and you open the floodgate. There can be no doubt in any thinking mind that much of the moral decline in the whole nation is traceable to this source. It has falsified the conscience of our separated brethren to an incalculable extent. They never seem to consider at one glance the injury done us, and most assuredly never reflect for an instant on the terrible wrong which they are committing against their own moral nature and that of their children, whom they imbue from the cradle with such distorted moral ideas.

Our Catholic population contains a large proportion of the poorer classes: the rest of the poor are fast losing all religion. The State and public opinion seem alike determined to prevent any definite religious ideas obtaining among them. A kind of heathen morality is all that is permitted to be inculcated, which by its very

negation of every essential element of Christianity renders it powerless for good.

Our relation as Catholics to the condition of our poor, what is to be done to save what is still healthy, what is to be done to reclaim the lost, are subjects that must henceforth demand more general attention than they have hitherto received. Our difficulty will be all the greater as we shall find the power of the State and the influence of Protestant denominations constantly arrayed against us, and really aiding vice instead of encouraging us to suppress it. This is a hard thing to say, and yet every Catholic at all interested in the matter knows that there is no disguising the fact. For instance, in New Jersey, the Catholic boys and girls in the State Reform School are not allowed to be instructed in their religion, attend its worship, or receive its ordinances; they are forced to take part in Protestant worship and receive Protestant religious instruction. The Catholics established a reformatory of their own, but the State refuses to charter it, to confide Catholic children to it, or aid it at all in its good work. The State virtually says: "We are in the hands of proselytizers, and proselytize we shall as long as we can. We do not really care about reform, but so long as we can root Catholicity out of the hearts of these unfortunates, we are satisfied. This is one of the ends for which our government was established."

What exists in New Jersey exists elsewhere. In Massachusetts it was decided within the last year that the wife of a keeper of a poorhouse was a public officer by law, entitled to remain at the bedside of a dying Catholic and prevent her making her confession to a priest, and that the priest on attempting to exclude her from the room was a criminal, as liable to arrest and punishment as the drunken vagabond who knocks down a quiet citizen on the street.

In New York the forcing of Catholic boys to attend Protestant religious service led to a revolt, and though the Catholic Union used every effort to have the cause of discontent removed, the boys were punished and the inhuman bigots escaped even censure.

To consider now what Catholics have done and are doing, we find much to console as the work of a few, and much to give us pain as showing neglect on the part of our community in general. We do not see our wealthier and more influential men taking part in any movements to meet any of the wants which so strongly appeal to us as Catholics and as American citizens, and on the successful remedying of which the future well-being of our country depends. We see one of the great daily papers of the Union constantly giving advice to the Catholic hierarchy, clergy,

Religious Orders, secular and regular clergy, occasionally instructing the Sovereign Pontiff in regard to dogma and discipline; but though the proprietor is a millionaire, and at least nominally a Catholic, as his father was, we do not find that he has ever established any great Catholic charity, or been prominent in inaugurating any movement to help Catholic distress or save Catholics from moral and physical ruin. He is but one of a class. Yet we think that, by proper means, our leading citizens could be induced to take part in organizations similar to those for which our Protestant fellow-citizens find no difficulty in obtaining active co-operation. There is a certain timidity in our prominent men that seems almost moral cowardice, and the silence of Catholic members in municipal and educational boards, in legislative bodies, contrasts most unfavorably with the frank, free attitude of Catholic members in similar situations in England. Yet, if they felt that they were not in a manner isolated, we think that a more manly course would be adopted when they found that they were supported by numbers and respectability.

Certain it is that to meet the great moral wants, we must take action as a body. In the benevolent movements of the day, we cannot, as we have shown, take part, without in reality warring on our religion and convictions; and it is almost hopeless yet to expect our separated brethren to look at this question in the light of truth and honesty, or to stop the long-pursued course of tampering with the faith of Catholics. We can convert criminals much more readily.

In our desire to look well in the eyes of our fellow-men, we have been led away to erect churches that have been too costly. They are grand, and add dignity to religion, it is true, but the necessity of raising money to pay the absolutely necessary portion of the cost, and of meeting the annual interest on the mortgage debt, makes attendance at our churches a heavy tax on the poorer Catholics in many parts. A large expensive church holding but a comparatively small number is a great embarrassment to a zealous priest sent to such a parish. In our large cities there are many districts where hundreds of the faithful cannot, without great difficulty, assist at Mass or hear instructions. Yet, if we are to keep alive faith and religion in the hearts of the poor as the best guard against the temptations that surround them, we must have more and plainer churches for the poor, where the amount they can contribute will meet all the necessary expenses, if it is not possible to make them absolutely free. Here is a field for the generous Catholic who feels that he should make some return to God for the wealth lent to him, lent to him to traffic with till his Master comes. There are districts in every one of our large cities where a few

thousand dollars would secure and even endow a plain church that would afford hundreds of Catholics means of salvation. Let any one in New York start at the Battery, and proceed along the East River, and he will see the truth of this. He will go a mile in the lower part of the city before he reaches a Catholic Church, and then find one densely crowded, with schools attached, most creditable indeed, but both church and school requiring relief. And yet in this part of the city there are more Catholics than in some of our dioceses which have numbers of priests, churches, and institutions.

Cross the river to the great Catholic cemetery, and see what recalls the words of Job: "For now I should have been asleep and still, and should have rest in my sleep, with kings and consuls of the earth, who build themselves solitudes," for here, indeed, are solitudes worthy of kings, monuments simply of human pride costing thousands upon thousands of dollars. The thought can but come, how much nobler a monument a man might raise by erecting, at the cost of such a useless structure, a church in a poor densely populated neighborhood, where the Holy Sacrifice would be constantly offered for his soul, and the prayers of the poor, saved by it from the moral ruin that threatened themselves and their children, would rise day by day as a sweet incense to heaven.

To relieve our overcrowded churches and give the poor every means of practicing their religion and obtaining the encouragement and strength it can give, is the first step.

Providing for the Christian education of their children, we are undoubtedly doing to an extent that is simply wonderful. The number of our parochial schools in all parts of the country bears no mean ratio to those maintained by the State in the interest of the Protestant denominations, though, to some extent, at our expense.

But our poor are crowded in tenement houses, and they and their children are exposed to all the deleterious influences of those unhappy buildings. Places of entertainment for the more advanced, and play-grounds for the children, where all that is improper can be excluded, are necessities. Separate play-grounds for boys and girls, connected with the parochial schools, are a real want. The children of the tenement houses have no play-ground but the street, where they mix with the most vicious element. If ground could be obtained where they would be under good influence great evil would be avoided.

To afford the young men some place where they can enjoy innocent recreation, and thus be under no temptation to frequent the saloon, or the political hall, which is generally connected with a bar, is another want. Very successful attempts have been made in several places to supply this want. The present Bishop of

Rochester, when Rector of the Cathedral in Newark, established a Catholic Institute, in which there was a reading-room and a small library, a gymnasium, ball-alley, tables for innocent games, a room for public lectures and other conveniences. The amount of good effected was at once visible. Young men whose homes were crowded or confined, or who had but a small room in some boarding-house, here found recreation and congenial company, free from any temptation to intoxication or vicious indulgence.

The Church of the Assumption, in Brooklyn, has now, by the exertions of the Rev. William Keegan, a fine building of this character, with rooms for the meetings of the various societies connected with the church, bath-rooms, and rooms for practicing music; everything to attract the young, who justly feel proud of it and benefit by its advantages.

Among the first to recognize the advantages of such institutions are the city authorities, who soon note the influence they exert for the general well-being. In the occasional outbreaks of labor against capital, where many by the tyranny of unions, or by bad example, are led to violence, and after having been for years steady, respectable mechanics, find themselves denizens of a prison along with abandoned criminals, such institutions are a haven of salvation to the unemployed. They can scarcely be too much multiplied in our large cities, where the temptations are the greatest.

Besides the children who come to our parochial schools, there are many who are orphans and many whose parents are worse than dead—dead to God, religion, virtue. Our orphan asylums gather up many of the first class, instruct and fit them to obtain situations, and place them, fortified by good sound training, in positions to earn a decent living. Great as the numbers received in the asylums are, there are still many left unprovided, who join the class of those deprived of home by the vice of their parents, or who, learning vice, defy parental control.

“Vast numbers of these young creatures,” said the New York Society for the Protection of Destitute Roman Catholic Children, in its first appeal, “vast numbers are daily wandering over the face of this great city, exposed to all the horrors of hopeless poverty, to the allurements of vice and crime, in every disgusting and debasing form, bringing ruin on themselves.” “It is true we have our orphan asylums, our parochial schools, our Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, all of which are giving relief to the utmost extent of their capacity. Yet the amount of juvenile delinquency and wretchedness is hardly diminished; the full tide of destitution and destruction still flows on, and seems likely soon to be swollen by a new current.” “We can certainly do something to arrest it. As Catholics, we have the motive; as men, we have the means.”

Though their protectory now contains two thousand three hundred children, the appeal is still true as an utterance of the present day.

Voluntary refuges were needed. The Rev. G. T. Haskins established his House of the Angel Guardian in Boston, and similar establishments have been organized in various parts. But the number is too small and the tendency is, perhaps—whether wisely or unwisely—to create very large central establishments, rather than more numerous local institutions. In 1872 the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul established a home for boys in New York, which, under the Rev. John C. Drumgoole, has been very successful. Brooklyn has a similar one, under the Rev. Mr. Hickey. The aid furnished such an institution is a solid investment, certain of producing a large return. After years of experience this clergyman says: "No class of children can be more readily brought under the influence of our holy religion than the homeless and destitute children. They have their faults, but they cannot be blamed, for these faults are to be attributed to the pernicious example of parents, who being a disgrace to religion themselves, by the lives they lead, deprive their children of all means of bettering their condition, either spiritually or temporally. The remark has been made more than once that these poor children cannot be reclaimed because they inherit the bad qualities of their parents. This, from experience, I most positively deny, and do so on the authority of these little fellows themselves, who, with tears in their eyes, deplore the low and vicious habits of their degraded parents."

The establishment of reformatories and homes is a matter of necessity, and as Catholics we must make sacrifices to save these young people, for neither as Catholics nor as Americans can we allow them to go to destruction and become a scourge to the country.

While the sectarian associations work on the principle of breaking all family ties, our Catholic institutions try to strengthen them, and the reclaimed boy, though often persecuted by degraded parents, is sometimes the instrument of their reform.

The Sisters of Mercy, as one great object of their institution, have refuges for girls whose virtue is endangered, and in their institutions in various parts of the country have done incalculable good; but as a community we seem to do little to aid them in their saving work. In their visits to prisons they afford Catholics fallen into crime means of amending their lives and certainly produce good results; although it has to be admitted that many of the convicts become incorrigibly wedded to a life of dishonesty. It is a startling and terrible statement of a clergyman long connected with the Albany Penitentiary, that while men are often reclaimed by re-

viving their religious faith and its influence, it is almost impossible to make any impression on the hearts of women who have become criminals.

For those who have been led astray, but have not committed crimes punishable by State law, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd make it their peculiar field to labor. Religion here appeals in all its force, and reformation is effected with a solid basis, giving every hope of a future virtuous life. To those who feel that the world presents too many dangers, a permanent home under a religious rule is offered, and they are enabled to support themselves by their industry, free from all danger.

Foundling asylums, too, afford to many unmarried mothers shelter and encouragement to reformation.

For the aged poor the Little Sisters of the Poor have asylums as their sole and special object; and Sisters of Charity and other Communities make it in various places one of the objects of their care.

Our Catholic institutions, not always sufficiently attracting the interest and encouragement of our Catholic people at large, are thus constantly meeting many of the crying wants of our time. But the tenement houses as hotbeds of sin and misery remain almost untouched. The visits of Priest, of Sisters of Charity and of Mercy to the sick are not enough. Those of the members of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul can do little to palliate the general evil or make a very permanent impression. The movement begun in some cities to seek legislative action to limit the number of tenants in one building, has thus far dealt more in rhetoric and fine phrases than in anything having any appearance of a system of providing better homes for the poorer classes. These must live, and they prefer life in a city, where they can obtain employment, to life in the country. Mere encouragement to go West, breaking asunder family ties by separating husband and wife, or parents and children, is not a step that can be ultimately beneficial. The country is wide enough and varied enough to afford means of livelihood for all; but many of the poor are unskilled and ignorant of means of support. There seems to be an opening for some Religious Order, like the Benedictine or Franciscan, to begin as they did in Germany or California, making a monastic establishment, with its church and school, as a centre, and selling lands around to poor families drawn from the cities, who can be aided and guided till they are self-supporting, thus building up a Catholic settlement and giving employment to mechanics as well as agriculturists. In the colonization schemes that are from time to time inaugurated, none have looked especially or mainly to the salvation of the inhabitants of our overcrowded city tenement houses, yet there would seem to

be no insurmountable difficulty in obtaining land enough to make the attempt, and to obtain such legislative sanction as would, to a great extent, keep intemperance from destroying the good work. The Methodists at Ocean Grove and Asbury Park, New Jersey, have thus prevented all sale of liquor, and insured in those settlements freedom from intoxication and the evils that follow in its train.

Some of the Southern States offer land as cheap and healthier than the West, where market-gardening for the North is highly remunerative, and smaller farms could be made to give support.

But we Catholics cannot remain in apathy. The increase of crime and of the criminal classes is such as to excite universal alarm, and despite all that has been done and is doing its increase is more rapid than our present means of checking it. Where in our city parishes zealous Religious come to give a mission or retreat, hundreds come to the confessional and make their peace with God, who, living within sound of the church bell, have been strangers for many years to all that religion can give; but though the conversion is sincere, they go back to the same temptations, the same allurements, and the newly acquired habit of virtue is too weak, the path of duty is too difficult, there is no hand to encourage in the moment of weakness, and they fall back.

Thousands can be saved if we can give them healthier surroundings.

The communistic organizations, ramifying throughout the country, will involve many and will bring untold woe on all. The Molly Maguire murders, in Pennsylvania, show that ignorant Catholics can be led into such organizations, and they undoubtedly will, there and elsewhere. Religion alone can save them, and it has to be brought home to them till they feel its influence. In those mining districts many have expiated on the gallows crimes of which they were the reluctant instruments. There are others as weak, who, if withdrawn from evil association there, might elsewhere become useful members of society.

To help the poor in our great cities, whose numbers and whose dangers are increasing, and to save their children is one point that needs concerted action on the part of Catholics generally. Whether by special associations or otherwise, we must give them more churches, facilitate removal to healthier spots, and secure means of livelihood.

The scattered Catholics in the rural districts are exposed to dangers of their own, dangers more especially of a gradual dying out of the faith. They should be aided to concentrate. Both feel the constant war on their faith and need popular cheap books to meet the objections to Catholics and their religion, or to religion of any kind. These should be clear, bright, pointed, and

less defensive than aggressive. The assailants are generally deplorably ignorant and can be easily met. They try to make the Catholic ashamed of his religion, and undoubtedly many are lost to us, who, looking rather to the opinion of men than of God, are ridiculed out of their faith. We should give these help, and strengthen their faith, and enable them to turn the shafts of ridicule on the incongruities, absurdities, and real irreligion of their persecutors.

Our catechetical books, written in other countries, are generally antiquated and defective in form. We need treatises better adapted to our needs to save our young people, and to save them, to keep religion in their hearts is the greatest service we can render our country.

Nor is it among the poorer only that this is the fact. The graduates of our colleges meet in the circles where they move the same temptations, and if they lose the faith, they too are fair candidates for the criminal classes. Our colleges certainly have not produced in the country generally the results we might naturally expect. The graduates have not made their influence felt as have those of the rationalistic institutions, and, in spite of the training they have received, not a few seem to be moral cowards enough to be laughed out of their faith, or at least out of the practice of their religion. We do not find the robust, sturdy, stalwart faith, which, kindled by the enthusiasm of youth, should exert a wide influence and cheer those lower in life, who seeing courage, take heart in turn.

A great Catholic University is a want, but it will require years of preparation to give it a faculty that will meet every branch of science and learning as acknowledged masters, and take issue at once with all the erroneous theories of the day so ably that the students will feel that they are on the victorious side. But whether by associations, publications, or a more general shaping of education to meet our wants, we must strengthen the faith of the poor, and rouse the faith of the rich, choked by the cares and pleasures of this world, or the rapid increase of the criminal element will rob us of our poor and leave our wealthier enervated and helpless.

The great peril of this country approaches, and to us Catholics comes with terrible meaning the question: "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

Not only must we have more and plainer churches, with ragged schools, if you like, societies to aid the tenement-house poor in obtaining a livelihood in country parts, more extended associations to support reformatories and refuges, but we need higher educational establishments, a great Catholic University that will give us what we lack, a class of thoroughly educated and truly Catholic young men, who will inspire Catholic life in the upper class and by ex-

ample and influence act on the lower class. Unless the Catholics more favored by fortune do not show more of Christian life, and exert a wider and more general influence than they have yet done, they will be swept away in the general irreligion around them, and so far from preserving or reclaiming their poorer brethren, will have to be brought to higher and better thoughts by the examples furnished among their humbler brethren.

On them rests a grave and a great responsibility.

They are called upon by every motive to give time, influence, and exertion to avert the evils which menace us.

ADMISSIONS OF OUR ADVERSARIES.

“Judicibus vel inimicis nostris.”

THE testimony of an unwilling witness, in a civil or criminal court, has deservedly very great weight, and preponderates largely over the evidence of one who has no bias, and still more over the words of those whose eagerness to testify is apparent. This is especially visible in matters pertaining to the doctrine and practice of the Church; for there is frequently manifested among thinkers of the “advanced type,” a certain disposition to sneer at even the best and most thoroughly presented arguments of a professed champion in her cause, chiefly through the insinuation that *by this craft he has his livelihood*; and that therefore, whether he really thinks so or not, he is necessarily bound down to present as strong a case as possible, and to smooth over, with his utmost adroitness, the real difficulties of the question. This we well remember to have been the case among very many with whom we were acquainted in early days, who used frequently to assert that “the learned of the clergy of the Romish Church knew better than to believe her doctrines;” but that they merely kept up appearances, making the worse appear the better cause and using their ability simply for personal ends. From this it was easily deducible, and on that conclusion they acted, that they would not read the arguments of Catholic writers, nor would they give heed to the most logical reasoning of well-informed Catholics; and thus it became utterly impossible to bring them to a respectful consideration of the claims which the Church has, particularly upon every bap-