House of Refuge

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Published by Syracuse University Press

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To rescue and cherish the unprotected, especially the young, the ignorant, the helpless, who are exposed to crime, to misery, and to utter ruin, is the sacred duty of us all; and in the abandoned and wretched state of hundreds of poor children of this city, a scene of present [sic] suffering and a prospect of future mischief is presented, which needs only to be properly viewed to excite the compassion of the good, and the apprehensions of the thoughtful.

—New York American (For the Country), December 20, 1823.

II. The Society for the Prevention of Pauperism (1815—23)

The notion of creating a refuge for delinquent children in New York City did not arise overnight. The Reverend John Stanford had initially broached the subject as early as 1815, and it had shifted back and forth between Stanford and the city government for almost a decade. When the grand jury lamented the number of children present in the city's prisons, the old preacher harangued them for having allowed youngsters to be admitted initially. For many years he had implored the authorities to remove children and place them in a separate institution.

Earlier, Stanford had developed a plan for an asylum which would house two types of juveniles. "Little wanderers," who had been either abandoned or who had run away from vicious parents, would constitute one group of inmates. The other part of the asylum would house youngsters who had been tried and convicted in the courts. He recommended a maximum age limit of fifteen years for the "criminal" youths.

Stanford based the corrective character of his proposed institution on three methods of treatment. He suggested work, education, and religion as prime means to alter deviant behavior. Part of the children's time would be spent in learning manufacturing skills, the remainder in learning elementary academic subjects. A firm believer in the redemptive values of religion, Stanford gave a very high priority to religion and morality. To his mind, these elements played the most prominent
part in the educational curriculum. Stanford could not conceive of reformation taking place without religious emphasis.

In selecting useful employment for the children, Stanford suggested a maritime school as an attachment to the proposed institution.

The theory, or first principles of navigation can be taught any boy who is moderately acquainted with the first four rules of arithmetic; so as to keep the ship's reckoning, attain some idea of the log book; box the compass, and in short to perform what is called “a day’s work at sea.” In addition to this, they may readily learn to splice knots, strapping blocks, and ropes, make points and mats, mend old sails and a variety of other small articles necessary for boys to perform on land. Some idea of practical seamanship can likewise be conveyed to their minds. Produce two old long boats useless for water; roughly plank them, introduce imaginary masts, in the one for a brig, the other for a ship. With old cordage of the smaller kind . . . boys who have an inclination for the sea, will learn to rig and unrig, while they will acquire the names, and uses of the whole.2

For the school's superintendent, Stanford suggested a retired sea captain of “respectable and firm habits.”

Stanford felt that the idea of such a school would captivate ship owners and captains alike. They would be bound to hire boys trained in this manner. The institution might also serve a patriotic function. Domestically trained seamen could replace less dependable foreigners and help to establish America's independence on the waters. Stanford concluded that the boys themselves, sensing their debt to America's maritime industry, would be ready to serve in times of national disaster.

For the needed support with which to construct his cherished institution, Stanford looked to “the opulent.” He assured himself that these worthies, “possessed of strong intellect will not withhold their concurrence in a design so humane in itself, gratifying to the generous mind, and beneficial to society:—nay, the children may rise to call them blessed!”

The opulent either lacked the intellect with which Stanford credited them or doubted the utility of his project. Although he presented his scheme to the city government each year, for a number of years, it
had not received support. In 1819, seven years after he had first sug­
gested the children’s removal from adult prisons, Stanford was still
holding religious services for young boys behind the walls of the city
penitentiary and appealing to the city fathers for their removal.

Stanford, like many another, saw his own ideas initially rejected by
those in power and then later put forward successfully by others who
seemed to have had more influence. Although he brooded over being
snubbed, he nevertheless had to credit those who were able to do what
he had been unable to accomplish. Where he had failed, they had suc­
ceeded. Even their efforts, however, would not reach immediate frui­
tion. When the well-intentioned reformers of the Society for the Refor­
mation of Juvenile Delinquents presented a scheme which would entail
the expenditure of money, they could anticipate a long and frustrating
struggle before their hopes could be realized.

Two Quakers provided most of the thrust behind the House of
Refuge movement. Thomas Eddy and John Griscom influenced the
earliest development and subsequent history of the Refuge idea as it
grew from a somewhat generalized concern over poverty and crime,
following the War of 1812, to a more specific creation which became
the first public institution devised for the care of delinquent and ne­
glected youths.

John Griscom, professor of chemistry and eventually principal of
New York City’s chief secondary school, differed a great deal from his
partner in reform, Thomas Eddy. Griscom, a massive man with heavy­
lidded eyes and a serene good nature, loomed over his companion.
While Griscom exuded strength and calm, the smaller man, with his
great head and piercing eyes, often dominated reform meetings. By
1825, Griscom had known intense personal suffering, but he was a
man on the crest of his career as a teacher and reformer. For Eddy,
the skein of time had nearly run out. He and the Reverend John Stan­
ford, the patriarch who had served the inmates of the city’s prisons for
many years, could look back on a generation of service to mankind.
The Refuge would be one of Eddy’s last efforts to confront the social
and economic changes following the American Revolution.

Earlier, even while the Revolution had been going on, Eddy had his
first taste of what it meant to be regarded as an outcast. When Eddy
had been a young man, courting a Quakeress on Long Island, Rebel troops had seized him and thrown him into a squalid prison. Although the Revolutionary War came to a halt not long after this experience, Eddy had never forgotten it. It served as one of the motivating forces for his lifelong work in prison reform. Unlike the Reverend Stanford, Eddy possessed considerable wealth. He had suffered temporary financial reverses after the Revolution, but a series of judicious business speculations in the 1790's had made him a rich man. The proceeds of Eddy's dealings, along with money taken in from a new insurance office, one of the first in New York City, enabled him to retire from active business. His form of retirement, however, was continuous activity, for long after he retired, Eddy retained the posts of Director of the Mutual Insurance Company and Director and Treasurer of the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company. The latter affiliation put the shrewd old Quaker in constant contact with some of the most influential figures of New York State. These contacts would often prove useful in aiding his efforts at humanitarian reform.

With Eddy, the possession of wealth came as a "Divine Trust." A devoted student of the problems of those less fortunate than he, Eddy used his wisdom and wealth to improve men's moral and physical condition. Earlier, during the 1790's, Eddy and a group of Philadelphia friends had worked on the improvement of penal codes and penitentiaries. In March, 1796, Eddy had lured the influential General Philip Schuyler to Philadelphia to see the Walnut Street Prison. General Schuyler, owner of the Inland Lock and Navigation Company and heir to a great New York name, had only to announce his support of the penitentiary idea for New York State. Schuyler's support assured Eddy of success, but the actual work of designing New York State's first penitentiary had fallen to Eddy. A committee of five men was designated, but he designed and superintended the building of the institution.

When he completed the new prison, Eddy took over as its chief administrator. While there, he conducted an efficient, thrifty and "mild" regime. His tenure, however, was somewhat short and in 1804, he resigned the post. Adverse political currents, swept in during the Jeffersonian Revolution of 1800, had made it extremely difficult for him to continue. One of his close friends, Assistant Attorney General Cadwallader D. Colden, sharply commented on the change:
When there was a great revolution in political power, those who had effected the change thought their influence should be felt everywhere; and though there was no emolument annexed to the office of the governor of the prison, there were those of the dominant party, whose ambition was to be gratified by being put in place of the Friends who were managers of the institution. The difference between the government of those who took the office merely from motives of philanthropy, and who devoted themselves to the discharge of its duties, and those who held it as an honorary distinction, that deserved little sacrifice of their private business, was soon perceived. The new management was so bad, that it had very nearly occasioned the failure of this great experiment.  

During this period of his life, in addition to his work in the prisons, Eddy had worked out plans for hospitals and insane asylums. He involved himself in the creation of both the New York Hospital and the Bloomingdale Asylum.

Besides his own great contributions of time, effort, and money, this Quaker showed considerable political ability. Operating efficiently and quietly behind the scenes, Eddy possessed a knack for extricating money from the New York State Legislature. During the winter months of 1816 he virtually lived in the halls of the senate and the assembly. His persistence produced results. The legislature, not realizing its unwitting generosity until long afterward, granted a continuing sum of money to Eddy’s asylum.

In 1817, Eddy once more utilized his influence in Albany. With Joseph Curtis beside him, Eddy marched up the Capitol Hill against a gusty February wind to see another of his cherished projects become a milestone of humanitarian reform. While Eddy and Curtis sat by, the state legislature passed an act of emancipation for the slaves of New York State.

In their earnest effort to remove all of the obstacles in men’s path to perfection, Eddy and his friends held to a firm line on the causes of human depravity. They believed in the paramount influence of environment upon man. Instead of fastening the blame for sin upon man’s innate weaknesses, they chose to attach evil to external objects. One of their favorite targets happened to be the rum bottle. Sober citi-
zen that he was, Eddy had declared a war on alcohol or anything else that seemed to stand in the way of the progress of mankind.

When Eddy and Griscom finally walked into the House of Refuge for its dedication on Christmas Day, 1825, they confronted a series of neat rows of seated children. Sitting down not far from the youngsters, Griscom could easily recall the time when he and Eddy, along with others, had first felt the urge to do something for other urchins, similar to those seated before him. Almost ten years before, out of a larger concern for all of the outcasts of the city, Griscom and his colleagues had begun to seek guidance as to ways in which they could alleviate the conditions in which poor children lived.

As the winter snows of 1816 drifted around the trees outside, a small group of men, sitting in Griscom’s parlor on Williams Street, searched their souls. What could they do for the poor? Even before the devastating War of 1812 had ground to an inconclusive close, these men, some of New York City’s most important citizens, had sensed the existence of a growing body of poor people within their city. The army of idlers had swelled to frightening proportions. Discharged soldiers, sailors, unemployed artisans, rootless immigrants, bewildered widows, and orphaned children blended into a growing mass of discontented paupers. The presence of so many desperate men and women, many without a penny in their pockets, frightened the city’s more substantial citizens.

Griscom and his friends, true to a trusted American technique, decided to form a voluntary association. A decade before, in 1805, Eddy, Griscom, and a number of others had joined together in the house of John Murray, Jr., a prominent New York Quaker, and founded the Free School Society. Since that time, they had created similar groups of various other causes, all testifying to the efficiency of the voluntary principle of philanthropy. This time, instead of providing education and food for the poor, the philanthropists had decided to conduct an operation on the causes of poverty. Whatever contributed to the increase of want and crime, they sought to isolate, examine, and eliminate.

Who should lead the investigation? Only a skilled person could conduct the preliminary probe. Besides intellect and ability, he must possess a strong sense of morality and a constant devotion to the unfor-
tunate. The group might have selected Reverend John Stanford. Certainly, he knew the most about the problems of the poor. Stanford, however, was too close to the problem. Also, he could seldom move the rich and well born; his own presence reeked of pauperism. To meet these demanding qualifications, the group selected John Griscom. By choosing their host, the rest of the group foreshadowed their own eventual course of action.

Although only in his early forties, Griscom already had a long career in public and private education behind him. A former resident of New Jersey, he had come to New York City via Philadelphia as a young school teacher and had since risen to become a leading member of Manhattan's intellectual circle.

Part of Griscom's prominence had come from his varied chemical and scientific experiments, but many knew him as the chief administrator of one of the city's flourishing schools and as professor of chemistry at the Queen's College Medical School. Griscom's reputation as a chemist rested less on his ability to devise original theories and experiments than it did on his ability to assimilate and popularize already existing knowledge. Most of the information had been gleaned from the work of European scholars.

Griscom transferred into social concerns the pattern of collecting and disseminating information which had brought him such success in science. One of those individuals who combined scientific insight and training with an interest in religious and social affairs, Griscom, a prominent member of the American Society of Friends, conducted an active correspondence with scientists and philanthropists on both sides of the Atlantic. Because of his many Continental acquaintances, he became a convenient transplanter of Old World ideas to New World soil.

Waiting silently for the prompting of the "inner light," as he sat through meetings, Griscom had become sensitized to the ills existing in the world outside. Once the realization of an injustice or evil rose within him, he could not rid himself of it. Even while he waited patiently for divine guidance, the uneasiness burned into his conscience. He thus experienced an urgent "horizontal" relationship with mankind at the same time in which he experienced a "vertical" relationship with God. Leaving the 1816 meeting, Griscom, in keeping with others, felt compelled to eliminate injustice. Only when he had made an attempt
to do so would he know peace. Even if he were unsuccessful, he would
at least have the satisfaction of having tried to carry out the prompt­
ings of his conscience.

If by any chance Griscom’s desire to rectify injustice and abolish sin
should flag, Advices and Queries, published by the Quakers to remind
the brethren of daily duties and obligations, served to keep him con­
stantly aware of his yet unfinished task.

Also, William Penn’s well-known book of maxims, entitled Some
Fruits of Solitude, provided a formula for Griscom’s daily good works.
“Tho’ Meddling is a Fault, Helping is a Duty,” Penn advised his read­
ers. He told them that they must do good for its own sake, without
regard for praise or reward. The virtues of charity and piety, straight
from the scriptures, should guide the daily life of man. “Zeal dropped
in charity is good,” Penn remarked, but zeal without charity “devours
all it comes near.” Penn had described the life of the wise man as one
who “is always for some solid Good, Civil or Moral; as, to make his
Country more Virtuous, Preserve her Peace and Liberty, Imply her
Poor, Improve Land, Advance Trade, Suppress Vice, Incourage Indus­
try, and all Mechanick Knowledge; and that they should be the Care
of the Government, and the Blessing of the People.” The Quaker con­
science permeated all of life.

Other Quakers besides William Penn had pointed the way toward
social reform. In the year of Griscom’s birth, 1774, the Society of
Friends published posthumously the diary of John Woolman, a Quaker
mystic from New Jersey. Many considered Woolman the outstanding
spokesman for American Quakerism. His diary became a fixture in
nearly every Friend household in America.

Early in Woolman’s life, he underwent dramatic conversion to the
cross. Conversion, to Woolman, meant a life of “increased” devotion to
his fellow man. He translated his newfound love into a lifelong camp­
paign to preach the gospel of love, eliminate slavery, improve the lot of
the Indians, and root out lotteries, idleness, and other related iniquities.

The moral sensitivity created during worship, combined with the
scriptural admonition that God existed in every man, and the example
of men such as Penn and Woolman, stood before all American Quak­
ers. Because of these influences, many Quakers participated in the
work of social reform. Although one of the smallest religious groups in
American, the Friends wielded a disproportionately important influence in humanitarian movements.

By the midpoint of the nineteenth century, the census takers of New York County, for example, listed only 1,000 Quakers. This amounted to less than one in every 600 residents, in a population of 629,904. In the same period Methodists numbered 50,000. Thus, at least one in twelve persons would most likely have been of Methodist persuasion. Methodists involved in social reform, however, were distinctly outnumbered by Quakers.

Fortunately for the prospects of humanitarianism, Quaker thought and action neatly converged with the prominent ethic of the period. In contrast with the earlier bedrock Calvinism, American Christianity had gone the way of the "cult of benevolence." Americans had translated the European Enlightenment into a combination of rationalism and moral obligation. Drawing upon Enlightenment-inspired theology and a knowledge of the boundless resources of the new continent, many Americans, when they thought of the future of their country and its institutions, were piously optimistic, and older notions such as the Calvinist doctrine of innate depravity continued to diminish in importance.

On occasion, the optimism of Americans outran their piety. At these points, the religious pronouncements of Cotton Mather and William Penn faded from view and became amalgamated in the secular maxims of Benjamin Franklin. John Griscom's colleagues in the work of reform did not always feel the religious motivation which Griscom experienced. To them, the impulse to reform arose from a conviction concerning the possibility of man's perfectability. Although not all of the reformers whom Griscom knew were Quakers, he could still find kindred spirits in his work. Thus, during the months following their initial meeting, Griscom combined forces with non-Quakers in preparing a plan to combat poverty and vice.

Although considerable time elapsed after their first meeting, Griscom and his associates had not necessarily lost their zeal. Griscom, in particular, had suffered through a great tragedy. In the middle of March, while he and his friends worried over the misfortunes of others, a disaster struck his own family. Not long after giving birth to her ninth child, Abigail Griscom died of puerperal fever.

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By late fall, however, Griscom, saddled with the care of a large family, again stood prepared to perform his share of the group's work. His personal loss only served to deepen his concern for the woes of others. Late in December, when the reformers designated themselves the New York Society for the Prevention of Pauperism, Griscom took charge of the investigating committee. At the February meeting of the newly formed society, he presented his initial findings. Carefully describing the goals and regulations of the organization, Griscom charged the Society with the task of serving initially as a research organization. He presented the results of his own preliminary investigation and thereby set the pattern which the Society was to follow for the next several years.

Griscom and his associates concluded that the greatest contributors to the phenomena of poverty and crime were ignorance, idleness, and intemperance. They also listed wastefulness, early and hasty marriages, lotteries, pawnbrokers, houses of ill-fame, indiscriminate alms-giving, and, in certain periods, war. Given Griscom's religious convictions and intellectual disposition, the list could have been predictable.

Griscom's words fell on fertile ground. New York, a growing city of nearly 120,000 people, was as much a center of paternalistic reform as it was a hotbed of crime and pauperism. The editor of the Commercial Advertiser, a member of the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism, made no apology to his readers for giving the meetings of the Society extended coverage in his newspaper. He did not need to, for many of his readers, made up chiefly of the commercial classes of the city, maintained a lively interest in such affairs. The editor and his constituency felt that any efforts to "instruct the ignorant, and to reform the immoral . . . would not be suffered to fail through lack of public support." A month or so after reading his committee report to the Society, John Griscom, suffering from an increased "catarrhal affection," decided that the time had come for a vacation to Europe. Although Griscom considered it a serious matter to absent himself for such a long time from his family and his work, he felt that he needed a change of surroundings. On the first of April, 1818, leaving his family in the care of relatives and boarding schools, Griscom placed his own school under the supervision of assistants and sailed from New York on the Pacific.
For Griscom and the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism, this was an eventful voyage. In addition to restoring his health and breaking up his arduous routine, the European sojourn provided Griscom with an opportunity to gather information concerning the latest efforts being made overseas in the direction of solving man's social problems. However, he did not go to the Europeans empty-handed. Carrying a sizeable bundle of his committee's reports, he was prepared to circulate among Europeans the news of the Society's activities. As he stepped aboard the ship, Griscom took on the role of emissary of reform from the New World.

Communication among reformers in different nations was not a new practice. Ever since the American Revolution, citizens of the New World had looked to the Old. As far back as 1802, Thomas Eddy, the veteran philanthropist of New York's Society for the Prevention of Pauperism, had communicated with the English police administrator, Patrick Colquhon, and they often sent materials to one another. In exchange for Eddy's own writings and his account of the New York State Prison, philosopher Jeremy Bentham forwarded, through Colquhon, a copy of his own *Tracts on the Education of Youth and Tracts on the Means of Supporting the Poor, and Preventing Idleness and Vagrancy*. Through the years, numerous works were exchanged in this manner. While the Society took shape, Eddy and Colquhon kept up their exchange of reports, pamphlets, and papers. Just prior to the formation of the new Society, Colquhon had sent a set of pamphlets from Europe, and Eddy had sent a group of reports from the Philadelphia Association of Friends for the Instruction of Poor Children and the New York Free School Society. Access to new ideas and institutions thus existed on both sides of the Atlantic.

The English philanthropists sought advice and information fully as often as the Americans in these exchanges. Even while Griscom traveled to England, Eddy received a letter from William Allen, a member of the Society of Friends and a longtime leader in London reform circles. Allen wanted Eddy's thorough appraisal of a scheme for the reformation of juvenile delinquents in London. The Englishman proposed a "Reformatory" which would hold approximately six hundred boys. What did Eddy think of the idea?

The New York Quaker responded enthusiastically. He thought the
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plan the "wisest and best ever proposed," but cautioned Allen that each boy must have a separate sleeping compartment. If there were more than one boy to a room at night, Eddy assured Allen that the boys would "corrupt each other," and the reformers would surely be frustrated in their plans. Speaking from his experience with the state prison which he had designed and operated almost twenty years before, Eddy recommended single sleeping cells at night and a congregate system by day.

In his next letter, Eddy advised Allen of the imminent arrival of Professor Griscom. Desiring a close connection with his friend's movements, Eddy asked Allen to encourage Griscom to write, alerting the people at home of his "movements, prospects, etc."

While his letter to Allen was still in transit, Eddy received his first note from John Griscom. The Professor told Eddy that soon after his arrival he had managed to get an interview on May 2 with William Roscoe, one of the foremost reformers in England. On May 5, the two men met again. This time, Roscoe interrogated Griscom concerning the prospects for American prisons; the Englishman frankly despaired of ever making any lasting alterations in his own country. The forces of tradition, declared Roscoe, had captivated the government; they were much too strong to be overthrown at the moment.

Griscom communicated the results of his conversations to Eddy, who knew the work of Roscoe quite well. Praising Roscoe's realism, Eddy had remarked that success in the work of reform must always be accompanied by the sort of patience and perseverance typified in the person of men such as Roscoe. Why be hasty? Writing to Griscom, Eddy declared:

The whole work may be ruined by men, who in England are called Oppositionists or Reformers (in America, Democrats), and who, actuated by an over-strained zeal, do not know how to take hold of things at the right time; like many religious zealots, they press on the people more than they are able to bear. The light which Providence has been pleased to enlighten the minds of men, as it regards moral or religious truths, is gradual—as was the commencement of the abolition of slavery in New York State. If the good people in England, who are now engaged in endeavoring to effect an alteration in the penal
system, act wisely, they will be exceedingly prudent and cautious not to press too much in their first application—eventually, they must succeed in so righteous a cause. Eddy, the thoroughgoing gradualist, distrusted Democrats and immediatists alike. He preferred to work on the careful alteration and reform of society.

Sometimes, however, the work of reform went ahead more gradually than even Eddy was willing to accept. He complained to Griscom that the “Pauper Society does not get forward with any spirit and, in my opinion will cease, till thee return to revive it.” Griscom, however, had just started on his journey; he had people to meet, ideas to discuss, things to see, institutions to visit.

Early in June, fresh from his Liverpool meeting with Roscoe and a number of days spent touring Manchester, Griscom arrived in London. He had come to attend the annual session of the British and Foreign School Society and to examine the newly initiated project of the London Philanthropic Society. This group, founded by one of the foremost philanthropic families of England, the Gurneys, had recently become interested in the plight of juvenile delinquents. In their work with the poor, William Allen, the Gurneys, and others had come to feel that only through working with children could they effect any lasting change among the lower classes. Since all of these particular reformers were Quakers, Griscom found it easy to get quickly to the essence of their work and the problems connected with it.

On June 25, 1818, Professor Griscom, together with a group of English friends, arrived at the London Philanthropic Society’s institution for delinquent children. Touring its buildings, the American traveler immediately became engrossed with the internal operation of the place and interrogated the managers at length concerning their methods. They told him that they ran the institution through the device of a large committee, which met every fortnight. The boys, laboring in the shops and as apprentices from six o’clock in the morning until six o’clock in the evening, helped to defray the cost of operation. Master workmen and journeymen superintended their labors. Although the work day was incredibly long, Griscom did not think it worthy of notice. Instead, he observed that both boys and girls worked in the place, but that a massive wall separated them. The girls sewed garments for
themselves and the boys. The managers informed Griscom that there were about 150 boys and 50 girls present. The ages of the children ranged from eight to 12 years.

Elsewhere in town, the Society operated a house called the “Reform.” This establishment, although it had been set up for older youngsters, actually contained a retraining program in which not only labor but moral and academic education took place. Evidently the English assumed that younger children could not profit from such training while older youths could.

Professor Griscom noted one fact about the younger children’s work which he considered quite interesting. Although the boys labored to pay for their own food and lodging, they were still allowed to keep a portion of the profit from their own labor. The older boys also received a free night away from the institution for one evening during the month, and the younger boys received one every three months. Even though he thought of himself as an educator, Griscom’s innate love of frugality and commitment to the virtues of work overwhelmed his perspective on the value of the institution. Watching the children at work, Griscom reflected on the pleasing possibilities of so many boys and girls being plucked as “brands” from the fires of criminality and vice. Such an institution might well contain an immense potential for good. Perhaps, he reasoned, Americans could profit from seeing this type of system in operation.

Although Griscom met some of Europe’s foremost reformers in his travels, the visit to the London institution evidently made the greatest impact on his sensitivities. The other reform institutions tended to handle smaller numbers and to depend upon the personality of the founder. When visiting Johann Pestalozzi, Griscom criticized the Swiss educator for his individualistic approach. Griscom favored the Lancasterian method, which he felt could function regardless of the personal skills of the instructor. Under the system of Englishman Joseph Lancaster, one master could teach a number of children who would, in turn, teach younger children, and so on, down the line. Although he admired the warmth and sincerity of Pestalozzi, Griscom felt that his scheme lacked practicality. When he returned to the United States in the spring of 1819, Griscom had a number of ideas as to how to institute a reform for the children of the poor. There was a sense,
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however, in which his ideas had not really changed as a result of the trip. He had viewed selectively the efforts of others, and he felt ready to apply only those aspects of their schemes which fitted into his own design of what an asylum for youths should be.

While John Griscom toured the philanthropic institutions of Europe, his colleagues remained active at home. Contrary to the fears expressed earlier by Thomas Eddy, the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism had not faded from view. Neither had it carried out any dramatically new reforms. Essentially, the members had done little more than try to implement some of the suggestions made earlier by Griscom.

One of the most encouraging signs of the good prospects of the Society lay in the cordial attitude extended toward them by Mayor Cadwallader D. Colden. Although he had taken office only the previous March, Colden had already made several attempts to deal with the many social problems confronting the city.

Returning in time for the fall meetings of 1819, Griscom eagerly re-joined his comrades. Just after Christmas, Griscom, having gathered up his scattered family and resumed his lectures in chemistry and natural philosophy at the New York Institution, met with the Society and took over the post of secretary. Almost every influential person in the city, including the Mayor, came to the City Hotel to participate in the meeting.

Griscom’s friends, of course, encouraged the Professor to give an account of his European trip. The many Quakers present delighted in hearing of the exploits of Mrs. Fry at Newgate Prison in London and Griscom’s encounters with the almost legendary notables of the Old World. Griscom’s comments, however, were not the highlight of the meeting. Young Charles Haines, a New Hampshire lawyer who had recently joined the group, presented the most important address to the assembly. During Griscom’s absence, Haines had taken over the older man’s position as head of the research committee. The older members of the Society appreciated the young man’s devotion and talent and warmly received his report.

The imposing mass of statistics which Haines and his group had gathered contained a disturbing picture of the misery and wretchedness in their midst. According to Haines’s figures, 8,000 school-age chil-
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dren in New York City went without even the barest elementary education. In spite of the combined labors of the Free School Society, the numerous religious and charitable organizations, and the private schools, these children still were not reached; such huge numbers of unschooled children constituted an urgent reminder of the task still to be accomplished.

To the usual bogeyman, Demon Rum, Haines added a new partner—the foreign immigrant. By this addition, the Society indicated that it shared the apprehension of others concerning the waves of new paupers arriving from other lands. The prospect of foreigners joining forces with already large numbers of nonresident paupers drifting in from the surrounding countryside and other cities frightened the largely Anglo-American audience. Haines estimated that 28,000 “foreigners” had landed in the port of New York within the past twenty months. According to Haines, most of these people were likely to remain in the city, and the bulk of them already had gone on poor relief. The immigrants appeared to observers as a solid core of unassimilated, unemployed, lower-class citizenry.

New York City had always had a greater immigration problem than other American cities. The usual procedure of “passing on” nonresident paupers did not help at all. Immigrants who came into the country through this port, destined for other areas or cities, were often found to be burdens and invariably got shipped back to the port of entry. City officials consequently faced the dilemma of supporting the paupers as permanent public charges or paying for return passages to foreign countries.

In addition to the steady rise of alcohol consumption and immigration, Haines and his colleagues thought they detected a decrease in the amount of religious fervor present in the community. According to the members of the Society, the magic mingling of alcohol and immigration minus religion produced an evil potion.

Besides Haines, Mayor Cadwallader D. Colden played an important part in the creation of the Society’s second report. The assembled members acknowledged his contribution with a hearty declaration of appreciation for his “prompt and powerful support.” Colden’s portion was a lengthy letter on existing conditions in the city’s penal establishments. Concern for the treatment of criminal offenders, a relatively
new departure for the members, came out of the growing realization that although the criminal population was increasing, efforts toward meeting the growth remained static and inadequate. The housing of young offenders in the city’s jails and almshouse was a matter of particular concern for the members of the Society.

Thomas Eddy was among those who had long deplored the situation. To determine what steps the English were taking to implement the “Reformatory” idea, Eddy, doubtless with Griscom’s encouragement, had written an inquiry to the chairman of the Committee for the Improvement of Prison Discipline in London. Any material gained from this new experiment might be influential in convincing the common council of the need for a similar institution in New York.

City officials were already painfully aware of the presence of children in their penal institutions. Earlier in the year, they had taken a hesitant step toward alleviating the situation. At that time, sixteen boys ranging in age from ten to sixteen, inhabited the city penitentiary. For the first time, city authorities separated the youngsters during the daytime, and the Reverend John Stanford came occasionally to instruct them.

When asked why they even permitted intermingling of the young and old at night, the officials threw up their hands. What choice did they have? When the common council suggested that a separate building be established for juveniles, the wardens and jailers thoroughly agreed. Such a structure would allow for separate instruction, work, and sleep. The common council had recommended that a building be erected on the recently acquired city property adjacent to the existing institutions. A modest structure, housing fifty boys along with keepers and instructors, could be constructed for less than $2,000.

The existing institutions were useless for purposes of reforming youth. Not wishing to condemn those currently in charge of the prisons, the members of the Society were eager to point out that the fault lay in the system. The courts were at a loss for the appropriate disposal of youngsters between the ages of twelve and sixteen. If sentenced to the penitentiary, the children would shortly pop up again before the court. Mayor Colden, as chief magistrate of the court, stated that he had sentenced the same boys time after time.

An even worse situation obtained for young females. The only real
separation in the female division of the Bellevue Penitentiary was made on the basis of color. This meant that all kinds of convicts, “such as prostitutes, vagrants, lunatics, thieves, and those of a less heinous character,” were housed with young girls “who from neglect of parents, from idleness and misfortune, have never had a sense of morality.”

Commenting on the futility of the system, Mayor Colden described the courts as perpetrators of crime. “If anything,” he assured his readers, “can blunt moral sensibility, and divert shame of her blush, and remorse of its poignancy, it is repeated arraignments and sentences at a criminal tribunal.” By sentencing children to the prisons, the courts assured themselves that they had opened the “road to ruin.” In prisons, eager youngsters would learn the skills and vocabulary of “thieves, burglars, counterfeiteers, gamblers, perjurers, drunkards, vagrants and peace breakers.” Those who denied these facts, declared Colden, possessed little wisdom.

In spite of their awareness of the lack of facilities for juvenile criminals in New York City, the interest shown in remedying the situation by Mayor Colden, John Griscom, Thomas Eddy, and others of their number, along with the continued agitation of the aged Reverend Stanford, the bulk of the members of the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism were not yet ready to act.

In December, about a month after assisting the opening of the new library for young apprentices, the Society returned again to the subject of youth. Still concerned with the morals of young people, they appointed a committee to “confer with such committees as may be appointed by other Societies on the most effectual means of suppressing the vices and immoralities of clerks and apprentices.” Throughout this time, Professor Griscom remained extremely active. In the influential post of secretary and as member of the Committee on Correspondence with Europe, he was in a good position to channel information back and forth across the waters. In November, 1821, Griscom could report to the group that the Society’s publications received widespread attention in Europe.

At the same meeting at which Griscom made this announcement, the members of the Society drew up the standing committees for the coming year. Thirteenth on the list was the committee on juvenile delinquency. James Watson Gerard, a vigorous and handsome young
lawyer, agreed to become chairman. While Gerard's committee went to work, another committee, constituted somewhat earlier, published its findings. This group had taken on the ambitious function of surveying the penal system of the entire United States. Throughout 1820 and 1821, the committee members, headed first by Mayor Colden and later by Charles Haines, wrote letters and compiled returns. In 1822, the final report, running to over one hundred pages, came before the public eye.

Haines and his associates had found the penal system of the country in appalling condition. They singled out for particular notice the inadequate handling of juvenile criminals. To their minds, efficient and humane juvenile penitentiaries ought to be established at the earliest possible moment. "As population clusters," Haines argued, "the civic relations of life multiply, moral habits become less strict, education is less diffused, and a portion of the youthful part of the community are more neglected, and young convicts bear a greater ratio to old ones, than in the interior." 13 While courts in the larger cities sentenced boys fourteen to eighteen years old to state prisons, the woodshed remained the chief deterrent to juvenile delinquency in the countryside.

A number of respondents located in both rural and urban areas, however, sensed the inadequacy of established methods for handling young criminals. Perhaps a type of school would be more appropriate for achieving reform than the prison. Instead of a place of punishment, a school might serve to help in the creation of new habits. With a goal of "reformation and future usefulness" in view, school officials could train boys while they subdued them. "Regular and constant employment in branches of industry" would be the first order of such a place. The inmates could thus achieve future means of support. Together with this, the children could be instructed "in the elementary branches of education, and the careful inculcation of religious and moral principles." Suddenly, John Stanford's views, through the medium of the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism, had come before the populace. Typically, Haines made no mention of the old Baptist eccentric. As an ideal for the institution which the Society had in mind, Haines mentioned the reformatory developed by the London Society for the Improvement of Prison Discipline.

Young Haines was perfectly aware of the great outcry which would
be raised by the public at the thought of spending more money for a new institution. To this, he replied, "What is the object of penal law?" Was it cheaper to have money for a short time, only to have it wrenched away later on, or spend a little money in the beginning, to insure a safer life for the future? Haines, like John Stanford, hoped that "the wise, the good, and the public spirited" would not neglect the juvenile delinquent. He urged his readers to look to England, where "men who combine station, power and talents—who stand among the ornaments of the British empire, and of the civilized world" had become interested in the cause of the youthful criminal. Americans, he contended, could surely do as well.

The publication of the Haines report marked the beginning of the end of the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism. It was clear that the broad-scale goals of the group were being eliminated in favor of a specific reform. As 1822 came to an end, the Society was fast coming to a decision to take its own advice, and as Griscom and Eddy looked back on the years of conditioning, they could take pride in having played a considerable part in the program of the Society. Others might take up the job of nurturing the plan along, but Griscom and Eddy could take credit for planting the seed.

The year 1823 marked a metamorphosis in the life of the Society. After almost eight years of agitation and research, it had finally begun to focus on a specific device to eliminate vice and misfortune. Motivated by a desire to save New York City's unfortunate and troublesome youngsters, the members of the Society had begun to move away from total efforts to abolish poverty and crime and toward an attempt to eliminate juvenile delinquency. New members joined the ranks. Professor John Griscom, having initially spirited the movement into being, could now afford to turn over some of the work to younger men.

At first, some of the newcomers found it difficult to accept for themselves the advice which the Society had so freely extended to others. Only when brought face-to-face with delinquent youths did many of the newer members of the Society come to express a desire for a separate institution for the reformation of juvenile offenders. Once they sustained such an experience, however, their outlook dramatically shifted. One example of this was the lawyer James Gerard; he had a thriving practice and a rich wife. Until thrown into close association
with juvenile criminals, he had not been convinced of their difficulties. Gerard's particular awakening had come about when he participated in his first court case, the defense of a promising fourteen-year-old boy charged with the theft of a canary bird. Eventually, the boy landed in the state prison.

Participation in the affairs of the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism by young men such as Gerard marked the changing character of the group. Gerard, like Charles Haines, who had also joined the Society a year or so before, was a new breed of reformer. Both aspiring lawyers and capable speakers, Haines and Gerard plunged eagerly into public affairs. Neither wore the garb or ideology of their older Quaker colleagues. Gerard and Haines tended to be intellectuals of the DeWitt Clinton variety, sensing that the path to success lay in involvement with community problems. Haines, in particular, was a devoted disciple of Governor DeWitt Clinton. He was a tireless worker for the older man's political campaigns, making sure that the home bailiwick was secure while Clinton spent time with the people upstate.

Although they may have been permeated less with religious zeal than a desire to see their community and themselves progress, young men supplied the ability, intellect, and fervor to pursue and carry out specific reforms. When working with the older men, many of whom had both wisdom and experience in social reform, the younger men could assure themselves of making an impact. Voluntary associations of influential citizens, such as those who comprised the pauperism group, served as convenient devices for promoting ambitions. Through these groups, the young men could meet key people in the community, such as Mayor Colden and Governor Clinton. At the same time, political aspirants could demonstrate their ability by active participation in various projects.

By 1823, even DeWitt Clinton, a rising star in New York State politics, had become sufficiently aroused over the plight of youngsters to join his opinion with the others. The young chip pickers along the waterfront, many of whom lived by their wits and elusiveness, particularly concerned him. He felt that the juvenile gangs along the waterfront represented the growth of an undesirable element in the city's life. Clinton felt very strongly that the navy yards were the "ruin of young men."
House of Refuge

The members of the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism shared his opinion. Eager to do something about the situation, they appointed Joseph Curtis, John Griscom, and the Reverend Cave Jones to investigate. Immediately, the trio hiked themselves down to the waterfront. After a brief survey of the scene, they concluded that their only recourse was to talk to the ship carpenters, and they called a joint meeting with the tradesmen to discuss the problem. At the meeting, Griscom and his associates outlined the plight of the children. Could the carpenters do something to make the waterfront area less inviting? Wishing to cooperate, the carpenters passed a resolution which prohibited “the taking of any chips from the yards by any persons other than those employed in the same.” The members of the Society, of course, realized that some systematic means must be devised to handle the problem; negative resolutions amounted to very little in the way of combating juvenile vagrancy and crime.

While the waterfront group concentrated their efforts on ridding the area of chip pickers, James Gerard and his Committee on Juvenile Delinquency interrogated the city’s penal authorities. Gerard went to visit the Bridewell (New York’s city jail), the city penitentiary, and the state prison. He interviewed police justices, criminal lawyers, and all persons connected with the process of handling delinquent youngsters. He also spent long hours in consultation with his Quaker friend, Isaac Collins, another member of the Society and a close correspondent with the London Philanthropic Society. Unlike Gerard, Collins represented the older element of the Society; he had held posts in a variety of reforms, and he could lend his experience to the energies of the younger man.

When the February meeting of the Society took place, Gerard presented the results of his research. Even though the weather had become exceedingly cold, large numbers thronged into the assembly room of the City Hotel. As usual, the subject of juvenile crime did not merit first place on the agenda. The English stepping mill, just recently installed in the penitentiary to terrorize “sturdy beggars” by making them tramp in place for hours at a time, headed the list of subjects. Many held out great hopes for the machine; Mayor Stephen Allen headed the list of its admirers. One speaker, however, did not think much of the device. Theodore Sedgwick, a distinguished Albany barris-
ter, scoffed at it’s usefulness. The stepping mill could accomplish nothing; it was just one more device to suppress the poor. Although he did not denounced its inhumanity, he did point out its futility.

Sedgwick argued that nature afforded a better antidote to crime and pauperism. He urged his hearers to eliminate current community services for the poor. Instead of providing expensive city programs, he argued that community benefactors should look to the country. “There, there is not one pauper to a hundred inhabitants and in some places, not one in two hundred; but here, you support, or at least, you make provision for ten to twelve thousand people.” 18 Cleaving to his notions of the superiority of the agrarian way of life, Sedgwick expressed a widespread belief that city dwellers, with their legion of relief-supported rascals, lived with a “monstrous” ogre which they alone had created.

Pauperism, according to Sedgwick, could not be legislated out of existence; neither could it be treated by current nostrums. The New York State Legislature could pass bundles of bills, but Sedgwick wanted to know what good would come of such a procedure. “Tippling houses” could not be reduced; the public would not stand for it. Sedgwick implored his listeners to use their imagination. Looking around him, he spied the numerous round hats and bonnets of the Quakers. Where were the mendicants among the Friends? Who ever heard of a lawyer making any money on an assault-and-battery litigation among Quakers? The audience chuckled and applauded.

Sedgwick advised his hearers to adopt firm measures with ne’er-do-wells. They should be sent to the country. “We have plenty of room for them,” he announced, “and plenty of work too; they can earn, with us, six and eight shillings a day, in the summer!” Bypassing the obvious fact of pauper emigration from the countryside, Sedgwick contended that the matter of pauperism could be solved, if men used their minds and hands.

Thomas Fessenden followed Sedgwick. No more acquainted with the phenomenon of city pauperism than Sedgwick, he nevertheless felt free to deliver a long oration. Stephen Gerard sat quietly waiting. Clearly, men such as Sedgwick and Fessenden could talk forever. They possessed the fertile mind and supply of words which kept the American lawyer in business. Certain members of the audience, however,
must have concluded that such talk was all very well, but ineffectual. Fessenden's diatribe may have contained some truth, yet it seemed to ignore the harsher realities of life. A trip to the country would be healthy for idlers, but rural dwellers continued to converge on the city. To some of the restless but polite listeners, Sedgwick and Fessenden had misplacèd their emphasis. If habits were to be altered or people were to be moved, it would have to be while they were still children, before bad habits set in. Unlike adults, reasoned Mayor Allen, children could still be molded. To people who shared the Mayor's view on the matter, James Gerard's report came as an oasis after a long trek across a verbal desert.

Unlike his distinguished fellow speakers, Gerard shifted away from the general topic of pauperism. He wasted few words in getting to his subject. Many already knew the plight of the juvenile, but for those who remained unaware of the natural career of the young delinquent, Gerard delivered a dramatic and emotional description. Gerard demanded that a "House of Refuge" be constructed immediately. Patterned on the lines of the London "Temporary Refuge," he felt that such an institution should treat only juvenile delinquents who had just completed terms in prisons and jails. He described it as a school of moral rehabilitation as well as a training center in mechanical skills. Leaving it, children would possess marketable skills with which to gain their livelihood.

Although they did not act immediately upon Gerard's suggestion, the members of the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism did not need much more convincing. After four months, they finally decided to act upon his recommendation. On June 12, 1823, the Society appointed a committee of seven men to draw up a plan consistent with the committee's report. They selected Professor John Griscom, the only one of them who had actually seen the English establishment in operation, as chairman of the group; Gerard was selected to serve as a committee member.

To some people, the prospect of arresting the continued growth of juvenile delinquency seemed exciting and important. Earlier, they had been frightened by the word prison in regard to youths. The concept of refuge appealed much more to their sensibilities. Also, those who thought that the very essence of their society was threatened felt re-
lieved that something at last was being done. The editor of one of the
daily newspapers expressed the sentiment of this sector of the public
when he congratulated the Society for promoting the project.

We are much gratified to find this highly respectable, laborious,
and useful Society have taken this subject into their consideration.
It is well worthy of their attention, and not only theirs, but
that of all the inhabitants, who are desirous of checking the
progress of one of the most serious evils that now threatens the
peace and safety of the community.19

To the populace, the sight of an undisciplined young ruffian created
more dismay than a view of Rembrandt Peale’s macabre “Court of
Death,” then on display at Broadway and Franklin Street. The lurid
details of the twenty-foot painting, illuminated by flickering gas lights,
disconcerted the public far less than the sight of a mob of young ma-
rauders and cutpurses lurking in the shadow of a street lamp.

Public opinion could support the Society’s new ambitions. Now,
some hope existed that the number of juvenile misdeeds witnessed
daily might somehow be reduced. The inhabitant of Broadway, who
complained to the civil authorities that a “Set of idle dissolute young
men and boys,” who met every night by the hospital and shocked “the
ears of every female passing by their licentious observations,” could
breathe easier.20 At least he might feel that the younger members of
the group might soon be eliminated.

Suggestions as to how to organize the new establishment came in
freely from all quarters. The editor of the New York American (For
the Country) suggested that the Court of Sessions of New York City
send criminally inclined juveniles to the new place and that the court,
or some particular body, be “given power after notifying parents, to
apprentice the children.”21

The editor declared that the new establishment should also be open
to all the little wanderers who ran about the streets, “leading idle and
dissolute lives, and acquiring habits of intemperance and vicious asso-
ciation.” Because it only made provision for orphans, current legislation
represented little more than a dead letter. Neglected children, or chil-
dren currently being reared in idleness or crime by profligate parents,
needed both surveillance and training. The law, according to the
House of Refuge

editor, possessed many blind spots. If a parent abused his power and neglected his responsibility, he should be made to suffer. Wherever and whenever the general welfare had been sacrificed before the altar of individual caprice, the supporters of the Refuge argued that society stood threatened.

The fall of 1823 marked a busy time for the members of the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism. After a period of illness, Thomas Eddy was back at his philanthropic work. He had become increasingly engrossed in the Refuge scheme. As usual, Eddy played the role of educator and dispenser of information. He saw to it that the latest report of the London Society for the Improvement of Prison Discipline and the Reformation of Juvenile Offenders got into the hands of New York City's common council. The report contained a detailed account of the London Refuge and the council members became sufficiently enthusiastic about the document to recommend its reprinting.

At seven o'clock in the evening of December 19, the members of the Society gathered again for their annual meeting in the assembly room of the City Hotel. As in former occasions, numerous important citizens packed the hall. The members of the common council were present, having accepted an invitation from the Society to attend. Many key citizens had also come to listen and participate. One of the newspaper editors had announced the meeting with an urgent appeal to all philanthropists. He told them that the time had come for the citizens of New York to attend to their "sacred duty." They must be ready to "rescue and cherish the unprotected, especially the young, the ignorant, the helpless, who are exposed to crime, to misery and to utter ruin." 22

The editors had little reason to admonish the members of the Society. Professor Griscom and his colleagues had already gone over the report a short time before at the New York Hospital. They had painstakingly scrutinized every facet of it. The time had now arrived, they felt, to bring the plan before the entire public.

An atmosphere of urgency filled the hall as Colden, now president of the Society called the assembly to order. After clearing away a few incidental matters, Colden requested John Griscom to come forward. Grasping his papers firmly, the well-known Griscom began his report.

First, he wanted to clarify the principle of punishment which he
Society for the Prevention of Pauperism

felt ought to be endorsed. Heading dead against what he considered to be the predominant view, Griscom declared that the notion of “revenge” must be totally eliminated. The reformation of the individual must rank equally as high as the protection of society as a whole. Griscom counseled his audience to “deter others from crime, to prevent the aggressor from the repetition of his offences, and, if possible, to effect the moral reformation of all those who become amenable to the laws.”

The downfall of the present system, he argued, had not come about because of an excess of kindliness, but because of indiscriminate classification. The heaping together of persons of “all ages and degrees of guilt” had prevented any and all reformation and had made “Schools and Colleges of crime” out of the penitentiaries.

Griscom declared that the representatives of civil government had a responsibility of treating juvenile criminals. Government officers must exercise “paternal care”; as “fathers of the people,” Griscom urged, civil officials must see to it that the guilty receive punishment and that nothing be spared in rooting out the sources of temptation and corruption.

If government officials and philanthropists were to think of themselves as “guardians of virtue” in the community, should they not regard unfortunate youths as special charges and claim for them “the right which every child may demand of its parents, of being well instructed in the nature of its duties, before it is punished for the breach of their observance?” Should not every citizen lend a hand in redeeming these “pitiable victims of neglect and wretchedness” from the inevitable doom of becoming “apprentices in the prisons?” For these poor ones, Griscom declared, the government must surely act in loco parentis.

The paternal role of government which Griscom urged upon his hearers, despite the inroads of certain frontier ideologies, was not unknown to his listeners. Two years later, President John Quincy Adams, in his annual address to the United States Congress, would give it the official sanction of his office.

Moral, political, intellectual improvement are duties assigned by the Author of Our Existence to social no less than individual man. For the fulfillment of these duties governments are invested with power, and to the attainment of the end—the progressive improvement of the governed—the exercise of delegated powers
House of Refuge

is a duty as sacred as the usurpation of powers not granted
is criminal and odious.24

For those who would deny the necessity of governmental intervention, John Griscom suggested a stroll about the city. He implored them to observe the great numbers of young rogues growing up in idleness and degeneracy. "What can be expected, but that such children will, in due time, become responsible to the laws for crimes, which have thus, in a manner been forced upon them?" Such a situation, Griscom declared, made a travesty of justice. Griscom noted that the Bridewell alone received as many as three hundred youngsters during a given year; two-thirds of them could be counted upon to return almost as soon as they had been released. Appealing to the sentiments of his audience, Griscom described the conditions present in the Bridewell.25 Community officials, he had been told, planned to remove the Bridewell to a new location; he hoped that when that day arrived, the institution would be erected on an entirely different plan.

The Bellevue Penitentiary left nearly as much to be desired as did the Bridewell. Although he did not call the Reverend Stanford forward to substantiate his research, Griscom knew of the old clergyman's labors and recommendations concerning the penitentiary. Bellevue at least separated boys from older convicts during the day. This step, however, meant little. Alderman Burtis, superintendent of the penitentiary, stood up to substantiate the Griscom report. He estimated that an average of seventy-five boys had been committed in each of the past three years and that their ages had ranged from twelve to sixteen years. Burtis estimated that over half of the boys could be expected to return after being released. Such boys viewed second convictions with "comparative indifference"; prison had become their way of life.

Griscom concluded that citizens ought to have no difficulty whatsoever in seeing the need for a House of Refuge. Without it, the "progress of humanity" would surely pass by New York City.

Griscom had plenty of support for his plan. District Attorney Hugh Maxwell sprang up to testify. He vowed that a House of Refuge would be a "beacon" of safety to the distressed populace. He could not predict that every delinquent would be reformed, but he assured the audience that many young people would be changed for life. Assured that
the New York State Legislature would concur with the scheme, Maxwell asserted that the legislators might even assist in carrying it out.

The parsimonious Burtis, with one eye on economics and the other on reformation, agreed with Maxwell. Boys might easily be put to trades to earn their own keep; the contract labor system seemed the most economical way of employing them. Many of the boys might also be indentured to seafaring ventures. How could a project of this sort fail? Lest the group be carried away with optimism, however, Burtis added a note of caution. In time, the benefactors might have to come to terms with it. Security measures, Burtis intoned, must be taken immediately and be sustained “until the keeper and the committee were well acquainted with the children’s wishes and character.” His note of warning, however, was lost in the wave of enthusiasm which swept through the hall. Others followed Burtis and Maxwell in their support of the Griscom report. Seven of the various leaders of the community rose from their seats to deliver congratulations and support for the plan. Next, the members, as if on a prearranged schedule, adopted two resolutions. These measures stood as the final contribution of the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism:

1. *Resolved*, that it is highly expedient that an institution be formed in this city for promoting the reformation of juvenile offenders, by the establishment of a House of Refuge, for vagrant and depraved young people.

2. *Resolved*, that a society be now formed, under the appellation of the Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents.28

With the last resolution, the members of the old Society officially sacrificed their long standing organization. The Society for the Prevention of Pauperism ceased to exist as an organization and the Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents rose to take its place. By forming anew, the members signified that they could no longer conduct a frontal attack on all of pauperism. Now, by attacking the problems of youth, they hoped to scotch pauperism at birth.