

As to the propriety of persons entering such Institutions, your Committee are not called upon to inquire, nor is it made their duty to determine whether such Institutions are consistent with the spirit of the age, with the "well established" and dearly cherished principles of our Government, or with the expressed sentiments of the American People.

The question to be determined is, whether, in reality, there are within the limits of this State Religious Houses in which persons are unlawfully deprived of their natural, civil or religious rights, and whether any case has been presented to this House properly supported, which justifies an examination or inspection of such places, or demands additional legislative protection.

¶ Mere complaints that there are religious institutions where such persons are said to be detained against their will, are not sufficient to justify legislative interference, for it is possible that unlawful restraints have been exercised in private houses, and many individuals deprived of their liberty and right, in the place recognized by the law to be their castle. Yet no one has thought, because of such abuses, that the Legislature ought to authorize Grand Juries or Committees, to forcibly enter and inspect private houses on suspicion that these abuses did exist. Such a proceeding would not be tolerated in any free government.

Nor was it intended that Grand Juries or Orphans' Courts should act the part of Grand Inquisitors. That function has been established in other countries by ecclesiastical and civil laws, and the result has been such as to prevent your Committee from recommending any such course in this State.

Nor is it submitted to this Committee to inquire whether any further legislation should be had as to the *property* of persons who may choose to enter those Institutions. The single matter referred to them is the *personal protection* of those entering Convents, and whether there be, under the existing laws, sufficient remedy for illegal restraint upon such persons.

Your Committee would, therefore, respectfully suggest, in the first place, that no allegation has been substantiated, nor has proof been exhibited that any person is now unlawfully confined in any religious house or Convent within the limits of the State.

There is a general charge that such a state of things does exist, and the statement is also made that unsuspecting females are decoyed into such places and there detained against their will; but it is necessary to justify the interference of this Body that the petitioners should state some particular case, and the facts in the case wherein a wrong is committed, or a right violated, so that the House could, as the Grand Inquest of the State, act, as all