

# INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

There is again a decline in the number of committals to the Industrial Schools. The annual average of committals from 1880 to 1885 was 298·5, and the maximum number for one year—340—was reached in 1885, the year in which the Hospital and Charitable Aid Act was passed. The several numbers for the several years since that date are 238, 224, 190, 169, and (for last year) 158. During the year the number of children belonging to the schools has declined from 1,525 to 1,454, and the number of children maintained by the schools (as distinguished from inmates at service, or licensed to reside with their friends, or otherwise absent from the schools) from 1,054 to 971.

The children admitted—as has been said—were 158. Of this number, 76 were destitute, 6 vagrant, 26 found in disreputable places, 9 uncontrollable, 38 guilty of punishable offences, and 3 admitted by private arrangement. The number of inmates discharged was 229: 212 by warrant, 7 on attaining the age of twenty-one years, 2 by marriage, 2 by transfer to the Costley Institute, and 6 by death. Of the inmates of Burnham, two boarded-out children died—one of whooping-cough and teething at the age of twelve months, and one of consumption at the age of six; and a boy of sixteen, who had absconded from service, was killed by a kick from a horse. A boy of eight, boarded out from Caversham, died of inflammation of the kidneys, preceded by “la grippe”; and a boy of fifteen, belonging to the same school, who was in a place of service, was thrown from a horse and killed. At St. Mary’s, Nelson, a boy of seven died of meningitis. With respect to the religious profession of their parents, the children admitted during the year are classified as follows: Church of England, 68; Roman Catholic, 41; Presbyterian, 31; Methodist, 9; Congregational, 2; Baptist, 1; “Protestant,” 3; not ascertained, 3. The circumstances and character of the parents of the children admitted are shown in Table T, from which it appears that there are 47 cases in which no suspicion of blame rests upon the parents, and 22 other cases in which the information supplied affords no adequate means of forming an opinion in this respect; while in 17 cases the conduct of both parents may be held to account for the state in which the children are found, and there are 45 cases in which the character of the father alone, and 27 in which the character of the mother alone, is liable to censure.

TABLE T.—ADMISSIONS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO PARENTS’ CIRCUMSTANCES AND CHARACTER, 1890.

Children of	Mothers described as						Total.
	Dead.	Sick, Lunatic, Disabled, &c.	Of Good Character (or Poor).	Not known or not stated.	Of Bad Character.	Deserters.	
Fathers described as—							
Dead .. .. .	6	1	10	..	17	..	34
Sick, lunatic, disabled, &c. .. ..	..	..	9	..	1	1	11
Of good character (or poor) .. ..	16	1	4	15	5	..	41
Not known or not stated .. .. .	..	..	1	6	1	2	10
Of bad character .. .. .	15	5	2	3	12	..	37
Deserters .. .. .	10	..	8	2	3	2	25
Totals .. .. .	47	7	34	26	39	5	158

The inmates actually residing in the schools at the end of the year numbered 544, and of these there were 260 in Government schools, 8 in the “local” school at the Thames, and 276 in “private” schools. From the Government schools 426 were boarded out, and from a “private” school one. The rest of the young people—of whom 423 belonged to Government schools, 10 to the “local” school, and 50 to “private” schools—are accounted for as follows: At service, 372; licensed (on probation) to friends, 82; absent without leave, 17; at Costley Institute (on probation), 2; at a blind asylum, 1; in hospital, 3; in lunatic asylums, 2; in Magdalene Asylum, 2; in prison, 2. Table U shows the changes in the number of inmates of the respective schools, distinguishing residents, boarded-out children, and absentees.