

We have had a very busy time among the staff preparing for a new departure in Brookside history, which took effect early in February, 1897, when about ten of those in residence moved, under Miss Faris's charge, to the neighbourhood of Heywood. The diggings on Pitfield Plains are making this district much more populous, and should the mining go on a general migration will no doubt be desirable. We have had another dry season, so that, though the gardens have been kept tidy, there has been very little produced in them for the use of the cottages.

Mrs. Downing remains at the head of the staff still, with Miss King as second. Miss Faris and Miss Watson have gone to the new home, St. Ann's, Heywood, and Miss Curlewis left for Western Australia early in 1897, so we have had our share of changes. I must express my sense of the efficiency of every member of my staff, and of their anxiety for the welfare of their charges.

During 1896 we received twenty-four girls, ranging in age from ten to seventeen years: one from gaol, fifteen of them were new committals, and eight transfers from the Neglected Children's Department. The general behaviour of the girls during the year has been good. Some of them do not keep their places, but we try to work them harder when they come in, so that they may crave for the change and pleasures of an outside life. During the year we have been notified of the marriage of five girls passed out of control. Seventy-four have completed their term since Brookside was established, nearly ten years ago. Of these we can point to fifty-six, or over 75 per cent., who are respectable members of society. More than half the number have married. Of the remaining eighteen, several will no doubt come out all right. Others are, and will be, cause for grave anxiety to those who care for their future, as we do at Brookside. Our numbers in the homes on 31st December, 1896, were thirty-eight.

I do not think there is anything more which requires remark, so sign myself,

ELIZABETH ROWE,

Superintendent, Brookside Reformatory School.

#### EXCELSIOR HOME for REFORMATORY BOYS, Brighton.

I HAVE the honour to submit for your information my report for the past year.

The health of the boys has been excellent. The conduct of those at service and on probation in most cases has been very good, especially the latter. The boys at Sunday- and day-school have done very well. I enclose a report of their conduct.

The most encouraging part of the work during the year has been the real change in many of the gaol transfers. Some have given cause for great anxiety at times, but I am truly thankful for the marked change in them for the better. During the last three months I have visited no less than nineteen of them whose terms have expired, and are still at service or with friends to whom they had been sent on probation, and found them doing well: others are in very satisfactory positions. Again I have to thank Captain Burrowes for the way in which he has co-operated with me during the year, in watching many cases with a view to transfer.

The demand for boys at 1s. per day in the locality is more than I can supply. The farm which was started about this time last year by the boys themselves (which is called the Boys' Farm) has in many ways been a great success, though the returns for the labour have been very small; but still the boys have taken a deep interest in the work. I must again thank Dr. Simmons for his prompt and generous attention through the year, and other friends who have helped me in so many ways with the boys. There are eight others not connected with the Government at present in the home, who have a good influence with the reformatory wards.

In conclusion, I may say that we are pleased with the success of the past year.

W. GROOM.

DEAR MR. GROOM,—

Brighton.

I feel it incumbent upon me to convey to you my high appreciation of the manner in which you must handle the boys, because we have never had the slightest trouble or unpleasantness with any of them during my long experience of the various boys that you have sent to the church and school; and I can assure you that Mrs. Stone and myself feel a most deep and earnest desire to help them in every way. Trusting and praying that the Lord will long preserve you to carry on your good work,

I remain, &c.,

ROBT. STONE, Supt., Bay Street S.S.

#### REPORT of KINGSBURY REFORMATORY SCHOOL for the Year 1896.

WE have nothing very fresh to report for the past year. The work has been progressing steadily. There has been a much better demand for our boys during the past year than previously, and all fit for situations have been sent out. I have also other openings awaiting boys when they are suitable. The health of the boys has been very good, with the exception of a few slight accidents, which Dr. Eccles always attended to willingly as usual. There were seven boys in the Home on the 31st December. There were three cases of absconding during the year, but, as they were quickly picked up, did not cause as much trouble as if they had escaped arrest for some time.

A. BREBNER, Superintendent.

#### WANDIN YALLOCK REFORMATORY.

I BEG to report that the condition of this school in its three branches of Fernydale, Olinda, and Hillside continue to give me satisfaction. The general health of the lads has been good, and their conduct, on the whole, has also been satisfactory.