

presence of women in the infirmary is indispensable. It appears to us almost impossible for men, no matter how well disposed, or how much in sympathy with the boys, to do what women can do in the matters referred to. We cannot believe that if women had had anything to do with the duties at Stoke School, the boys would have been allowed to wear socks for weeks or months without washing, or that the bedding of the smaller dormitory—that occupied by boys of dirty habits—would have been in the condition described in evidence. Again, it appears to us that the entire dissociation from women during six or eight years of the early life of a boy must have an injurious effect upon his character. We consider there should be at least two women employed at Stoke School—married women, whose husbands might be engaged as cook, gardener, farm-hand, &c., and whose duties should be in the laundry, the clothing-room, the dormitories (when not occupied by boys), and the infirmary. If these women were carefully selected for their duties, we believe their presence would be of great advantage to the institution.

Nor do we think the management has been satisfactory with regard to outside work. It appears evident to us that the boys' work has been too desultory and unsystematic, and that in consequence they have not benefited by their physical training to the extent they might have done. Ample opportunity exists at Stoke for the employment of the boys at more systematic labour, under proper instructors, in garden, dairy, and farm work. This would involve the employment of skilful men suited for the work, as instructors; but the result would be to make both garden and the farm more productive than they have been, and provide a much larger and more varied supply of vegetables and farm-produce, milk, and butter for the use of the school than has been produced of late. More technical education should also be given.

The system of punishment until quite lately has been unsatisfactory, and has already been referred to in detail. It has been too severe. The flogging with supplejacks on the body, now long discontinued, verged on cruelty. The punishment on the hand with supplejacks is more severe than with cane, and it has been used too freely. It is now given up, and the strap adopted. The regulations now in force as to punishments in Government schools appear to us to err on the side of clemency.

It has been the practice at the school for upwards of ten years to administer a dose of mustard and water in all cases of indisposition. This has been much complained of, and has been more or less strongly condemned by the medical witnesses. No direct mischief has been traced to it, but its use should be discontinued at once.

The fact that Brothers Kilian and Wybertus, who were deservedly unpopular, were retained in their positions for a considerable time after their unsuitability was manifest is a serious blot on the management.

In the course of our inquiry we instructed Drs. Gibbs and Talbot to visit the school, and report upon the physical condition of the boys. The result of their examination of the inmates and premises is given in Dr. Gibbs's evidence, concurred in by Dr. Talbot. From this we learn that the boys were generally well nourished and in good health, but in height were below the average of boys of the same age in England and Wales, while in weight they are above the average up to twelve years, and below it after that age. Dr. Gibbs furnished us with a table giving the height and weight of each boy in the school compared with English standards, which will be found in the appendix. We have no means of comparing the children at Stoke with those at other similar schools; but we understand a low average is characteristic of inmates of industrial schools, Mr. Hogben, the Secretary of Education and Inspector of the Schools, having in his evidence told us that industrial-school children are usually under average size, principally due to hereditary and antecedent circumstances.

The educational work of the school is under the care of Brother Augustine as head-teacher, the boys being classed as under:—

Preparatory ...	...	...	3	Standard IV. ...	...	24
Standard I. ...	...	...	8	" V. ...	...	20
" II. ...	...	...	16	" VI. ...	...	8
" III. ...	...	...	41	" VII. ...	...	1

A number of boys are employed at tailoring under a teacher, who make and repair the clothes worn by the inmates. Others are engaged in the laundry, some at housework, and a few in the kitchen, the house-cleaning being fairly well done.

The school band is very good and well trained, and has over thirty performers.

The football and cricket teams are well kept up, and during the summer bathing in the swimming-pool is regularly practised.