

#### Successes achieved. Removal of incorrigibles and defectives.

During the last five years the total number of boys who have been inmates of Burnham, and have now ceased to be so, is 235. Of these there is definite information that 155 are of good character, and show every indication of becoming good and valuable citizens; 8 are classed as only fair; 23 are bad; 5 are weak-minded, and only partially responsible; 23 are reported as missing; 3 are at sea; 2 have died; 1 was discharged very young, and his record has therefore not been kept; and there are 15 about whom no reliable information can be obtained. These figures, working out as they do, cannot be considered as other than distinctly favourable and encouraging, and fully justify the opinion that Burnham, with all its drawbacks, has achieved a large measure of success in improving the moral and social conditions of the inmates, and in generally fulfilling the purpose of a reformatory. But to my mind there is no adequate reason why we should not do better still, and I am convinced that improved classification by the removal of the "incorrigibles" and the "mental defectives," and a few minor internal improvements on the lines that I shall hereafter summarise, will in the future show still better results. In considering all questions such as these, it must be remembered that every lad reclaimed and reformed and made a good citizen is a distinct gain to the State, and the saving by the good citizen as compared with the criminal can scarcely be estimated in all its many aspects.

#### GENERAL.

Land exceedingly poor. Teaching of trades. Preference to outdoor pursuits. Improvements of farming conditions. Irrigation.

There are about 1,100 acres of land attached to the Burnham Industrial School. This land is exceedingly poor in quality, and gives a very poor return indeed for the labour expended upon it. A smaller area of good agricultural land would prove a much more valuable asset to the school, both from an economical point of view and as a training-ground for the boys in farming and outdoor pursuits generally. It is, no doubt, useful that boys should be taught a knowledge of certain trades, such as tailoring, shoemaking, and carpentry; but I am not at all prepared to say that, having regard to the antecedents of the boys and to their future interests, they should in the main be taught such trades as would be liable to gradually incline them to centres of population, where the temptations of life are greater, and where the boys would inevitably in many instances be brought in contact with the very environment from which they had been taken at the time of commitment. I am inclined to the opinion that every facility should be afforded the boys to take up outdoor pursuits in preference to trades. Many of these boys are what I may term "sexual degenerates," and strong physical exercise is one of the greatest safeguards in that direction. There is little at Burnham at present to encourage the boys to take a real interest in farming and all that pertains to it, for the reason that the results are so absolutely discouraging. True, there is an excellent garden, which affords a most valuable training-ground for the boys, and is a credit to the institution in every way. But I see no reason why a great deal more should not be done to improve the general farming conditions, and I hope that something will be done in that direction. I would suggest the carrying-out of an inexpensive system of irrigation as a first step.

#### Locality of Burnham.

There are many people greatly interested in the school who express the opinion very strongly that Burnham is not a suitable locality for the reformatory, owing to its position and to the extreme pooriness of the soil. These opinions are entitled to great respect, but I am not disposed to say that I am convinced they are quite sound. There is no doubt a great deal to be said both for and against Burnham, and as the result of mature consideration I see no reason to doubt why the school should not be an unqualified success under improved conditions. Very little money has been spent of late years on the upkeep of the main buildings. These are old, dilapidated, and inconvenient. If it is decided to continue to carry on the institution where it is, the Department will require at once to enter upon a scheme of gradually rebuilding the whole of the main buildings upon more modern and up-to-date lines, and providing the best possible means of classification of the inmates, as well as improved accommodation.

#### No dairy-work.

I have been struck with the fact that there is no attempt whatever to give any instruction in dairy-work at Burnham. No course of instruction in general farm-work can possibly be complete without this, and I consider that steps should be at once taken to supply the omission. It seems extraordinary to me that not a single pound of butter is made on the farm.

#### Kitchen arrangements inconvenient. Bread.

The kitchen arrangements at the school are inconvenient, inadequate, and out of date. This department should be made a valuable training-ground for the boys, but this is almost impossible under existing conditions. And in this connection it seems to me an extraordinary thing that no bread is baked on the premises (speaking practically), and that therefore no instruction in baking is given. I consider that a brick oven should at once be built, and that all bread required for the institution should be baked on the premises. At present the bread is supplied from a distance, under contract; and there is evidence that previously to the existing contract the bread supplied was of a disgracefully inferior quality.

#### Food.

The food supplied for the use of the inmates is, speaking generally, excellent in quality and ample in quantity.