

and this evidently was recognised by the Department when framing the regulations. The more need, therefore, for the strictest compliance therewith.

The register shows that there are entries of 153 punishments as having been inflicted on forty-three girls during the last two years. These punishments include the infliction of corporal punishment on forty-eight occasions. The regulations provide for the use of a strap of a specified size and weight in the infliction of corporal punishment. Not more than twelve strokes are allowed to be administered at any one time. The ages of the girls who received the strap varied up to over twenty years. The regulations further provide that except for grave offences—such as gross insubordination, repeated attempts to abscond, or inciting to abscond, gross indecency, persistent refusal to obey orders, gross insolence, violence to officers, servants, or inmates, or wilful damage to property—corporal punishment shall not be inflicted upon inmates who are over seventeen years of age.

In my report on the Burnham Industrial School in 1906, in dealing with the question of corporal punishment in industrial schools, I used the following words: "Personally, I am, as a rule, opposed to corporal punishment; but I fully recognise that a large number of persons, whose opinions are entitled to carry more weight than mine, and who certainly have as full a sense of responsibility, consider that this form of punishment is the only means by which you can appeal to the type of boys who are at Burnham. This, of course, implies that the fear of physical pain is the only deterrent from wrongdoing. However this may be, I do hold the most decided opinion that when it is considered necessary to inflict such punishment it should only be done with the utmost discretion." In using these words I was speaking entirely of boys, and, by tradition and otherwise, boys are popularly supposed to require a certain quantity of corporal punishment, and to be incapable of being properly raised without it. But here I have to deal with girls, and not girls only, but young women approaching the age of twenty-one, when they will become free agents. I cannot bring myself to believe that the infliction of the strap is a fit and proper punishment under any circumstances for any of these girls; but most certainly do I hold very strongly that the strapping of young women as carried out in this school is perfectly unjustifiable. To think of a young woman of twenty years of age, laid on a bed, face down, clothed in a nightdress, and receiving twelve strokes of a strap on her body, is to my mind most repellent, besides being quite opposed to all modern methods of securing discipline. Moreover, I have reason to believe that such treatment at certain periods might be positively injurious.

The excuse made by those in authority at the school for a somewhat free use of the strap is that it is absolutely necessary to deal in this way with the peculiar and depraved class of inmates so as to secure ordinary discipline, and it is asserted that it would be impossible to run the institution at all if corporal punishment were abolished. This, to my mind, is a serious admission of weakness, and I decline to believe that it is based upon any reasonable foundation. I make every allowance for the very difficult material with which the Manager has to deal, and I fully realise how dreadfully she is handicapped in her work of dealing satisfactorily with the girls, owing to the lack of such accommodation as would enable her to improve her system of classification, and so minimise the necessity for stringent punishments.

It is plainly shown by the records of the school that the Education Department, for several years past, has discouraged the use of corporal punishment, but at the same time no absolute embargo has been placed upon it. It seems to me that the Department, while not approving it, has hesitated to abolish it, because of the fear that the staff could not control the inmates without its retention. I believe that, apart from the sentimental aspect of the matter, it answers no good purpose, either as a deterrent in itself or by way of example. To believe that any good end could be gained by strapping a young woman within a few months of her discharge is, to my mind, illogical and absurd. I feel very strongly that corporal punishment should be entirely abolished at Te Oranga; but if the Department is not prepared to go to this length, then, without doubt, it should only be used on the authority of the Department and under medical approval.

The register shows that punishment with the strap was inflicted forty-eight times during the last two years. Of these, two inmates were strapped four times, three were strapped three times, five were strapped twice, and twenty-one were strapped once. The maximum punishment of twelve strokes was inflicted in fourteen cases, and the maximum punishment was inflicted twice on three inmates.

No one individual, or set of persons, can with any show of reason or justice be held responsible for the continuance of a practice which I have felt bound to condemn. It has simply been passed on from hand to hand, and has been regarded as part of the necessary discipline of the school. I feel sure that the practice has only obtained under a deep sense of obligation and duty. The act of infliction has been painful to those who have inflicted the punishment.

I directed some attention to the case of a girl who was alleged to have been sent to the Hospital very shortly after receiving a severe strapping. The full facts of this case are these: The girl had absconded from service, and during her absence had been leading an immoral life. She returned to