

28. *Mr. Salter.*] How often do you visit the Home?—On an average, three times a year as Official Visitor; but I have been constantly consulted.

29. What would be the length of your stay here?—About three hours on each occasion. I go thoroughly into matters here, and inspect the punishment-book and premises generally.

30. Including the kitchen arrangements?—Yes.

31. Have you ever given the girls an opportunity to complain to you about anything that is wrong?—I have had no personal talks with the inmates. I did not think, perhaps, it was wise, considering that the two Lady Visitors constantly attend to that matter. They merely refer questions to me for consideration. Of course, I should be only too happy to give the girls an opportunity did they wish it; but I did not consider it desirable to push that side of the question, considering one of the Visitors is here weekly, and is in constant touch with the inmates.

32. You would probably feel that the girls would be backward in coming forward and speaking voluntarily to the Official Visitor?—I should not think, to a Lady Visitor.

33. We have had evidence that some young women have received as many as twelve cuts with this fairly heavy strap: do you think it is necessary, even if a girl has to be strapped at all, she should receive the full complement fixed by the regulations for absconding?—It would depend entirely upon the fault committed.

34. Can you conceive any fault a girl could commit which would deserve twelve cuts with the strap?—If you admit there is to be corporal punishment at all, I can conceive it; but, as I said before, I would prefer to use some other method.

35. Do you agree it would have a bad effect upon a girl to be subjected to corporal punishment at all?—On some individuals it would; with others, again, I think corporal punishment is the only deterrent possible.

36. Do you ever take steps to ascertain whether the entries in the punishment-book are correct entries of what has occurred?—If I had had any doubts on that subject I should have written to the Government asking them to dispense with the people in charge. You must trust your officers.

37. If it can be shown that the punishment-book has been incorrectly kept?—That would certainly be a very wrong thing to do.

38. Do you think that cutting down trees such as they have in the grounds would be too hard work for girls of ordinary strength?—I do not think the girls have been overworked. Of course, cutting down trees does sound heavy work, but to the extent to which they are allowed to work here I do not think it can be looked upon as very serious. I have seen them at work several times, and they never appeared to be overexerting themselves in any way. They seemed to me to be rather enjoying the work than otherwise. Of course, I hold that it is necessary to have physical work in connection with an institution of this kind. That is acknowledged all over the world.

39. *The Commissioner.*] A very great deal has been said about this hair-cutting as a deterrent: what do you think?—It is a matter of opinion. I do not think it is such a very serious matter. It apparently has a very strong effect on a girl's behaviour, and, considering that in some countries women sell their hair once a year, I do not think it can be looked upon as very serious.

40. That is a voluntary act?—Yes.

41. The question is, looking to the fact that these young women are wards of the State for the time being, whether it is right?—The whole difficulty is this: It is well known that there are some girls in this Home who are very difficult to handle, and what are you to do when they are rebellious and abscond, and do many things most difficult to correct? One is at one's wits' end to devise some means to prevent them.

42. You probably would come back to the same point as before: you think a perfect system of classification would do away with the necessity to a great extent for any abnormal form of punishment?—Exactly.

43. I am correct in assuming that you think the great weakness in the classification hitherto has existed from the want of facilities for separating the different classes?—Yes. I think the inmates should be put into three classes, and that would be one of the methods to enable you to dispense with corporal punishment. You would hold out the hope to the girls of going into the highest class if their behaviour was very good. On the other hand, if their behaviour was very bad, they would know they would go into the lowest class.

44. You would start them all in the middle class?—Yes.

45. What would you do with the girls who come in in a state of disease?—They would have to be separated.

46. Then there should be a fourth class?—I am strongly of the opinion that, just as a first offender should never be sent to gaol, so a girl in that condition should be separated from the others. They should be subject to medical treatment. They are not fit to be inmates until they are in a healthy state.

47. The committing Magistrate would not know at the time of committal that the girl was in a state of disease. She comes here on account of her antecedents and conduct prior to committal?—There should be some means of isolation for them.

48. It really implies a sort of fourth or infirmary class?—Yes; until they are fit to be classified.

49. Have you given any thought to this aspect of the reformatory question: that a number of girls up to the present time, under our existing system, have shown no signs of being reformed sufficiently to justify their being sent forth amongst the community generally with safety at the age of twenty-one, when they are legally entitled to their discharge?—It is a difficult problem. I should treat these cases on the indeterminate-sentence plan.

50. A point has been raised in regard to the treatment the girls have to undergo, especially after their return after absconding, in the matter of a physical examination by the Matron. Without expressing any opinion upon it myself, Mr. Salter inclines to the opinion that this physical