

14. Did you have any interview with Mr. Pope about the girl about this time?—I went to Wellington shortly afterwards, and I saw Mr. Pope at the office there. The first news Mr. Pope gave me was that the girl was illegitimate. I said that did not matter. Then he said, "You know her mother died in an asylum." I said I was sure Mrs. Branting had told me that, but it did not follow that it was hereditary, but that what had influenced me was the girl's immorality.

15. You had that story from Mr. Pope?—He did not mention the immorality; that was Mrs. Branting. Mr. Pope also said the girl would be twenty next April, and I said I thought she would be twenty-one in June. He said they had records to prove what he said, but I told him I thought he was wrong.

16. After you came back from Wellington, did you see Mrs. Branting?—No.

17. Did you let her know you had seen Mr. Pope?—Yes; I rang her up. I had told Mr. Pope that Mrs. Branting would not recommend the girl for service, and I asked him, "What about Miss Early's report?" He told me that, as a rule, they were guided entirely by their manager, but that in this case they would see what they could do. He made no actual promise, but I inferred from him that if Miss Early wrote a fair report about the girl there would be no difficulty. I told Mrs. Branting that.

18. Did Mrs. Branting seem in any way put out at your having arranged this matter behind her back?—No. I told her directly I came back.

19. Matron Early sent her report?—Yes. I was waiting for the girl, and I found it very inconvenient, so I hurried her up. She told me she had sent her report to Mrs. Branting on Tuesday morning. I waited some days, hoping to hear from the Department, and then I rang Mrs. Branting up on the following Monday, and asked about Miss Early's report, and she said there was no word yet from Wellington. I said that was strange. She said, "I am writing to-night, and I will remind them." I said that in the meantime, as I was in a hurry, I would wire. I sent a wire to Mr. Crow, and got a reply that they were awaiting Miss Early's report. That rather nonplussed me, and I rang Mrs. Branting up, and then discovered the report had not been sent until she said she was writing that night, and would remind the Department. So she had kept the report from Tuesday afternoon or Wednesday morning until the following Monday afternoon. Meanwhile Mrs. Branting had told me she would send the report up without comment, as she would be glad to be done with the girl, or words to that effect.

20. Did Mrs. Branting express any wish to you that the girl should not go out to service until she was twenty-one?—At our first interview she said if she had her way the girl would not go out until she was twenty-one, or words to that effect.

21. You said in your letter to the Minister that was read the other day, "And I do not think the country will suffer in the way she coarsely suggested": Can you tell us what you meant by that?—If I have to explain it, it is this: When I told Mrs. Branting I was still willing to take the girl I said to her, "Well, Mrs. Branting, supposing the girl is not all we think she might be, if the girl does not suit me I will return her to you." Mrs. Branting said, "Yes, if she is there." I asked where would she be. I said if the girl ran away I supposed I could ring up the police. Mrs. Branting replied, "Before you could get her there would probably be a few bastards in the world." Those were the words. I remember them distinctly, because they were words I was not accustomed to hear.

22. Was the doubt about the girl's age ever inquired into to your satisfaction?—When the Department saw I was persistent, and intended having it seen into, Mr. Pope came down and saw me. I asked what about her age, and he said they would say no more about it, because it was a mistake. Neither was she illegitimate. I had pointed out to the Minister she was not illegitimate.

23. You never discovered anything untruthful about the girl?—No; the girl since she has been with me has been truthful.

24. I think you were in the room the other day when a letter from A—— G—— to Mrs. Branting was read, containing some very affectionate terms: knowing what you do about the girl, can you account for her writing such a letter?—Oh, yes. When the girl came back to me the second time she was overwhelmed with the kindness she had received at Te Oranga that fortnight. She told me it had atoned for all that had happened before. I was not surprised to hear she had sent that letter, because that is just what I would have expected her to do. She told me she wanted to forget everything that had happened, and was quite willing to forgive Mrs. Branting, because she had since been kind to her. She told me the Matron had taken her to tea at Broadway's, and had given her milk for her supper, because she was not very well—a thing she had never had before. I encouraged the girl to forget any bitterness towards Mrs. Branting and have done so all along.

25. She received this kindness during the fortnight she was there?—Yes; when she was sent back from the Samaritan Home.

26. Can you suggest any explanation of Mrs. Branting keeping back that report, as she said, for a week?—I cannot explain Mrs. Branting's methods. I only know it was kept back. The explanation she gave me was that Mr. Pope was coming down, and she wanted to talk it over with him. I suppose she talked it over with Mr. Pope so much that I had to bring more pressure to get the girl released.

27. Do you think that probably if you had not made a persistent effort to get the girl and give her a chance she would have been kept at Te Oranga?—I am quite sure about that, although Mrs. Branting said to me during that fortnight if she did not come to me she would get the girl a nice place. But nothing of that sort was spoken of at the beginning. I was told the girl would be kept until she was twenty-one. The suggestion of immorality influenced me more than anything else, on account of the children. I asked Mrs. Branting if she was sure of what she said, and she told me she could produce letters from a friend or relative in the country who had invited A—— to go up there for some bad purpose. I could not understand it. I asked Miss Early about that, and said I did not want any misunderstanding. Miss Early said she had seen a good deal of