

ORGANIZATION.

I do not think the methods adopted at Dr. Barnardo's Home, Barkingside Home for Girls, the huge organization at Bielefeld conducted by Pastor Bodel Schwing, and many others, can be improved upon—viz., that, instead of occupying large buildings, the inmates are placed in separate small houses in groups of about ten, under the immediate charge of—in the case of girls—a young woman, who is practically the mother, and who imparts a knowledge of domestic and other duties to her charges, and generally trains them to become good housewives and capable of going out into the world.

It is superfluous to observe that much depends upon the adaptability to their work of those in authority, as it is not given to many to have sufficient faith in human nature to see that in almost every one, however far they may have fallen, there is still some remnant of good, and, more than all, to show in their dealings with their charges that they do not despise them.

PUNISHMENT AND REWARD.

The above may be considered together. It was the opinion of many of those with whom I discussed this side of the work that no system had yet been devised which would maintain discipline and appeal to certain temperaments without severe punishment, which in the case of males must be corporal. They say, "If you selected your inmates, driving the worst cases elsewhere or leaving them at large, you might possibly dispense with severe punishment; but it is apparent that in institutions some of whose inmates possess the worst possible attributes strict order must be maintained." The moving spirit of one institution was given me as follows: "God is good to us, but if we persist in wrongdoing He punishes us."

On the other hand, I found that in most modern institutions it has become general to dispense with the old methods, "punishment" meaning the curtailment of liberty, the loss of some pleasure or privilege, absolute silence when in the company of other inmates, or reduction in grade. Any or all of these, with the proper firm control and influence of the right kind, are found sufficient to maintain discipline, except in very isolated cases, which it may be found necessary to make special provision for, and whose lack of control—possibly owing to weak mental capacity—makes them impossible in an ordinary reformatory.

BOARDING OUT.

This system is much practised in Great Britain and on the Continent, as also in New Zealand, the chief point being the individual attention each child received if placed in proper hands, and the removal from the towns into a healthier atmosphere.

It is customary in some places to have committees of ladies and gentlemen in each district who assist the inspector in supervising the houses and details generally.

The results of the boarding-out system are spoken of very highly—in fact, in England it is difficult to find sufficient houses suitable for the purpose, and the system is extended to the emigration of children to Canada, where they are carefully looked after and placed with people likely to bring them up properly.

CHILDREN'S BUREAU.

A unanimous plea of the Press and the people has been presented to the United States House of Representatives that the cause of the child should be upheld by the provision of a Children's Bureau, having experts in such questions as the causes and treatment of illegitimacy, juvenile delinquency, infant mortality, child-labour, physical degeneracy, and diseases of children. It would be the duty of the Bureau to gather and disseminate information easily understood by all, and provide statistics regarding the matters within its scope of work.

It appears to me that it is impossible for the officers of existing departments in New Zealand to add the work suggested by the Bureau to their present duties; but it is a question worthy of the fullest consideration whether an officer should not be appointed who would take charge of the work and be in constant touch with the latest developments in other parts of the world.

NEW YORK SCHOOL OF PHILANTHROPY.

This most interesting institution has for its object the training of men and women who wish to become proficient in the best methods, and learn the latest ideas, regarding social and philanthropic questions. The Year-book for 1908-9 herewith contains full particulars of the work of this school.

In 1908 a similar school was opened in Berlin, closely modelled on the lines of the American schools.

THE BORSTAL SYSTEM.

It is now generally recognised that the commitment to ordinary prisons of young wrongdoers for short terms is a mistake, and power has been given in most countries to the Courts to commit for long periods to the care of the State those either commencing or becoming hardened in a career of crime.