

The work of the cottage matron is perhaps the most important in the school, as the girls in their cottage life are more natural than when in the schools, and the matron is able to help them in situations similar to those which will be met after leaving the school.

A very interesting feature has been the springing-up of clubs in various cottages, and these have done much to assist the officers and improve discipline. For instance:—

THE LEND A HAND CLUB.

Motto:

Look up and not down; look forward and not back; look out and not in; and *lend a hand*.

Rules:

Whenever I feel blue, something for some one else I'll do.
 I will be thoughtful and careful.
 I will be on time with all my work.
 I will try to think of the comfort of others, and be strong when others are weak.
 I will try to take direction and correction in the right spirit.
 I will try to be honest in thought, word, and action.
 If I am angry I will count ten; if still angry, I'll count again.

Rolls of honour have also proved helpful in some of the cottages, and one cottage has adopted the plan of marking on the calendar as red-letter days those days which have been happy ones because each has done her best.

The schools for ordinary instruction are very popular with the girls, as they have only the half-day, the other half being devoted to industrial training either in the cottages or industrial schools.

In addition to the above, there are the library, the cooking-school, sewing and dressmaking, and classes in vocal music, held four times a week; also physical culture and garden-work. Religious instruction is given once a week by outside teachers, sent by the various congregations, and the Sunday services are conducted by various clergymen from Hudson in turn. The form of service has been approved by all the churches.

On the whole this school compares very favourably with any others I have heard of in its genuine attempt to deal with a difficult problem on modern lines.

RECAPITULATION IN A NUTSHELL.

Those herded together in large institutions have not the same chance of reform as others placed in separate homes.

Different natures must be treated differently; the same medicine will not cure all diseases.

Ignorance is the cause of much wrongdoing.

Those not susceptible to reforming influences should never be set at large, but employed in self-supporting institutions, preferably in the country.

The loafer and waster must be made to support his family; in Germany he is compelled to do so.

It might be more healthful for a community to stop indiscriminate charity by law.

Society deems it ethically moral to execute the homicide; it should, to be consistent, prevent the degenerate and the criminal from bringing children into the world, foredoomed to a life of misery and perhaps premature death.

Corporal punishment is practically eliminated from disciplinary methods in modern male reformatories, and altogether so in the case of females—mainly because many natures are hardened by its use.

Some people are born to influence others for good, and some may learn, but those who do not love the work of reclaiming their fellow-creatures for its own sake should never attempt it.

Every child born has strong claims upon the State for a fair chance.

The State under existing laws is responsible for a large proportion of children being born of unsuitable parents.

The self-governing principle has much to commend it.

Recognition that crime in many cases is merely disease has helped the reform movement during the last half-century more than anything else.

There is no royal road to reform methods; measures must vary according to the infinite variety of human dispositions.

CONCLUSION.

New Zealand has made a most commendable effort to reclaim her waifs and strays, with remarkably good results. Will she now have the courage to commence at the right place and make clearly understood the responsibility of parenthood, aiming directly and mercilessly at those unworthy people who, in the most heedless manner, cast their responsibility upon the State.

I also trust we shall all in the future try more than in the past to realise the unselfish lives led by those engaged in reform work. The difficulties which beset them are little known to the outside world, which is always ready on the merest rumour to find fault without just cause. If some of us were to try the work for one short month only, we should appreciate the splendid efforts made, give the workers our support and encouragement, and wish them God-speed in the noble work of bringing hope and happiness to some of life's derelicts.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM REECE.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.