

There is no evidence of repression whatever; the girls were not only happy and contented, but, incredible though it may appear, they were obviously fond of the place, and each was anxious to impress the visitor with the superiority of the house to which she belonged.

There is no fear of the development of any inferiority complex here; the girls are carefully guarded against any implication of disgrace, and after discharge they often revisit their *alma mater*, sometimes accompanied by their husbands and families. The school staff do not attempt "to reform by hard work and firm discipline"—they form part of the environment which allows or encourages or activates the real reformatory influences, which are primarily within the child herself, to develop. There is nothing to suggest an institution: it is a school, but a special school in the sense that it does not make a fetish of academic education; it makes allowances for personal traits and for early handicaps, and its methods are successful.

The illusion that Sleighton Farm is merely a first-class girls' boarding-school is dispelled only after examination of the history-cards of these children: there one may read the most sordid stories of vicious homes and criminal associations, and then one realizes the meaning of the word one so often hears at Sleighton, "adjustment"—the key word of this system which can take a child from a criminal haunt in the slums of New York and complete its education at a high school.

This is not accomplished through any heaven-sent system of classification, not by psycho-analysis, nor by any one of the fantastic theories claimed by enthusiasts as the panacea for crime or degeneracy. Its success is directly due to the sound common-sense of the women who manage it. There is systematic teaching of sex hygiene on biological lines, and nothing is kept hidden from the girls, who are encouraged to bring their personal difficulties to the teacher, or, if so preferred, to write them. The head teacher told me that there is practically no difficulty over sex matters, certainly not more than in most other schools.

The success of Sleighton Farm is due to the environment into which new admissions are received; and it is a necessary corollary that reception into a bad atmosphere would produce the opposite effect. This is a very cogent reason for avoiding classifications based on "goodness" or "badness," and the establishment of corresponding institutions. A well-conducted institution can work wonders with a bad child, but a reformatory, with its constant suggestion of wickedness, its prohibitions, and its repressions, can afford little help to any of its inmates.

It is true that some children will be found too refractory for a school such as Sleighton; but the more enlightened and understanding the management, the fewer will be the failures, and these will probably be found to be defective or psychopathic—requiring treatment in an institution devoted to these classes.

The aims of the Borstal institutions and of the Education Department's training-farms and industrial schools are essentially the same, and I suggest that these should all come under the co-ordinating direction of the Eugenics Board.

#### *Male Sexual Offenders.*

The apparently large increase in the number of sexual offences during recent years, and the very gross nature of these cases as revealed in Courts, caused certain resolutions to be passed by the Prisons Board and published in their annual reports for the years 1920, 1921, and 1922. This led to the setting-up of the Committee on Mental Defectives and Sexual Offenders in 1924.

In view of the public anxiety on this question, I regarded it as a supremely important part of my mission abroad to collect as much first-hand information as was available, but the result was disappointing; and, although I have discussed the matter with Judges, psychiatrists, prison and police officials in many countries, I can only report that I have been unable to find any effective system in operation anywhere. The same difficulties, the same suggestions, and the same uncertainty as to the effects of surgical interference are in evidence in all countries; but, while there is everywhere an awakened interest, there is also great hesitancy in adopting practical measures on a comprehensive scale.

It is, however, interesting to note that in Denmark a Royal Commission which inquired into this question has suggested the enactment of a law legalizing the sterilization not only of the insane and mentally deficient, but also of those whose sexual impulses render them liable to commit crime. I append the text of this Bill, which is experimental in its nature, re-enactment being necessary every five years.

Clause 1.—Persons whose abnormal intensity or direction of sexual desire may render them liable to commit crime, thus creating danger to themselves and to the community, may, upon their personal request, be subjected to castration or other interference with the sexual organs, provided that the request is sanctioned by the Commission described in clause 3. A request of this nature can only be submitted by persons who have reached full age. It must be accompanied by a medical certificate, and must contain as complete information as possible as to the reasons leading the applicant to submit the request. If the applicant has been declared incapable of managing his or her own affairs the request must be endorsed by his or her guardian. If the applicant is married and is living in a state of married life, the consent of the spouse must, as a rule, be obtained.

Clause 2.—The Commission described in Clause 3 may consider the question of taking away the power of reproduction in mentally abnormal persons who are under the care of an institution, and in whose case it is considered of special importance to the community that they should be incapable of having progeny, although they do not exhibit such danger to the public safety as is detailed in clause 1. Petitions must be submitted to the Commission by the governors of the institution concerned, accompanied by a declaration by the physician of the institution or the local medical officer; and the consent of the person concerned must be obtained, or, if he or she has been declared incapable of managing his or her own affairs or is under age, the consent of the guardian. If the person concerned, without having been declared incapable of managing his or her own affairs, is unable, on account of mental defect, to understand the importance and consequence of such an operation, the petition must be endorsed by a guardian appointed for the occasion. If the person concerned is married and his or her married life has not been broken off by separation, or by the married couple having actually lived apart, for some considerable time, the consent of the spouse must, as a rule, be obtained.