

1896.

VICTORIA.

DEPARTMENT FOR NEGLECTED CHILDREN AND
REFORMATORY SCHOOLS.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

FOR THE YEAR

1895.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT PURSUANT TO ACTS 54 VICT. No. 1121, Sec. 10,
AND No. 1079, Sec. 320.

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R E P O R T .

To the Honorable the Chief Secretary.

Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools,
Melbourne, 30th June, 1896.

SIR,

In accordance with the requirements of the Acts Nos. 1121 and 1079, I have the honour to submit for your consideration the Annual Report of this Department for the year ended 31st December, 1895, together with the usual Returns, Statement of Accounts, &c.

In view of the fact that on the 1st of July last the Government did me the honour to appoint me to the office of Inspector in addition to that of Secretary, it has been thought unnecessary to furnish a separate Report, and the observations appertaining to the dual office will therefore be embodied in the one Report, thus avoiding what might perhaps have been considered repetition.

The transactions for the year, as compared with those of 1894, are shown on the following Table :—

	1894.	1895.
Committed to Neglected Children's Department during year	490	485
Transferred " " " from Reformatory	7	8
Children from " " " in service at end of year	669	760
" " " on probation at end of year	576	551
" " " boarded out at end of year	1,905	1,997
" " " finally discharge d during year, exclusive of those expired by effluxion of time	48	60
Committed to Reformatories during year	58	76
Transfers to Reformatories from gaol during year	5	21
" " " Neglected Children's Department... ..	48	31
Children from Reformatories in service at end of year	144	165
" " " on probation at end of year	27	34
" " " finally discharged during year, exclusive of those expired by effluxion of time	21	14
Number of Children received under one year old during the year 1894, 128; 1895, 113; or 23 per cent. of the neglected children received.		
Death-rate 1 per cent. of the whole under supervision.		

The following will show the number of Neglected Children and Reformatory Wards who were a cost to the State on 31st December, 1894, and 31st December, 1895, respectively :—

							<i>Neglected.</i>	
							1894.	1895.
Boarded out	...	...	...	...	...	1,905	1,997	
In Schools	...	...	...	...	...	125	142	
Total							2,030	2,139
							<i>Reformatory.</i>	
In Schools	...	...	...	...	...	143	150	

Committals.—Although there was a small reduction in the number of neglected children committed as compared with the previous year, I regret to say it exceeds by over 25 per cent. the average yearly committals prior to 1890. This large increase is still mainly to be accounted for, as pointed out in my last Report, by the continued depression through which our colony is passing, necessitating large numbers of the

parents to migrate in search of employment to the country and the other colonies, more particularly to Western Australia, leaving their children unprovided for, and this will probably also in a great measure account for the large increase over last year in the number of committals to the reformatories and transfers from gaol to them. It seems right that here I should again draw special attention to the very important and truly patriotic assistance the various rescue societies of the city are rendering the State in diverting large numbers of destitute children to their own care, that would otherwise, in very many instances, become wards of, and a cost, to the Department. The extent of this important rescue work will be further referred to when I am dealing with Part VIII. of the Neglected Children's Act, under which most of the societies in question are working.

Mortality.—Thirty-six (36) children died during the year, being only 1·68 per cent. of those under supervision. The exceedingly low average death-rate we have been able to report for some years past has always appeared to me to be one of the strongest and most satisfactory arguments in favour of the boarding-out system, more especially when it is borne in mind that fully twenty-three (23) per cent. of the total committals were infants under one (1) year old, and many were in the very lowest state of health when received by the matron.

Children sent to Service and their Conduct.—Considerable difficulty is still met with in the various districts in suitably placing the children at service as they become eligible, large numbers of the farmers and others being unable at present to employ labour of any kind through the depressed times, consequently in many cases children have had to be retained for a longer period in their foster homes and paid for. Those in situations are upon the whole doing well and giving satisfaction.

Children placed with Relatives and Others on Probation under section 30, sub-section 5, of Act 1121.—This system of placing children on trial with relatives and others is still proving a great success from many points of view. 123 were thus dealt with during the year, making the total now under supervision 551.

Transfers from Gaol, section 333 of Act 1079.—There were twenty-one (21) transfers from gaol to reformatories, as against sixteen (16) the previous year (16 boys, 5 girls), and the satisfactory reports of former years are being fully maintained. I am pleased to say there is no branch of the work in this Department yielding better results and that I am more hopeful of in the future than that carried on under this truly beneficent clause, whereby youthful offenders who may be committed to gaol can be transferred and dealt with in one or other of the many private reformatories now established. I would here take the opportunity of cordially acknowledging the great assistance I receive from Mr. Groom, the superintendent of the Brighton home for reformatory boys, who, at my request, and at great sacrifice of his time, regularly visits the lads received into the various gaols, and furnishes me afterwards with valuable advice as to their transfer, &c. I was therefore pleased to notice in a file relating to the question of remanding children to gaol lately passing through this office, Captain Burrowes remarking—“All youths are brought under the notice of Mr. Groom, whose services are in my opinion invaluable, and I do my utmost to assist him in the direction of getting the youths out of gaol as soon as possible; whether they are on remand or convicted I always have in mind the principle that, if it be any way possible, never to let any boy or girl (or even men) enter the gate of a gaol, for, having once been in a gaol, they are tainted for ever, and it may be cast up to them at any moment.”

Suspension of Sentences by Courts and Release of Prisoners on Probation under sections 353 and 354, Act 1079.—It is gratifying to know that the first of these sections is still being largely made use of. Under it 66 were set at liberty on probation during the year. I fear, however, that, as a community, we are not getting the best results obtainable out of these two important sections, and principally, I think, from the want of proper and systematic supervision over the probationary cases. On page 4 of the 1893 Report I pointed out how carefully these clauses were being worked out in New Zealand as regards “first offenders,” and with what wonderful success. I venture, therefore, to again draw attention to the matter, in the hope that something may yet be done towards our obtaining equally satisfactory results in this colony.

Receiving Depôts, Royal Park.—The usual routine work of passing in and out of the depôts all the reformatory and neglected children committed and transferred during the year has again been satisfactorily carried out, and the health and conduct of the children has, upon the whole, been good. I have to acknowledge the receipt of the annual present of toys, fruit, &c., from Mr. Peterson and other kind friends, the gifts being greatly appreciated by the children. The matron still finds difficulty in disposing suitably and safely of certain girls, whose mental and physical state is such as to at all times cause those intrusted with their care the greatest anxiety. At the present time there are several such here whose terms of control have expired, and yet whom it is simply impossible to place out, as they would at once become a serious menace to society, as well as danger to themselves, being weak in mind and body, but not sufficiently so to justify their committal to an asylum under the present Lunacy Act. Many of them are very similar cases to those brought under your notice recently by an influential deputation of ladies and gentlemen who waited upon you, asking that action might be taken to surround such girls with protection, and, if necessary, to bring in legislation for the purpose.

Protestant Training School for Girls.—The Matron reports well as to the health and conduct of the children under her care. She will be at all times pleased to receive visits or applications from ladies who may require girls that have undergone a few months' training at this excellent school.

Roman Catholic Industrial Schools.—The Mother Superioresses of these schools are also able to report well of the children's health and conduct. I have again to thank the ladies at Abbotsford for so readily taking into their care the special cases I have to send them from time to time, and with whom they are so very specially fitted to deal.

Boys' Private Reformatories.—The reports of the Superintendents of these schools will be again perused with interest, as they give an insight into their various methods of dealing with these Reformatory lads. The plan we have adopted of placing lads out in private reformatories, thus virtually extending to them as far as possible the advantages of the boarding-out system, is each year, by satisfactory results proving the soundness of the policy. I venture, therefore, to urge public men and others interested in this important work to visit the separate schools, as opportunity offers, and judge for themselves as to their success. It will be found that in almost every instance there is some distinctive method of dealing with the lads, peculiar to the place and its management, which seems to commend itself to one's judgment. On my last annual round of visits to these Reformatory Farm Schools, I was particularly gratified with the whole appearance of the children and their homes, for such they really are, and with the personal interest taken in each by those in charge of them. I am more than ever impressed with the importance of this new departure, and of the necessity for strengthening the hands of the Superintendents by placing as few children together as possible in each school, with a view to their being at all times in a position to maintain that individual interest in their lads without which they can hardly expect to exercise over them any permanent reforming influence. The following table, giving the average length of time each of those sent to service during the year had been a charge before going out, will be found of interest:—

TABLE OF COMPARISON.

GIRLS.			BOYS.		
Albion	...	5 months	Bukawert	...	9 months
Brookside	...	6 "	Excelsior	...	2 "
Oakleigh	...	2 yrs. 9 "	Heidelberg	...	5 "
			Kingsbury	...	6 "
			Straight View	...	7 "
			Wandin Yallock	...	14 "

Brookside Protestant Reformatory for Girls.—This school has had an equally successful year with the past, and a perusal of Mrs. Rowe's interesting report shows that a very large percentage of her girls are doing well, many of them being married and comfortably settled in life. While there have been some very serious cases of sickness, the health of the inmates has upon the whole been good. On my annual visit in October last, everything was found in a highly satisfactory state; the school being conducted on the lines of a well-regulated country home, and the children happy and contented.

Salvation Army Protestant Reformatory for Girls.—The health and conduct of the inmates, and of those sent to service from this school, have been satisfactory. Many of the girls, I feel assured, have been permanently influenced for good. On visiting in September last, I found the institution in perfect order, and evidently each girl's welfare and moral improvement was made a matter of personal interest to the officers individually. Any one really interested in the reclamation of these girls will be well repaid by visiting this "Home," and seeing for themselves the excellent reformatory work being carried on. The inmates are employed in all kinds of domestic work, and in knitting hosiery and clothing. I drew attention to some repairs to buildings that were required, and other matters, which I was promised would be carried out shortly.

Oakleigh Roman Catholic Reformatory for Girls.—The Reverend Mother Superioress is able to report that the year's work has been successful, and that the conduct and health of her children had been good. A larger number has been sent to service than last year, although a difficulty has been experienced in finding suitable situations for them, as they became eligible. When visiting this school in December last, I was gratified at the appearance of the children, who looked happy and contented. They are evidently being well trained in all kinds of domestic duties, more particularly in that of laundry work. The Reverend Mother will be at all times pleased to receive visits from ladies requiring servants and others who may be interested generally in the reformatory work being carried on under her direction.

Children Boarded Out.—It is gratifying to know that the interest in this important part of our work is still being maintained by the various ladies' committees throughout the colony, and the visiting officer found that the high standard of the foster homes of past years is still being kept up. At one period of the year it had been decided by the Government to reduce the boarding-out pay from 5s. to 4s., in consequence of the very serious state of the finances, requiring a general reduction of expenditure. Strong representations, however, were made by the ladies, and on further consideration the proposal was abandoned, much to the satisfaction of these numerous honorary workers and the foster parents. As already pointed out, in consequence of the general depression, the committees have experienced more or less difficulty in finding employment for the children who become old enough for service. It is hoped, however, that, as times improve, this disability will disappear.

Maintenance Collections.—I am glad to be able to report an increase in the maintenance receipts, £917 14s. 7d. having been received as against £856 12s. 1d. the previous year.

Societies Dealing with Neglected Children under Part VIII. of Act 1121.—Having dealt with the past year's work as regards the "Children of the State," I feel that this Report would be incomplete did it not refer more fully to that equally important work being carried on among the neglected children of the city and suburbs by the various rescue societies, most of whom are duly registered under Part VIII. of Act 1121, whereby they are enabled to obtain, if they desire, the legal control of their children, by either direct committal from the courts, or by the parents transferring their guardianship to them. From the following return which has been compiled from information furnished by these societies, it will be seen that 579 children passed through their hands during the year under review; 68 from the courts, 82 by transfer of guardianship, and 429 by voluntary admission. In addition to these, there are the children dealt with by those societies and individuals not yet registered under the Act. If, again, we add to the 579 children already referred to, the 582 sent to the care of this Department, we have a total of no fewer than 1,161 children, of whose care the parents and relatives were relieved in one year, pointing, I venture to submit, to a most serious outlook in the future for this comparatively small and young community. I have visited most of the depôts and institutions connected with this voluntary work, and found them in excellent order, and in some instances admirably adapted for the purpose intended. I have carefully gone through many of the papers received with the children over whom these societies have legal control, and found that, in nearly every instance, they are very similar cases to the ordinary committals to this Department. Those children I saw in the depôts were looking happy and contented, and evidently the most careful interest was being taken in them by the kindly ladies under whose management and care they had been placed. One of the weakest points I observed in connexion with this important work seems to be the want hitherto of

systematic supervision of the children and of their foster homes. I understand, however, from the managers, that they now fully recognise the importance of this matter, and are gradually providing for it. The other, and in my opinion the more serious one, is the large number of children that are being dealt with and placed out—in some instances in lonely parts of the country—by these societies over whom they have no legal control and, therefore, no real protecting power. Knowing as I do, from experience, the necessity of surrounding the “Wards of the State” with the utmost supervision and protection possible, I have felt it to be my duty to lose no opportunity of pressing home, upon the managers and other representative members of these rescue societies, the importance to them of obtaining, as far as they can, the legal control, and, in all cases, the unwearied supervision over the children in whose welfare they have such an interest.

Preventive work among Street Boys.—

WORK OF PRIVATE PERSONS AND SOCIETIES UNDER THE “NEGLECTED CHILDREN’S ACT 1890”
FOR THE YEAR 1895.

Name of Society.	Under Supervision on 31.12.94.	Admissions during 1895.			Under Supervision on 31.12.95.
		Court Commitments.	Transfer of Guardianship.	Voluntary Admissions.	
Victorian Neglected Children’s Aid Society	200	2	...	130	307
“Clifden” Society	25	...	5	4	37
Gordon Institute	209	13	4	199	218
Try Excelsior Class, Hawksburn*	1	1	...	...	2
Wesleyan Church Neglected Children’s Aid Society	112	8	3	...	123
Burwood Boys’ Home ... ..	...	...	6	1	6
Church of England Deaconesses Home ...	22	1	2	14	37
Presbyterian and Scots’ Church Neglected Children’s Aid Society	473	41	62	13	523
Try Society, St. Kilda	54	2	...	68	124
Total	1,096	68	82	429	1,377

* The Society numbered 501 members in 1895.

Preventive Work among Street Boys.—I lately visited the rooms of the Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, one of the oldest and most successful “Preventive” institutions in the colony. Mr. Forster, the founder and manager, kindly took me over the extensive premises, explaining the methods and giving a most interesting account of his many years’ work among the street lads of our city and its suburbs.

Having for some time resided near Mr. Forster, my personal recollection goes back to the commencement of what, to many of his friends, then appeared the hopeless task of enticing to his own house, for healthy amusement and instruction, boys found loitering at the street corners. I remember also with what unobtrusive perseverance this man, with a definite unselfish purpose at heart, worked away, almost single-handed, determined to succeed. Consequently, when after a lapse of years he is seen still to the fore, and full of the same earnest enthusiasm, and, I am happy to say, with all the evidences about him of having succeeded in his aim, one cannot help feeling thankful that our street lads have such a friend spared to them. My firm conviction is, that had each of our crowded suburbs a similar “Preventive” work carried on in its midst, and on the same lines as Mr. Forster’s, it would be a great social blessing, and would be the means of directing into a healthy channel a portion of the present stream of young people who otherwise would run to waste in larrikinism.

As a means, perhaps, of encouragement to other similar workers, I venture to quote a passage from an address delivered by His Honour the Chief Justice when presiding recently at one of the Try entertainments, showing his high opinion of this society and its work.

SIR JOHN MADDEN ON “TRY” WORK.

Sir John Madden, Acting Governor of Victoria, spoke as follows:—“ As to the good that is being effected by their admirable manager, Mr. Forster, I dare say the whole is not known, in fact, it is not sufficiently known how much is being done. If one were to search around for the one work of all others that is valuable of this kind, which is being done unostentatiously and most successfully, I venture to say that it is this “Try” work.

"It perhaps is news to many, at all events, that Mr. Forster for a period of now more than twelve years has been carrying on this system, and with the most admirable results, with results which speak for themselves in the pages of the little book which has been distributed amongst you. There you will observe information to the effect that during last year over 500 boys have passed through his classes. I do not know if we sufficiently estimate or apprehend the value of that work. We know how easy the path downward is for boys who have no homes of their own, or have none of the pleasant surroundings of the homes of those better to do. We remember how easy that path backward is, and how boys are found in the streets at all times of the day and night, and when we remember how easy destruction awaits boys of that class when we ourselves have a feeling of anxiety for our own boys, and are fearful of what may befall them, notwithstanding the many advantages they have compared to the boys before us now, and yet it is so easy to save them, when we recall that what has really to be done is to give them employment, which will come within the scope of their possibility.

"If we do not let them fall to those things which they contemplate, but lead them to believe that their present calling is creditable and honorable, then half the battle is won. That is the object aimed at in the first instance. It is impossible to place boys in every employment, which we would like, and what we have to do is to get them employment which they can do. Rather than allowing them to consider that they are something like vagrants, and that they have to go down to the slums among the vagabonds of the city, they have to be led to believe that they are employed in an occupation that is creditable and honorable in itself.

"When we wander through the streets we will be struck with this fact in a very remarkable degree, that these boys shine out for civility and propriety of conduct, and honesty in their dealings. I dare say there are some who practice the special tricks of their trade, but I think as a body you will find them sharp, intelligent, honest, and civil, and it will strike us the more forcibly if we compare them with other boys in other cities not so far away.

"The object of this Try Society is to inculcate ideas that are well illustrated in the athletic exercises which we have witnessed here to-night. We have seen the calm self-possession of the lad who is carried upon the shoulders of his fellows; we have observed the faith with which he takes his plunge into the arms of a strong instructor. That seems to typify the work of this society. The boys have to be lifted by a means which will encourage their faith and self-confidence.

"Some of the members who go forth through the classes of this school in the course of a year we also find are sent abroad into the country, and they appear to enjoy agricultural employment better than that of the town. Before they are sent out they are given the knowledge of the elements of some trade, as we find that they are instructed in carpentry and boot repairing, &c., so that they will not introduce themselves in the guise of little wretches who want to be watched 24 hours out of the day. They, therefore, make themselves welcome in their new homes. This is the class of work that is being aimed at in these schools. We see, in addition, the cultivation of social accomplishments that the association encourages.

"We have heard two boys sing in a manner that would do credit to any training school, and I venture to think that these lads will be heard of in the future in more senses than one. We have heard them sing a duet in an admirable way, in the most perfect time and with excellent voices. In the guise of hosts, and with the knowledge of how an audience should be held with attention, we have been shown that they are trained not only with a view to developing their self-reliance and independence, but also in good manners, which go furthest of all to make a man.

"There is one other question with which we are immediately interested, and it is how is this stupendous undertaking being carried on? The effects of this work may be read so easily in all we have seen to-night, and what we see going on in similar institutions to those we are interested in to-night, namely—institutions which exalt the lot of many. Some movements depend on the Government, but this dependence is one which seems as it were to paralyze all things. The aid which is given when Government is prosperous must be withheld when Government is not prosperous. At the same time, it paralyzes those who would be friends to these institutions by relieving them of responsibilities, which otherwise they feel to be theirs. Now, this institution is not fed in any such fashion. It is fed by voluntary subscriptions, and also by such means as this resorted to to-night, and the Try Exhibition, which is to be opened in October, and which is to last over several days. This is admirable in itself. Besides this, every boy contributes at the rate of 6d. a month. This is a splendid system, as it gives the boys a feeling of independence. It gives them the idea that by their work they are helping their institution in their own way.

"In object, in extent, in quality of work, or method by which effect is given to it, the whole thing is admirable and praiseworthy. It is undoubtedly one of the best undertakings carried on in this country. I have only to appeal to you to urge upon you the necessity of assisting to contribute to its funds. I hope you will bear my appeal in mind, and I trust that it will not be in vain in some slight degree attracting your interest, enthusiasm, and above all—your cash."

The thanks of the Department are again cordially rendered to the many honorary workers connected with it, more particularly the lady correspondents, for another year's hearty co-operation.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

THOS. M. MILLAR,
Secretary and Inspector.

TOTAL EXPENDITURE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF CHILDREN.—INDUSTRIAL AND REFORMATORY.

Items.	Head Office.	Industrial Schools.						Total.	Reformatory Schools.								Total.		
		Boys' and Girls' Receiving Depots.	Abbotford.	St. Joseph's, Geelong.	Servants' Training Schools.	Boarded-out Children.	Licensed Children.		Albion.	Oakleigh.	Brookside.	Heidelberg.	Excelsior.	Wandin Yallock.	Kingsbury.	Straight View Farm.		Bukawert.	Licensed Children.	Telephone Service.
Average strength	...	83	57	1	18	1,951	...	23	38	32	17	12	13	6	6	2	...	...
Provisions	£ s. d.	325 4 10	...	...	...	...	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Clothing and Bedding	...	79 5 3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Fuel, Light, and Water	21 5 6	237 13 3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Stores, Stock, &c.	96 16 1	137 0 2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Medical Attendance, Medicines, &c.	...	...	...	...	...	1,421 12 10	...	...	32 2 5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	32 2 5
Incidentals, &c.	370 19 1	141 9 7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Transport and Travelling Expenses	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Telephone Service	7 0 0	7 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	143 11 0	143 11 0
Salaries and Wages	3,100 19 0	1,090 5 9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Maintenance	...	...	649 11 0	13 0 7	240 4 10	27,696 2 1	...	605 2 10	1,836 8	2,438 3	3,318 1 11	343 8	1,150 12 6	144 12 10	53 6 11	...	...	3,875 18 7
Deduct—	3,596 19 8	2,017 18 10	649 11 0	13 0 7	240 4 10	30,387 4 3	1,452 15 1	605 2 10	1,868 10	7,438 3	3,318 1 11	343 8	1,150 12 6	144 12 10	53 6 11	1,167 19 2	143 11 0	5,219 11 2	
Value of Labour performed by Schools	...	160 13 6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Maintenance	...	30 0 6	20 12 5	0 7 3	6 10 3	705 15 10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	13 9 1	4 9 9	...	...	154 8 4
All other Receipts	...	21 6 6	...	...	...	131 16 10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Net Cost	...	212 0 6	20 12 5	0 7 3	6 10 3	837 12 8	...	72 7 11	14 7 9	19 7 38	2 5 26	18 2 29	3 1 13	9 1 13	9 1 4	9 9 4	...	154 8 4	
	3,596 19 8	1,805 18 4	628 18 7	12 13 4	233 14 7	29,549 11 7	1,452 15 1	2,598 0 3	974 7	6,858 11 0	400 0 10	291 3 9	314 5 0	137 3 5	131 3 9	48 17 2	1,167 19 2	143 11 0	5,065 2 10

* Under Part VIII. of Act.

REPORTS ON SCHOOLS.

RECEIVING DEPÔTS, ROYAL PARK.

The Secretary, Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit, for your information, my report for the year 1895.

There is nothing special to report on ; everything in the various departments has gone on orderly and satisfactorily.

The health of the children has been generally good. Nine deaths occurred in the Girls' Division ; with two exceptions they were infants received in a delicate state ; of the other two, one was a young girl of eighteen years of age, whose term had expired, but who was retained on pay, owing to her usefulness in the work-room ; her death was due to brain disease ; she was a favorite with all, and much grief was expressed for her loss. The other was a little girl who died from peritonitis.

There has been a considerable falling-off in the number of absconders from the Boys' Depôt, no doubt owing to the more vigilant supervision exercised. There were none from the Girls'.

As usual the boys have kept us in a plentiful supply of vegetables and milk, and the girls' laundry and other work has been done in a creditable and efficient manner.

In January the visiting committee gave their annual treat, which was duly appreciated, an abundance of fruit, pastry, and confectionery being provided, and a magic lantern entertainment in the evening later on. Mr. Boase and the young ladies, who give the girls' pleasant Sunday afternoons, gave them a treat in the shape of a tea meeting and concert. The boys were similarly entertained by the Sunday-school teachers from St. George's, Royal Park, and the Bible Christian Church, Hotham Hill.

We were again indebted to Mr. Petersen for his usual kind gift of toys, and to Mr. Hutchinson, for periodicals.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) J. WILSON, Matron.

ANNUAL REPORT OF VISITING COMMITTEE FOR RECEIVING DEPÔTS, ROYAL PARK, YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 1895.

In presenting their annual report, the Members of the Visiting Committee have to express regret that the visitation of the depôts has not been so systematically kept up as in previous years, owing to vacancies occurring through several members removing to other neighbourhoods. Those who remained endeavoured to continue the work, and have satisfaction in stating that the whole management of the depôts has been carried out with the same order, routine, and kindness as of old.

The children generally have been very healthy, affected chiefly by ailments incidental to childhood. Nine deaths have occurred during the year; those who died were, except in two instances, young children in almost a dying condition when admitted; one, an elder girl, had been an inmate for some years, and by good behaviour had won the affection of officers and companions; her death was much regretted. From the Boys' Depôt there have been but few absconders. The superintendent and attendants have generally given a good report of the boys under their charge.

At the Girls' Reformatory the wards do not remain very long, but are sent to situations as soon as possible.

The annual Christmas treat given to the children of both depôts by the Visiting Committee was postponed until 8th January, 1896.

The Committee desire to express their sense of the courtesies shown them by the officers of the institution during their visit of inspection.

(Signed for Committee)

M. L. HUTCHINSON, Chairman.

LISA BARDEN, Hon. Secretary Visiting Committee.

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, ABBOTSFORD.

During the period of report the general health has been good, only one death having occurred, the cause being pneumonia.

The conduct of the girls in school has, on the whole, been satisfactory. Of those sent to service, the conduct of some has been unsatisfactory and the cause of regret ; still we have not the same unfavorable account to give of all, for the visits of several of the old girls, some of whom are happily married, others doing well in service, has been a pleasure, and a proof that all the care and labour bestowed on them by those in charge of the school has not been in vain. Mrs. Simmons, inspector, examined the children, and gave certificates to several.

On different occasions the school has been visited by several distinguished ladies and gentlemen, among whom were Sir Arthur Snowden, Lady Snowden, the late Sir James Patterson, Sir R. Reid ; also by many kind benefactors, who have shown an interest in the little ones, and contributed to their happiness and amusement. A most enjoyable entertainment was given by Mr. and Mrs. Doubleday and party of friends. It consisted of a series of limelight views and songs, at the end of which lollies were distributed.

Also a Santa Claus Fête by Messrs. Gollin and friends, who provided a liberal supply of Christmas gifts, and a treat of fruit, cakes, &c., which were distributed in the school-room to the recipients by Lady Snowden, Lady Berry, Lady Benjamin, Dr. and Mrs. Lazarus, and a number of young ladies, co-operatives in the good work.

The medical officer, Dr. J. P. Ryan, has been most generous in care of, and unremitting attendance on, the sick, for which special thanks are due.

Yours respectfully,

(Signed) MARY V. KENNEDY, Provincial Superioress.

GIRLS' TRAINING INSTITUTE,

SIR,

I have the honour to submit my report for the year 1895. It has been very satisfactory.

The girls have enjoyed good health, and their conduct on the whole has been good. I shall never forget their affection for me, or the loss of Miss Berry, the late sub-matron, which I feel deeply.

I also feel grateful to the kind friends who have helped me, and beg to thank Mr. Peterson for his gift to each child, and others who have contributed to their happiness.

Lady Brassey visited the "Home" and made the following record :—"Have spent a most interesting time looking over the institute, and am quite charmed with it. Everything is so clean and fresh and neat it does the greatest credit to the workers and superintendence. The children look happy and healthy, and seem to trust Mrs. Banner as a mother. Was specially struck with the laundry and cooking."

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) EMMA BANNER.

OAKLEIGH REFORMATORY SCHOOL.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit for your information a report of the working of the school for the year ending 31st December, 1895.

I am pleased to say the health of the girls during the year was good, except one, who being very delicate required constant treatment. The conduct of the girls was also satisfactory. Of those at service favorable accounts were received from employers generally, only one being returned for misconduct; two were comfortably married during the year.

We wish to thank our many friends who kindly sent us presents of lollies, cakes, &c. &c.; also for the many nice gifts towards the decoration of a Christmas tree, which amused our girls greatly, there being many useful presents amongst them. Also Dr. Grant, who has been most attentive and regular in his attendance.

(Signed)

MARY H. O'SHEA.

OAKLEIGH REFORMATORY SCHOOL.—REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE.

We have much satisfaction in recording our approbation of the management of the Reformatory School, as well as of the happy, healthful, and contented appearance of its inmates.

We note in this the good care bestowed by the good nuns, and we are especially gratified that there is not at present, and has not been, since our last visit of inspection, any sickness amongst the girls.

(Signed)

N. FITZGERALD.
JAMES HOGAN.
JAMES O'DONNELL.
M. MORNANE.
H. O'CALLAGHAN.

REPORT OF THE BROOKSIDE REFORMATORY SCHOOL, CAPE CLEAR.

To the Secretary Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools.

DEAR SIR,

Once more I have to report on a very quiet year. The work as it grows older is giving good proof of its worth in the good behaviour of a large proportion, both of service girls and inmates. The former number 48 and the latter 34 on 31st December, 1895. I have taken advantage to a much greater extent of the clause in the Act which provides for the licence of wards to their parents or other relations on probation. When sending them away, I try to impress upon them that they are liable to be recalled without notice if unfavorably reported upon by the police. There are now nine so placed. I have in all these cases acceded to the earnest entreaty of parents or friends. I am not much in favour of the plan, but am willing to give it a fair trial. Of the 51 who have been my wards, but whose term is finished, we are in correspondence with 26, who are doing well, of these 26, 12 are married, 9 are doing fairly well, 9 badly and indifferently, 3 died, 2 are in a lunatic asylum, of 2 we have no present information; 6 out of these 51 are more or less of weak intellect.

Absconders have been troublesome occasionally. Now and then a wave of restlessness seems to run through the cottages. We have one still at large. The health of the inmates has been good. We had a scarlatina scare, and one serious case for the hospital, which recovered. We have had periodical visits from the Rev. R. Whyte, of Rokewood, which have been most acceptable to all. Mr. Bird, of Scarsdale, has also shown his sense of the needs of the girls by coming and addressing them occasionally on Sunday night. Other friends have done the same for them. We have had visits from several of the girls who passed out of control some years ago. It is good for the others to see them return tidy steady young women by no means ashamed to accept a holiday amongst their old surroundings. Each of them expressed deep thankfulness for benefit received with us, and for the knowledge of household work gained while in residence. Three have married during the year while still under age. Three more are getting ready to be married early in 1896.

Our staff is much the same; Mr. Downing is still at the head of matters. All are working well together, and I think the work was never so efficiently done as at present. The inspector professed himself satisfied on his visit.

The year has been a very dry one, and the gardens have given very small return for the labour expended on them. I think this is all that will be of any particular interest for your year's Report.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)

ELIZTH. ROWE.

EXCELSIOR HOME FOR BOYS REFORMATORY SCHOOL.

SIR,

I am pleased to be able to report satisfactorily with regard to the general conduct of the boys at service, and especially those on probation.

During the past year 16 boys have been transferred from the gaols to my care, and 4 of that number were committed at the Melbourne General Sessions. I am glad to note that not one of them have attempted to abscond, but an all-round improvement has been marked in them, perhaps more so than in the younger ones transferred from the dépôt. Of the 16 boys transferred from the gaols, only 2 are in the "Home" now, 8 on probation (with a careful watch over them), 4 at service, and 2 discharged.

Here I should like to tender my sincere thanks to Captain Burrowes for the many ways he has helped me to do my work, in watching certain cases with a view to transfer from gaol.

The boys attending school both at the Roman Catholic and State school during the year have done even better this, than in the past; not one played truant at either school.

The boys who are beyond school age (and who I feel will not forfeit the trust I place in them) are always employed by friends at 1s. per day, in and around Brighton, and I am thankful to say the demand is often more than I can supply. The money so earned is placed to the boy's credit in the Savings Bank, and in many cases where I find the parents are poor but respectable, who feel it hard to pay the maintenance money into court, the boys pay it themselves; (this has a good effect generally).

The Rev. Father Carey has been very attentive to the boys belonging to his faith. Mr. Chambers has been most kind to the other boys, who are always pleased to see him.

Our camping out was again a great success; much good always comes of this outing.

I am further pleased to report that the boys have started to clear and fence 10 acres of land near Ferntree Gully (which was given to me some years back) under supervision; only the best boys are allowed to go to the "farm" as they call it, and the interest taken in starting the new work is very encouraging. So far it has been a great success, and my sincere hope is that it may be a step in the right direction.

I beg again to thank Dr. Simons for his generous and prompt attention on all occasions to the wants of the boys, also the many friends who have helped me during the year.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

W. GROOM.

KINGSBURY REFORMATORY SCHOOL.

SIR,

I have the honour to report that our work at Kingsbury for the past year has been fairly satisfactory. The boys' conduct has been good, we having only one absconder for the year, who was recovered.

We find in many cases six months too short a time to fit boys for service; sometimes the employer finds a boy promise well for a time, but then he turns lazy or untrustworthy, which necessitates his re-admittance. With others less time is sufficient, for we find much depends upon the home they go into.

The health of the lads was very good, with the exception of those affected by the influenza epidemic and a couple of accidents. In connexion with these, I wish to place on record the kindness of Dr. Eccles, of Newstead, who is ever ready to give his services.

Mr. Gordon and Lieutenant Field, to whom we tender our thanks, kindly sent us a parcel of suitable reading matter.

Many persons engaged in dairying want boys for the busy season, which only lasts, as a rule, during the spring months, after which, having no work, are unable to keep them for the winter, even at a low wage.

Mr. Millar, the inspector and secretary, visited here toward the close of the year, which is always a time of profit to us all.

I am, &c.,

(Signed)

A. BREBNER.

WANDIN YALLOCK REFORMATORY SCHOOL.

SIR,

Of the boys placed out during the year, the majority are reported as doing well, and as a proof I have had a number of applications for similar lads.

The attention and behaviour of the wards in school hours has been good, and, as I have had both male and female teachers, my experience is that a female teacher has a refining influence upon their natures that is impossible for a man to have.

In reference to recreation, we had a three days' camping-out expedition on the Wandin Yallock Creek, fishing, swimming, &c., which the boys appreciated very much. In addition to this, they have an occasional pic-nic in the paddocks, when they manage and distribute their own provisions, make "billy tea," have foot racing, and other games—a sort of "go-as-you-please," no one interfering with them—which they seem to enjoy.

I wish most sincerely to thank the Rev. E. Turner for his kind interest in the welfare of the boys; also for conducting divine service since the work has been instituted here. I also desire to thank Dr. Norris for his voluntary and kind interest in the lads while he was at Lilydale; also his successor, Dr. Syme, who has kindly filled the office of honorary physician to the Home.

I may add that the health of the lads has been remarkably good.

I am, Sir,

Yours respectfully,

(Signed)

M. McASKELL, Superintendent.

BUKAWERT REFORMATORY.

SIR,

Three boys are in good situations and doing well, the fourth was sent back to the Royal Park.

The other boys are behaving well, and are learning general farm and bush work, as well as having lessons at night. One boy, fourteen years old, did not know the alphabet when he came to us.

The health of all the boys has been excellent.

I have, &c.,

(Signed)

H. B. SADLIER.

STRAIGHT VIEW FARM REFORMATORY SCHOOL.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit for your information a report of the working of the school for the year ending 31st December, 1895.

The health of the children has been excellent.

Owing to the continued depression, situations have been difficult to get.

The boys have lessons every night during the week, and are employed at various kinds of farm work, milking night and morning, and working in the garden. Some of them are learning the slaughtering business.

We have been visited by Mr. Gordon, Mr. McCay, and Mr. Williams, and all enjoyed the kindly advice given.

We have service every Sunday morning, when all attend.

I am, Sir,

Faithfully yours,

(Signed)

P. McMAHON.

ALBION REFORMATORY.

SIR,

With few exceptions, the conduct of the girls has been very good, and there are evidences—very encouraging evidences indeed—of a real change in many of the girls dealt with by us during the past year.

Good health has prevailed, and many of those, who, when received by us were in a very low state, are now well and robust.

Believe me to be, Sir,

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)

C. H. JEFFRIES,

For Matron.

HEIDELBERG REFORMATORY.

SIR,

The general health of the lads has been good, with the exception of those who are constitutionally weak.

I am pleased to say, too, that the conduct in the reformatory has been highly satisfactory, showing a thorough improvement in the demeanour of the lads under our care. Especially marked has been this in the case of one or two who were the cause of great anxiety to the authorities of the suburbs in which they resided prior to admission to this reformatory.

Believe me to be, Sir,

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)

C. H. JEFFRIES,

For Superintendent.