

1900.
—
VICTORIA.

DEPARTMENT FOR NEGLECTED CHILDREN AND
REFORMATORY SCHOOLS.

R E P O R T

OF THE

SECRETARY AND INSPECTOR

FOR THE YEAR

1 8 9 9.

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, 1900.

SIR,

In pursuance of the provisions of Acts 1121 and 1079, I have the honour to submit the Annual Reports of the proceedings of this Department for the year ending 31st December, 1899, together with the usual Returns, Statements of Accounts, &c., appertaining thereto.

The transactions of the year, as compared with those of 1898, are shown in the following table :—

STATEMENT OF ADMISSIONS AND DISCHARGES, ETC., FOR THE YEAR 1899.

	Neglected Children.	Reformatory Children.	Total.
ADMISSIONS, ETC.			
Number under supervision on 31st December, 1898	4,196	392	4,588
New committals	928	49	977
Transfers from Gaol	...	16	16
" " Neglected Children's Department	...	35	35
" " Reformatory	3	...	3
Returned absconders, &c.	3	14	17
	5,130	506	5,636
DISCHARGES, ETC.			
From Institutions, Service and Foster-homes, &c., as follow :—			
By Order of the Governor in Council	234	11	245
" Death	56	...	56
" Effluxion of time	165	84	249
" Transfer to Asylums	10	1	11
" " Neglected Children's Department	...	3	3
" " Reformatory	35	...	35
" Absconders during 1899 not returned	34	38	72
Number under supervision on 31st December, 1899	4,596	369	4,965*
	5,130	506	5,636

* The location of the 4,965 children is shown hereunder :—

†	{	3,113 Neglected Children were being maintained in foster-homes.
		135 " " " " institutions.
		199 Reformatory " " " reformatory schools.
		710 Neglected Children were maintaining themselves at service.
		110 Reformatory " " " "
		629 Neglected Children were with relatives, &c., without cost.
		60 Reformatory " " " "
		7 Neglected Children were in Hospitals.
		2 Neglected Children were on a visit to relations.

† In addition to these, 24 who are free from legal control are still being maintained by the State, as they are incapacitated.

The following is a comparative statement of the numbers of Neglected Children and Reformatory wards who were a cost to the State on the 31st December, 1898, and the 31st December, 1899, respectively :—

	<i>Neglected.</i>	1898.	1899.
Boarded out	...	2,791	3,113
In Schools	...	113	135
Total	...	2,904	3,248
<i>Reformatory.</i>			
In Schools	...	204	199

Committals.—While, I am happy to say, there is a considerable reduction in the number of children committed under the head of Neglected, as compared with the year 1898, which was abnormally large, it still exceeds by upwards of 39 per cent. the average of the committals for the previous five years. Judging, however, from the gradual but continued decrease in the number of children received during the first five months of 1900, there is every reason to believe that we may look forward hopefully to this satisfactory phase of the Department's work continuing, especially as work in Victoria appears to be now more plentiful, particularly in the country districts, and therefore there is less necessity for parents leaving for other colonies, ostensibly seeking employment, a proceeding which has at all times proved to be a fruitful source of supply of neglected and deserted children. If I am right in this hopeful outlook it will, I trust, give corresponding relief to the many societies which are registered under Part VIII. of our Neglected Children's Act for the rescue of children, and which all through the depressed times with which our colony has been contending have given the State valuable and truly loyal assistance in diverting large numbers of destitute children to their own hands that would in very many cases have drifted into the care of this Department.

Of the 928 children committed to the Neglected Children's Department during the year, 420 were left with their own mothers with a view to their receiving payment for them. Having, however, dealt so exhaustively with this portion of our work in my last report it seems unnecessary to deal with it further on this occasion. At the same time, it is gratifying to know that the committals under this particular head during the first few months of the current year show a steady decline, which, it is to be hoped, will continue.

Mortality.—Fifty-six (56) children died during the year, being 1·1 per cent. of the total under supervision. Our low average death-rate which we are able to report from year to year has always appeared to me to be one of our strongest and most satisfactory arguments in favour of the boarding-out system, and this is all the more accentuated when it is borne in mind how large a proportion of the children committed from year to year consists of infants under one year of age. In the year under review there were 143 so received, being over 15 per cent. of the total number committed, and many of these were reported by the Matron to be in the very lowest state of health from neglect, &c., when admitted. And here I may mention that the system we have now for some years adopted, in suitable cases, of encouraging young mothers of illegitimate infants to suckle them themselves, by placing them in foster-homes very specially selected by the Department, is still giving very satisfactory results.

Reference to our Departmental Report for 1897 will show that I then dealt more fully with the important question of infant mortality, consequently, it is extremely gratifying to find that the amending Infant Life Protection Bill introduced last session, and which it is hoped will ere long be passed and put in force, has provided so many additional safeguards for the conservation of infant life.

Children at Service.—There has been a decidedly brisker demand for our service children, and consequently we are, upon the whole, securing better wages for them, and are gradually getting back to the rates that were ruling prior to the depressed times, during which period we were compelled to accept almost any terms for our children's services. Those in situations are, with few exceptions, doing well and giving satisfaction, and are in excellent health. As in former years, a few cases of very serious misconduct have been transferred under your authority to one or other of the private reformatories, while others of a less serious nature have been suitably met by transfer to one of the training schools, for discipline and a few months' further training.

Children placed with Relatives and Others on Probation under section 30, sub-section 5, Act 1121, and section 340, sub-section 6, Act 1079.—The Department is, under these sections, still being relieved of the cost of maintaining many of its wards by placing them in the care of relatives and friends willing to take them; the Department, of course, keeping up its protection and supervision, and, upon the whole, with satisfactory results as regards the welfare of the children and the monetary saving to the country, which is very considerable, there being no fewer than 629 children so placed out. In a few instances children had to be taken back again into the direct control of the Department, either through their own misconduct or that of those with whom they had been placed.

Transfers from Gaol, section 333, Act 1079.—There were 16 transfers from Gaol to the Reformatories as against 19 in the previous year (14 boys and 2 girls), and I am pleased to be able to say that this branch of our work is still yielding satisfactory results. A large proportion of those so far brought under the operation of the section is doing well, and they are, I feel satisfied, deeply grateful for having been relieved from the prison restraint, and, as far as possible, from its taint, and given an opportunity for redeeming their character under more healthy surroundings. I have again to thank Mr. Groom and Captain Bray of the Salvation Army, and other gaol visitors, for their cordial and continued assistance in dealing with these cases.

Suspension of Sentences by Courts and Release of Prisoners on Probation under sections 353 and 354, Act 1079.—I am glad to be able to report that 105 first offenders were given their liberty under the first of these sections as compared with 79 during the previous year, and it is further very gratifying to know that section 354, which I have for so many years had to report upon as inoperative, was during the year in question utilized in the case of 4 first offenders, 1 male and 3 female, who had actually begun their gaol sentences.

As I have on former occasions pointed out, that, while it is extremely gratifying to know that these beneficial sections of our Crimes Act are gradually being brought into operation to a larger extent in the case of first offenders, the almost total absence of the systematic supervision over them that is provided under the New Zealand system precludes our being in a position to test the results from year to year with any reliability.

Receiving Depôts, Royal Park.—The important work of passing in and out of the Depôts the large number of Neglected and Reformatory committals and transfers during the year has been carried out in a satisfactory manner, and the health and conduct of the children have, upon the whole, been good. The difficulty as to the most suitable way of disposing of the mentally and physically weak wards and ex-wards of the State, a residuum of which is to be found in this and most of the other institutions connected with the Department, is, I regret to say, still unsolved, but the question has not been lost sight of, and I am yet in hopes that ere long some satisfactory solution will be found for their better comfort and training. Our cordial thanks are due to the family of the late William Peterson, Esq., who are very kindly continuing his periodical gift of valuable and useful presents of toys, &c., for the children of these and other schools, also to the many other kind friends of the children. In addition to the local Visiting Committee of ladies and gentlemen who visit here regularly, taking the deepest personal interest in their work, the inmates have weekly visits from clergymen, and ladies and gentlemen, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, for the purpose of imparting religious instruction.

The Protestant Training Schools for Girls.—I am pleased to say that there is still a good demand for the girls trained at this school, no fewer than 45 situations having been filled during the year, and the Matron, Miss Watson, is able to give a very satisfactory account of her charges, both as to their health and conduct.

The Salvation Army Albion Home.—This school, which I referred to in my previous report as having been only recently opened, has met a long-felt want in connexion with our work amongst girls, and it is fully realizing our expectations regarding it, as will be seen from Mrs. Booth's report of the year's operations.

The Salvation Army Bayswater Home for Young Boys.—This home, having met with your approval, was opened during the year for the reception of little boys who are either too young, or whose previous history does not warrant their being sent direct to a Reformatory, but whose conduct, nevertheless, had been such as would cause me to hesitate before placing them in either a service or an ordinary foster-home until they had gone through some such disciplinary training as is carried on here. It has already proved a success, and certainly was much required by the Department in dealing with the very young but wayward and, in some instances, already depraved boys.

Christian Brothers' Home for Boys, Geelong.—I may here state that, with the kind co-operation of the Christian Brothers, and also with your approval, we have been enabled to hand over to them for temporary training and care at the Geelong Orphanage such little Roman Catholic boys as correspond to the description of children who are not considered fit to be at once placed out in foster-homes, &c.; and I am

pleased to say that the Reverend Brother in charge gives me a most hopeful account of his experience with them so far. Of course, in so disposing of this class of the Department's wards, it is quite understood and well kept in view that it is with a view to qualifying them as early as possible for entering a foster-home, and being thus treated like the ordinary children of the State.

Roman Catholic Industrial School, Abbotsford.—The ladies in charge are able to give a good report of the majority of their girls. My personal thanks are again due to the Reverend Mother for so readily taking off our hands cases that are not deemed suitable for treatment in foster-homes, or, having been already tried there, are withdrawn for a time for special reasons, and sent to her. Thanks are also due for the great work she is doing in receiving large numbers of neglected children free of cost to the State, and giving them equal advantages with our own children. On a recent visit I paid to this school, I was informed that there were nearly 300 of such children then present, and from my own observation they appeared mostly drawn from the class which supplies the committals to the care of the Department.

Boys' Private Reformatories.—The satisfactory results of previous years are still being maintained, as will be seen from a perusal of the Superintendents' reports; and the general health and character of the lads, both inmates and those at service, are, with a few exceptions, well reported on. The superior advantages for the lads in the way of training available at Bayswater, and at one or two of the other Farm Reformatories, and which it has been considered advisable as far as possible to take full advantage of, necessitated our closing one or two of the smaller Reformatories during the year, a step which was taken with extreme regret, in view of the really good work that had been carried on with the limited means at their disposal.

In order, however, that the experience, &c., gained by the officers in charge of the closed Reformatories in question may not be altogether lost to the Department, I have arranged to board out with them from time to time a few lads of the neglected-children class who may require more disciplinary treatment than can at all times be found in the ordinary foster-home.

Girls' Private Reformatories.—There are six of these schools at present in existence—five Protestant and one Roman Catholic—and I am pleased to be able to say that each, in its own distinctive way, is doing excellent and, in a vast majority of instances, permanent reformatory work with the girls sent to their care by the Department. The reports of the officers in charge of the various schools will be perused with interest. My own observation at my periodical visits of inspection has thoroughly satisfied me that the inmates, surrounded as they are by the comparative freedom of family life, are being trained in a kindly, judicious, and truly womanly atmosphere to fill a useful and honorable position in the world.

Before closing my report on this part of our work for the year, it seems most fitting that I should refer to the great loss the Department and, indeed, the country have recently sustained in the death of Mrs. William Rowe, of Glenfine, Cape Clear. Apart altogether from her charitable and kindly interest in every good work, which was proverbial, her name will, I venture to say, be chiefly held in reverence and deep respect as being the founder of the first Private Reformatory in Victoria. A reference to former yearly reports will show that the necessary approval of the Governor in Council having been obtained, Mrs. Rowe's school for the reclaiming of fallen Protestant girls was opened on the 29th December, 1887, by transferring to the Brookside farm six girls from the Government Reformatory at Coburg. As experience and opportunity opened up the way, her interest in this truly Christlike work increased year by year, until it culminated in her at last coming forward and relieving us of the balance of the inmates in the State Reformatory to such an extent that we were enabled to close it altogether and hand over the buildings to the Penal Department.

Further, the result of Mrs. Rowe's successful work with fallen and depraved girls at Brookside eventually led, in 1892, to our opening private reformatories for boys on the very same lines (the Lunacy Department taking over the Ballarat Reformatory buildings), and, as experience has shown, with a like successful result. During the twelve years ending December, 1899, over which Mrs. Rowe's work in connexion with Brookside extended we passed no fewer than 240 girls through her hands, with, in a very large proportion of cases, the most gratifying results, indeed, many of them are filling really good positions in life.

Children Boarded out.—The placing in foster-homes of new committals, and the transferring of others to more suitable ones, have been carried out by the ladies with their usual care and consideration for the welfare of the State wards, and they are able to report that the general health and conduct of the children have been good. The difficulty the ladies' committees have at times met with, of late years, in finding suitable employment locally for the children when they reach the service age, is gradually disappearing, particularly in the case of boys suitable for farmers.

In again thanking the ladies and other honorary workers for their continued interest in this portion of our departmental work, I venture, as in former years, to once more impress upon them the supreme importance of keeping up continued and systematic supervision of their foster-homes and children. I am very glad to say that the majority of the ladies fully realises that upon their unwearied vigilance in this respect depends, in a very great measure, the continued success of a system which prolonged experience shows is the most natural and permanently beneficial way of disposing of the children of the State.

Maintenance Collections.—In view of the small aggregate annual maintenance collections recovered for many years past from the parents of the children, it is gratifying to be able to report an increase for the past year, £1,288 19s. 2d., as against £1,063 2s. in 1898.

Societies Dealing with Neglected Children under Part VIII. of Act 1121.—The following table will, to some extent, show the nature of the important work being carried on by various societies employed under this Part of our Act in rescuing street children, and I very gladly avail myself of this annual opportunity of thanking them for their great assistance to the Department in this respect :—

WORK OF SOCIETIES UNDER PART VIII. NEGLECTED CHILDREN'S ACT, NO. 1121,
FOR THE YEAR 1899.

Name of Society.	Under Supervision on 31.12.98.	Admissions during 1899.			Under Supervision on 31.12.99.
		Court Committals.	Transfer of Guardianship.	Voluntary Admissions.	
Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society	416	3	31	68	459
Wesleyan Church Neglected Children's Aid Society	146	10	3	...	185
Presbyterian and Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society	391	9	20	1	373
Church of England Deaconesses' Home ...	42	1	2	12	54
"Clifden" Society, Wedderburn ...	64	2	...	2	65
Gordon Institute	149	12	26	82	200
Try Excelsior Class, Hawksburn ...	111	2	2	77	123
Burwood Boys' Home	43	...	16	16	45
Try Society, St. Kilda	110	...	...	52	95
Fitzroy Streets Mission	9	1	...	3	12
Geelong "Try" Boys' Brigade ...	203	...	...	41	181
Latrobe-street Ragged School Mission ...	357	2	...	202	313
St. Joseph's Home, Surrey Hills ...	167	...	...	43	218
Total	2,208	42	100	604	2,323

In closing this report of another year's proceedings, I beg to thank the lady correspondents, the officers in charge of the several schools, and the officers of the Department generally, for their efficient and cordial co-operation.

I have already referred to the other honorary workers and to the cordial service they have rendered.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

THOS. M. MILLAR,
Secretary and Inspector.

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

Items.	Industrial Schools.					Total.	Reformatory Schools.														
	Head Office.	Boys' and Girls' Receiving Depôts.	Abkirkford.	Servants' Training Schools.	Service Children.		Boarded-out Children.	Oakleigh.	Brookside.	St. Ann's.	Pakenham.	Excelstor.	Wandin Yallock.	Kingsbury.	Straight View Farm.	Bukewert.	Mount Paradise.	Baywater.	Service Children.	Telephone Service.	Total.
Average strength } Provisions Clothing and Bedding Fuel, Light, and Water Stores, Stock, &c. Medical At- tendance, Medicines, &c. Incidentals, &c. Transport and Trav- elling Ex- penses Telephone Service Salaries and Wages Maintenance	...	84	59	25	...	2,952	...	27	9*	46	19	13	4	4	2	14	29	...	...	...
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
	428 14 2	428 14 2	...	...	428 14 2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	50 11 3	50 11 3	...	...	985 9 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	321 17 10	321 17 10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	242 1 2	242 1 2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	...	...	...	...	2,230 7 2	...	24 18 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	24 18 0
	166 11 3	202 18 8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

	6 0 0	6 0 0	...	...	606 15 11	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	691 8 0
	3,751 18 3	1,242 0 4	...	...	12 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	148 0 0

	4,117 13 8	2,494 3 5	767 1 4	324 8 9	39,704 18 0	1,892 1 6	702 14 7	49 0 9	1,213 14 8	3,834 7 106	1,491 3 8	347 18 7	106 1 5	104 2 11	61 5	936 2 8	757 9 7	...	...	...	5,085 16 1
	...	...	...	...	43,539 10 1	892 1 6	727 12 7	49 0 9	1,213 14 8	3,834 7 106	1,491 3 8	347 18 7	106 1 5	104 2 11	61 5	936 2 8	757 9 7	969 14 5	148 0	...	6,228 8 6
Deduct— Maintenance recovered from Parents All other Receipts	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	...	...	...	...	1,148 15 6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	...	19 18 3	...	...	22 16 10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	17 11 6

Net Cost ...	4,117 13 8	2,474 5 2	767 1 4	324 8 9	1,514 63 4	3,892 1 6	727 12 7	49 0 9	1,213 14 8	3,834 7 106	1,491 3 8	347 18 7	106 1 5	104 2 11	61 5	936 2 8	757 9 7	952 2 10	148 0	...	6,070 13 4

* For two months only. † The value of labour performed by the inmates of this school in manufacture of outfits, &c., is £174 11s. 8d.

AGES, RELIGIONS, AND BIRTHPLACES OF CHILDREN COMMITTED TO THE CARE OF THE DEPARTMENT IN 1899.

AGES.

—	Under 1 year.	1 to 2	2 to 3	3 to 4	4 to 5	5 to 6	6 to 7	7 to 8	8 to 9	9 to 10	10 to 11	11 to 12	12 to 13	13 to 14	14 to 15	15 to 16	16 and over,	Total.
Neglected ...	143	62	72	82	78	87	70	73	66	52	43	37	19	10	18	9	7	928
Reformatory ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	3	7	11	19	23	65
Total ...	143	62	72	82	78	87	70	73	66	52	43	39	22	17	29	28	30	993

RELIGIONS AND BIRTHPLACES.

—	Number committed	Religions.			Birthplaces.							
		Protestant.	Roman Catholic.	Jewish.	Australasian Colonies.	England.	Scotland.	Ireland.	America.	Germany.	India.	Unknown.
Neglected ...	928	661	265	2	917	...	...	4	...	4	1	2
Reformatory ...	65	46	19	...	61	1	2	...	1	...	...	...
Total ...	993	707	284	2	978	1	2	4	1	4	1	2

PARENTAGE OF CHILDREN COMMITTED TO THE CARE OF THE DEPARTMENT IN 1899.

Particulars supplied with Order of Committal.	Neglected.	Reformatory.	Total.
Parents dead ...	22	5	27
" unknown ...	17	1	18
" deserted ...	17	...	17
" drunkards ...	5	1	6
" in gaol ...	1	...	1
" poor, but of good character ...	37	16	53
" " " bad " ...	4	1	5
Father dead; Mother poor, but of good character ...	301	9	310
" " in hospital ...	3	...	3
" " deserted ...	8	...	8
" " in gaol ...	6	2	8
" " in lunatic asylum ...	1	...	1
" " a drunkard ...	12	1	13
" " of bad character ...	1	2	3
" " immoral ...	4	...	4
" " an imbecile ...	2	...	2
Father poor; Mother a drunkard ...	5	3	8
" " of doubtful character ...	3	...	3
" " dead ...	24	4	28
" " in hospital ...	8	...	8
" " an imbecile ...	4	...	4
" " in gaol ...	8	...	8
" " in lunatic asylum ...	1	...	1
" " deserted ...	8	...	8
Father deserted; Mother poor, but of good character ...	169	2	171
" " an invalid ...	1	...	1
" " in lunatic asylum ...	4	...	4
" " dead ...	22	2	24
" " a cripple ...	3	...	3
" " in hospital ...	8	...	8
" " unknown ...	3	...	3
" " in gaol ...	9	2	11
" " immoral ...	13	...	13
" " a drunkard ...	6	...	6

PARENTAGE OF CHILDREN COMMITTED TO THE CARE OF THE DEPARTMENT IN 1899—*continued.*

Particulars supplied with Order of Committal.	Neglected.	Reformatory.	Total.
Father unknown; Mother poor... ..	9	3	12
" " in hospital	2	...	2
" " deserted	12	3	15
" " in lunatic asylum	5	...	5
" " in gaol	6	...	6
" " immoral	4	...	4
" " an imbecile	3	...	3
" " dead	7	1	8
Father in gaol; Mother dead	13	...	13
" " poor, of good character	28	...	28
" " a drunkard	1	...	1
Father a drunkard; Mother poor	13	4	17
" " deserted	3	...	3
" " immoral	2	...	2
" " dead	15	1	16
" " in lunatic asylum	7	...	7
Father an invalid; Mother an imbecile	4	...	4
" " dead ... ..	...	1	1
" " poor	15	1	16
Father in hospital; Mother poor	10	...	10
" " dead	2	...	2
" " an imbecile	3	...	3
Father in lunatic asylum; Mother poor	12	...	12
" " " " dead	3	...	3
" " " " unknown	1	...	1
Father blind; Mother poor, but of good character	2	...	2
" " in hospital	1	...	1
Father a cripple; Mother in hospital	3	...	3
Father a bad character; Mother in gaol	2	...	2
Total	928	65	993

REPORTS ON SCHOOLS.

RECEIVING DEPÔTS, ROYAL PARK.

I have the honour to submit for your information my report for the year 1899.

During the year the health of the children was very good, the six deaths that occurred being of young children who were in a delicate state of health when received; four of these were in the last stage of marasmus, one suffered from pneumonia, and one from laryngitis.

The conduct of the children has been good, and the boys continue to give satisfaction under the care of Mr. Biddle.

As in former years, I have to return my warmest thanks to the members of the Visiting Committee for their interest in the welfare of the children, and for the pleasure and amusement given at their annual treat; also to the clergymen and other friends who have taken a kindly interest in them.

JANE WILSON, Matron.

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, ABBOTSFORD.

I have the honour to forward my report for the year ended 31st December, 1899.

During the year little of note has occurred to break the ordinary routine of school life, if the visits be excepted of persons of distinction, notably Sir Malcolm and Lady McEacharn, Sir George Turner and Parliamentary party, Mayors and Councillors of Fitzroy, Richmond, and Collingwood, on which occasions the girls were treated to a liberal distribution of sweets, &c.

The general health has been good and conduct on the whole satisfactory.

In conclusion, I beg to offer most sincere thanks to all who have in any way interested themselves on behalf of our little ones.

MARY V. KENNEDY, Provincial Superioress.

GIRLS' TRAINING INSTITUTE.

I have the honour to submit my report of the above institution for the past year.

The health of the inmates has, on the whole, been good; unfortunately, there was one exception which ended fatally; one girl having died on the 20th March, at St. Vincent's Hospital, from appendicitis and peritonitis. This was the first death among our wards for seventeen years; and only the second during the twenty years of the existence of the institution.

We had fourteen cases of influenza in the spring; none were seriously ill, and they soon recovered.

The conduct of the girls has been excellent. I have felt deeply thankful to see the improvement in some cases. The girls are easily managed and have such kind dispositions.

I regret having to report the dishonesty of one girl while at service. We were obliged to send her away, as an example to the others.

Most of the girls are very honest, especially in money matters. I trust them on every possible occasion, and find them very trustworthy. I sometimes wonder at it when remembering their previous surroundings.

The service girls are staying out well, and in most cases are giving satisfaction. I have a large number of applications, and have filled 45 situations during the past year.

Dr. Jeffreys Wood and Dr. Percy Webster are still our honorary doctors, as well as Dr. Constance Stone, who has kindly joined the honorary staff, and Mr. F. Baker is still the honorary dentist. I cannot speak too highly of the kind and prompt attention the girls have received from each under all circumstances.

Mrs. William and the Misses Peterson sent each inmate a beautiful gift at Christmas time in memory of the late Mr. Wm. Peterson, and many friends sent donations in money or kind, which enabled me to give the girls a happy Christmas.

During the year Mrs. Budd has sent us many useful presents for the girls in the shape of garments, which were most acceptable. They were beautifully made by hand by the pupils at the school at Brighton, and certainly do them great credit.

In August last the Committee granted me a month's leave of absence, which I spent in Sydney, visiting the various institutions there, and I gained much useful information. I feel very grateful to the Government officials, who put every facility in my way and enabled me to see so much.

LILIAN M. WATSON, Matron.

ALBION TRAINING SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

Gladly I respond to your request for a report on the progress of the Albion Training School for Girls.

Distinct prosperity has marked the year, and a clear advance has been the order of the day. Many new girls have been received from the Dépôt. Some have been placed out at service. As a sign of the success of these, I might add that we are unable to supply the numerous applications for others like them.

Most closely observant and systematic training has been given to the children in the ordinary branches of school-work, house-work, and plain sewing, the latter including the cutting and making of their own clothing.

But amidst the necessary daily toil and discipline we have still striven to include as much as possible the element of innocent enjoyment, with music and light and merry exercise, having proved we can thus the better prepare them for their full share of future drudgery that lies before them in the battle of life.

The health of the girls has been good, with the exception of a few special cases. Dr. Hamilton has been indefatigable in his kind and constant attention to each little sufferer. Especially I must mention his care of one delicate child, who died during the year. Intensely pathetic was the effect of her suffering and death upon the rest of her comrades and playmates, for the little girl was endeared to them by her sweet spirit; and the effect of her eloquent dying prayers that her poor drunken mother might meet her in Heaven was more powerful than many sermons.

Of the three cripple children one has so far recovered as to be able, at last, to walk about on crutches. The second is also evidently improving.

Several ladies have willingly come forward to assist us, visiting the Home for meetings and services, and helping in other ways.

Almost unbroken peace and contentment reign within the borders of Albion.

CORNELIE BOOTH.

GEELONG BOARDING-OUT DISTRICT.

The Committee for the above district has the honour to forward a brief report of its work during the year just closed.

The lady visitors have, as usual, taken a great interest in the children boarded out, and are well pleased with the care and attention bestowed on them by their foster-parents, between whom and the children there is in almost all cases a strong tie of affection.

Several cases of influenza have occurred, both foster-mothers and children suffering from the visitation, but the medical officers attended promptly and the patients soon rallied.

Applications are numerous, but very few children are being sent down; and as about twenty have gone to service during the year, homes are unsupplied that we should be very glad to see filled. The children are well fed and clothed, and are regular in their attendance at the Sunday and day schools, and at the former several children have been awarded valuable books as prizes. A great trial to the foster-mothers is the habit of untruthfulness which prevails among many of the children, but we hope it will be overcome with careful training.

Some of the foster-parents have expressed great pleasure at having received visits or very kind letters from their former foster-children, who are now free from control and are earning their own living.

The demand for service girls and boys is greater than the supply; we have secured several good homes in country districts where the children are doing well.

Two very delicate infants were brought to Geelong, and but little hope was entertained of their recovery, but with constant attention and unceasing care they soon, with God's blessing, showed signs of improvement. One has been discharged to his mother; the other is still with us, and is in splendid health.

An unusually large number of children has been returned to Melbourne from various causes. Two or three returned on their own account without asking either our advice or assistance.

Eight have received their savings. Two poor boys were drowned, both great favorites and deeply regretted.

Four serious cases of illness were treated at the hospital, but notwithstanding every care and attention, two, a girl and a boy, died; and one poor lad, a former ward of the State, died from consumption at his mother's house.

For the first time the visiting officer has not made the usual annual visit of inspection; doubtless, he will be with us early in 1900.

I cannot close without again thanking all the members of the Committee for their unceasing courtesy and kindness, and we heartily unite in thanking you and all the officers of the Department for kind consideration and prompt attention, which have greatly facilitated our work.

31st December, 1899.

FRANCES DAVISON, Correspondent.

ST. ANN'S REFORMATORY.

I have the honour to submit my report for the past year.

The health of the girls has been very good.

Two girls were sent to the lunatic asylum on the expiration of their terms. They were not mentally fit to look after themselves, and had no friends who could take care of them.

We have still with us three girls who are quite unfit for situations. One suffers from epileptic fits. The girls at service are, generally speaking, doing well.

A Ladies' Visiting Committee has been appointed, and the girls were given the usual Christmas treat, and picnics during the holidays.

Mrs. Rowe's failing health has deprived us of her advice and help in many ways, and this has increased the responsibility of management considerably.

Mrs. Flaxman has worked hard with me all the year; her assistance was invaluable.

MARY S. FARIS, Matron.

GIRLS' REFORMATORY, PAKENHAM.

Excellent progress has been the record of the year at this Home.

Without doubt the principle of a variety of toil, diversified with a fair proportion of amusement and merriment, has wrought well among these inmates. Added to a routine of steady application to work we have insisted on lively games, physical training by drill, club exercises, &c., and we have proved this a strong factor in the good government and prosperity of the Homes; the behaviour of the girls, with here and there a passing exception, being exceedingly good.

Still fewer than ever have been the absconders from the Home, or from situations; and, if one may judge from the letters of their mistresses, most of those who are placed in service are giving good satisfaction.

Gratifying reports have been received from girls on probation, as well as from those whose terms have recently expired. By correspondence and visitation we strive to keep in touch with every one of them after she has left us. Some are earning good wages by knitting, having mastered the machines and the trade whilst in the institution.

Sub-reformatory at Heidelberg.—The sub-reformatory at Heidelberg has been removed to larger quarters at Murrumbena. The building was built for a gentleman's residence, containing about eighteen commodious rooms. We have had it thoroughly renovated and suitably furnished. It is situated in the midst of 14 acres of ground, beautifully laid out, including a fruitful orchard, ferneries, tennis-court, and fish-ponds. Nothing has been spared to make it home-like.

Hard work and prompt routine, with the discipline of daily life, has thus an element of enjoyment added to it, and we believe that with such beautiful and pure surroundings in the spring-time of life we shall be able, by-and-by, to develop many beautiful characters.

The very construction of the house seems calculated the better to enable us to train the girls for service in the family residences of gentlemen.

We have added another industry in the shape of a poultry farm, including incubators. This is always an item of interest to girls.

It is scarcely necessary for me to add that here, as in all our Homes, we strive by bringing each individual new-comer into an all-powerful atmosphere of spiritual influence, to lure them away from the old memories and old associations that have impeded the development of their highest nature.

CORNELIE BOOTH.

Extract from Mrs. Booth's "Heart to Heart" in the War Cry, dated 2nd December, 1899:—

The Murrumbena Home has been opened. The Heidelberg household has been transferred, and girls and officers are delightedly established in their magnificent new abode. Delighted, indeed, they are, and no wonder, for a lovelier spot one could hardly wish to find. At one time a gentleman's residence, the glorious garden has overgrown its bounds, and to-day it is nothing less than an earthly paradise—a vision of beauty and grace.

To the poet or the painter, it would afford food for perpetual meditation and sweet inspiration; as for me, I can but mention it in passing, with its cool stone tanks of water lilies, gleaming with radiant snow amongst the great green leaves, with its fountains, its arbours, its winding walks, its bowers, and groves, with its green swards and waving grasses, its ripening fruits, and its tropical wealth of blossom and bud.

Oh, those red roses of Murrumbena! To the artist how much they represent; but what, oh, what must it mean to the starved soul and dwarfed nature of the girl who first comes straight from the haunts of sin, and finds that this is her home, in the midst of music and love and peace.

As I walked among those lovely roses I recalled how I felt one morning last winter, when, after a long absence, I watched the Commandant resolutely leave me in the earliest morning, to ride off, all sick and weak and faint, through the most dark and dismal downpour of rain, and because he was inclined to think he had found a place at Murrumbena that would be the very thing for the girls' new Home.

Thus it is ever, dear fighting comrades, though we may sow amidst trembling and tears and wintry rains, there will come for some time a reaping in the sunshine for others.

So, after much toil and thinking, of which that winter's morning was but the beginning, the Murrumbena Home this week has been pronounced *un fait accompli*. In addition to all other attractions, within and without, we have added a poultry yard, where, amongst the motherly hens with their pretty broods, the girls may employ their play-time, and turn their leisure hours to practical profit, as well as in the discipline of the busy work-time, for we are resolved to train each one until she has become a thoroughly serviceable and domesticated woman.

That each and every new-comer may be truly and savingly converted to God, and well fitted for a life of usefulness and truth and beauty, for this world and the next, is the only point at which we shall rest content.

REFORMATORY SCHOOL, OAKLEIGH.

I have the honour to submit for your information my report for the year ended 31st December, 1899.

The health of the majority of the girls has been excellent, and their conduct for the most part satisfactory.

The girls at service and on probation are doing well. The year has been made bright by the kindness of many friends, who have given several concerts, two picnics, a dramatic performance, and a shadow pantomime. We are indebted to Mr. G. H. Bennett, M.L.A., for a very pleasant afternoon amusement—the grammophone, which entertainment the girls thoroughly enjoyed, and also for supplying cordials for the annual picnic.

A special word of thanks is due to many others who contributed biscuits, sweets, &c.

MARY F. CORBETT.

The following is a Report of the Visiting Committee:—

We have pleasure in placing on record our satisfaction with the result of our inspection of this institution.

We found the inmates healthy and contented, and the condition of the place and its surroundings reflects much credit upon the good Nuns in charge.

We are glad to hear that there have been no cases of sickness since our last inspection.

N. FITZGERALD.

I can heartily concur in the above observations.

JOHN GAVAN DUFFY.

BOYS' REFORMATORY, BAYSWATER.

I have the honour to report that the past year's work at this institution has, on the whole, been highly satisfactory.

There has been a decided advance in the general conduct of many of the boys under our control, and a far deeper interest in the rural work assigned to them. The result is that in time many of them will become thoroughly practical in every branch of farm work.

We are also very much cheered by the fact that in almost every case of discharge during the year by completion of term or on probation the boys are doing well. Quite a number of old boys visited us during the year, showing that they remembered the many efforts put forth on their behalf. We have also received a number of letters from boys who have left us years ago.

Another distinct advance has been made during the year by Commandant and Mrs. Booth in providing special accommodation for the encouragement of boys who show extra good desire and inclination to erase the past. We are thereby enabled to grade the boys better than ever.

The Commandant has also arranged a number of interesting evenings during the year, with the limelight, cinematographe, &c. Several parties have also been arranged to help them in their games and play.

We have to report that we have had a few cases in which boys have shown very great depravity, and have caused us a good deal of anxious thought. Still we have persevered, and endeavoured to help, and have reason to hope, in many instances, successfully.

Regular religious services have been held. We have had visits from a number of leading citizens of Melbourne, who have expressed themselves as being greatly impressed with the up-to-date equipment for dealing with lads of the class we have here.

JAMES H. BRAY, Superintendent.

EXCELSIOR HOME FOR REFORMATORY BOYS, BRIGHTON.

I have the honour to submit my report for 1899.

The health of the boys has been very good, and the conduct of those at service and on probation has in most cases been excellent.

The enclosed reports from superintendents of schools speak well for their behaviour.

I wish here to sincerely thank Sister Benedict and Father N. Norris for the deep interest they have taken in the boys.

The camp this year was a great success, many of the old boys spent the time with us as a reward for good conduct at service and while on probation.

The demand for boys by our neighbours for day-work is greater than I can supply.

Dr. Praagst has been as kind and prompt in his generous attention as ever.

We have had many visitors from this and other colonies during the year. All seemed pleased with the working of the Home.

We are indebted to many kind friends for increasing the happiness of our boys during the year.

W. GROOM, Superintendent.

"Chelsea," Chelsea-street, Middle Brighton.

Dear Mr. Groom.

Another twelve months have rolled away. It seems a very short time since I wrote you the last letter. As then, I have now, much pleasure in saying that the boys' conduct has continued to be surprisingly good, and it is the more wonderful considering the ordeals through which most of them have passed. Hoping that you may long be spared to continue in this work.

I remain, yours sincerely,

ROBT. STONE, Superintendent, Baptist Sunday School.

St. James' School, Elsternwick,
9th April, 1900.

The boys sent by Mr. Groom to this school give every satisfaction, and are doing very well at their studies.

Sr. M. BENEDICT, Head Teacher.

Elsternwick State School, No. 2870,
2nd April, 1900.

The boys attending the above-named school from Mr. Groom's "Excelsior Home" have been under my close supervision for the past twelve months, and I have much pleasure in stating that their general conduct and attention to their lessons have been quite satisfactory.

WILLIAM P. LE PAGE, Head Teacher.

WANDIN YALLOCK REFORMATORY.

I have the honour to report that the work in this Reformatory (including its two branches "Olinda" and "Hillside") has gone on very satisfactorily for the past year.

The health of the boys has been on the whole good, with the exception of two lads, one of whom is a cripple and the other suffers from chronic heart disease. Here again I must record my sincere thanks to Dr. Syme, who has most cheerfully and willingly treated all who required his attention.

Attention to lessons and general conduct in school have been good; the religious exercises of the boys have received the most earnest consideration of the attendants as well as of the elergymen of the different denominations in the district, to whom I feel very grateful for their kind interest in the religious training of the boys.

I have also much pleasure in testifying to the growing demand in the country for boys from this Home, as the employers find that they have been trained in all the various branches of farm work, dairying, fruit-growing, stock-rearing, &c.

However it is not "all work and no play" here, for besides the ordinary games of cricket, football, and indoor amusements, the different sources of enjoyment among the hills and dales of Wandin Yallock are too numerous to mention.

Each school had its usual camp out on the River Yarra, where the boys thoroughly enjoyed themselves. To this must be added the monthly "go-as-you-please" holiday, which I am happy to say they did not disgrace by any misconduct.

M McASKELL, Superintendent.

KINGSBURY FARM REFORMATORY SCHOOL.

I have the honour to submit my report for the past year.

The health of the boys has been excellent, with the exception of one who broke his arm. This boy was well treated at the Castlemaine Hospital.

The conduct of the whole has been satisfactory, as well of those at service and on probation as of the inmates in the Home, with only one or two exceptions. Six were admitted during the year, and three completed their terms.

I sincerely thank Dr. Eccles for the services which he has so kindly rendered up to the present.

A. BREBNER, Superintendent.

STRAIGHT VIEW FARM REFORMATORY.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ended 31st December, 1899.

The health of the boys has been excellent, both in the Home and at service.

Their conduct has been very good, with the exception of one or two.

Applications for boys have been more plentiful during the past year, and all lads that could be recommended were quickly placed at service.

The boys drive to church, and they have home lessons three nights a week.

P. McMAHON, Superintendent.

BUKAWERT REFORMATORY

This Reformatory was closed on 31st December, 1899.
 On that date there were five boys at service doing well, and two on probation with their parents.
 During the year one was returned to the Depot, and one left his service, and it is believed got away to Tasmania.

I still have the oversight of these boys.
 Their health has been good throughout.

H. B. SADLEIR, Superintendent.

MOUNT PARADISE FARM REFORMATORY.

I have the honour to report on the work of the year 1899.

The boys placed at service are all doing well, as also, with one exception, are those placed at home on probation with their parents.

There has not been any serious sickness in the Home since its establishment.

The boys drive to mass every Sunday, and are visited by the Rev. Father Gleeson once a month to examine them in their catechism, and give them instruction. He takes a great interest in the boys.

They are at present engaged in grading and packing fruit, chaff-cutting, ploughing, &c.

The annual pic-nic and camping out for a week at the Bunyip River this year was a great success, and all enjoyed themselves very much, swimming, fishing, shooting, and cooking the game bagged.

Drill instruction is imparted every Friday evening.

J. J. MILLANE, Superintendent.