

morning are very offensive. The manager wishes to have a closet made outside, connected with the dormitory by a corridor, and I strongly recommend this proposal to your consideration. I also recommend that a play-shed be erected on the open space between the wooden buildings and the kitchen. The stone wall of the enclosure would form one side of the shed, which should be without a floor. At present the play-hours in the evenings and on wet days are spent in the schoolroom, where every noise is an annoyance to the officers in their quarters, and where it is impossible for studious boys to read in peace. I am satisfied that, if there were a shed in which the boys could be at liberty to romp, and where they could exercise themselves in gymnastics, there would be a considerable diminution in the number of petty offences, and, consequently, in the number of punishments. The schoolroom would then be a place of refuge for those boys who take delight in reading. The play-shed and the closet could be built for about £77. A few pounds more would suffice to provide gymnastic apparatus. The sewing-mistress has no fireplace in her private apartment: I think it is only reasonable to recommend the outlay of a few pounds to provide her with a very necessary comfort.

With regard to Captain Breton himself, I wish to say that all I saw of him and of his work produced on my mind an impression thoroughly agreeing with the testimony borne to his character and services by several gentlemen who have had much longer acquaintance with him than I have, and who speak of him as a strictly conscientious and thoroughly honourable man, scrupulous, precise, and zealous in the performance of his duty.

The daily routine of the school was followed in my presence in such a way as to satisfy me that punctuality, order, method, and strict discipline are habitual there.

The food is of the best quality, sufficient in quantity, and well cooked. The clothing is all according to rules, and the rules in this respect are all that could be desired. The industrial training, in addition to instruction in seaman's work, includes the making of all the clothes that the boys wear, gardening, haymaking, milking, and so much of farm work as is involved in raising a crop of potatoes.

Of the nautical instruction I am not qualified to speak. At present it is very much limited by the want of a vessel, the schooner which has been built for the use of the school being in the hands of the builders, with whom there is some dispute, so that the practical work is confined to the use of the boats. The boys receive regular instruction in the names and uses of sails, ropes, &c., illustrated by a model ship, and they are taught splicing, the making of knots, &c.

The arrangements for instruction in the elements of an ordinary education are not satisfactory. The time allowed to each watch is two hours a day, and they have three-quarters of an hour's work together in the evening. The evening work is carried on without slates and school-books, and consists of oral instruction or the reading of some book. I do not think that two hours is sufficient for the regular school work; but it is difficult to see how more time could be given to it consistently with the keeping-up of nautical instruction and gardening. I have two suggestions to make for utilizing the two hours to better advantage. First, although the present master is painstaking and attentive, he has not the technical skill which would render it possible to make the best use of the short school time; and it is desirable to substitute in his place a trained schoolmaster, or a certificated master who has proved himself thoroughly competent. In the second place, instead of attending school by watches, the most forward boys of the port watch might attend school at the same time as the most forward boys of the starboard watch, and all the backward boys might in the same way attend together, so as to secure economical classification for school purposes. As things are now, many boys must go out into the world unable to read with comfort or to write a decent letter. None of the boys now in the school are sufficiently advanced to receive instruction in navigation. Those who leave understand that, if at a future time they require such instruction, they may return to the school and receive it from Captain Breton.

The defaulters' book, which contains a record of all offences and punishments, shows that punishment is very frequent. Looking over the record for the month of July, I found, I think, only one boy who had been not once punished, and several boys had been up for punishment on more than half the mornings of the month. I am afraid that such frequent punishment tends to the increase of offences, that familiarity with the cane breeds contempt of it in many cases, and that some boys who dread punishment have so little hope of escaping it, that they become reckless. It is not inflicted in anger, but in a calm, judicial spirit, at a set time every morning just after prayers. The manager has found that if the right of administering punishment is granted to the officers it is not always judiciously used. He therefore reserves the right to himself, and receives the reports of the officers every morning; and he cannot very well decline to punish a boy who has been reported, unless there is clear evidence of some mistake or serious want of judgment on the part of the officer. I spoke to the officers on this subject, and begged them not to report mere childish offences until, by frequent repetition or by some circumstance attending them, they assumed the character of serious disobedience or insubordination. The officers suggested to me that encouragement to good conduct might be afforded by giving some premium to any boy whose name is not entered at all in the defaulters' book for a set term—say, of one month. But Captain Breton says he has tried encouragement in many ways with very little success, while at the same time he has proved that corporal punishment has a very slight deterrent effect. He is of opinion that the character of the boys as a whole has been injuriously affected by the presence of a few who ought to have been sent to prison, or at least to a reformatory, and that while a practically criminal element is present in the school it is difficult to rule, whether with the aid of few punishments or many. The "black list," which involves an extra share of dirty work and a loss of play-time, appears to be dreaded more than the cane. The cells are only used in extreme cases. The "cat" is not in use. In some cases the whole school has been punished, as, by the stopping of the allowance of butter, sugar, and treacle, and by the closing of the library for a time. It is very satisfactory to know that the boys regard the closing of the library as a punishment; but it appears to me that that very fact shows that such a punishment involves the withdrawal of a very efficacious humanizing influence, and I should fear that any punishment extending to the school as a whole might lead to plotting and to wholesale desertion.

Desertion is not of rare occurrence. Its value as a symptom by which the state of feeling in the school may be estimated is very much reduced by the fact that the situation affords considerable facilities to escape.