

The Borstal system in England is working wonders amongst young men. It received its great impetus from the strong conviction in the minds of those keenly interested in the subject that the old system, whereby lads of sixteen and over had mixed with the ordinary adult prison population, was radically wrong.

The chief features of the system comprise grading, physical drill, trade instruction, religious and moral training, and, most of all, a real effort is made to obtain employment for those leaving the institution, as it has been shown conclusively that over 80 per cent. of those committed were out of work when they got into trouble. And it is generally conceded that all most of the offenders require to learn is that the love of idleness, impatience of discipline, and thriftlessness are the causes of their downfall.

The rules under the Borstal system will be found on page 103 in report of the Commissioner of Prisons herewith.

ELMIRA AND NAPANOCK REFORMATORIES, NEW YORK STATE.

I include with other books the reports for 1907 and 1908. There is much of interest in the progress of these reformatories, as showing the great advance which has been made in treating criminals and the good results derived from the methods there adopted.

The usual systems of grading and treatment of offenders without corporal punishment are here to be noted.

BIELEFELD.

I had heard so much in Germany of the great results achieved by Pastor Von Bodel Schwing and his numerous assistants that I paid a special visit to Bielefeld, near Hanover, having to get a German friend who could speak English to accompany me.

I found the organization of such vast proportions that time did not permit my doing justice to it.

There are about five thousand inmates of the various houses under the control of the institution, of whom a considerable number are epileptics, who come from all parts of the world for the treatment and discipline they may obtain at Bielefeld.

The religious element enters largely into the methods used here, and this, with ample employment of various kinds, combined with the cottage system of close contact with strong minds, appears to be the reason for the great success which is reported to be achieved.

The illustrated pamphlet herewith shows the various buildings and the magnitude of the organization.

JUVENILE SELF-GOVERNING COMMUNITIES.

The institution of the above type which is perhaps best known is the George Junior Republic, situated at Freeville, New York State. I had heard so much of it that I determined to pay it a visit. I first went to Albany to see Mr. Osborne, one of the Governors and a noted philanthropist, and proceeded later to the Republic. I was fortunate in meeting Mr. George, who, feeling now that the parent institution has been thoroughly established and is a proved success, is often away lecturing and generally spreading the self-governing idea. Mr. George is an exceptionally fine character, from whose countenance beams forth goodwill and charity to all, and whom one can easily understand having extraordinary magnetism over his fellow-creatures. He was most kind, and I had a difficulty in condensing into one day all he had to show and tell me.

Mr. George was very anxious that his ideas should be carried out in New Zealand, and kindly offered to fully instruct one or more young men if sent over by the Government.

The following is condensed from an article on the juvenile governing idea generally, by J. F. B. Tirling, and fully bears out my own views on the subject:—

“The greatest of American discoveries is the discovery of the child—in his self-governing capacity. The world has always been familiar with the child’s will and power to govern others, from his mother downward and outward; but this fact, although perennially and progressively in evidence, has not encouraged much expectation of self-government by the tyrants of the nursery or the exacting roysterers of the school.

“Yet it appears from many demonstrations that good citizens may be made out of almost any sane human stuff that competent teachers will take in hand. Failure can no longer be referred to heredity. The latest word of science on this subject seems to be that nature gives the great majority a chance. School Inspector Eichholz declares that 90 per cent. come into the world in normal conditions, in spite of all disadvantages, and become what parents and society make them. Dr. Barnardo’s representatives claim that 98 per cent. of children sent to Canada from the streets or the worst of homes turn out well. Miss Edith Sellers justifies a similar conclusion respecting the children cared for in peasant homes by the municipalities of Berlin and Budapest. This can only mean that the failure of children is much less their own fault than that of society which has neglected them.

“The mere cutting-off of special temptations makes an enormous difference in the amount of juvenile crime.

“The George Junior Republic is the earliest and most noted of the juvenile self-governing communities. A young business man of New York—Mr. William R. George—was an earnest student of social conditions, specially in relation to children. For five years he had taken from 200 to 250 boys and girls every summer to a farm near Ithaca, in New York State. Under the