

the colony. Their limited brain-development is dominated by sexual passion, which in town-life finds relief in the society of young girls of a corresponding type. When deprived of such natural means of satisfying their desires, they resign themselves to self-abuse and even unnatural forms of vice. This destroys their mental equilibrium, and develops incipient insanity. It weakens the will-power; and, while peculiarly obstinate and difficult to move, they cannot initiate any effort of mind or body, or exert themselves to do anything. They are, in fact, quite unable to work continuously, or to concentrate their attention on any one thing. The treatment I recommend consists in—

(1) Discipline: These offenders require constant watching. Their meat is limited to once or twice a week, but they get an abundant variety of other food. When repeated warnings are of no avail, boards covered with a blanket are substituted for the flax mattress in their beds. In very persistent cases, I have long been anxious to use a camisole nightshirt, which only means that the ends of the sleeves are sewn together. Permission has not yet been granted for this necessary measure. Cold baths, either ordinary or shower, are used daily in suitable cases. (2) Training: These unfortunate creatures require treatment as patients afflicted with a chronic debilitating disease even more than as offenders requiring discipline. Although they are physically and mentally unable to join in work and recreation on an equal footing with other boys, their capacities require cultivating with sympathy and perseverance. They are weighed down by apathy and inertia, which they must be encouraged to struggle against. (3) Vasectomy: When these efforts fail, and the steady increase of nervous exhaustion threatens health, reason, or even life with permanent destruction, I recommend vasectomy as a safe, simple, and effective remedy. It not only restores the patient to health, but offers the enormous advantage of protecting society from the propagation of degenerates. Vasectomy consists in the ligature of the seminal ducts. It is a perfectly safe and simple operation, involving neither risk nor pain, nor the removal of any part of the body. It is often performed on elderly men to cure enlargement of the prostate gland, a distressing complaint which occasionally renders life very miserable. The effect of this operation is to cause gradual shrinking and atrophy of the testicles, and to remove sexual desire. It has been performed also for the cure of epilepsy and insanity resulting from masturbation, with the happiest results.

The Attendants: I consider that the attendants are entitled to much credit for the efficient assistance which they render to Mr. Archey in the care of the inmates; but I think it would be a great advantage if the services of some retired and married petty officers of the navy or army could be obtained. Their training would specially adapt them for this work. Such men, living with their wives in cottages at Burnham, should each have about a dozen boys to live with them. This would afford a good method of classification, and provide the required increase of accommodation. The present conditions of life at Burnham do not render the post of attendant such as to attract the best class of applicants. The isolation, the long hours, and the absence of congenial society or recreation, make single men prefer employment in town. It is difficult to find suitable men; and, when obtained, they often get tired of their position, before they have acquired sufficient experience and training to enable them to manage the boys properly. On the other hand, there are many petty officers retired every year from the navy and army in England, to whom the offer of a comfortable cottage and the present salary in force would be very attractive. The wives of such petty officers would introduce a valuable civilising influence in the home training and home-life of the boys.

Alteration of Site: It has always been one of the greatest difficulties, in training the boys to farm work, that the land at Burnham is merely a shingle-bed, covered with 3 in. or 4 in. of soil. Its cultivation is not only difficult, but very unproductive as compared with the labour expended on it. Irrigation would greatly improve it, but the expense of bringing the water to it would be considerable, and the present system of water-races is even now insufficient for watering the stock. It is said that all the asylums are overcrowded, and that extensive accommodation is required to relieve them of old men and harmless chronic cases, which do not need the special treatment of acute cases. It appears to me that the whole establishment at Burnham might be profitably used for the reception of these cases; and that, instead of adding more expensive buildings to the existing asylums, the money might well be used to construct a new boys' reformatory on fertile soil—preferably on an island, if one can be found suitable for this purpose.

The Secretary for Education, Wellington.

W. H. SYMES, M.D.,
Medical Officer.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 29th June, 1903.

Te Oranga Home has only been instituted since July, 1900, a reformatory for the reception of all girls in New Zealand who require such treatment and are committed there until they reach the age of twenty-one or are previously discharged.

There are now about 50 girls on the books of the Home, in addition to 15 discharged. Of these 50 there is only room in the present building for 20, the other 30 being lodged in St. Mary's Home and at Mount Magdala. Of the 15 who have been discharged, 2 have been transferred to the Receiving Home, 1 is dead, 1 has gone to the Refuge, 2 have gone to their friends, 5 are in situations, 1 has gone to St. Mary's, and 3 to Mount Magdala. The last 12 of these are discharged as being over twenty-one, so that the 4 who are in St. Mary's and Mount Magdala are only kept there by persuasion, as there is no power to detain them if unwilling. I think some power should exist to exercise supervision over girls for about five years after they leave the reformatory. The conduct of the seven who have been discharged and returned to their friends or situations has, so far as we know, been fairly good, but our knowledge is very imperfect.

The Home is visited once a week by the Rev. Mr. Inwood, vicar of the parish; twice a week by Mr. Smail, the Bishop's evangelist; occasionally by other ministers, and regularly by the Official Visitors, Mrs. Chrystal, Mrs. Smith, and Mr. Heywood.