

Class I.

In Class I are placed the younger and exceptionally well-conducted boys, whose character and circumstances of committal are very carefully considered. These are kept apart as much as possible from other inmates. They have the advantage of a special recreation-room and playground, and they occupy a separate dormitory. From this class are selected the boys who reside in the two so-called cottage homes in connection with the institution, and who on that account are considered to have greater privileges than the boys actually resident in the institution. I shall have occasion hereafter to refer to these cottage homes at some greater length.

Class II.

In Class II there are those boys who are not fit for Class I, but whose continuance in their class constitutes a sort of period of probation. These boys are kept apart as much as possible from those of Class III, and a portion of the large playground is reserved for them, and they sleep in a separate dormitory.

Class III.

Those boys in Class III are the older, bigger, and more troublesome ones, who by reason of their general conduct and demeanour require firm discipline. They are kept to themselves as much as possible. They can qualify without difficulty for promotion into a higher class.

Class IV. Detention-yard for "incurrigibles." Need for removal of these boys.

Class IV is the detention-yard section, and this contains the most troublesome and dangerous boys in the institution. It is made up generally of absconders from the school who have been guilty of crime, of boys transferred from gaol, of hardened offenders, and defectives of a low type. This detention-yard was established by the Education Department in August, 1903, and was designed to supply what was then considered a crying need. It was a practical admission of a defect in the reformatory system, which herded all sorts of boys together in the one institution, with very little facility for real classification. It was a recognition of the absolute necessity for exceptional treatment of a number of boys who might be termed "incurrigibles," and who were at all times and under all conditions a source of contamination to the other inmates. I am not going to discuss here whether this yard was rightly and wisely established, or whether it has adequately served its purpose. This may be all a matter of opinion, and it is sufficient to state that the yard exists, and is believed to serve a good purpose. It is a piece of ground enclosed by a high fence, with a portion of it covered over as a shed, presumably for use in wet weather. In this enclosure the delinquents do such work as is possible under existing conditions, and they are subjected to, and thoroughly need, very strict discipline. The yard has its special attendant. The boys there are kept apart from the other inmates to a larger extent than the other classes, but they have their meals in the common room, and on occasions work outside with the other boys. The average number of boys in the yard is from ten to twelve, and the period of detention varies from a few hours to as much as seventeen months in the case of one boy. No stronger proof could be adduced of the necessity for improved classification in our reformatory system than the existence of this yard. But the reform must come, not by improved classification within the institution as now existing, but by the entire removal of these and other boys to another institution or institutions, where no opportunity of contamination can possibly exist. I hold very strongly the opinion that so long as certain boys are allowed to remain at Burnham the State is not doing its duty by those other children in the institution, whose care and reform it has undertaken, and whom it is morally bound to do its very best to turn into good and decent citizens. I shall have occasion at a later period of this report to return to this subject.

Classification not maintained.

The attendants throughout the institution are instructed to keep the classes as much apart as possible. This is necessarily very difficult to do during working hours, owing to the nature of the work required to be done by the boys. The classes, as I have already stated, play in separate playgrounds, and are kept as far as possible in separate recreation-rooms. They all, however, have their meals in the same room. On Sundays the three sections, I, II, and III, march together, though nominally in separate sections.

Pocket-money.

A system of pocket-money exists, by which the boys benefit according to their classes. There is considerable inducement offered here to boys to behave themselves, and by promotion to obtain increased benefits in this direction.

(b.) GENERAL TREATMENT OF INMATES.

General treatment good.

The general treatment of the inmates is distinctly good. As the result of a very long and exhaustive inquiry, I consider that it is amply shown that all possible regard has been had to the true interests of the boys, while an honest attempt has been made to enforce such discipline as, being absolutely necessary, it has been possible to carry out under most difficult circumstances.

Punishments. Exceptional case.

Under this heading, of course, has to be considered the question of punishments. A considerable amount of corporal punishment is inflicted at Burnham for all sorts of offences, varying in severity according to the Manager's view of the seriousness of the offence. I hold no brief for or against corporal punishment in industrial schools. Personally I am, as a rule, opposed to corporal punishment; but I fully recognise that a large number of persons, whose opinions are