

HARRIET BELLE PETREMONT examined on oath.

1. *Mr. Russell.*] You are Matron of the Caversham Industrial School?—Yes.
2. How long have you been there?—A year and nine months.
3. How many children are under your charge?—There are about three hundred in the industrial school and thirty-two in residence.
4. I suppose the children you have are of the same class as those mentioned by Miss Jackson?—Yes.
5. What do you do with the children who appear to be incorrigible?—They are generally sent to Mrs. Branting. I have sent three.
6. Prior to your appointment as Matron at Caversham, had you any experience on similar lines?—I had been in children's wards at Home, and had been a nurse about eighteen years. I have done district work in England, and was a jubilee nurse in the slums of Manchester for a long time.
7. Can you give the Commission any information in regard to the question of punishment, corporal or otherwise, in regard to girls?—I agree with all Miss Jackson has said about that. I cannot say any more.
8. You think some form of punishment is necessary, but only to be used as a last resort?—That is all.
9. What do you do with the elder girls of nineteen or twenty?—I have had to strap one not quite eighteen, and I think it did her good. She is now in the school.
10. What was she punished for?—Lying and encouraging men of low character when out at service.
11. How many strokes of the strap did she receive?—Four. That was about nine months ago.
12. Has there been any improvement in her since?—Yes, considerable. I do not let her go out. I know that moral weakness is there still. She is better in other respects, and more truthful than she was. I asked her about three weeks ago whether she thought the punishment I gave her had done her good, and she said "Yes."
13. She did not want any more?—No.
14. *Mr. Salter.*] You knew you had the right to administer twelve strokes?—Yes.
15. Why did you not administer twelve?—I tried four to start with.
16. Then, as a deterrent, you think four equally as good as twelve?—It was in this instance. It just depends. This girl is not as bad as these Mrs. Branting has by any means. If she was she would be with them.
17. Would you consider absconding any worse than offences like lying and encouraging bad characters when out at service?—Yes, I should.

ELIZA BANNERMAN KAYE examined on oath.

1. *Mr. Russell.*] You are the wife of Albert Kaye, merchant, Christchurch?—Yes.
2. And you are an Official Visitor to this Home?—Yes.
3. I think that prior to your official appointment you took a great deal of interest in the Home as a private lady?—Yes, a great deal.
4. And you have been visiting it regularly since when?—July, 1903.
5. Since then, I think, you have made it part of your duty to come here one day in every week?—More often two days, and always, except when I have been away from home on holiday, one day a week.
6. I think you have taken this up as part of your regular duty in helping the girls?—Yes.
7. You get no pay of any kind?—None whatever.
8. You are doing it simply for love of the work?—Yes.
9. Tell us what you do when you come?—When I first came my desire was to have a Bible-class, but Mrs. Branting told me that that work was already undertaken by Mr. Smail and Mr. Inwood, and she was a little afraid the girls might think they were getting too much on the religious side if there were three Bible-classes. So I just came down with a young friend, and gave them a little music, and generally got up a lecturette to amuse them and give them a subject for conversation. Recently I have been holding a Bible-class one week and a music-lesson the next week.
10. Have you found the girls pay very great attention and take a great interest in your subjects?—Yes; they always greet me warmly when I come.
11. Do you make any distinction between the Roman Catholic and Protestant girls?—I do not take the former at my Bible-class, but on singing nights I make no distinction whatever.
12. Do you find they like the singing-lessons and join in?—There is no doubt about it.
13. Have these girls, if they choose, an opportunity of conversing with you quietly and privately on any matter?—They have had a great many opportunities. For instance, they have had opportunities on play nights, when we have been playing guessing games and several of us have gone out of the room. I have stood in the dark passage with the children holding my hand and whispering and talking to me. One told me quite a long story as to how she had seen me before. On the same play nights I have taken charge of the service girls who were returning home, and have waited with them in the Square to see them into their different trams. On these occasions they have talked freely to me about the Home, and in every case I have heard the warmest expressions about the Home.
14. Then, the suggestions that the girls either have had no opportunity or have been frightened to speak to the Lady Visitors rest upon no foundation of fact?—I should think it ridiculous.
15. You are satisfied that if the girls had any complaints they had plenty of opportunities to speak to you?—I am perfectly satisfied, and I am perfectly certain that they are so far friendly with me that they would tell me if anything was wrong.