

85. This girl also complains of the food. Is that a general complaint in the Home?—I have not heard it except on one occasion, and then I think it was a new staff, who was not quite up to her work, and that day dinner was decidedly short; but I did not think it would hurt the girls to go short for one meal; they had plenty to eat at the other two. That was only on one occasion, but I heard of it for a week afterwards.

86. This girl also said she had to scrub upstairs in the winter-time without boots and stockings and with cold water?—I never heard of it. They scrub without boots, because otherwise they get their stockings wet, and have cold feet all day. I thought it better they should be without their boots and stockings for the ten minutes they were scrubbing, so that they might have them warm and comfortable for the rest of the day.

87. Have any of the girls ever complained to you that Miss Mills was unduly hard upon them?—Sometimes.

88. Have you noticed that Miss Mills is hard on them?—I think her bark is worse than her bite.

89. Is she kind to the girls, as a rule?—I think she is very good-natured with them.

90. Have you ever seen anything at all which would justify any complaint by a girl that Miss Mills pressed them hardly?—No, except that she is rather sharp with them sometimes; but they are very aggravating at times.

91. With regard to the complaint that you boxed D—— D——'s ears one day?—I think Miss Simpson and Miss Dean were both present, and they said I did not do it.

92. Did you?—No, I did not box her ears on that occasion.

93. Have you on any occasion since you have been here made it a practice on your part to hit girls upon the ears?—It is not my practice, but I would not say I have never done it.

94. Can you remember any instance in which you have done it?—No; but still I am quite sure I have done it. I generally give them a good slap on the arms, and generally finish off with a slap on the plait or back of the head. I know it is against the rules, but I have done it.

95. You know striking any one on the ears is liable to cause deafness?—Yes; I would never think of doing it.

96. *The Commissioner.*] Under what circumstances have you done it?—When they have been very impudent.

97. You admit it is against the regulations, and I want to know under what circumstances you do it—at a time when you are extremely angry, or on the spur of the moment?—I think it is because they have been so dreadfully impudent.

98. And suddenly you have been roused to anger?—No; I do not feel any anger against them; I really do not. I feel they have been very naughty girls, giving great impudence, and, instead of looking a bit penitent about it, they have come in with a don't-care look about them. I very seldom feel angry with them.

99. *Mr. Russell.*] Why have you been cutting the lupins down?—In order to give us a better view when the girls abscond, and to prevent the paddocks always being a source of danger to the institution. I got the Department to take the paddock so that we might keep the swaggers out of it, and also make a better place for the cows to feed.

100. With regard to punishment in the cell, there is the case of J—— L——, who says she was left there all day. I believe the office is close by?—Straight opposite.

101. And if a girl were forgotten, could she not attract attention at once by knocking on the door?—Yes.

102. Did you ever hear until the other day of this episode of the girl being put in the cell and forgotten?—I heard that a girl had been forgotten at tea-time, but on no other occasion.

103. Then her evening meal had been missed?—I never heard of the other. Had she been forgotten and had there been no one in the office she had only to rap on the end wall for the kitchen-girls to have heard her.

104. Are you of opinion that the girl's statement is true—that she was there from early morning until late at night without any attention at all?—I do not believe it. I do not think the other girls would allow her to go without food.

105. Would the kitchen-girls have known all about it?—Yes, because it is their business to see that her meals are carried in.

106. Would they have told Miss Simpson they had not taken Julia's food in?—Yes, over and over again.

107. And the girls who sat alongside her at table would know?—It is possible.

108. Do you think one meal might have been missed?—Not one meal without some one seeing the girl had not had her meal.

109. Is it the duty of these girls in the kitchen to see that any one in the cell has their meal?—It may not be their duty, but it is their business.

110. Can you conceive it possible for a girl to be missed by the staff by these four girls and by Miss Simpson?—I do not think it is possible.

111. Did J—— L—— complain to you at the time?—I never heard anything about it until this inquiry.

112. One witness said she was strapped by the Sub-matron instead of by yourself: will you explain how that came about?—I was in bed with influenza.

113. Has Miss Hunt on any occasion ever administered that punishment when you have been in the Home?—Yes.

114. Except under your direction?—Never.

115. When you are away from the Home is Miss Hunt in charge?—Miss Harrison has been.

116. The girls say occasionally that you take the side of the staff, and never listen to them: is there any truth in that?—I never allowed the girls to think I put them before the staff so far as authority is concerned.