

212. Did you do what you could for her?—Yes; what I would do for anybody else.

213. Have you had influenza here?—Yes; two or three times.

214. And other members of the staff?—Yes.

215. Have they been nursed here?—Yes; and they have always done exactly what I told them to do.

216. Had you any idea that Miss Howden was in a dangerous condition?—No.

217. I think she soon recovered after she got to the Hospital, and then she came back?—Yes.

218. After she came back, did anything occur that made you feel there was something going on in the Home that was not compatible with discipline?—There was a great deal of unrest, both in the first and second classes. The girls were very unmanageable, and I could not understand what was the matter. I could not make out why they were so naughty and so rude and so abominable.

219. What did you do?—I did not do anything.

220. When was it you had reason to believe that the unrest was due to a certain extent to Miss Howden?—One evening when Mrs. Kaye was holding a class here Miss Mills came to me and said she had a dreadful thing to tell me. Miss Mills was rather given to exaggerating things a little, and I rather laughed at her. She said she had something this time, and she told me Miss Howden was trying to tamper with the girls. I asked her how she knew it, and she said H—— M—— told her. She said that two or three of the girls were talking in the passage, and somebody said, "Shall we tell Miss Mills?" and the other girls said, "Oh, great big mouth, do not tell." Miss Mills said, "Come to my room if you have anything to say." She had no idea what she was going to hear. She thought it was something about running away. Then H—— told her Miss Howden had told her my name was going to be "Walker," because of something in the paper about cutting off her hair. I forget what else she said. Altogether, I thought it was a most extraordinary remark for an attendant to make. If the girls had said it I should simply have taken no notice of it, but I thought it was dreadful that one of the attendants should talk on these lines and say it was "hellish" to be here.

221. Did you have the girls brought in before you?—No; I waited until Mrs. Kaye came out from her class. I always saw her to the tram, and I told her going along the road what Miss Mills had told me. She said, "I shall go back with you; this is serious." We went back, and she asked me where was the best place to talk the matter over without the girls hearing. I said I did not know where we would be free from interruption except in the schoolroom, and we went there. I fetched in Miss Mills and Miss Hunt, and Mrs. Kaye then suggested the girls' statements should be taken in writing in her presence. So I sent Miss Hunt to the office for paper and ink, and H—— M—— was, I think, the first girl fetched downstairs. All the girls slept in different dormitories, so there could be no talking to each other on the subject. H—— came down, and made the statement which was handed in.

222. Did that girl know before she came into the room what she had been sent for?—No; she was in bed.

223. Did she make these statements voluntarily or were they put to her?—Mrs. Kaye warned her she must speak nothing but the truth, and that she was not called upon to make any statement about Miss Howden if she did not wish to, but that as she had made it to Miss Mills she would like the girl to repeat it. I took it down, and H—— signed it, and Mrs. Kaye signed it.

224. Was the same procedure adopted in regard to the two other girls?—Yes.

225. Did any one girl have an opportunity to tell another one what was going to be asked her?—No, because they were in separate dormitories.

226. As soon as a girl made her statement, was she sent back to bed?—No; she sat down in the room.

227. There was no speaking by one girl to another before making a statement?—No.

228. Then, these statements were made independently by the girls?—Yes.

229. Was one girl's statement shown to another?—No.

230. When did Miss Howden know about it?—The girls told Miss Howden about it, and she came to me the next morning.

231. What did Miss Howden say?—I showed her the statements, and she denied them. I asked her if she was prepared to put her name to these, and she said "Yes," and she wrote across them, "I absolutely deny these charges." I should like to say, in connection with this matter, that Miss Howden thought it was impossible these girls could have made these statements, so I sent Miss Hunt to fetch the three girls in. They came in, and all three, in the presence of Miss Hunt and myself, told Miss Howden she was a liar, and Miss Howden told them they were. Altogether it was a most disagreeable scene, and we sent the girls out of the room, as nothing more could be done.

232. When did you first know that the two other girls were prepared to say that similar statements had been made to them?—After Miss Howden left.

233. Then I think you sent these letters to the Department, with the letter that was read the other day?—Mr. Pope came down on the 30th December. I told Miss Howden previous to that I should keep an open mind on the subject—that I knew the girls were most untruthful, but that I had never known them to go against their own interests.

234. In what way were they going against their own interests?—Miss Howden was very good to them. When she went out she always brought them in lollies and fruit and gave them things. She took a good few of them out to afternoon tea, with my permission, and so on. When Mr. Pope came down I showed him these letters, and said, "I do not know whether you think there is anything in them, but will you kindly look over them." He told me he had no hesitation in saying these statements should go to Wellington at once.

235. In your letter you warned the Department the girls were untruthful?—Yes.