

More inspection than that would be surely unnecessary and unwise. Of course, the inspection of the homes must be thorough until one really knows the foster-parents. I do not find that they object to this inspection. I believe that one great advantage of the boarding-out system is that in a foster-home children learn to be far more independent than they could in an institution where they would know that everything was provided for them. I am certain that in many of our homes the boys and girls never realise that they are paid for. They obey "father" and "mother," and are proud of "our place" and "our horses, dogs, and cows," just as the sons and daughters of the family are.

In considering where to board a child I always think of the home that the child was born into. If the parents had acted rightly or been more fortunate, its circumstances would have been such-and-such. I try to find a home corresponding to such circumstances, then I feel that the child is getting something of the chance that was its birthright. If it has that, and a good foster mother and father, the less it is inspected the better.

The reports from school-teachers who see the children daily are very valuable. If the report shows poor attendance, the certainty of inquiries from the Department, and, worse still, the Truant Officer, make the Manager's remarks to the foster-parents pretty decided if the absence has been caused by "Ethel" or "Stanley" being "kept at home to help."

The work done by the Local Visitors deserves warm thanks from the Department. Many of them are busy women, and still, year after year, without remuneration, they every month visit a number of homes, report about the children, and take a most kindly interest in them. The children are generally very fond of the Local Visitor, whom they look upon as a friend calling to see them; they have no idea that their home is being inspected.

(d.) I firmly believe that environment is stronger than heredity. If the children are removed from depraved parents while young and reared in good homes, they as a rule turn out well. I think the magnificent work of the Barnardo, Quarrier, and Müller Homes has proved this. Surely the success that has attended our New Zealand boarding-out system shows that the homes in which our children have been placed have not suffered by receiving them. While the children are carefully watched, and removed if they show that they would contaminate others, I think the danger from this source is small, and as I go round I often hear of homes where I could not place our children because the children belonging to these homes would be a source of danger to my charges.

(e.) Here we have to remember that, after all, Nature is the great mother. Our children are generally placed in country homes, where the average foster-mother may not know much of scientific methods; but when she is aided in her care of such children by fresh air and sunshine, the wide space and peace of the country, her charges generally do pretty well. She may often need the advice and guidance of the children's guardian, and she can always have that. Letters stating that an anxious foster-mother wants to "see you about Tom" or wants you to "come and speak to her about Gladys," and so on, may not be welcome, as they frequently entail a long journey into the country, but I do not think they go unheeded by the Manager.

I have one child under my care, certainly of depraved parentage, who was puny, bad-tempered and extraordinarily irritable and nervous, boarded away in the country with a woman who is too simple to know anything of "scientific methods" or "hereditary taint," but under her care the child has grown into a rosy happy little maiden. It is a usually accepted idea that the industrial-school children all come of depraved parents and are suffering from hereditary taint: as a matter of fact it is not so. On the other hand, many children morally and physically tainted are to be found in the wealthiest homes in the Empire, and the boarding-schools and colleges are open to them; I think they do quite as much harm as our industrial-school children, but there is no outcry against them.

(a.) *Suitable Homes.*—The cottage home has, in my opinion, no advantage over a good foster-home. While the good woman at the head of it, who mothers the children, remains at her post, well and good; but when she leaves, twenty or thirty children are orphans, and have to learn to love a new mother, in this way breaking one of the strongest influences in moulding the children's characters, and loosening the bond that would have been the best help in holding them from wrongdoing in the years to come. What cottage home is so fortunate as to keep its Matron for even fifteen years?

(b.) I think the classification carried out by the Department, with its homes and residential institutions, is sufficient. No doubt the question will receive more and more attention in these institutions, but I cannot see why it should be considered in reference to doing away with the boarding-out system as being the best way of dealing with the better class of industrial-school children.

(c.) I always feel intensely sorry for the children I see in the cottage homes, however happy the little ones look. I think of what they will feel as they grow older, under the inspection that is considered necessary.

(d.) I suppose by this is meant keeping children of low type from mixing with others. The need of this is not overlooked as the boarding-out system is at present conducted; but I think there ought to be a Home for girls, such as the Otekaiki Home for boys, where weak-minded and defective girls need not be boarded out at all, and no doubt they do better under the care of trained workers.

(e.) When I think of all the Home babies and little toddling children, I do not want to get for them "scientific training and education"; I just want to find mothers for them. The institution of the family is divine; in family life and home love is developed the best character. If the children committed to the State have lost their natural parents, I am sure that the best the State can do for them is to find good foster-parents. As the children grow older the State schools supply the necessary "scientific training and education."

Of course, mistakes are made in some of the homes chosen, caused by an error of judgment or too hasty work on the part of the Manager. As time goes on, the children are moved from such a home. I also find that the children have to be moved even from a good woman, because the foster-parent has not taken to them, or because she is too gentle to manage an unruly boy; but in the end they