

The following is an extract from a book written by Sir John E. Gorst, entitled 'The Children of the Nation':—

"The most natural and ideal method of dealing with a deserted and homeless child is to place it in a real home where it can enjoy the love and affection of foster-parents. The home life draws out the child's individual character instead of suppressing it as institution life does. It grows up with other children, learns with them, plays with them, gets into childish scrapes, and loses that sense of separation and strangeness of position which in the rearing of children is above all things to be avoided . . . Children boarded out in private families become absorbed in the general life of the village in which they are placed, and thus escape the evils inseparable from the dreary routine of an institution. . . Dr. Barnardo found the health of the children whom he boarded out very much higher than that of the children in his institutions, and on this and other accounts he ended by almost entirely abandoning the latter system for the former. . . Dr. Barnardo, who began by trying large institutions and afterwards village communities, adopted boarding out, twenty years before his death, as superior to both. He told the Committee on Poor-law children that he would not create another large institution under any circumstances, and that although he had had many opportunities of adding to his institutions he had declined to do so, 'because boarding out is so much better.' "

Industrial Training.

The importance of the work of training and moulding into useful citizens these delinquent and vagrant children, who if left to their own devices would probably become a permanent burden on society, cannot be too strongly emphasized, particularly at a time when the services of every available person are an asset to the country. Some hundreds of boys during the past year have been turned out from the various schools as competent workers and are now either filling the places of those who have gone to fight for the Empire or are already soldiers themselves. Several have won distinctions on the field, and a considerable proportion of those who have enlisted are now holding commissioned rank. It is impossible at the present time to estimate the number of these lads who have joined the Forces since the commencement of hostilities. From information received from time to time it is evident that they make excellent soldiers. Almost every casualty list issued contains the names of some of these young men both past and present inmates of schools who have either been wounded or have made the supreme sacrifice.

Boys and Girls placed in Situations or Occupations.

Particular care is now taken in the placing of boys and girls in situations or occupations for which they have special aptitude, and every precaution is taken to ensure that they are not exploited in the matter of wages or working-conditions generally. The question of wages has received particular attention during the past year, with the result that there has been an appreciable increase all round. The wages now received by these young people correspond very nearly with the ruling rates. The girls in situations and the children boarded out are visited regularly by the lady Managers of the industrial schools and receiving-homes concerned, and also by the lady Visiting Officer, who is the revising officer for the Department and altogether independent of the Managers. All boys placed in situations, apprenticed to trades, or on probation with friends are supervised and visited frequently by the Probation Officers, and also by the male Visiting Officer, who acts as revising officer for the Department.

Admissions during the Year and the Reasons for Admission.

During the year 331 children were committed to industrial schools, and an analysis of the state of these children prior to admission shows that 82 were destitute, 9 vagrants, 17 residing in disreputable surroundings, 112 not under proper control, and 92 either accused or guilty of punishable offences. Of these 331, only 94 were actually in residence at industrial schools at the end of the year, so that