

The boarding-out system aims at placing the dependent or neglected child in the natural surroundings of a good country home where such child will grow up with his foster brothers and sisters and become one of the family. He attends the local public school and the Sunday School, associates with children outside his foster-home, and in short becomes an ordinary member of the local community. When the time comes for him to make a start in life for himself he possesses the ordinary child's knowledge of the world, and in addition has the guidance and affection of his foster-parents in all his efforts.

To the child who has been reared in an institution no such advantages can be given, and when that child is placed out, as he invariably must be on reaching the wage-earning age, he suddenly finds himself, with character wholly unformed, placed in a new world and among strange people. Only those who have come in close contact with the institution-bred child can realize the tremendous handicap with which he begins life in the outside world. It is not possible, however, to board out all children who are committed to the care of the State. The institution occupies a valuable and a necessary place in this work, provided that it is properly equipped and managed. Children of vicious habits or who for various causes are unfit to associate with ordinary children must of necessity be admitted and detained in institutions for a certain period for purposes of observation and for preliminary training in discipline and correct habits. There is no doubt, however, that the normal healthy child who is committed to the care of the State on account of destitution, or on account of the character of the parents, is better provided for by boarding out in a selected foster-home under strict supervision. This system forms the closest approximation to the normal home life of which these children have either been deprived or have never had.

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.