

It is most satisfactory to note a distinct improvement as regards the conduct of the girls: only two attempted to escape this year, as against ten in 1927, these two being captured quite near to the institution. One of the escapees was mentally deficient, and has since been transferred to the mental hospital. Only ten inmates had to be brought before the Visiting Committee this year, while eighteen had to be thus dealt with in 1927; and, speaking generally, the atmosphere of the institution has been less agitated emotionally, although one cannot expect perfect contentment among those who are deprived of their personal liberty, even though it be for their own good.

Some changes have been made in our industries during the year. Owing to the completion of the new building at Mount Crawford that prison is now able to do its own laundry-work and mending, thus enabling us to undertake laundry-work of a more delicate nature, which is better suited to girls' capacity and gives more training in skilled ironing. The laundry and repair work for the Defence Department, and the laundry-work for the Department of Internal Affairs and the Government Printing Office are still carried on. Another change is that Wellington Prison has been able to take over the dairy, as it was found that girls from here never took up this line of work after their release, and it was felt that it would be better to concentrate upon occupations which would provide more useful training for their future. We still have the garden, which provides practically all the vegetables required for the institution; the work here is invaluable for certain temperaments, and also for those whose physical health requires an open-air life for a time. Mrs. Coventry continues her weekly knitting class, so that every girl is taught that useful occupation.

School, drill, and games have been carried on as before, and it is noticeable that, while the zeal shown by the girls in these directions does not seem to be very keen, if there is any short lapse owing to teachers' holidays many longings are expressed for them to begin again. Fergusson House are the present holders of the inter-house games shield presented by Her Excellency, and we hope to have another competition for it shortly. An innovation with respect to the outdoor games has been made this year, as members of Victoria College have come out on three occasions to play matches; on two occasions games of basketball were played, and on the third tennis was the game; and, while we were never able to defeat our visitors, we put up quite a good fight each time, and the afternoons were thoroughly enjoyed by all. We hope that our kind visitors will find it possible to repeat their visits next year.

Our thanks are due to those who have come out so regularly on Sundays in order that services of the different denominations might be held for the inmates; owing to their visits there are few here who do not get the opportunity of attending the service of their own denomination at least once a month. In connection with our Church services I should like to express our deep gratitude to an anonymous benefactor who painted and presented to us a most beautiful picture of the Good Shepherd for our chapel. By the kind help of other friends I was able to get suitable curtains, &c., to form a background for it at the east end, and at Easter friends in Christchurch sent us a lovely cross, candlesticks, and vases in brass, which had been especially designed and made to harmonize with the picture. I still have in hand some donations from generous oversea visitors with which I am hoping to get more pictures for the other walls as soon as I can find something which will blend with the spirit of reverent beauty already established.

The lighter side of life has not been overlooked by our kind friends and visitors; we have had many entertainments arranged for us on Thursday evenings by the ladies of the Borstal Association, who have undertaken to provide recreation for that evening every week. This is a big undertaking, and I should like to express my deep appreciation of all they have done. In addition to the musical programmes arranged, fancy work has been brought out and new stitches taught to the girls, and I would particularly thank Mrs. Freida Shaw for the many evenings she has given us, spent in health talks, physical culture exercises (which have been practised afterwards with much zest), and singing.

Once again we have not been forgotten by kind friends at the festival seasons. At Christmas the J.P.'s Association provided their usual sumptuous tea, preceded by an entertainment, and accompanied by gifts to both staff and inmates. A little later Mrs. Glover and other officers of the Salvation Army gave their annual tea to both staff and inmates, followed by an evening of games and music for the girls. At the New Year Mrs. Pearson, on behalf of Mrs. Sprott, arranged the party given us each year by the girls' and women's organizations of the Church of England, and our girls had another very happy afternoon. And at Easter the ladies of the Borstal Association gave us yet another tea-party, followed by an evening entertainment, having previously given each girl a Christmas gift.

That most important part of the work which lies in the after-care and supervision of the girls on their return to the outside world has again been undertaken by the Borstal Association, under the Presidency of Her Excellency the Lady Alice Fergusson. The first few months of freedom are always a very difficult time, and our thanks are due to all who give so much time and thought to this work. Her Excellency has further shown her interest in our work by again visiting the institution, when the girls had the honour of presenting some items which they had got up entirely among themselves. We were further honoured by receiving from Her Excellency on Christmas afternoon a signed portrait of herself; the girls' pride and pleasure when the parcel was opened and the portrait hung in their dining-room was very great.

I should like to thank most heartily Messrs. Pinny for their generous gift of a gramophone; also those whose donations enabled Mr. Wood to put up our splendid wireless outfit; and the many kind friends who have sent us books, records, &c., throughout the year, thus adding so greatly to our pleasures.

The Borstal Committee, with Mr. I. Salek in the chair, has met regularly, and after dealing with any necessary business the members have regularly visited the institution and talked to the girls at their various occupations, thus bringing in a link with the outside world which is very helpful.

In conclusion I must express my thanks to the staff for their help throughout the year. The strain is very great of controlling and teaching these girls, who are at the most difficult stage of physical and emotional development, and all my officers have responded well to the demands made upon them.