

QUEEN'S ORPHANAGE HOBART TOWN 1828 - 1879

by Joyce Purtscher

The first reference to an orphanage in Hobart Town was Bligh's observations when he was in VDL in 1809 – 1810. He was very critical of the Hobart Town buildings and administration by Governor Collins and wrote to Castlereagh – *Mr Collins is also called 'Superintendent of Public Works', but except Government House, which is a miserable specimen of his art, here is nothing done but a Shell of a Building called an Orphan School, alternately used for the Shelter of Cattle and Men'*. How long this orphanage lasted, or who was in charge or who the orphans were is so far unknown to me. ⁽¹⁾

By 1825 Governor Arthur saw the need for a purpose-built asylum in which to house, feed and educate the many destitute children. In a letter to the Rev H R Robinson, New Norfolk, 1825, he proposed the asylum should be a *school of industry, where labor as well as learning is taught...the Colony is overrun with illegitimate children... born to no certain provision of inheritance but the vices of their parents and their consequent misery.* ⁽²⁾

In 1827 Governor Arthur sent circulars to several clergymen and magistrates requesting them to furnish a statement of the children within their respective districts, who would be proper objects for the care of the projected institution. About 400 children were found to be of need but only 50 were admitted in the first intake. ⁽³⁾

Those to be admitted were under four classes:

1. those entirely destitute.
2. those with at least one parent dead
3. those whose parents were totally incompetent to afford them means of education
4. children of NSW Veteran Company, or children of parents who could afford to pay moderate maintenance ⁽⁴⁾

By the mid-1840s the orphanage became so crowded that the only children admitted were children of convicts arriving in convict ships and children with both parents dead or in prison.

In 1828 the first intake of boys were housed in a disused distillery at New Town ⁽⁵⁾ and the girls at *Belle Vue*, a stately mansion in Davey St.

John Lee Archer designed and built the new orphanage at New Town. It was designed to house 300, but in 1844 there were 513 children in residence. The bricks came from Port Arthur and some timber from Mt Wellington. A feature of the orphanage was the parish church of St John, which was placed between the girls' and boys' buildings. Like the convict system, large doses of religion were handed out. The orphanage was under the management of the Convict Department and was managed like a prison, with walls surrounding it and discipline to match.

The 1830s saw many of the staff dismissed for misbehaviour, cruelty and stealing provisions to sell for their own gains. The first headmaster, Mr Giblin, meted out such severe punishment as to cause the deaths of two boys, John Burgess and Arthur Dabble. ⁽⁶⁾

A very detailed dispatch by Lieut-Governor Sir W Denison to Earl Grey in 1849 ⁽⁷⁾ draws a moving word-picture of life at the Queen's Orphanage. This report was made after the Inspector of Schools, Mr C Bradbury had made a thorough inspection of every aspect of the orphanage.

This institution contains 466 children, of whom 246 are boys and 220 are girls. Of these, 55 are orphans, or the children of free parents, and 411 the children of convicts. The age of 2 years is the earliest at which they are received, and if not removed by their parents or guardians when 14 years old they become eligible for apprenticeship, the responsibility of certain guardians. At present there are three - the Superintendent of the Schools, the resident minister of the Church of England, and the Roman Catholic Vicar-General. These are parties to the indentures, and to them applications for an apprentice have to be made. The schools are held in extensive buildings erected expressly for them at New Town. The premises consist of two series of school-rooms, dormitories, apartments for the teachers and matrons, and the requisite offices, corresponding with each other, one for the boys, the other for the girls, situated one on either side of the parish church, which forms the middle portion of the front of the general design.

On the boys' side there is a large school of the elder children, containing 151, and one for the younger, in which there are 52.

On the girls' side there are in the upper school 144, in the lower 47, and 64 too young for either of the schools, of whom 38 are boys and 26 girls.

The senior school for boys is conducted by Mr Dickenson as head master, and Mr Quin, as assistant-master. Mr Dickenson is nearly 60 years old. He is a member of the Church of England. He was not educated with a view to becoming a teacher, and never had charge of a school before being appointed to his present situation. He was previously for 12 years a clerk in the Audit Office of the colony, from which he was removed to this school. He has been here 9 years and he has a family of 7 children. His salary is £156 per annum and his wife receives £50 as matron of the boys' side. Private apartments (a parlour, a bedroom opening off the dormitory and two attics) are provided in the building and he receives rations of food and fuel. He has an apprentice from the school, but no other servants.

Mr Quin is about 30 years old. He is a Roman Catholic. He was not educated as a teacher, nor ever acted as one till appointed to this school, where he has been for three years. He was previously a store clerk and is unmarried. He has two private rooms, his bedroom opening from the dormitory of the elder Roman Catholic boys. He has a ration allowed of food and fuel and has the services of a boy after school hours as an attendant. He receives a salary of £35 per annum. Of the boys 73 are Protestant and 78 are Catholics. All Protestants are instructed in the Church of England.

Boys' Side

All the boys are taught in one large room, 50' x 30', lofty and well lighted and ventilated by several side windows. On Wednesday & Saturday afternoons the denominations are separated for religious instruction. The furniture of the room consists of 5 large ill-suited desks of the double kind, not fixed, and placed at different times in various parts of the room. Sufficient forms are arranged in squares along the walls for the several classes, as in the National Schools. There is a small black diagram board, apparently unused, and a few small engravings of natural history and mechanics, hanging round the room.

The playground is of large extent, surrounded by a wall of stone not yet quite completed. It contains no apparatus for gymnastic exercises. The children are divided into 8 classes and are selected from day to day at the discretion of the master. No extra instruction is afforded the boys who act as monitors. The books provided for reading are those numbered 2 to 5 of the series of the Irish National Schools; the latter is beyond the capacities of the children. There is a supply of Mavor's Spelling Book and some lesson sheets for the younger classes. These are all, except books for Religious Instruction. The lessons contained in the secular books are the limit to the instruction and nothing is attempted beyond these. A little knowledge of geography is incidentally acquired, but with reference to grammar, history, and physical subjects, no resources exist, no instruction in them attempted. Drawing is not produced of any kind. Mental arithmetic is not employed, and only three of the most advanced boys can do reduction, the rest only elementary sums can be done. Forms of accounts, or bookkeeping are obviously impossible to them, nor is there one who can write the form of a receipt. For the religious instruction the following provisions are made. From 2 to 3 o'clock on two afternoons a week, the Protestant children are taught by Mr Dickenson, assisted in the lower classes by the monitors, from the Society of Propagation of the Gospel. Liturgy, Scriptures and prayers are committed to memory and heard to repeat it by the master. Occasionally a chapter in the Bible is read, a copy of which and a prayer book are permanently given to each of the children of the three upper classes. From 3 to 4 o'clock the Church of England clergyman holds an examination of these three classes. Every morning service is held in the parish church. At this all the Protestant children are present, excepting a few necessarily absent on household duties. On Wednesdays and Fridays evening service is also performed in the church. The morning service is held immediately after breakfast, at this season (August) at quarter past 8 and the evening service upon the termination of the religious instruction in the schoolroom. Mr Dickenson reads prayers to his children in their dormitory, upon the evenings when there is no service in the church. The children are not taught prayers expressly to be said by themselves in private. On the Sabbath the whole of the Protestant children attend both the morning and evening services in the church. From 10 till 11 o'clock on Sunday mornings they are heard read the Bible, repeat the Collect, &c. by the master before going into church. Their seats are in the gallery, apart from other portions of the congregations, and they are under the surveillance of the master. Their conduct is generally very becoming, as being an attendant at the church, I can testify to.

The Roman Catholic children under the leading of the assistant-master say prayers in their dormitory immediately upon rising in the morning. Prayers of longer duration are afterwards read by him in the school-room, while the Protestant children are in church. Each evening they pass about an hour before going to bed, in their dormitory, in reading and committing to memory religious lessons. On Wednesday and Friday afternoons from 2 to 3 o'clock the assistant-master takes religious instruction until the arrival of the minister (Rev Cotham) in the dining-hall where he instructs and examines until 4 o'clock when they all repair to the dining-hall of the girls' side, which is used as the Roman Catholic place of worship, and contains a recess with folding doors, closed at ordinary times, prepared as an altar. Here evening service is performed to the girls of the church and about 12 of the older nursery children. The younger Roman Catholic

are not specially instructed. One or two boys, however, of their own church are always present in the infant school to assist in teaching them, and one attends and sleeps in their dormitory, where also the Church of England portion of this school is lodged, to hear their prayers morning and evening. On the Sabbath all the Roman Catholic children attend the morning and evening services in the dining-room. These are considered of a public character and are attended by persons not connected with the establishment. The holydays peculiar to the Roman Catholic Church are not observed in the school.

The industrial training is on a very limited scale. The trades taught are only those of the tailor, shoemaker, and baker. The domestic affairs of this side of the establishment are almost exclusively performed by the boys. There are 18 boys in the tailor's shop, 18 in the shoemaker's, 6 with the baker and the other 65 boys have domestic tasks in the dormitories, dining-hall, infant school, hospital, verandas, halls and staircases and water closets. Not one of the boys is employed in farming or gardening, the operations connected with which are all performed by 5 hired labourers under an overseer. The boys in the shoemaker's shop are taught repairs alone, not one can cut out, or is acquainted with the making of a shoe. Shoes are supplied by the Ordnance Storekeeper's Department.

In the tailor's shop the whole of the necessary mending of the clothes of the boys is done, together with that required to the bed-rugs, hammocks etc. Their simple leathern braces and winter caps are here made. The cutting out of the clothes is done almost wholly by the master tradesman in charge of this class. Two or three of the boys are in some degree instructed by him in this. None of the weekday clothes are made by them. They are sent on board the 'Anson' for the work of the convict women. The material is moleskin, and the master tailor says it is too stubborn for the strength of the boys' fingers. The Sunday suits of softer material of coarse blue cloth are, when required, and this is only seldom, made by the boys.

In the baker's department the whole of the bread required for the establishment is made. The jobbing carpentry required from time to time, is done by a person engaged as beadle and carpenter, and there are two boys set apart occasionally to assist him.

The boys rise in the summer at 5 in the morning and in winter at 6, and go to rest at 7 or 8 o'clock in summer and 6 in winter, or rather to their dormitories at this time, for they are mostly occupied till near 8 o'clock committing religious lessons to memory. From 12 till 2 o'clock in the day and from 4 to going to their sleeping rooms, are the times of recreation for those to whom are not allotted domestic work, or not in trade shops. The boys so employed have but little time for amusement, and the little they do obtain is chiefly gained by their inducing other boys to help them to a speedy dispatch of their work. There is no direction or guidance whatever of their amusements. The children ramble about, doing as they please. The assistant-master is generally at hand for the correction of any quarrelling, violence or mischief.

The Queen's birthday is in reality the only observed holiday in the year. Upon this day, if the weather permits, the teachers take the children out of a day's ramble in the neighbouring country. The other usual holidays are devoted to religious instruction and attendance upon services of the churches.

There is no definite system of rewards, but general good conduct is recognized and as far as possible boys distinguishing themselves in this respect, are treated with marked confidence. Some are placed in charge of the boys at one table during meal times, and in this capacity they receive a double allowance of bread. They are distinguished on Sundays by a waistcoat of blue cloth, not part of the ordinary dress, and in any little matters of trust or consequence are selected in preference to others. Four or five times during the last four years, the superintendent has distributed a few prize books, but this is an act of uncertain occurrence and resting solely with his personal feeling. Now and then the Roman Catholic minister gives small rewards to his children.

The punishments employed, are the cane, solitary confinement, and in extreme cases the birch. Few of the latter only have occurred during the last four years. Solitary confinement is inflicted perhaps once in the course of a fortnight; 48 hours have been resorted to as a severe punishment, but the customary time is about two or three hours. The offences, so far as I could ascertain, appear to be those ordinarily incident to large schools. There are none of a flagrant character, but petty stealing, violence, and oppression towards each other, occasional indecent and blasphemous language, are the chief varieties of misconduct. The common faults of the schoolroom are visited with the cane, mostly upon the extended hand and arm. If pilfering at meals occurs, the delinquent has his food distributed amongst the other boys and is placed in a prominent position in the room during the meal. The assistant master stated that he believed the solitary confinement was not dreaded, as the boy would then escape work, which they all appear glad to do. Absconding from the school formerly existed to a serious extent, but cases are now very infrequent, there seeming to be but little disposition amongst the boys to leave the premises, even for a short time.

The visitation to the school is almost wholly limited to that of the two ministers of religion. The Bishop of Tasmania has been once over the building, but the master could not recall the visit of any other clergyman, for years past, nor indeed of any one, until his Excellency's recent personal inspection. The gentry living in the neighbourhood take no practical interest whatever. A visitor's book had once been kept, but the little use existing for it had led to its abandonment.

The infant school of the boys' branch is held in a separate room, under the nominal charge of Mrs Dickenson, assisted by two nurses and three of the boys of the upper school. The instruction, however, I believe to be wholly carried on by one of these boys, who is quite blind, he has acquired some of the infant school exercise, and is the best singer in the school and is about 12 years old. Of the 52 children in this school, about equal parts are Protestants and Roman Catholics. They are taught simultaneously, partly from lesson sheets, but chiefly by oral and singing exercises. There is no apparatus, and no books are used. Mrs Dickenson is not acquainted with discipline of infant schools, nor did she ever have superintendence of a school before her present engagement. The ages of the children are from about 3 to 6. Elementary religious instruction is given by the matron, or one of her assistants on Wednesday & Friday afternoons to the Protestants, while the others go to the dining-hall to join the elder boys under Mr Quin. No prayers are said in the schoolroom, but morning and evening prayers are read by the matron or nurse in the dormitory. The school hours are the same as in the upper school. When the weather is inclement, the children are confined to the schoolroom. The latter is not large enough for so many children. It is

warm and comfortable in winter, but must be oppressive in summer. Meals are taken with the whole school, one low table and forms being appropriated to them.

The boys of the senior school have two suits of moleskin clothes per annum. On Sundays they wear a coarse blue cloth dress; these latter last a long time, as the wearers increase in size they are transferred to smaller children. They have two clean shirts per week, if possible, but frequently one. They have no socks, and shoes are issued to them three times a year.

There is a wash-house set apart for the boys, who daily wash the upper part of their persons. On Saturdays, if the weather admits of it, they are taken to the Derwent (river) through winter and summer, to bathe in the salt water.

There are three meals every day, breakfast, dinner and supper. The whole of the boys take these together. At the first and last meals, tea, with milk and bread are served to all. At dinner soup with vegetables and meat mixed with it, each child having also a large piece of coarse, but sweet wheaten bread. On every occasion grace before and after each meal is said aloud by the whole children.

There are three dormitories, one for Protestant boys, one for Roman Catholics and a third for the infants. The first two contain about 80 hammocks slung in a convenient manner upon a low frame fixed along the sides of the rooms. Each boy has two blankets and a rug, the former are changed weekly. Each of the rooms is lit by a skylight or lantern in the roof. The infant school, children's room, is of ample size and more airy and cheerful than the former, having in addition to a skylight a large window at one end. Wooden frames are here used for the beds and three or four children sleep together. One of the nurses sleeps in the room.

I found the members of the upper classes with reference to secular information very deficient, far below the average of the primary schools I am accustomed to visit. Several can read with tolerable correctness, though with no expression, but they cannot explain the meanings of many of the commonest words, or even spell them correctly. They did not know when capital letters should be used, what paragraphs or sentences were, or the uses of punctuation. It is needless to say they know nothing whatever of grammar. Upon subjects of common and general familiarity in most schools I found them almost without exception ignorant. For example, one of the upper boys was writing a sentence relative to Napoleon, another mentioning Cromwell, yet neither one nor the other, nor any of several boys near them knew anything as to who these men were. One said Napoleon was a great lawyer. Some others did not know what or where Jamaica was. One boy did know it was an island, but could not tell where it was situated. He thought it was in Spain, and said that Spain was in Asia. Another boy knew that Van Diemen's Land was an island, but said it was in the northern part of the world. He did not know the name of the country nearest to it and did not know where NSW was, or Sydney. He had been in the school five years and was 13 years old. None of them could explain the prominent geographical divisions of the earth and did not know what a sphere was, or the equator, or anything relative to latitude and longitude.

The 1st class only are exercised in writing from dictation. I found their spelling very bad, even in the simplest words, and I may here remark that generally the

boys express themselves in vulgarly incorrect language. The writing of the upper boys is cramped and unsatisfactory, nor is this likely to be otherwise while the practice now permitted exists of their standing at the desks to write, no forms being provided. Each boy writes only four lines daily, the book is then taken to the master who makes his comment upon it and the book is put away. There is no superintendence during the time of writing. The junior classes exhibit intelligence superior to the upper classes, but even these are much below the average of ordinary schools. There is nothing attractive, stimulating, or strengthening in the whole routine, and, at the same time, little actual information is given.

The personal appearance of the boys generally indicates hereditary low mental characteristics, with, frequently, physical infirmity. But there are fewer extreme cases than might, have been expected amongst so many children having such an origin. Cutaneous disease, especially of the head, is prevalent in the school, but there is less of this than there was a few months ago. A large number of boys are suffering, and some severely, from chilblains. On one occasion in my presence the master gave an order "Sore hands and feet stand out". This dismembered several classes, particularly of the younger children. There were 36 with deep red hands or limping feet, formed a double line, and were marched out for the purpose of some remedial treatment. On a subsequent occasion I counted 41 responding to this summons.

The schoolroom is very cold in the winter and the absence of a guiding superintendence and tempting apparatus for active amusements in the playground, leads to moping, idle wandering, or trifling exercises. The Roman Catholic minister told me that he found the room in which his children were assembled for his instruction (dining-hall) so cold in winter, that he could not give himself up to his duties there as he would wish, and ought to do. There is but one fireplace in each of these large rooms.

In the personal habits of the boys, I think cleanliness and order might to a much greater intent be enforced. In their dress they are mostly untidy, and in some instances so dirty, that it is unpleasant to stand near them, from the odour arising from their outer clothes. A large proportion I observed were insufficiently provided with shoes, their feet being but little protected by the fragments they wore. Upon one or two wet days I was painfully struck with this deficiency. The toes and heels of some of the children were projecting from the mud evidently within the shoes. This, however, I was informed was about the time of the periodical issue of a new supply.

I observed in the dormitories a large proportion of the hammocks stained, also the floor under them, from the wetting of the children, some evidently of the past night's occurrence. The effluvia from them was offensive, especially towards the ends of the room, where the ventilation is least. The head master stated to me that every effort has been, and still is made, to correct this practice. When clearly the result of reckless dirtiness, punishment with the cane is inflicted. He seemed to think it was not easy to arrive at this fact, as it might frequently be the result of physical weakness.

Tubs are placed at both extremities of the dormitories, behind movable screens, for the accommodation of the children. When the master goes to bed, about 10 o'clock, it is part of his duty to cause every boy to turn out of his hammock and go

to these tubs. The scene he describes as really distressing. The children, nestled in their warm close hammocks, are roused always with difficulty. They got out staggering, and in confusion, and naturally with almost insurmountable reluctance and vexation, chilled and shivering with the cold. Some wake in fright, others think it is morning, the whole presenting a picture that the master stated he always regarded with pain. Notwithstanding this practice, the beds are wetted.

The dormitory of the Roman Catholic children, exhibits fewer traces of the dirty practice referred to. Mr Quin says that the instances of its occurring are exclusively amongst the youngest children. He does not cause the whole of the boys to get up when he goes to bed. There are not more than 16 or 18 so disturbed, including some bigger boys to help the younger ones. The cleansing of the dormitories on the boys' side has to be done by the boys selected for house duties. The disagreeable character of this service, especially with reference to the younger children was much felt by them and regarded with evident aversion. The soiled bedclothes are, if the weather permits, put out to dry, but at other times, Mr Quin stated, the wet blankets are rolled up in the usual way until the evening.

The boys are respectful in their deportment towards their superiors, and appear generally upon terms of mutual good feeling amongst themselves. Their behaviour in the schoolroom and dining-hall is orderly and decorous. I may here remark that at their meals large-sized knives and forks are placed for their use. They seem, however, to be looked upon mostly as unserviceable or unwieldy, and a bad practice of using the fingers and teeth in separating the pieces of meat consequently exists.

Girls' Side

The domestic affairs are under the direction of a matron, Mrs Gazzard who has held the situation for 16 years. She has apartments and fuel and if required the attendance of one of the girls, but no rations and receives a salary of £130 per year. There are 255 children under her care – 144 girls in the upper school, 73 girls and 38 boys in the nursery.

As in the boys' school, this is under the care of two teachers. One is a member of the Church of England and the other of the Church of Rome.

Miss Raven, the first referred to, is chief mistress. Her age is about 30 and she has only been in charge about three months. She was previously 4½ years mistress of a girls' school, of about 70 children in Hobart Town, under the Board of Education. She is unmarried and her salary is £60 per annum, and is supplied with two apartments, coal, but no rations. She has one of the girls to attend upon her if required.

Miss Quin, sister to the assistant-master of the boys' school, is the second mistress and is also about 30 years old. She was early accustomed to tuition, and acted as a teacher in the school in which she was educated. She conducted four different private schools in England, and has been three years in her present situation. Her salary is £60 per annum and she has two private rooms, fuel, and a girl to attend upon her, but no rations. She is obliged to pay the matron's private cook to cook for herself and her brother, who takes his meals with her.

The schoolroom, which corresponds with that for the boys, is furnished in a similar manner. There is a large table for cutting out needlework, and two presses for books. In other respects the room is bare.

There is a large playground, used also as a drying-ground, but without any apparatus for the exercise or amusement of the children.

Miss Raven takes charge of the four upper classes, while Miss Quin teaches the other four.

Miss Raven has discontinued the employment of monitors, finding their services of little value, and that their management of the classes occasioned much noise and confusion in the room. The whole of the children are taught in the same room, and there is no separation of the religious denominations during school hours.

The reading of books, the same as in the boys' school, writing in copy books, and the simple rules of arithmetic are the extent of the instruction afforded. On Saturdays there is no school held, the day being devoted to bathing, in a room appropriated to the washing of the persons of the girls, in cleansing the building, examining the clothes, and changing the bedding.

On Wednesday and Friday mornings the Protestant and Roman Catholic children are separated in classes, in different parts of the same room and heard read and repeat the lessons assigned them. In the afternoons, the Roman Catholics are assembled in the dining-hall and at 2 o'clock their priest attends to instruct the examine them, whilst at the same time, the Protestants are catechised in the schoolroom by the Church of England minister.

The Protestant girls are included with the boys in the monthly examination held publicly in the church. No prayers are said in the school, but, in the dormitories, morning and evening prayers are invariably observed. Morning prayers and the lessons for the day, are read every morning immediately after breakfast, in the church and on Wednesdays and Fridays the full evening service of the church is performed at the close of the school.

Arrangements are made so as to avoid labour upon Sunday. About 12 girls are absent from one service or the other. If not needed in the necessary domestic duties, the children, when not in church are at liberty in the playground. The Roman Catholic girls attend services in the dining-hall.

The industrial employments of the girls consist of the domestic duties of their branch of the establishment, plain needlework, and knitting. 38 are engaged in the former, as assistants to four hired servants and five nurses, as house servants, kitchen maids, laundry maids, attending sick in hospital and attending in the nurseries. These are arranged in parties, so that at least each girl is in school half a day.

The cooking is exclusively upon a large scale, in coppers, such as is necessary for the meals of the whole school. The bread is supplied from the boys' side. They see no cooking suitable for small families, and know nothing of it. They are not allowed to be employed in the preparation of the officers' meals, which takes place in a kitchen appropriated to this purpose, nor are any employed in waiting at table.

The laundry work consists alone of the clothes of the boys and girls. This is done under the direction of a hired laundress and a girl formerly belonging to the school, now engaged at small wages. The washing of the bedding is done at the

Cascade Factory, by the convict women under punishment there. No opportunities exist of the learning the washing and preparation of the finer kinds of clothing. The linen of the officers is prohibited from being attended to in the building. The mangling they learn is necessarily solely that required for their own plain clothes. Upon an average, a girl remains in the laundry about 12 months.

The needlework is confined to the making of their own clothes, and shirts for the boys. All their own is made by them, but occasionally work for the boys is sent on board the 'Anson'. The materials are supplied from England, through the Ordnance Department. Not one can do fine needlework. None are taught to cut out, this being done by the mistress or matron. About 30 can, without assistance, make their own frocks, one of which can be made in an afternoon. They do not make their own bonnets. These, together with the summer hats of the boys, are procured from the labour of the women on board the 'Anson'. Formerly, needlework was taken in from the public, the girls then learned the superior kinds. No dressmaker ever applies for one of the girls in order particularly to the practice of her trade. About 40 can knit, and these prepare the whole of their own socks. The boys wear none.

During the half-year ending June last, the following articles were made – 852 pinafores, 418 frocks, 196 petticoats, 182 shifts, 18 cloth tippets, 4 white tippets, 379 pairs of stockings, 91 sheets and 33 boys' shirts.

There is no reward system, as with the boys.

The offences among the girls are commonly disobedience, insolence, falsehoods, and stealing small things from each other. Generally, the matron states, they are free from any strong tendencies to vice or immorality. It had been some years since it was, she observed. The punishments employed are the cane, solitary confinement, and cutting off the hair. The latter is most dreaded. Solitary confinement is inflicted generally for not more than four hours. On a recent occasion one girl was shut from 1 to about 6 o'clock in the evening. The mistresses have no authority to impose either of the latter punishments. They report offences not of an ordinary character to the matron, she awards the punishments, reporting each case to the superintendent.

Very few persons ever visit the school. The matron observed that no one appeared to take the least interest in it. No ladies ever inspect it. There have been no visits from Protestant clergymen since 1843 when the Bishop visited once. The Roman Catholic Bishop used to visit occasionally before his going to England, and since his recent return he has visited twice. The Sisters of Charity visit every Sunday, and examine the girls as to what they have heard and read, and generally instruct them in their religious duties.

Infant Branch

The teachers of the upper school have no control in this, which is under the management of a young woman, Elizabeth Edwards, formerly one of the girls of the school. There are 47 little girls in it from about 3 to 6 years old. There is no rule as to the age of their leaving for the senior school. They are transferred to it when from new comers, their numbers increase beyond the accommodation of the room, which admits only of about 50 children.

The infant school mode of teaching is employed, with which the teacher has tried to make herself acquainted by reading. She has also some recollection of it as

practised in an English school where she was a pupil for some time. Four of the girls in the upper school assist in this, being relieved alternately by another party of four morning and afternoon – two Protestants and two Romanists. These four also sleep in the dormitory occupied by the children of this school. The mistress receives a salary of £20 a year. She sleeps in the dormitory.

Watts Children's Catechism is taught to all, they daily trained in the singing of hymns and moral songs. They join the bigger children in church services and say prayers night and morning in the dormitory.

The hours of school attendance is the same as the upper school, and they play in the same ground with the other girls.

The clothing of the whole of the girls is neat and clean, each has a clean frock every fortnight, of blue cotton with a small white pattern, one checked and two white pinafores every week. Their shoes appeared in a far better condition than those of the boys. Their hair is cut close behind, but is allowed to grow in front amongst the bigger girls.

The food and the dining room is the same as the boys.

I have reason to believe, that where inquiries, which I could not enter upon, made with reference to the habits of the girls in the dormitories, it would be found that the grossest uncleanness exists amongst them.

The bearing and manners of the girls are in so far satisfactory that they indicate habits of submission, order, and attention in their classes in the school, but there seems to be a want of energy about them, passive rather than active tendencies appear to characterise them. In their personal appearance generally there is a fair promise of intelligence and ordinarily good tendencies. There are few very unfavourable physiognomies amongst them. They have but comparatively little of the scrofulous disease so prevalent with the boys.

Of their school acquirements my account is but little more favourable than of the boys. As a whole they are much below the average of girls in the ordinary day schools of the colony.

The intellectual cultivation of the children, it has been shown, is of the meagrest and most slowly progressing kind, while the industrial training is also limited within the narrowest bounds.

The girls are not taught many essential things they should know in relation to their probable future life. They are not qualified for respectable private service, except merely as nursemaids. Nor are they trained in those duties likely to be required of them as wives in the labouring man's home, or even the judicious provision and preparation of his frugal meals. Of the out-of-door occupations of rural life usually attended to by women, in which many of them may hereafter be called upon to engage, they are altogether ignorant.

The boys, excepting those helping the baker, simply learn a little of two trades, least likely to be of material use to them. Training in the occupations immediately available here, such as farming, gardening, management of cattle, horses, even sheep might be added, and some of the handicraft trades connected with building, for it has been justly said that a farmer will more highly value a husbandman who can weatherboard a barn etc

The lands around the school buildings embrace 170 acres, 4 in garden, 50 under cultivation and 116 as bush or grazing ground, with not one boy employed upon the whole, but instead, 5 hired labourers and a paid overseer.

A difficulty exists in the present junction, in the same individuals of the duties of the schoolroom instruction and the continual superintendence of the children at other times. The present teachers feel the heaviness of the duty so great that they most reluctantly submit to it, and speak, especially the head master, whose health has been seriously affected, of the almost impossibility of bearing up against it. The want of time for relaxation, or private reading, must materially unfit them for bringing to bear upon their school that freshness of mind, and gatherings of new information, likely to invest their teaching with cheerfulness and attraction.

I regretted to find that no measures had ever been taken to obtain information as to the careers of those who after remaining some years in the schools had gone out, as apprentices, into the service of employers. From occasional opportunities that have occurred of hearing of these, it would seem that the boys generally conduct themselves respectably, but with respect to the girls, the long experience of Mrs Gazzard, the matron, gives the result that most of them have fallen into improper courses of life.

Tables of average heights and weights of children at the orphanage compared with children of *respectable parents* and children of the *poorer* class, show that the orphanage children were much shorter and considerably lighter in weight. ⁽⁹⁾

Following that report, Governor Denison made several recommendations. Amongst these was that: -

1. A Normal School be set up on the grounds whereby young men be trained to become schoolteachers at the orphanage. This Normal School should also be a School of Industry where children can be afforded an opportunity to learn skills in occupations that prove of great use after leaving the school. A certain number of students, who have distinguished themselves most, might be taken off annually to this Normal School.
2. An industrial master be appointed to direct the children in gardening, gymnastics, amusements and other sporting activities such as football, cricket, hockey, jumping and running. The person selected for this appointment should be young, active, and intelligent with good temper and kindness of manner.
3. A garden be set up and any surplus vegetables sold to the public with portion of the proceeds given to the children as pocket money and banked for them for when they leave the school. They should be taught to keep the accounts of the receipts and expenditure upon their gardens.
4. A separate building be provided for the infants under 6 years of age.
5. A better system of warming the buildings in winter.
6. A covered outdoor shelter for exercise in rainy weather.
7. Construct in the boys' yard a couple of masts properly rigged, as at the Naval School at Greenwich, where the boys might be taught to know and splice, reef, and handle rigging, so as to qualify themselves to enter on board the vessels of the colony as apprentices, as the shipping is daily increasing, will be likely to provide a profession for several boys annually.

8. Parents of children who are in work should contribute towards their children's upkeep.

Although a new infant school was eventually built and for a time a Normal School was in operation, not much else changed and the institution continued as a place of misery.

After the cessation of transportation, numbers dropped at the orphanage. The boarded-out system of looking after disadvantaged children began and industrial schools for boys (Kennerley Boys' Home) and girls (Girls' Industrial School) was under way in the 1860s. St Joseph's Orphanage also took many girls, so the Queen's Orphanage closed in 1879 and became a charitable institution for paupers.

References

- (1) Commonwealth Historical Records, Series 1 Vol V11 p161
- (2) CSO1/122/3073
- (3) GO 33/1
- (4) CSO1/122/3070
- (5) HTG 29Mar 1828)
- (6) CSO1/2/6633)
- (7) SWD24
- (8) British Parliamentary Papers, Vol 8, Relative to Convict Discipline & Transportation
- (9) Ibid