

FRESH START FOR BAD BOYS

New York Tryine Farming to Cure Juvenile Delinquents.

SCHOOL IN OPERATION NEAR ROCHESTER

Boys Divided Up Into Small Independent Colonies and the Prison Idea is Entirely Eliminated.

ROCHESTER, May 4.—On a 1,600-acre tract of land twelve miles outside of Rochester the state of New York is trying a new plan for dealing with bad boys.

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It is such an institution as is now proposed to take the place of Randall's Island for the offending boys of the eastern end of the state. Realizing that in perhaps a majority of cases the boys themselves are not really to blame for their condition, the object has been to eliminate entirely the prison idea from the school.

The State Industrial school in Rochester was opened to receive boys in 1850. It was known for many years as the Western House of Refuge, but as the nature of its reformatory system was altered, a change in title was also made.

The old school in Rochester occupies a tract of twelve acres, enclosed by a stone wall twenty feet high. That barrier was the limit of vision for any youngster committed to the school.

A military system was in force to develop them physically and teach them obedience, and proper care of themselves and their belongings.

Conditions at New Schools. The conditions at the new school are very different. The site is on the east bank of the river, in the town of Rush, in the fertile valley of the Genesee.

The school is on the cottage plan, the homes of the boys being dotted over the beautiful rolling uplands, and there they are living in all the freedom and enjoyment of country life.

At the city institution all buildings, aggregating about thirteen acres of floor space, were situated within a walled enclosure. At the new institution the buildings for the accommodation of the boys are scattered over the property.

At the city school as many as 250 boys have lived in a building 150 feet long and forty-two feet wide. Their work and recreation have been confined within the limits of a space 200 feet by 600 feet.

The whole tract is divided into farms, each group having its own cottage, which is entirely separate and distinct from every other cottage.

Each farm has its own horse, cattle, sheep, swine and poultry, and already it has been noticed that the care of the stock exercises a beneficial influence upon the character of the boys.

The boys living in one cottage are assigned to shops or squads with the boys of other groups. The same rule is followed in the school work.

Experience has shown that it is unwise to allow the groups to intermingle. At the new school the general plan embraces two distinct sets of colonies, farm and industrial.

The farm colonies are located on either side of the industrial colonies. To each is assigned the cultivation of a farm of at least fifty acres.

Each farm cottage has a barn having accommodations for eight head of cattle, three horses and a dozen sheep and also a henhouse and a pigsty.

Each colony has its own garden, where all kinds of vegetables are produced. When each colony produces its own milk, butter, cheese, beef, pork and mutton, its fruit and garden products, the boys may live on the fat of the land.

This organization tends to develop the idea of colony responsibility and possession and has the effect of arousing and holding the interest of the boys in their homes.

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Lessons in Home Life. Everything is done to cultivate the home atmosphere. The cottages are light and airy, cheerful and homelike.

The dining room adjoins the sitting room. The boys and their supervisor and matron have their meals at the same time, the officers having a separate table.

The individual kitchen gives an opportunity for the matron and boys to exercise ingenuity in cooking the same materials in a variety of ways.

The boys' dormitory is located on the second floor. It consists of one room, in which all twenty-five boys sleep in single beds.

Advantage of Farm Work. One advantage of letting all the boys devote their time to agriculture is that they see the object of each act required of them.

The boy knows why he milks the cow, and he knows that the more carefully he milks her the more milk he will have for himself and his fellows.

The education of the boys is also looked after. The instruction in the common school branches is given by teachers who go to the cottages.

Boys Prefer to Stay. In discussing the matter recently Prof. Franklin H. Briggs, superintendent of the school, said that seventy boys had escaped in the first year, but that all save five had either been re-captured or returned voluntarily.

The most severe punishment that can be inflicted is deprivation of the privilege of visits and correspondence with friends, or participation in games.

The average term of detention at the school is one year, but a few boys succeed in winning their parole in six months.

Some Statistics. Of the 267 who were committed in 1905, 124 were sentenced for stealing, thirty-four for burglary, eleven for disorderly conduct, thirty-two for being unmanageable and thirty-three for vagrancy.

Forty-four of the boys had brothers who had been arrested, fifteen had brothers already in the school.

The board of managers of the school has asked the legislature for an appropriation of \$150,000 for the maintenance of the school for the ensuing year.

OUT OF THE ORDINARY. The emperor of Austria, who makes a hobby of gathering insect cards, has a wonderful collection.

Amos Martin of Newcastle, Pa., discovered the distinction of having lived in three continents, three countries and so on.

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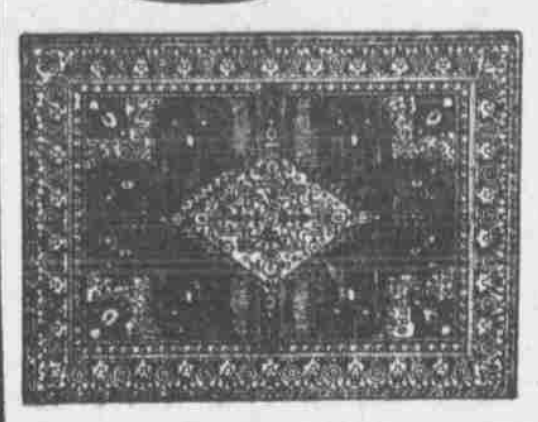
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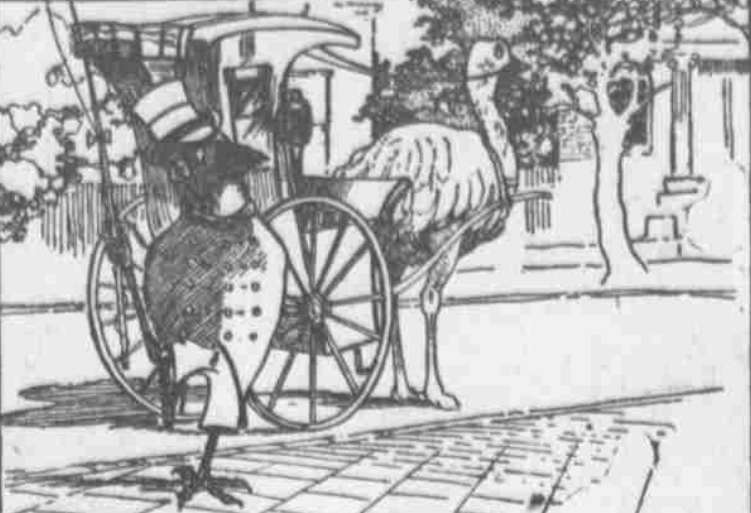
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