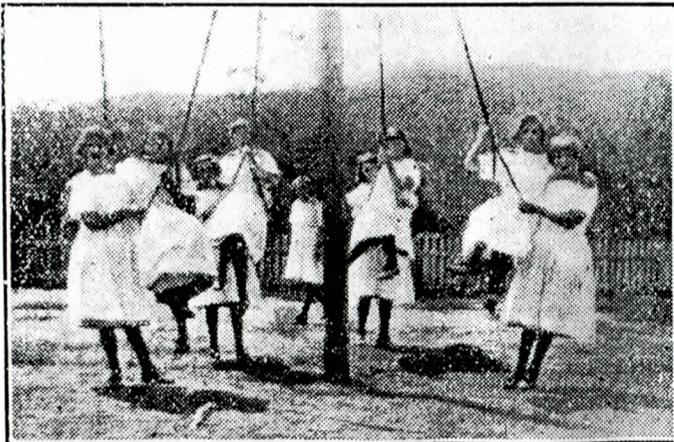


Saving a Nation's Daughters: A Glimpse of the corrective and preventive work carried on by The Army at Seaforth, W. A.

THERE surely cannot be anywhere a more courteous and obliging company of people than The Army's Officers; and of these none are more quick to show kindly consideration than the women who have devoted their lives to the saving of Australia's wayward girls and unhappy women.

A few days ago it was my pleasure to visit The Army's Home for girls at Seaforth, W.A. It is a delightful place. To reach it one boards a motor charabanc in Perth and travels for fourteen miles along an excellent roadway, heading straight for the clear blue hills that never seem more than a few miles distant. When at last The Army's estate comes into view, there meets the eye a cluster of picturesque red-roofed buildings, built mostly bungalow style, and all standing back some hundreds of yards from the roadway.

These buildings are on rising ground at the other side of the tree-lined Canning River. Behind the Homes the ground rises again, and in half a mile merges into the foothills of the Darling Ranges.



THE GIRLS AT PLAY ON THE GIANT-STRIDE

This cluster of buildings forms the Boys' Colony, comprising dormitories, schools, and dining-hall for Reformatory, Probationary and Backward Boys, with a central administrative block, Manager's and other Officers' Quarters, kitchen, bath house, and such like.

Being bound for the Girls' Home, I remained in the charabanc for a further hundred yards or more, till another building came into view much nearer the road, well separated from the Boys' Colony. This was the Home I sought.

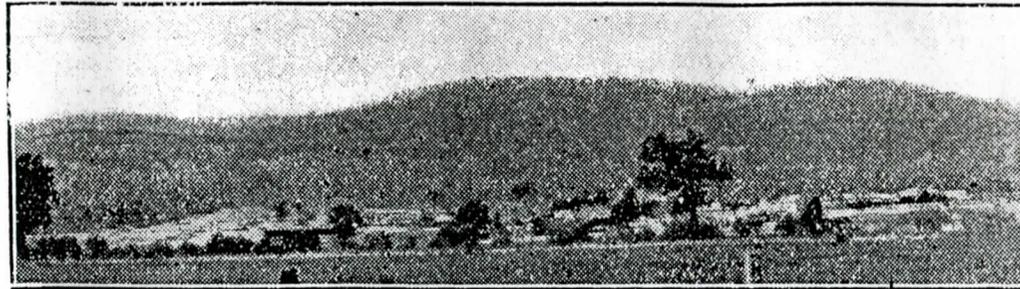
The Matron loves the girls, so when once her first reticence was overcome she could not refrain from telling me a few interesting things about them and about the Home in which they lived.

All the girls at Seaforth were very unhappy before they reached that Army Home, and in practically all cases their unhappiness had been brought upon them by their own wrongdoing. Almost without exception they had been before the Court for some misdemeanour. Some had been guilty of shop-lifting, others had proved so unmanageable at home that their parents had been obliged to invoke police aid. Some, alas, were without parents, and had so conducted themselves as to cause the State officials to send them to the Reformatory Home for training.

Jenny was one of this class. (Jenny is not her real name, which it would not be kind to reveal, because she still has her life before her.)

When Jenny's parents died, leaving her a little orphan girl, with not a single person to love and care for her, a friendly Government stepped in and made her a ward of the State. The effect of this was that all the people of West Australia became her sponsors. But the actual work of caring for Jenny fell to the lot of the men who administer the affairs of the Department bearing this responsibility. They boarded her out until she was old enough to work, and then arranged for her to go out to service.

For a time all went well. A portion of each week's pay was given to Jenny for pocket money, while the remainder was paid to the officials, who banked it for her in a trust account. But Jenny did not keep good company. After a time her mistress became disturbed at the many times Jenny stayed out till long after good girls were home in bed. State



GENERAL VIEW OF THE SEAFORTH ESTATE, WITH GIRLS' AND BOYS' HOMES

then decided that a term at The Army Reformatory would be the best for her.

To The Army Home, therefore, Jenny went. Despite her apparent waywardness she was a thoughtful girl, with a good fund of innate common sense. At The Army Home she quickly recognised the loving-kindness of the Officers, and by the sanctity of their lives and the love that was obviously the mainspring of their work she became convinced that they were in touch with a Power of which she knew nothing. So in one of the little meetings that the Officers hold periodically with the girls, Jenny sought Salvation. Her penitence was sincere, and her faith real, and that night Jenny became a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Seeing this new creation had taken place it was not to be wondered at that Jenny's life was changed. A few weeks later she expressed a desire to be enrolled as a Salvationist. As her life gave evidence of conversion, she was handed a copy of the Articles of War. These she signed, and soon there came a night when she was fully enrolled as a Salvation Soldier. Jenny is still in the Home, her term of commitment not yet being completed, but she is a happy Salvation lassie, a good example to the other girls, and a joy to the Officers.

There are eleven girls in the Home orchestra, and they play violins, banjos, and guitars. The Matron herself plays two or three instruments, and when one of the girls was given a guitar as a Christmas present, the Adjutant saw the possibility of forming an orchestra. She helped this girl with lessons, and lent her own instruments to other girls. Then more of them secured instruments, some as gifts, others (by permission of the State) out of the money held for them in trust. Then the Matron arranged for the purchase of a piano, and though some money has still to be raised on this

the work-room, where about fifteen girls were busily engaged in sewing. Their ages, as nearly as I could judge, ranged from fourteen to nineteen years. All were clad in neat blue over-all dresses, and they seemed quite happy, and smiled and chatted together as merrily as any average group of Australian lasses would. The work-room, the Matron told me, was under the care of Adjutant Wray, one of the best needle-workers The Army has in the Commonwealth. It is the work done in this room that helps to maintain the Institution.

Afterwards we saw the kitchen, the dining-room (where each table bore a fine palm) and the dormitories; the wash-house, the garden, and the recreation yard, where a giant-stride and a



ONE OF THE GIRLS WITH HER PET

swing help to give the girls rosy cheeks and happy hearts.

Then it was time for me to hurry

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The Matron was expecting me, but knowing the real purpose of my visit, she was not at all in favour of it. Publicity is frankly distasteful to her. But the welcome given me was fine.

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For a time all went well. A portion of each week's pay was given to Jenny for pocket money, while the remainder was paid to the officials, who banked it for her in a trust account. But Jenny did not keep good company. After a time her mistress became disturbed at the many times Jenny stayed out till long after good girls were home in bed. State authorities then became perturbed, fearing lest Jenny should be so tempted that instead of growing up to become an asset and a credit to the State, she might become a menace. Without more ado, they

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I was kindly invited to see various sections of the Home. First we went into



ONE OF THE GIRLS WITH HER PET

swing help to give the girls rosy cheeks and happy hearts.

Then it was time for me to hurry away, glad to have spent a happy hour at this moral hospital as it were for Australian girls who have made an unhealthy beginning.—Stanley Harewood, Adjutant.