

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE VICTORIA INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

To the Board of Management of the Industrial School Association.

GENTLEMEN,—Allow me to present for your careful consideration a review of the work done in the Victoria Industrial School for the year ending September 30th, 1896.

In this age of enlightenment, when so much time, effort and means are expended in charity and reform, it should not be necessary to point out the great importance attached to the work in which we are engaged—that of saving the youth of our land. That this is an important work all will admit; for who can estimate the tremendous possibilities that lie dormant in a boy. As to the means employed in prosecuting that work there may be differences of opinion. The methods that prevail in this institution are, in principle, the same as those pursued in the best reform schools on this continent. The efforts of your officers have been handicapped to a certain extent by the inefficiency of the plant. Our systems of lighting and water supply are altogether inadequate for the requirements of the school. Still, with these and other drawbacks, the progress of the work has, on the whole, been satisfactory. Under the most favorable auspices the work of reformation is slow. Time is needed to wean a boy from his early associations and companionships, and while we cannot in all cases claim for the boys who go out from our care a complete reformation, still, from all we can learn, fully eighty per cent. are doing well and are giving evidence of the permanence of the good they received while under the care and guardianship of the school. Many of them to-day are filling positions of trust throughout our land, their success being largely due to the habits of industry formed while in this institution, combined with the high moral and religious instruction given.

In judging of the work done in a reform school we should take into consideration the character and early training of the boys committed to our care. They are not, as is generally supposed, vicious, but are rather the creatures of circumstances. They have not been subject to that discipline that is so essential to the formation of habits of industry and obedience. They have been allowed