

IDEAL ST. HELENA.

St. Helena has once more come into the limelight. The South Australian Comptroller of Prisons, who has been visiting Queensland, enthusiastically declared the island to be an ideal penal spot for the carrying on of the modern reformatory methods associated with the treatment of prisoners, and a prisoner serving a sentence of 5 years for stealing has escaped from the penitentiary by a simple but unique method. It was at first authoritatively reported that he had constructed an extemporised boat by placing a bath tub from the officers' quarters inside the four legs of a table turned upside down and paddled away to the mainland. To have completed the picturesqueness of the incident, he should also have taken the tablecloth and used it as a sail; but it now transpires that he did not make use of the table, bath or tablecloth, but of a couple of forms which he made into a raft and was sighted within a few hundred yards of the island on Sunday morning, two and a half days after he had first been missed. There is little doubt he was in hiding on the island itself in the meantime. Not so many months ago a couple of prisoners were reported to have got away from the penitentiary, but it was afterwards discovered that they had not only broken out but also broken into the mail enclosure and had secreted themselves in the ceiling of one of the workrooms. The Moreton Bay League, which is opposed to St. Helena being given over to the criminal class, has waxed satirical in connection with recent happenings, having passed a resolution sympathising with the Home Secretary in regard to the most recent escape "from the natural prison of St. Helena," and respectfully suggesting before the foreshores of the mainland and adjacent islands are searched that "the ceilings of the various buildings on the island be examined." One of the interesting features about the latest escapade is the statement that the convict had only about a mile of deep water to negotiate and could then wade through shallow water to the mainland. No doubt the escapee will enthusiastically agree with the South Australian and New South Wales Comptrollers of Prisons, as well as our own Home Secretary, that St. Helena is an ideal spot for a prison, though the public, after last week's experience, are beginning to have their doubts as to its ideality in this respect, and especially that section who have their homes on the Bay within easy distance of the island, where the modern method of the regeneration of Bill Sykes and Co.—which includes a good deal of freedom—is being initiated.