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LECTURE ON PRISON NURSING.

Councillor Beatrice Kent gave a very interesting address on the subject of "Prison Nursing," on Saturday, October 10th. Miss Georgina Lord took the chair, and, in opening the lecture, spoke of the many years during which Councillor Kent had been interested in promoting prison nursing, and of her enthusiasm as a Borough Councillor in all reforms which are calculated to the well-being of the community. Owing to lack of space we are unable to give more than a brief summary of the lecture, and we are also unable to report the interesting discussion which followed it.

Councillor Kent commenced her lecture by drawing attention to the fact that prisoners should be regarded as sick persons. They are sick in spirit because they are anti-social, and many of them are sick both mentally and physically. Councillor Kent referred to the work of John Howard and Elizabeth Fry in connection with the prisons. Both were instrumental in bringing about important prison reforms, both in this and in other countries. Their task was colossal, but they brought light out of darkness, and did a great deal to prevent the indiscriminate herding together of prisoners. Councillor Kent next referred to an important deputation to the Home Secretary, which took place in the year 1918 in order to represent to him the need for further reforms in prison administration. In this deputation she acted as the delegate of the R.B.N.A.

In discussing the work of the prison nurses, Councillor Kent told her audience a pathetic little story of how their services are appreciated. One of the two nurses referred to below—appointed in 1917—and who possessed particularly kindly qualities of heart and mind, had the following interesting experience. On the day before she left she found a little note on her bed with the brief words, "Dear Nurse, I am very much obliged to you for being so kind to me."

In 1917 two trained nurses were appointed by the Prison Commissioners to work in Holloway Prison as an experimental measure to be carried out for six months, and so satisfactory was the result of this experiment that it led to the appointment of a permanent staff of trained nurses in Holloway Prison. The first Superintendent of prison nurses by appointment was Miss Jolley, who has done a very great deal to promote the comfort of the prison nurses and to advance the progress of this branch of nursing work. Recently Councillor Kent, by the courtesy of the Prison Commissioners, was able to visit and inspect the hospital and nursing quarters in Holloway Prison. She was courteously entertained by Miss Bevan, the present Lady Superintendent, one who, added to a charming personality, possesses outstanding qualifications for such an office. The present staff at Holloway consists of a Lady Superintendent, one Sister and nineteen nurses, but it is hoped to increase the staff to thirty-one at no very distant date. All nurses

must have a Certificate of three full years of training, must be State Registered, and must hold the C.M.B. Certificate. The minimum salary is 24s. a week, which rises annually at the rate of £2 12s. a year until the nurse is receiving 34s. a week. Nurses are granted sixteen days' leave per annum, which is increased to eighteen days after ten years' service. It is hoped that the prison authorities may see their way to increase this. The eight-hour day system is in practice, and the nurses take their turn for night duty on special cases. All nurses are appointed for a year on probation, and after four months have to pass an examination on Prison Discipline. Lectures are given by the Governor, who is a medical man, and by the Lady Superintendent. At the end of the year there is another examination to test the capacity of the nurses.

Besides the hospital for convicted prisoners, which contains forty-six beds, there is the hospital of twenty-six beds for prisoners on remand. When such a prisoner, being a hospital patient, goes to the Court for trial, a nurse accompanies her and also the Discipline Officer is in charge. There is an observation ward and also a labour ward.

Among the nurses of the staff at Holloway Prison two hold the Certificate of the Medico-Psychological Association, a most essential qualification in view of the fact that many of the inmates are weak-minded and mentally deficient. As part of the well-organised nursing scheme at Holloway Prison there is an Advisory Nursing Board, consisting of three hospital matrons and there are other ladies. The Chairman of the Board is Dr. Mary Scharleib. This Board meets once a month; the Governor is present and also the Medical Member of the Prison Commissioners, Dr. Griffith. Miss Bevan, the Lady Superintendent, attends the Meeting and reads her Report. The Prison Commissioners consist of four persons all of the male sex, and it is to be hoped that before very long we may see one woman added to the Commissioners. In Scotland there is at the present time only one trained nurse in the prison service. In all large prisons there must be cases of venereal diseases, and the care of these is surely work for the trained nurse. Councillor Kent gave an instance of the necessity for nursing in these instances by relating an anecdote which had come under her notice. The Doctor said to one of these girls, "I think that the treatment that I am giving you is doing you a great deal of good." Her reply was, "Yes, sir, it is, but that is not all." "Oh, to what else do you attribute the improvement?" he asked. "To the nurse, sir, of course," was her ready answer; "if it had not been for the daily dressing and the constant care and kindness of the nurse, I would not be anything like as well as I am." "Oh, indeed," he remarked, "you are not the first who has said that."

Councillor Kent next referred to the fact that among the women police, official and voluntary, there are some trained nurses, and a woman police sergeant recently said, "My experience is that trained nurses make good police women,

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