

beneficial results. It is provided that trained nurses are in future to be put in charge of the Infirmary Wards in all large prisons; and in smaller prisons, where separate infirmaries are not provided, the authorities are empowered in future to obtain the services of trained nurses for sick prisoners, from some nursing institution.

It can easily be understood that the want of proper care and attention must, in the past, have not only led to the prolongation of convalescence and incomplete recovery, but also to the commencement, in many cases, of chronic disease. For example, it is stated that, even in the larger prisons, patients who were delirious and seriously ill were kept in separate cells, which were frequently dark, not always scrupulously clean, and sometimes even below the level of the ground; and it is unnecessary to point out that such conditions must militate against recovery, even from some simple illness; and that, when the patient is seriously ill, they must tend to protract, or even to altogether prevent, recovery.

The statistics of illness and mortality in prisons are, we believe, either not published at all, or are, at any rate, not generally accessible. It would be interesting to learn not only what percentage of prisoners are taken ill and die each year, but also the chief complaints from which they suffer, and the average periods of their illnesses. It would then be of practical importance to contrast these figures, of the past with those obtainable in the future under better conditions and nursing care. There must, of course, always be special reasons for illness amongst prisoners. The classes from which they are recruited are so notoriously addicted to intemperance and other predisposing causes of ill-health, both by heredity and by early environment; so many must possess enfeebled constitutions that it would not be surprising to learn that the percentage of sickness and mortality in prisons has always been, and always must be, higher than amongst those who live cleaner and more temperate lives. But this fact should be an incentive rather than an hindrance to the institution of measures of greater medical and nursing care for sick prisoners than are usually accorded even to the same classes when at liberty; because, in the latter case, the freedom and natural exercise of mind and body must tend to maintain conditions of health better than they can be upheld in a state of unnatural

confinement. For every reason, therefore, and especially on the grounds of increased usefulness for nurses and of higher humanity, we welcome the reforms which have just been made by the Home Secretary.

We believe that Sir Mathew White Ridley deserves the gratitude of the community also for the wise reform he has instituted. Anything which diminishes crime is a national gain, and the humanising influence which well trained nurses exercise over the roughest and most callous in our hospital wards would lead one to expect that their influence over hardened criminals, in their times of illness, might be no less beneficial.

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## Annotations.

### WOMEN INSPECTORS.

It is a fact worthy of the weighty consideration of women that every effort on their part to do organised work for the good of their sex, even—we may almost say, more especially—when they have demonstrated their capacity to perform the work in hand well, meets with opposition and obstruction from the other sex. A glaring instance of this is found in the position assigned by the Home Office to the successor of Mrs. Tennant, who, until June last, filled the post of Superintending Inspector of the Womens' Factory Department, with a capacity which none—however adverse they may be to the appointment—can gainsay. Mrs. Tennant, during her tenure of office, amply demonstrated the truth, now well established, that if a woman is given a free hand, and adequate powers in the performance of her duties, those duties are almost invariably performed in a way which must compel admiration and respect. For ten months before her resignation, Mrs. Tennant was engaged in organizing her department; women inspectors, and the women's department were recognised factors in the machinery of the Home Office, the women inspectors were brought into touch with the Chief Inspector of Factories, through their superintending inspector, and all seemed to promise well for the future. There could be no sort of doubt that the scheme was of the greatest possible benefit to the million-and-a-half of women and children, whose health and safety were intrusted by the State to their care. But upon Mrs. Tennant's resignation, the scheme which had worked so well for the four months that it had been in full working order,

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