

suffer under the present system of law, which assumes that the criminal possesses absolute free will to choose between good and evil. In this assumption it sets at naught the law of cause and effect, acknowledged in every department of science. Offenders must be dealt with as individuals, not as a class—or even in classes. Omniscience only could decide the exact punishment justly to be given—and who amongst us is all wise?

Let us therefore leave vengeance and punishment entirely out of the treatment of prisoners, and inculcate a cure, reformation, rehabilitation. To ignore decency, to treat his body, however vile, with disrespect, to garb him in humiliating fashion, to assign him a number in which all individuality vanishes, to force him to the performance of certain tasks at the mechanical command of a bell or a whistle, or worse, to submit him to the horrors of enforced solitude and idleness of mind or body—is there in such a system anything influencing a prisoner for good, calculated to send him out of gaol a useful, honest, and an ambitious member of society? Nothing! The prisoner's mental, moral, and physical condition must be diagnosed and readjusted. Prison life must be one, not of suffering, but of preparation—preparation for liberty. Independence, courage, right thinking, mental discipline—these are the qualities he will need if he is not again to fall. The Criminal Law should be for his benefit. The commission of crime is the sign that a man needs reformation; it is the red flag which tells the State to sequester and educate him.

And now, quite briefly, I will touch on the special place of trained nursing in prisons. I want it everywhere.

Women have as yet no place or duty assigned them in the Home Office, and the people are thus unjustly deprived of the mother influence in the management of prisons. Women have no power to organise their own work in prisons, or to provide for its supervision. We know that there are prison infirmaries, that when a prisoner is sufficiently sick in body he is transferred from his cell to the ward. Of the quality of the nursing he receives there we have no means of judging, but we do know that during his unnatural cell life he is surrounded by warders who have never been trained (it is not their fault, therefore, that they are ignorant) in any respect for, or care and knowledge of, the functions of the body, and mental and physical suffering which may amount to torture may be exacted from a prisoner without any intentional cruelty upon the part of the turnkey. There is a remedy for this condition of affairs.

1. The Matrons of our prisons should not only possess the intuitive sympathy in relation to the prisoner which inspired the success of Elizabeth Fry in her dealing with human wreckage, but, in addition, sound practical experience as a nurse of the sick in mind and body.

2. Prison warders must also be specially trained for their duties, and in the course of training the elements, theoretical and practical, of general and

psychological nursing should form the basis. Much more they will need to learn. The body, is it not the temple of the Holy Ghost?

Women of character, of temperament, of education, should offer themselves for this work. Here, behind the bolts and bars of every prison in the land is virgin soil awaiting the plough of love and knowledge, and promising an abundant harvest.

During the discussion reference was made to the article, "A Plea for Trained Nurses in Prisons," which appeared in this journal on the 12th October last.

Progress of State Registration.

THE CENTRAL HOSPITAL COUNCIL FOR LONDON

The following is the Bill of the Central Hospital Council for London, to which we drew attention in our Editorial column last week, under which, if passed by Parliament, nurses would be excluded from any voice in the management of their own profession.

NURSES OFFICIAL DIRECTORY.

A BILL TO

PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OFFICIAL DIRECTORY OF NURSES.

Be it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in the present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Short Title.

1. This Act may be cited as the Official Directory of Nurses Act, 1908.

Power to His Majesty in Council to Establish an Official Directory.

2. It shall be lawful for his Majesty in Council by order to establish an Official Directory of Nurses, and to that end to provide for the appointment of an Official Registrar, and for the employment of such officers, clerks, and servants as may be expedient, and for all other matters incidental thereto.

Provisions of Order.

3. An Order of His Majesty in Council in pursuance of this Act shall—

(a) Indicate the particulars to be entered in the Directory.

(b) Lay down the Conditions under which the Directory is to be kept, including the grounds on which the name of any nurse shall be excluded from the Directory.

(c) Make provision for the imposition of penalties for furnishing false particulars or other breaches of the regulations for the time being in force.

(d) Prescribe the fees to be paid for Registration; and

(e) Set forth all such rules and regulations as may be necessary and expedient for prescribing and regulating the procedure in relation to the objects of this Act.

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