

"I was specially struck by the trust that was placed in the women, and the way they responded to that trust; punishment is rarely used or needed, discipline being maintained more by rewards than by degradation. No prisoners were in the lowest grade, and all can work up to the highest, while those wearing the large T (for Trust) have special liberty, privileges, and work. The food is not doled out in specified quantities, but each can have as much as she wishes (at all events as regards bread), nor do the inmates eat in their cells, but in dining-rooms, each grade having its own. Crockery is used at the table, not tin vessels and mugs; and also proper bedsteads and mattresses, while the fatiguing and useless military plan of daily folding up the bed and bed-clothes is abolished. All are kept busy, and I saw none of our characteristic prison lounging. May not this be partly because the labour, instead of being useless, is made to serve a given and visible end? Another admirable custom was that the women are allowed to carry their library books to the work-room, laundry etc., so that whenever they have a few spare minutes, or their allotted task is done, instead of sitting with vacant minds they can read and occupy their thoughts. Further, the Superintendent gathers the women round her daily for the half-hour's mid-day leisure, thus helping them to forget for that time that they are prisoners, and giving them something high and beautiful to think about, not only in prison, but after they have left. It never occurs to her that they may be disorderly; and they never are. Another act of mercy here is that female prisoners expecting their confinement are sent to hospital, so that the poor baby is not subject to the life-long stigma of being born in prison.

"In the above account I have merely referred to such improvements in our methods as we might adopt without any fresh legislation. Do not we need to replace the seven devils we are trying to drive out of our prisoners by something better? so that if (in the words of the Quaker philanthropist) anyone should say to them, 'Friend, thee should have better thoughts,' no one of them could reply, 'Where shall I get them?'"

ALCOHOL AND THE BABY.

A case is reported by the *Lancet* from Oldham which is described as "amazing." Whether it indicates amazing vice or amazing ignorance may be considered doubtful, the probability being that vice and ignorance had equal shares in the proceeding. A woman going to the market left her two children in the care of her mother. On her return she saw one of them, 22 months old, on her mother's knee looking "strange." A man in the room said, "It's drunk; it's been having something to 'sup.'" Then the grandmother stated that the man had given it "some rum and whisky." The mother took the child to a doctor and later to the infirmary, where the house surgeon said the child had been poisoned by alcohol. The grandmother was fined 10s. and costs, and, curiously enough, the man who had given the "sup" was let off.

Book of the Week.

A BLIND BIRD'S NEST.*

"A Blind Bird's Nest" is not a very new book, but a very popular one, for it has attained that surest of popularity—publication in Collins' 7d. Edition. Like other of Miss Findlater's books, it is well worth reading, but the special object of referring to it here is because of the portrait it contains of a modern nurse. We consider Dickens' inimitable portrait of Mrs. Gamp out of date, and yet—listen—

Here are Mrs. Gamp's orders to the assistant chambermaid of the hotel for the night:—

"I think, young woman, that I could pick a little bit of pickled salmon, with a nice little sprig of fennel and a sprinkling of white pepper. I takes new bread, my dear, with jest a little pat of fresh butter, and a mossel of cheese. In case there should be such a thing as a cowcumber in the house will you be so kind as bring it, for I'm rather partial to 'em, and they does a world of good in a sick room. If they draws the Brighton Old Tipper here I takes that ale at night, my love, it being considered wakeful by the doctors. And whatever you do, young woman, don't bring more than a shilling's worth of gin and water, warm, when I rings the bell a second time, for that is always my allowance, and I never takes a drop beyond."

As to easy chairs Mrs. Prig had forewarned her. "The easy chair ain't soft enough. You want his (the patient's) pillow."

Other times other manners. Here is Miss Findlater's portrait:—

An old lady—the rector's wife—is concerned that the nurse shall have all she requires.

"There's no arm-chair she can 'ave, ma'am," said the maid, unless one from the drawing-room, or master's study chair, and it's so big; but there's a chair in the blue bedroom now, ma'am, as all our visitors use."

"Yes; but it's a wicker chair, Joan. She says that won't do."

So the rector's chair is hauled up with the aid of the gardener, and the verdict is that it will "do."

"Did you ask her if she would like anything for herself through the night, Joan?" the old lady inquired, anxiously.

"Yes, ma'am, and she said as 'ow any little thing would do. She only wanted just a slice from the joint—cold like—and any cream or fruit as might be over from the table; and she was particularly fond of a custard, and only just a glass of Burgundy along with her supper, and then some bitter ale and biscuits the last thing, and nothing more except just the tray with the syphon, and a small teapot with cream and sugar, and some plain bread and butter, or a bit of muffin, and two slices, or else the loaf, to make herself a bit o' toast, and the kettle for 'ot water; and just about a breakfast cupful of fresh milk, with a benamelled pan to warm it in; and if there was any plain, light bisenits she might just 'ave one or two of them,

* By Mary Findlater. (Collins, London and Glasgow.)

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