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EDITORIAL.

WOMEN POLICE, THEIR POSITION AND POWERS.

The necessity for the appointment of policewomen, as well as policemen was urged at the meeting organized by the Criminal Law Amendment Committee held at Caxton Hall on Friday, June 19th, under the presidency of Dr. W. Cobb.

The suggestion is not a new one, for, as our readers know, such officers have already been appointed in Germany with good result, Sister Henriette Arendt, who was present at the meeting, being the first to be appointed, and trained nurses will remember with pleasure that Sister Arendt is a member of their profession. Women police have also been appointed in fifteen different cities in the United States and in two in Canada, and their work has been eminently successful.

The chairman of the meeting while paying a tribute to the police force in this country, said that it was the custom to place on police constables multifarious duties for which men were not always competent. With women there would be less of red tape, a little less of brute force, a little more of humanity, and a little less of the spirit that a person before the Court must be convicted somehow.

It must be at once apparent to those who consider the question that women who need police assistance, advice, and protection may be very much handicapped by having to apply to a male constable. Many women (for instance) would apply to one of their own sex for advice as to lodgings, when in difficulties, who would hesitate to consult a man, and Councillor Margaret Ashton, of Manchester, speaking on this point said that many a young girl had had to go to a policeman to ask for a decent lodging, and though she agreed as to the high character of a large number of police officers, they also knew of some who had

misled girls into bad houses. The woman police officer in uniform would be a lighthouse preventing in some cases the wrecking of a life.

Take again the case of a young girl appearing in a police court to substantiate a case of assault. It is on record that the only assistance one such girl had in preparing her depositions was that of a young police constable. The attendance of woman constables in police courts, both to assist witnesses in such an emergency as the foregoing, and to support them with their presence when they appear to tell an intimate and painful tale to a bench and court of mainly male officials, would be a seemly arrangement on the part of the authorities.

Amongst the duties for which women police were suggested as specially suitable at the above meeting, were (1) supervision in parks and open spaces, (2) duty at railway stations, (3) answering enquiries in the streets, (4) taking depositions of women and children, (5) investigating cases of assault, (6) visiting places of amusement and refreshment, (7) inspection of women's lodging houses.

In Germany the women police have the entire supervision of prostitutes, and are on duty in the Children's Courts where these are in existence. The resolution adopted by the meeting at Caxton Hall, urging the appointment of women constables, with powers equal to those of men constables, in all county boroughs, and the metropolitan boroughs in the County of London, must commend itself to all thinking men and women.

Another point which is also apparent is the peculiar suitability of trained nurses for this branch of social service. The training in discipline, and the insight they acquire, in the course of their professional work, into the conditions with which the policewoman has to deal are excellent preliminary preparation for the work.

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