

to regard their work as an honourable vocation, in which all driving and punishment would be out of place. Something like this, it seems to me, is the first requirement of the prison service.

When I accepted the invitation to read this paper I remarked to a colleague that it would be difficult to avoid introducing penal reform. He replied, "Why try to?" Well, I have not tried very hard, and I hope you will forgive me. How, I ask you, can we nurses contemplate the prison system without wishing to alter it? I must confess that my chief motive in advocating the introduction of trained nurses into prisons is the hope that they will help to transform them out of recognition. From what my husband assures me, and from what I myself have seen and heard of the very courteous and humanely minded people I have met in the prisons, I feel sure that the co-operation of the nurses to this end would be welcome if the difficulties, or apparent difficulties, in the way could be overcome. Cannot this Conference, by discussion and ventilation of the subject, do something to lessen those difficulties?

One word more. In advocating trained nurses for prisons we do not wish to oust those who have borne the burden and heat of the day. Let nothing that has been said here be taken as implying disrespect to those who have devoted their years to thankless tasks. Our message to them also, as well as to the prisoners, must be one of hope and uplifting, and of more effective co-operation all round in the service of the community.

Discussing these matters one day with a doctor who was governor of a prison in India, I urged the desirability of having trained nurses of culture in all prisons. He looked shocked, and said that prison was not a place for ladies. I think the answer to that is that the sooner prison becomes a place for ladies the better. Indeed, here in England it has already become a place for ladies, has it not? And they have done some useful ventilating for which we owe them deep gratitude. I seriously ask my sister nurses if they do not feel that prison is eminently a place for us at any rate. Our vocation is to tend the sick in body. Why not also the sick in mind—and in soul? Surely where the outcast and the desolate and the oppressed are there is our place.

Lord Shaftesbury has withdrawn from the House of Lords the Nurses (Contributions by Local Authorities, Ireland) Bill, and hopes to get it introduced in the House of Commons.

MISS DOCK ON MISS NIGHTINGALE.

In her English Letter contributed to the *American Journal of Nursing*, Miss Lavinia L. Dock writes most interestingly of the "Life of Florence Nightingale":—

"The trip to London to give two months' volunteer service to Mrs. Pankhurst gave me the opportunity to read with close attention the 'Life of Florence Nightingale,' by Sir Edward T. Cook, a book which I had at first only been able to rush through in breathless haste. Perhaps many nurses will rejoice if they have time to read it once, and yet I do believe that on one reading alone one can hardly assimilate thoroughly this most fascinating presentation of a most remarkable life and a commanding personality. The style in which the 'Life' is written is so delightful, its simplicity so united with dramatic power, that, sometimes, you feel as if you were watching a great drama on some classic stage, and its deep and delicate understanding and sympathy with Miss Nightingale's character, her problems, her destiny, are so winning, that I determined I would try to meet the author, if possible, in London. I was, then, much gratified at being able to do this, though I realized afterwards, to my great chagrin, that, having gone in hopes of hearing Sir Edward Cook talk, I had done all the talking myself! But this gives fresh proof of the sympathetic nature of Miss Nightingale's biographer, though I also suspect partly a most potent and delicious brand of tea. It is impossible to think of a better choice of a biographer than Miss Nightingale's executors made, and for myself, I had rather expected that her 'Life' might be written in a conventional way. Perhaps, however, the character of her great mass of written records would have made it difficult for anyone to have written academically, and actually, the biographer, having been chosen, was left wholly free to present Miss Nightingale as he saw her.

"As well as delicacy of perception of character, Miss Nightingale's historian had to possess a rich equipment of familiarity with the social and political history of her time, and with the stimulating atmosphere of art, literature, travel, and learning in which she and her friends moved. All this is woven into the text of this delightful book."

"How great a pioneer Miss Nightingale was, in many different ways, how great a revolutionist in education and training, in making new paths for women, and in overturning the accepted ideas of women's subordination, can

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