

tated entails, and the enormous saving that treatment in the early stages would ensure. These arguments if elaborated would cover a very large question. These evils could be curtailed to a large extent in proportion to the amount of money the State was prepared to put down.

Who could doubt that the nation would have a very handsome return for its money?

The educational part of the scheme was of the first importance. Sufferers should be made to realise the necessity for early treatment. The healthy should possess the knowledge that would prevent them from contracting it ignorantly.

Every nurse, in dealing with the cases, had her moments of fear. She should have no panic of this kind. It was not caught except through carelessness. Doctors, nurses and innocent persons, if they took reasonable precautions, ran no risk or very little risk. It was said that it was possible to be infected by shaving, at restaurants, &c., but such risk was infinitesimal—1 in 100,000.

He strongly deprecated the action of certain ladies who demanded compulsory notification. He was totally opposed to it, as was all expert opinion. It would result in patients refusing to present themselves for treatment, and thus it would defeat its own ends.

VENEREAL VIRUS AND ITS DETECTION.

The second of the course of four lectures, delivered under the auspices of the Institute of Hygiene, on Venereal Diseases, was delivered at the Institute, on Tuesday, November 7th. The lecturer was Dr. J. W. H. Eyre, F.R.S. Ed.; and the subject was "Venereal Virus and its Detection."

The lecturer said that it was not an easy subject to deal with before an audience who, for the most part, were probably not familiar with microscopic and bacteriological research.

In dealing with the three varieties—gonorrhoea, soft sore and syphilis—he said that each type differed in character. Gonorrhoea was characterised by pus in the genital and urinary tract, and was associated with a form of rheumatism. Soft sore took the form of skin ulcers, which affected the neighbouring lymphatic glands, and caused swellings known as buboes.

Syphilis was characterised by a hard single sore, and in its primary stage by sore throat and a rash; later, it affected the internal organs. The disease was acute, infective and highly contagious.

Efficient treatment depended on exact diagnosis. Of recent years the cause of these diseases had been clearly shown in the laboratory.

Dr. Eyre explained the various processes of isolating, cultivating and staining the bacilli, and also the method of inoculation.

He described the Wassermann test, and explained the significance of anti-bodies in the blood, which were never manufactured unless the virus was already present. The presence of anti-bodies therefore confirmed the presence of the disease.

PRISONS AND PENAL REFORM.

PART III.

(Concluded from page 379.)

PIONEER REFORMERS.

By MISS BEATRICE KENT.

Who does not revere the memory of pioneer reformers and pathfinders! We owe them heavy debts which we never shall desire to cancel. Nevertheless, in the busy rush of modern life and its manifold demands, we are in grave danger of forgetting them. John Howard, the ideal philanthropist, was the first apostle of prison reform. He had a heart of pure gold. The treatment of prisoners and the state of prisons in his day—the middle and end of eighteenth century—were so awful that he spent his large fortune and many years of his life in working for reform. He travelled over England and Wales and visited many prisons. Notorious gaols in France, Belgium and Germany, he also visited. The gates of the cruel Bastille were barred to him, however. The fruitful result of his self-devotion was that the report he presented to the House of Commons was acted upon, and two Acts were soon placed upon the Statute Book—namely, one which provided for the liberation of all prisoners against whom the grand juries had failed to find a true bill, and made the wages of gaolers chargeable upon the county rates. Before that glad day, they were unsalaried and lived upon the most rigorous extortions from the prisoners. The other Act, which very quickly succeeded it, prescribed regulations with regard to cleanliness and sanitation, also medical advice, clothing for half-clothed prisoners, and the abolition, in a great measure, of underground dungeons. In 1775 his book appeared, entitled "The State Prisons in England and Wales with an Account of some Foreign Prisons." The effect of this—of a practical nature—upon the public conscience was that another Bill was quickly drafted and passed, embodying the principle (with the letter of which we are more familiar than the spirit), "that the reform of a criminal's character and habits should be the guiding motive in determining the method of his treatment." This golden-hearted man fell a victim to his own self-imposed duties. He died of camp fever and was buried in a little village in the south of Russia.

Sacred to the memory of Elizabeth Fry is the monument of her own immortal work on behalf of prisons and penal reform. It was very similar to that of her predecessor, John Howard, who paved the path for her to tread. Her work was more intimate and individual, but not more noble than his. At that period of the world's history those who most deserved punishment were not those who received it, but those who made the cruel laws by which they suffered. As late as 1797 a man might be hanged for picking a pocket of more than a shilling! "There were 222

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)