

HOSPITALS IN STATE PRISONS.

The most fertile field for hospital development to-day is the State and Federal prison. With few exceptions, these institutions are almost devoid of what can be truthfully called hospital facilities for their sick and injured.

A man is received in the average State prison after confinement, perhaps, in a filthy jail, and after strain due to trial, and is at once assigned to a cell and a place in which to work.

In choosing his work for him, the officials lay much stress upon what he has done outside. If he has done nothing there, he is sent wherever a man may be needed. The examination of the man to determine his physical and mental condition is perfunctory; in many cases it is not made at all.

The life of the prisoner is without the attention of medical, dental, or psychological specialists. If surgery is needed there are only primitive facilities at hand. Sometimes the prisoner is removed under guard to a city hospital for amputation or other operation which is too serious for the prison staff to attempt. . . .

A State or Federal prison needs a complete hospital in a building by itself, equipped for surgery, dentistry, eye, ear, nose and throat and the ordinary laboratory routine work. The staff should consist of a competent physician of modern training and education, with sufficient medical assistance so that it will be possible to have someone on duty all the time.

The prisoner, on admission, should be carefully examined in every respect, psychologically, psychotically, neurologically; his eyes, ears, nose, and throat should be gone over. Surgical treatment, if necessary, should be applied.

In other words, the man should be put into as perfect physical condition as possible.

His work should be picked for him after a study by the psychologist and other specialists. The effort should be to fit the man for the years he is to spend within the walls, and also to prepare him for the time when he shall again take up his life outside. To do this without hospital facilities, psychological examination and advice, intelligent treatment of his physical, mental, and nervous being, is impossible.

There is the added consideration that the prison of to-day must make provision for the psychoses. Prison insanity or prison psychosis is a distinct type of reaction found only within the walls. It requires special equipment, including the right kind of building construction. Again, there is tuberculosis, a common disease in prisons. Very little accommodation has ever been made for the segregation of the incipient or of the mildly chronic case. When the disease becomes virulent some sort of segregation is attempted.

In the average State prison little attention is given to public or individual health, yet it is a community in which there is the very greatest need for health work and education.—*The Modern Hospital*.

THE HOSPITAL WORLD.

Writing in the *Contemporary Review* on "The Plight of the London Hospitals," and describing the closing down of seven wards at King's College Hospital, Mr. C. E. A. Bedwell says:—

"An attempt to describe the empty wards, the unoccupied nurses, and the appalling atmosphere of depression everywhere would involve the use of language which would seem to be exaggerated if it were really descriptive. But perhaps the worst was yet to come. The Medical Board re-allocated the beds to the various classes of patients, and among other results the maternity ward, which is one of the largest in a general hospital in London, had to surrender half the beds to gynaecological patients. Twenty-three expectant mothers had to receive six weeks' notice that, after making arrangements weeks beforehand, and in some cases paying contributions towards the cost, they must find somewhere else for their confinements because there was no room for them. Five out of the twenty-three were living in one room, a sixth with three children was in two rooms, and a seventh with five children was in two rooms.

"The main facts connected with the closing of a hospital have been stated baldly, as Lord Cave's Committee might have given them to support their conclusion that 'if any considerable number of hospitals should close down, the shortage of accommodation would be such that the public would be compelled to step in and supply the deficiency, and the position of the hospitals throughout the country would be imperilled.'

"It should be realised, however, that this condition of affairs is far more than a danger to the public health service of the country. The closing of wards in hospitals like King's and the London, standing in the midst of large populous areas, is a direct stimulus to unrest and something worse. To tell a man, already troubled by present conditions, that his child is seriously ill and should receive treatment as an in-patient, but that there is no room, is tantamount to an invitation to him to 'see red,' and has an effect upon an ever-widening circle of his friends and acquaintances. If, in addition, he has an opportunity to frequent a neighbourhood where ostentatious luxury and self-indulgence are conspicuous, then there is little need for any propaganda to make him a revolutionary against the community and a desperado fighting merely for the existence of himself and his family."

We understand that the Duchess of Connaught's Memorial Nursing Home at Bagshot is open to the patients of any practitioner in this urban district, under their own medical advisers.

The Woolwich Medical Officer of Health reports that diphtheria and scarlet fever are becoming less virulent, and suggests that some hospital accommodation now available for scarlet fever, which

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