

sweep the ward, or bring in coals, except on a single occasion, when three soldiers suddenly tramped in unheralded and dumped down a bath full.

On the prison side, as distinct from hospital, things were far worse—30 beds to the dormitories, set so close together that the girls could hardly stand between them; and the sentries not only commanded a full view of the whole, but had the right of entry at all times. One girl told me, with thankfulness, that by standing on her pillow at the head of her bed she could just manage to dress out of view of the sentry. Sixty girls were sleeping out of doors in the compound through those bitter nights, with only two blankets apiece. And because they refused to go in and add to the already overcrowded dormitory, all parcels and letters in and out were stopped. One bath, one basin, and one lavatory to every hundred girls; no room to sit in by day; filthy stairs and floors; sanitary bins unemptied. Our doctor lived in daily fear of an epidemic.

A few girls escaped during my time in. Because the authorities failed to identify these, the daily ration of porridge and milk was cut off, leaving over three hundred hungry, and, in addition, 37 girls, on the day I was released, were left without breakfast. And the governor, who is legally bound to see prisoners who ask for him, issued an edict that, for a certain number of days, he would neither receive letters, nor see a prisoner. I sent for him twice without result. That reminds me that I sent for the doctor in Tralee, too, but he never came.

Poor prisoners—poor mice! Pat them until they lie still—the stiller the better.

On the fifteenth day of hunger-strike I was released. Do you ask me why? I don't know. Uncharged, untried, uncured, untended, dumped out into the world again to pick up life as best one may. And no redress. Only this I know. Some day, when the lead has been got out of my leg by operation, and strength has come back to my tired body, I will arise and do it again.

Meanwhile, a thousand girls and women in Ireland, and fifteen thousand men, suffer in prison for their principles. Shall I tell you more of them some other day?

ALBINA BRODRICK.

COMING EVENTS.

May 26th.—Frills and Furbelows Sale, Restoration Fund, St. Helena's Church, Thoroton, Notts. 431, Oxford Street, W. Open 12 noon.

May 26th.—Fever Nurses' Association. Annual Meeting, Metropolitan Asylums Board Offices, Embankment, E.C. 3 p.m.

May 26th.—Professional Union of Trained Nurses. American Tea and Concert, 6, Nottingham Place, W.1. 3.30 to 6 p.m.

May 28th to June 1st.—Eleventh Annual Post-Graduate Week for Midwives. General Lying-in Hospital, York Road, Lambeth, S.E.1.

June 5th to 9th.—St. Bartholomew's Hospital Octocentenary Celebrations.

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

HIDDEN LIVES.*

To know that a book is by the author of "The Woman in the Little House" prepares us for finding it elemental, true to life, a picture of things as they are, and "Hidden Lives" is terribly realistic—so terrible that, as we put it down, we wonder what is to happen to our country if the life of the slums is not swept away, and long with a longing which amounts to passion that once and for all the housing question shall be adequately considered, adequately settled, so that everyone of our countrymen and women and not only a favoured few shall have decent homes which are an incentive to live decently.

The book abounds in tragedies, but the one which runs through the whole is the love story of Francis Reay, the devoted curate of the Mission Church at Shellpit, and Dr. Helen Clevion, who, with a passionate desire for the health of the people amongst whom she lived, made war on houses unfit for human habitation, ("just like a woman doctor, sticking her nose into everything"), took into her own house derelicts on the sea of life, to be rewarded mostly by their ingratitude. She also obtained possession of a house of bad repute and turned it into a bath-house for a neighbourhood so lacking in baths that black sateen covered pillows were a local device to meet the exigencies of the situation. But that did not save her from having the house burnt down through the enmity of the disreputable tenants who had been evicted.

One moral of the story—and they are many, although we are left to deduct them—is the wisdom of the English Church in leaving her clergy free to marry or not, as they please. There was therefore no reason why the curate of Shellpit should so torture himself when he found that his love had been irrevocably given to Dr. Clevion, regarding it as a temptation of the Evil One that he lost his mental balance and ended his days under care after a tragedy resulting in his being unfrocked by his diocesan, and the removal of her name from the Medical Register.

Incidentally, Dr. Clevion's enrolment on the Midwives Roll after she had been removed from the Medical Register hardly rings true. Would the Midwives Board have had the courage to take this action, whatever extenuating circumstances might be urged? Would it have been wise to take it until she had been reinstated on the Register of her own profession, when the necessity would not arise? Further, we remember that the Chairman of the Central Midwives Board is a member of the General Medical Council. We commend these points to the author.

The unfolding of the story of the loss of reason of the mission priest because his faith in the Divinity of the Master whom he served was shattered, and he was haunted by an obsession so

* By M. Leonora Eyles. London: William Heinemann.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)