

THE HOSPITAL WORLD.

AT HIS MAJESTY'S PRISON, HOLLOWAY.

Evolution is a slow process. It took centuries to produce a Florence Nightingale, with a personality sufficiently forceful to demand that nurses should be thoroughly instructed in the principles and practice of their work, and who demanded admittance into military hospitals in time of war.

It is more than half-a-century ago since Mrs. Elizabeth Fry, with her gracious, compelling presence, gained an entrance into Newgate Prison, and by her personality brought order into the pandemonium which the sternest prison rules had failed to quell. And we are only now at the very beginning of the work of nurses for the sick in our prisons. In Holloway Prison to-day there is a staff of trained nurses working under a Lady Superintendent (Miss L. E. Jolley, R.R.C.) as part of the Prison Nursing Service, whose duty it is to care for the sick in the infirmary wards, as well as for those suffering from minor ailments in their own cells; and so to bring home to all the truth that a sick person, no matter what his crime, is entitled to skilled nursing care on the ground of our common humanity.

Twenty years ago I had an opportunity of passing the portals of Holloway Prison, and a recent visit convinced me that behind those closely guarded doors, and amongst the sad community which drift in and out of them, there are changes for the better. In the first place there is a woman Deputy-Governor, and conversing with her I found that she had the real interest of the prisoners at heart.

Also from the point of view of the public health there was a marked difference in the type of prisoners. Twenty years ago one was struck by the degraded appearance of many, perhaps the majority, of the women. Now the outward evidences of crime and degeneration are not nearly so apparent, and I learnt from the Deputy-Governor that formerly there were a large proportion of inebriates amongst the prisoners, women who frequented the public-houses as soon as they opened at five o'clock in the morning and had a drink from any who would treat them throughout the greater part of the day. Now, with the restriction of hours for the sale of drink, prisoners of this kind have greatly decreased, and so have the numbers of admissions, though perhaps greater leniency on the part of magistrates is partially responsible.

All this was very interesting information from the psychological point of view, with which the trained nurse must always concern herself. It also concerns those responsible for National Finance, if the effect of reduction of the hours when the public houses are open is to diminish crime, and to reduce the prison population. It also goes to prove that diminished opportunity results in diminished desire.

Another alteration for the better is that prisoners now return to their cells for tea, and then have associated work again, instead of being in solitary confinement from four o'clock onwards. When they return to their cells at seven o'clock, cocoa—and good cocoa, too—is served out to them.

But the main point of my visit to Holloway was to hear and see something of the Nursing Staff, and, needless to say, a very special type of woman is needed, preferably one who has made a study of the causes of crime, who is a firm disciplinarian, while possessing true sympathy, and whose desire is to help to set the feet of those who come under her influence upon the right path once again—a rough and thorny path enough, for there will be many, when they have served their sentence, who will lay traps to lure them once more from the straight path.

The Nursing Staff consists of seventeen members who are now required to hold a certificate of three years' training

from a recognised Nurse Training School. Preference is given to those who are also certified midwives, or who possess the Certificate of the Medico-Psychological Association. The remuneration offered for this highly skilled service, including in a number of instances, double qualification, appears quite inadequate, more especially when compared with that readily obtained by nurses in pleasanter branches of professional work. It commences at 45s. 6d. a week (*i.e.*, pay 26s., bonus 19s. 6d., liable to a reduction), and laundry. The Lady Superintendent lives in the prison, but the rest of the Nursing Staff have quarters away from it, with mess room, recreation room, bathrooms and separate bedrooms. The nurses mess together and share expenses, the cost of food amounting to about 14s. a week.

The Nursing Staff have an average day of eight hours. The day begins at 6.30 a.m., breakfast is at 7.50, and they return at 8.45 a.m. At 10 a.m. those who have been on late duty the evening before go off duty for the day. The section remaining on duty have 1½ hours off for dinner, and go off at 4.40 p.m., when they are succeeded by the section who come on duty from 4.40 p.m. to 10 p.m.

The hospital wards are in a separate section of the prison, and include 47 beds in all; one large ward, and the others separate cells—open to the inspection of the nurse, and readily supervised.

I learnt that there are not a great many cases of acute illness in Holloway Prison, and any serious operation cases are at once removed to the Great Northern Hospital, Holloway Road, N.; but, at the same time, many of the prisoners are under the normal standard of health. All are seen by the doctor on admission, and only about one in three is able to be put to do any kind of work.

The Nursing Staff have two days off duty a fortnight, which can be taken together, and they can get away on the previous evening, thus securing three nights away.

M. B.

The Prince of Wales will lay the foundation-stone of the new headquarters of the Royal Association in Aid of the Deaf and Dumb at Shepherd's Bush on Tuesday, April 22nd, at 3 o'clock, and will receive purses from children towards the £10,000 urgently required to place the work of the association on a satisfactory basis.

Lord Stanmore, Treasurer of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, has received a cheque for £9,468, representing the total sum resulting from "Fleet Street Week for Bart's." This is a splendid result, for which the Press may be warmly thanked.

Miss Ellen Terry appeals for helpers for a "Daffodil Day" in London on March 14th in aid of the Ellen Terry National Homes for Defective Blind Children, and to extend the scope of the other activities of the Braille and "Servers of the Blind" League. Offers of help should be addressed to her at 3, Upper Woburn Place, W.C.1, marked "Personal."

Mr. Francis Pelham Whitbread has been elected Treasurer of Guy's Hospital in succession to Lord Goschen. Since 1914 he has been vice-chairman of the House Committee.

NOTICE.

Will members of the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council who have not yet paid their Annual Subscriptions kindly note that they were due on January 1st. Also that the expenses of propaganda work, of which the Council undertakes so large a share, are very heavy, and donations will be gratefully received.

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