

HYGIENE AND MORALITY.

MISS LAVINIA L. DOCK, of the Nurses' Settlement, New York City, the Honorary Secretary of the International Council of Nurses, has added another to the books she has written for nurses, in "Hygiene and Morality."*

This book is one of many results of the great effort which is being made to crush venereal diseases by publicity and the dissemination of knowledge about them. Societies for the prevention of social diseases are springing up in almost all lands. A Meeting with this object recently held in England was addressed by some of the most prominent men in the country, statesmen, clergymen, doctors and others; and all agree that one of the first things necessary to the improvement of present conditions is a widespread knowledge, especially among young people.

Nurses often have opportunities, because of the intimate relation which they sustain toward patients and their families, to help the Social Purity Crusade to an extent which is perhaps denied to all others but doctors themselves. Miss Dock's aim is to arouse nurses to their responsibility in this respect, and to make it possible for them to exert their influence intelligently.

"Hygiene and Morality" is, as its author calls it, "A Manual for Nurses and others, giving an outline of the Medical, Social, and Legal Aspects of the Venereal Diseases." The book grew out of a paper presented by Miss Dock at the International Congress of Nurses in London, in 1909, and has for its chief purpose, "to reiterate the social significance of the venereal diseases and the crusade upon which women should enter in regard to them." It is divided into three parts, the first being a careful and scientific description of the venereal diseases with some statistics as to their prevalence, precautions to avoid accidental infection, etc. The pitiful condition of the child who has inherited syphilis is emphasized, and the relation of syphilis to other diseases and to crime is dwelt upon. The writer quotes the opinion of Ravogli that much crime, particularly of a cruel and degraded sort, is due to the injurious action of syphilitic virus on the vascular system and structures of nerves. Ravogli says also, "A strange relation exists between syphilis, crime and prostitution; cases of prostitution which cannot be explained by poverty or by special accident have to be attributed to hereditary syphilis. Prostitution and crime go hand in hand, and in the families where the brothers are criminals the sisters are prostitutes."

Part second deals with the attempts which have been made to control and regulate prostitution and the White Slave Traffic, with the crusade

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against regulation by the abolitionists. Investigation has shown that real depravity is not a frequent cause of prostitution. Rev. G. P. Merrick, in his *Work Among the Fallen*, says that out of a hundred thousand cases personally known to him he had not found a hundred who did not loathe the life. Figures giving the ages at which girls were led into prostitution show the largest number at about seventeen. As long as four-fifths of the prostitutes are not willingly so (many authorities make the proportion even greater), but are driven into the life by poverty, or accidentally, or deliberately snared while almost children, there can be no talk of punishment for the women. When prostitution can be reduced to the small proportion of willing prostitutes, then punitive measures may well be resorted to, or confinement after the manner of inebriates' homes.

Examination has proved a failure because it was of women only and not of men, and could include but a small proportion of the women involved. In Paris in 1903, 5,000 women were examined, and there were 50,000 clandestines. The author says, "It is surprising that the plan of examining women only while men were unexamined should ever have been advanced as worthy of being taken seriously." And she quotes Dr. Morrow, the President of the American Society of Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis, as saying, "The health officer of a port might as well attempt to prevent the importation of infectious disease from a plague-infested vessel by quarantining the infected women while permitting the infected men to go free."

The chapter on the White Slave Traffic gives a terrible picture of the trade in girls and young women which has been and is carried on in many countries on the continent of Europe and in the United States. It is very much the same story in every place. The girl being entrapped in some way, is deprived of all ordinary clothing in which she could appear on the street and is kept a prisoner. She is made to go in debt to her keeper for a wardrobe, and all her hope of ever escaping from the life is systematically taken away. The investigations of District Attorney Edwin W. Sims, of Chicago, and his assistant led them to believe that some 65,000 American girls and 15,000 aliens are being entrapped yearly for this trade.

The age of protection for girls has been raised in most of the States of the United States as a result of the indignant protests of women against the inadequacy of the old law, which was originally fixed at ten years.

Part three takes up the principles of prevention of the social diseases. As the causes are moral they must be met by moral prevention, and this involves the complete rooting out of prostitution. Something can be effected by legislation, but the only absolute cure will be in building up the moral tone of the whole community until it is above such degrading pursuits.

When it is necessary to write about such a horrible subject at all, it must be attacked boldly and plainly, and Miss Dock has done so without compromise or sentimentality. Continued reference is made in the book to

the work of Mrs. Josephine Butler, and it is written with an enthusiasm which suggests this pioneer social reformer. Miss Dock is an ardent suffragette, and her indictments of man-made laws are scathing and at times even unjust. Most of the leaders in the present Crusade for Social Purity are men, so the author gives a wrong impression when she implies that all justice for the downtrodden women must be wrested from the unwilling hand of man by women alone. Miss Dock seems to forget that it is only within comparatively recent years that the State has begun to realise its responsibility to provide for its citizens, men and women, and even when necessary, to protect them from themselves. Improvement in laws regarding social problems is seen markedly in the present day, as a result of a more enlightened public conscience, even where women have not had the vote. Most men, even those utterly opposed to giving women the suffrage, are convinced of the value of having a woman's point of view in the management of public affairs, and women are continually being appointed on Royal Commissions and various committees for investigation and reform.

One could wish that the author had produced evidence to sustain some of her statements, such as the sweeping accusation she makes on page 107 when she says that the British law-makers previously made imperfect laws for the protection of young girls, purposely to maintain a supply of victims for the institution of prostitution.

While it has lost in value by this antagonistic attitude toward men, and apparent readiness to impugn their motives, the book is eminently wanted, and nurses and social workers in India who meet this terrible scourge and its problems every day will find its pages a great help in their work. The Bibliography shows extensive study, making the book a valuable addition to the literature on the subject, while the names of Dr. Elizabeth Hurdon and Dr. Florence Sabin are sufficient vouchers for the accuracy of the scientific part of the book.

THE NURSING WORLD.

THE *British Journal of Nursing* for July 16th has a photograph of Miss S. Grace Tindall of the Cama and Allbless Hospitals, Bombay, with a very interesting little account of her career. Miss Tindall had a wide nursing experience in Egypt before she came to India.

Miss Mildred Heather-Bigg, Matron of Charing Cross Hospital, is the newly elected President of the Matron's Council of Great Britain and Ireland, in which post she succeeds the late Miss Isla Stewart.

The *British Journal of Nursing* also gives an instructive resumé of an address by Major Ronald Ross on Missionaries and the campaign against Malaria. Major Ross thinks that as the priest was in barbarous nations the "Medicine man" and was foremost among the people in learning about and