

HILLSBOROUGH HOUSE INEBRIATES' HOME

Under the guidance of Commissioner Cox I inspected a number of the London Women's Institutions of the Army, first visiting the Hillsborough House Inebriates' Home. This Home, a beautifully clean and well-kept place, has accommodation for thirty patients, twenty-nine beds being occupied on the day of my visit. The lady in charge informed me that these patients are expected to contribute 10s. per week towards the cost of their maintenance; but that, as a matter of fact, they seldom pay so much. Generally the sum recovered varies from 7s. to 3s. per week, while a good many give nothing at all.

The work the patients do in this Home is sold and produces something towards the cost of upkeep. The actual expense of the maintenance of the inmates averages about 12s. 6d. a week per head, which sum includes an allowance for rent. Most of the cases stay in the Home for twelve months, although some remain for a shorter period. When the cure is completed, if they are married, the patients return to their husbands. The unmarried are sent out to positions as governesses, nurses, or servants, that is, if the authorities of the Home are able to give them satisfactory characters.

As the reader who knows anything of such matters will be aware, it is generally supposed to be rather more easy to pass a camel through the eye of a needle than to reclaim a confirmed female drunkard. Yet, as I

have already said, the Salvation Army, on a three years' test in each case, has shown that it deals successfully with about 50 per cent of those women who come into its hands for treatment as inebriates or drug-takers. How is this done? Largely, of course, by effecting through religious means a change of heart and nature, as the Army often seems to have the power to do, and by the exercise of gentle personal influences.

But there remains another aid which is physical.

With the shrewdness that distinguishes them, the Officers of the Army have discovered that the practice of vegetarianism is a wonderful enemy to the practice of alcoholism. The vegetarian, it seems, conceives a bodily distaste to spirituous liquors. If they can persuade a patient to become a vegetarian, then the chances of her cure are enormously increased. Therefore, in this and in the other female Inebriate Homes no meat is served. The breakfast, which is eaten at 7.30, consists of tea, brown and white bread and butter, porridge and fresh milk, or stewed fruit. A sample dinner at one o'clock includes macaroni cheese, greens, potatoes, fruit pudding or plain boiled puddings with stewed figs. On one day a week, however, baked or boiled fish is served with pease pudding, potatoes, and boiled currant pudding, and on another, brown gravy is given with onions in batter. Tea, which is served at six o'clock, consists--to take a couple of samples--of tea, white and brown bread and butter, and cheese sandwiches with salad; or of tea, white and brown bread and

butter, savoury rolls, and apples or oranges.

It will be observed that this diet is as simple as it well can be; but I think it right to add, after personal inspection, that the inmates appear to thrive on it extremely well. Certainly all whom I saw looked well nourished and healthy.

A book is kept in the Home in which the details of each case are carefully entered, together with its record for two years after discharge. Here are the particulars of three cases taken by me at hazard from this book which will serve to indicate the class of patient that is treated at this Home. Of course, I omit the names:--

A.B. Aged thirty-one. Her mother, who was a drunkard and gave A.B. drink in her childhood, died some time ago. A.B. drove her father, who was in good circumstances, having a large business, to madness by her inebriety. Indeed, he tried to commit suicide by hanging himself, but, oddly enough, it was A.B. who cut him down, and he was sent to an asylum. A.B. had fallen very low since her mother's death; but I do not give these details. All the members of her family drank, except, strange to say, the father, who at the date of my visit was in the asylum. A.B. had been in the Home some time, and was giving every satisfaction. It was hoped that she will be quite cured.

C.D. Aged thirty. C.D.'s father, a farmer, was a moderate drinker, her mother was a temperance woman. Her parents discovered her craving for drink about ten years ago. She was unable to keep any situation on account of this failing. Four years ago C.D. was sent to an Inebriate Home for twelve months, but no cure was effected. Afterwards she disappeared, having been dismissed from her place, and was found again for the mother by the Salvation Army. At the time of my visit she had been six months in the Home, and was doing well.

E.F. Aged forty-eight; was the widow of a professional man, whom she married as his second wife, and by whom she had two children, one of whom survives. She began to drink before her husband's death, and this tendency was increased by family troubles that arose over his will. She mismanaged his business and lost everything, drank heavily and despaired. She tried to keep a boarding house, but her furniture was seized and she came absolutely to the end of her resources, her own daughter being sent away to her relatives. E.F. was nine months in the Hillsborough Home, and had gone as cook and housekeeper to a situation, where she also was giving every satisfaction.