

been laid for the mid day meal – as we passed through. In every house the day room was gay with flowers and plants, and in one case a common Boston fern had been so carefully cherished, that its broad fronds had grown ten feet long and it was placed up on a high white stand, that they might hang their whole splendid length, without touching the floor.

There is a separate little white walled bedroom for every inmate with window and door of ordinary type, bedstead, dressing-table, looking glass and all that one might expect to find in a girls' boarding school. Each inmate may decorate her room as she pleases with photographs, ornaments and keepsakes from her friends.

Those who are serving the last part of their three years' sentence live in the 'Honour House', unless, which is seldom the case, they have forfeited their right to do so by some act of misconduct. In this house there is one room larger than the rest which is called the 'Honour Room'. For it the girls have made the window curtains and the chair covers and have upholstered the window seat, all in blue and white chintz, and they themselves elect the girl who is to occupy this room. There is self-government in the 'Honour House', the women electing a secretary and other managing officials and making their own rules. There are two day rooms in this house, and in the smaller, a group of twelve women were sitting together doing a little fancy work for themselves, whilst they waited for dinner to be served. They all looked exceedingly neat and fresh in their blue and white print dresses. No two were dressed exactly alike. Some had stiff stand-up collars and cuffs, others wore embroidered linen or lace at the throat. 'They can have their hair and necks as they please', said Dr Davis when questioned on this point, and she explained that as a rule, the women either make their own collars, or have them given to them by their friends.

There was a little stir of excitement in the homes just then, over the dressing of dolls for a bazaar. One of the New York Hospitals keeps a bed always ready for the Bedford inmates and so the inmates were doing what they could to help the hospital in this way.

As we left the house, Dr Davis spoke to one of the girls who met us, 'The silk for your doll's petticoat has come' she said, stopping to admire the tiny muslin dress that the girl had made. We realised in a flash how close and intimate was her knowledge of everyone of these three hundred and fifty souls that she was drawing up from the underworld.

We went next to the disciplinary building where those who become unmanageable are sent. It contains the matron's room and three or four

little cells with wooden floors, well warmed and brightly lighted from the roof, but absolutely bare. Not often is this building tenanted and pitiful indeed are the reasons that bring its occasional prisoners there. As a rule, the trouble begins with a misunderstanding between two friends, for these unfortunate ones crave passionately and jealously for affection. That very day one such case had occurred – a girl had tried to choke herself because her favourite companion had exchanged hair ribbons with another. She had been brought away here that she might not alarm and disturb her companions. Now after a violent fit of weeping her sobs were but just hushed. The matron, whose kindly wrinkled face was full of sympathy and concern, told us that the patient had declared that she would 'be good' and was begging to go 'home', by which she meant the prison cottage where she lived. The matron had promised her that she should go back there as soon as she was quite calm.

In the baby house the children had just waked from their nap and were being dressed in warm red coats, caps, and gaiters to go in the sun. The mothers may keep their little ones with them in this home till they are two years old. Then, if possible, the mother is paroled with the child. If this cannot be, a home is found for the baby, either in a private family or in some children's institute.

One baby girl, who had no mother to nurse her, was the matron's special care. The young mother had been brought out from England by her elder sister, a trusted upper servant in an American family. The girl also went into service and was seduced under promise of marriage. When the man refused to fulfil his promise, she shot him dead and tried to drown herself. She was rescued, but contracted inflammation of the lungs. On her recovery she was sent to Bedford Reformatory, where, after the child's birth, it was found that she had developed tuberculosis. It was necessary that she should be removed to a Sanatorium and on leaving the prison, she begged Miss Davis to keep the child and not to send her to 'an institution'.

She realised that, prison though it is, Bedford is in very truth a real reformatory, a place where bodies are built up, where minds are strengthened and developed, and souls germinate and expand. Dr Davis tells her prisoners that, if they will have it so, Bedford shall be for them an industrial boarding school, and looking at those who have just come in and those who are nearing the end of their term, one sees, almost with awe, the change that this little woman has wrought.