

less continue to take it, so why get ruffled over the question?"

A most interesting discussion has taken place at the Annual Meeting of the Taunton District Nursing Association, and the conclusion arrived at is very important and instructive to district Nurses.

It appears that the Taunton District Nursing Association, by their Superintendent and Nurses, were recently attending a poor woman in her last illness. The vicar and curate of the parish in which she resided visited her, and ministered to her spiritual needs up to the day of her death, and, it is stated, were regular in their attendance. Shortly before her death, the Superintendent, Miss Fisher, suggested to the patient, who was in great distress of mind, that a clergyman from another parish should come and see her for the purpose of hearing a confession and giving absolution, and to this she assented, and a curate from another parish was brought in without any intimation being given to the clergymen who were previously visiting her, but who, it is only fair to say, had hitherto failed in inducing her to receive Holy Communion. The woman subsequently received Holy Communion from the curate of her own parish in the presence of the Superintendent of the Taunton District Nursing Association. After some time the facts of the case were discovered by the vicar of the parish in which the patient resided, and formed the subject of a complaint to the Chairman of the Committee.

The matter being talked about in the town, Miss Fisher insisted on the whole subject being discussed at the Annual Meeting, at which she contended that she had broken no rule of the Association, and had acted up to the rubric of the Prayer-book which says "That, if anyone by self-examination is unable to quiet his or her conscience, he is enabled to go to the incumbent of the parish or any other minister." In this case the vicar and curate of the parish failed to prevail on the dying woman to receive the Sacrament, and another clergyman was called in who succeeded.

The vicar, Mr. Kingdon, and the curate considered themselves much aggrieved by Miss Fisher's action, and said "it was extremely wrong from every point of view" to call in another clergyman. Now it will be more sensible for these gentlemen to learn that people have as much right to choose their own clergyman as to choose their own doctor, and it is a monstrous assumption that a Nurse should not help a dying woman to obtain the services of any minister she chooses to ask for.

Miss Fisher stood her ground admirably and said if re-elected as Superintendent she should act again in exactly the same way if the same circumstances arose. She contended that she had done her duty, and as to the accusation

that she had not reported to the vicar that another clergyman had been called in, she drew attention to the rule of the Association which stated that the Nurses should consider strictly confidential all matters which came to their knowledge concerning their patients.

Miss Fisher's excellent work among the sick poor and the affection and respect in which she is held was dwelt upon by many of the speakers. And her action in this matter is completely vindicated by the fact that she was re-elected as Superintendent of the Association.

The time-honoured custom of the dressers of our Hospitals keeping for use in the *post-mortem* room, the ward, and the theatre, the oldest and dirtiest coats they own, really seems to stand a chance of being numbered with the things of the past. It was refreshing, on visiting University College Hospital the other day, to note that all the dressers wear white washing coats in the wards. It would appear that the authorities at University are advanced enough to believe that there is danger that "the wily microbe" may be found to inhabit masculine as well as feminine articles of dress, and have wisely legislated for their Hospital accordingly. They are surely to be congratulated on their wisdom in so doing. It is to be hoped that other Hospitals will quickly follow suit.

By the invitation of Canon and Mrs. Barnett, the Members of the Toynbee Nursing Guild met for a social and business gathering on March 24th, at the Warden's Lodge, Toynbee Hall, E. The Guild numbers some fifty-six ladies, and was recently started with a view to continuing the instruction gained in Ambulance and Nursing classes. Monthly lectures have been well attended and weekly bandage practices as well. It is proposed later on, when the Members have become more efficient, to register a list of Members willing to give temporary assistance in sick visiting under the direction of existing Nursing agencies. Further particulars can be obtained from the Hon. Sec., Miss Wills, 79, Mark Lane, or Mr. W. H. Winny, Hon. Sec., Ambulance Work, Toynbee Hall, E. We sincerely trust that the ladies of this Guild will thoroughly realise the necessarily limited extent of the knowledge of Nursing gained at Ambulance lectures, and that they will perform no duties for the sick poor unless under the *direct* superintendence of Trained Nurses.

The Board of Guardians of the Westminster Union have had attention called to a grave scandal in their Infirmary, when it was shown that at times one Nurse was left in charge of 120

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