

ment, and the injuries of the patient," at the St. Helens Hospital, the cook of the Institution is sent as an expert witness upon these matters. The Coroner, with slightly veiled sarcasm, considered that "it would be far more satisfactory to have the evidence of a nurse" than that of the "poor cook." Hannah Dobbin, the official in question, saw the deceased admitted, and was present when he died, and the Coroner elicited that it was the cheerful habit at this hospital "when they think there is going to be an inquest to call in the cook at the last moment, so that she can give the jury and himself proof as to death!!"

The Coroner went out of his way to express the opinion that he "did not pin much faith on medical evidence," a matter which, with all deference, we can hardly consider a judicious or a judicial utterance; his duty as a Coroner merely being to arrive at the truth concerning the deaths of those upon whom he holds an inquest. And it is quite certain that in a considerable number of cases no right decision can be arrived at, except upon the evidence of an expert. The Coroner's views, perhaps, explain the somewhat contemptuous manner in which this gentleman is apparently treated by hospital authorities in his district; because we can assure him that, in our somewhat extended experience, we have rarely heard of a nurse being sent to give evidence upon medical matters. Upon this supposition, the St. Helens Hospital simply seems to go one step further than the other hospitals to which the Coroner referred—by sending a cook, instead of a nurse.

But, even if this obvious explanation be correct, we feel compelled in the interests of the nursing profession to protest against nurses being treated in such a manner. Their duty consists, and moreover begins and ends, in carrying out faithfully, and also to the best of their ability, the medical directions which are given them for the care of their patients. They are not qualified to describe the causes of death; and it is placing them in an altogether false position to call them as expert witnesses upon such a matter.

To send a cook, however, instead of even a nurse, to give evidence in such an inquiry, opens up a question of great importance to the public. It illustrates, in the first place, not only the methods of management in force at St. Helens Hospital, whereby it seems to be the duty of the cook to be present at the

admission and death of patients. It also, once more, proves the manner in which the public are defenceless to protect themselves against any person who is engaged by an unconscientious employer to act in the capacity of a trained nurse. According to the paragraph in question, the cook at St. Helens Hospital was merely a witness of the patient's admission and death; but, in many instances in our knowledge, domestic servants have been dressed up, or have attired themselves—either by order of their employer, or at their own will—in the garments of a trained nurse, and have in the latter capacity undertaken the responsible duties of nursing the sick, to the danger of the public—and at the ordinary fees paid to thoroughly trained nurses. The case to which we have drawn attention is an interesting illustration of the well known fact that, in nursing matters, the public are without knowledge, and are therefore unable to protect themselves.

Annotations.

AT the Annual Meeting of the Central Committee of Poor Law Conferences, held last week at the Guildhall, the question of nursing, both in large and small infirmaries, was extensively dealt with. Dr. J. M. Rhodes, chairman of the Chorlton Union, in an able paper on the "Employment of Trained Nurses in Workhouses," expressed liberal and advanced views as to the treatment of nurses by Boards of Guardians. These bodies must, says Dr. Rhodes, provide satisfactory accommodation for the nurses—satisfactory to the nurses—not only to the guardians. He assumes that, as a matter of course, in every well organized workhouse the nurses are provided with a sitting room, and separate bed rooms, and that no nurse's sitting room is "decently furnished" without low armchairs. Dr. Rhodes, has also, we should imagine, studied the "Charter of Liberty for Nurses" of the Chairman of the London Hospital, while his views as to diet as well as salaries are wise and liberal. We hope many guardians will take Dr. Rhodes's remarks to heart, for we are afraid that there are very many Unions in which the arrangements for the comfort of the nurses do not approximate to the conditions laid down by Dr. Rhodes as essential.

Miss F. M. Chapman (Tisbury Union) read a paper on the "Nursing of the Sick Poor in

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