

### Annotations.

#### "ENTIRELY FREE FROM BLAME."

WE fear a very grave injustice was done when the Manchester City Coroner included Miss Brooks, a nurse on day duty at the Crumpsall Infirmary, in his severe expression of censure at the recent inquest on Frances Atkins, who died from an overdose of Batley's mixture, administered by the night nurse; and we are much pleased to observe that the Visiting Committee of Crumpsall Infirmary have brought the matter before the Manchester Board of Guardians.

At a recent meeting a report was presented in reference to the case, when the committee said: "that it appeared that the conclusion of the jury respecting Nurse Brooks, who was also censured, was founded on a misapprehension, as the solution of opium was not, in fact, left with the ordinary medicines, but was placed in a separate locked cupboard, specially used for it and the chloral mixture. The committee very much regretted that this fact was not clearly brought out in the evidence laid before the jury, as the consequence had been that an unmerited censure was passed upon Nurse Brooks, who, it was now clear, was not guilty of any negligence, and was entirely free from blame."

We feel sure that, when the true circumstances of the case are laid before the City Coroner, he will withdraw any words used by him which included Nurse Brooks in the censure, which amounted to accusing an innocent person of having, by carelessness, caused the death of a fellow creature.

We are informed that the matter has caused Nurse Brooks the deepest grief and distress of mind, and we feel sure, now that the truth is made public, that she will have the sincere sympathy of the entire nursing profession. We tender to her our individual sympathy, with the hope that, now that her innocence has been proclaimed, she will speedily regain happiness and peace of mind.

#### BRUTALITY v. SCIENCE.

THE report of the proceedings of the Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain, at a recent meeting held in Edinburgh, has given the public a severe shock. It is reported that

Dr. Wilson, superintendent of the Mavisbank Asylum, Midlothian, read a paper on "The Mismanagement of Drunkards," in which he said he would like to see a clause in the Habitual Drunkard's Bill at present before Parliament which would provide for the flogging of drunkards under appropriate and necessary provision, and that this novel sentiment was received with "Hear, hear, and some laughter!" In Dr. Wilson's opinion, the notion of heredity did nothing to help the drunkard, but everything to injure him. The latter felt he was compelled to give way to drink. A young man so influenced should be flogged within an inch of his life every time he took drink. Another excuse used with great effect by the drunkard was the myth of a crave for alcohol. The crave was a very exceptional thing.

Physicians should be careful how they popularised the result of their inquiries. They should agree that the appropriate treatment for the alcoholic crave was a good blistering and application of plasters, and he would guarantee that there would be no craving in Scotland for the next five years. Relatives expected drunkards in retreats to be pampered as they were at home. They were inveterate idlers who had to be taught to work; they were untruthful, slanderers, and intensely selfish, and had to be taught that their amusement and comfort was subservient to the general good of the house.

Dr. Clouston, Superintendent of the Morningside Asylum, Edinburgh, said they had too long been subjected to mawkish sentimentalism. Every man who became a disgraceful inebriate, had passed through a stage at which they might have been saved by the application of such treatment as Dr. Wilson advocated.

If medical men in charge of asylums for the insane are not ashamed to publicly advocate such a system of treatment is it astonishing that horrible scandals in connection with the treatment of the insane are of constant occurrence? In our opinion, medical men who own to sympathy with the old demoralising system of maltreating the mentally afflicted should be summarily removed from positions of power over them.

We should imagine that so long as the sentiments above expressed are taken to represent the views of the authorities at Mavisbank and Morningside Asylums, the public will hesitate to place their mentally afflicted relations in those institutions.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)