

Annotations.

"EFFICIENT AS AN UNTRAINED NURSE."

The death of a private in the Imperial Yeomanry in the Asylum Ward of the Westminster Union was the subject of an inquest at the Westminster Police Court, presided over by Mr. John Troutbeck, Coroner. The unfortunate man Waters was found lying in Leicester Square in an unconscious condition and taken to Charing Cross Hospital, where he "quickly recovered." He was then taken to the police court and charged with being drunk. Early the next morning the doctor who saw the man at the police station pronounced him unfit to be charged, and sent a note to the Workhouse saying the man was in a semi-comatose condition. The night nurse at the Workhouse said the man appeared to be asleep whilst she was on duty, and for this reason she did not call the doctor. In the afternoon of the same day the authorities, believing the man to be in a fit, removed him to the male asylum ward, where he died about 11.30 p.m. Dr. Alex. Mitchell gave evidence that when the nurse thought the man asleep he was really comatose from brain pressure. Dr. Frederick Axham, medical officer of the Poland Street Workhouse, said they had no trained nurses, and he did not reside at the Workhouse. "Somebody" gave him to understand that the man required controlling, and he ordered his removal. There was a great objection to a man dying in the receiving ward. The Coroner thought this a very serious statement, and enquired who objected. The witness replied, the public; and added that the removal of the man was most carefully performed; but further enquiry elicited that he was not present. He was not supposed to be called to these cases, but he had to put up with it. The nurse was not trained, so too much could not be expected of her. (In a subsequent letter to the press, Dr. Axham stated that the nurse had been in the employ of the Guardians for four years, and added, "She is efficient as an untrained nurse." We should like to know whercin the efficiency of an untrained woman who undertakes nursing duties consists, and what right the authorities have to place a woman who is untrained in a position of such responsibility.) In summing up the case, the Coroner said that this man was unconscious in the workhouse, and yet for nearly five hours no doctor was sent to him. This was not the proper way to treat sick

people. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death," and added a rider "that the treatment the man received at the Westminster Workhouse is deserving of the severest censure."

The Guardians of the Westminster Union object to this ruling, and consider that the man should have been sent to the Cleveland Street Infirmary, and not to the Workhouse. Anyway, we would advise them not to place sick people in the charge of a person "efficient as an untrained nurse," and also we draw their attention to the evidence, which proved that the male nurse at the Poland Street Workhouse is required to look after six wards, containing 60 troublesome patients—and himself to remain of a sound mind. Is it possible?

QUEEN'S JUBILEE SUPERINTENDENTS IN COUNCIL.

A meeting of Superintendents of Homes for District Nurses in the North of England, connected with the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute, was held last week at the Central Home in Liverpool. About twenty-four superintendents were present, the counties represented including Northumberland in the north and Warwickshire in the south. The object of the meeting was to afford to the superintendents an opportunity for intercommunication of sentiment and experience, and of conferring together on questions affecting the work of district nurses. We observe this onward move on the part of the northern members of the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute with much pleasure. In our own, as in other professions, many questions arise upon which consultation with our colleagues is both helpful and desirable. Matters of general interest in our work also require adjudication, and the time has gone by when these can be settled without reference to the expert opinion of responsible members of the profession concerned. So, as the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland was formed seven years ago, "To enable members to take counsel together upon matters affecting their profession," we now have superintendents engaged in a special branch of nursing organizing themselves for the same purpose. All efforts which tend to break down the isolation of the members of any branch of work, and to result in co-operation and *esprit de corps* are good. An official report of the recent conference is to be issued in which the conclusions arrived at upon the various subjects discussed will be stated.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)