

Nursing Echoes.



The public mind at Epsom has been considerably disturbed of late by the fact that from time to time inmates of the London County Asylums in the vicinity, who are members of the "walking parties" allowed to pass beyond the asylum boundaries make good their escape, and are not—to use official language — "retrieved." One such escape was made recently, and the man, as reported by the *Times*, has terrified several women by leaping out from the cover of hedges.

Another grievance is that small "shopping parties" of lunatics are allowed out from the asylums from time to time, and it is alleged that the shopkeepers suffer because their sane customers do not care to compete over the counters with these unfortunate people.

We do not wonder that a member of the Epsom Urban Council, at the meeting held on Tuesday, moved a resolution to the effect that the asylum authorities shall be asked to increase the watch kept over the patients inside and outside the asylum grounds.

It is interesting that the escapes of women are much rarer than those of men, while fourteen escapes, seven of which were completely successful, have been reported during the last nine months from the asylums for men in the neighbourhood, no woman has succeeded in evading the authorities. Is this to be regarded as evidence of greater vigilance on the part of the women attendants? The last escape recorded of a woman patient was from the grounds of the Manor Asylum in September last, and the Matron promptly gave chase down the main street of Epsom on a bicycle, "retrieved" the runaway, and returned triumphantly in a cab, her charge inside, and the bicycle on the top.

In a little pamphlet entitled "Nursing Amongst the Poor," published by Dulau and Co., 37, Soho Square, W.C. "Titania" gives some of her experiences as a nurse in hospital, district, and private work, as follows:—

District work is indeed the ideal nursing life, for the nurse must face fact and condition, and "necessity being the mother of invention,"

she must be able to do much for the many in so many and various ways. I have had a very fair experience of District Nursing in both North, South, East, and West of England, and I do feel it is the most satisfying of nurses' work.

Sometimes after a single day's round I have tried to count all the various professions and trades to which I have had to apply myself, from the priest, to baptise a child or read the prayers for the dying, the lawyer in both drawing up a will and witnessing the same, the undertaker, the sanitary inspector, relieving officer, policeman, cook, insurance agent, rent-collector, carpenter, sweep, and last, but not least, the "char!"

District nursing is often a spoiling time for the nurse too, as she is considered in every detail, and supposed to be able to give advice on every occasion. Often and often it is to be found that the husband or relation gets up half an hour earlier before going to the day's work, in order to get everything ready for "Nurse," placing paper round the kettle handle, in case it should get too hot, sweeping up the room, and leaving the smallest things ready and clean for Nurse's visit. On occasions when I happen to have been taken ill, I have been surprised at the wonderful sympathy and feeling the poor have displayed, and the extraordinary things which are kept or sent up to "poor Nurse."

Not so long ago I was very ill in my rooms in a very poor part of London, and one man offered to supply me with champagne, another with ice, another with soda water, and another with gravy beef for beef tea, and it was quite touching the way the various children had of saving their farthings, or keeping lumps of toffee or an orange under their pillow for "their Nurse," and when once it was rumoured that I might not get over the illness, a sort of "Round Robin" was arranged to be sent up, stating that I need not trouble about the funeral expenses, that they would "stand for it all," and give me "a rattling good 'un"—in fact, a coster's funeral! And that does indeed mean much!

Of the offerings made to her at Christmas-time, "Titania" writes: I remember one special Christmas Eve very well, amongst presents sent for Nurse were—a fowl reared chiefly in the one and only room under the bed; a pet rabbit brought up under the same conditions; a large loaf of bread, cakes, sweets, etc. One man presented me with a large

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)