

At the annual meeting of the subscribers and friends of the Bridgwater Infirmary an excellent report was given of progress made during the year. Mrs. Okell, the Matron, has done so much to raise the standard and efficiency of the Infirmary that it will soon be a matter of wonder as to what there is left to do. In the spring of the year there was a sale of work held by Mrs. Okell and her friends, with the splendid result of £275 3s. 6d., which has been nearly all expended in structural and other improvements, such as re-furnishing the Board room, Matron's, Nurses', house surgeon's, and servants' rooms. In fact, the money has been so well spent that every section of the Hospital has been benefited and a balance of £15 remains in Mrs. Okell's hands as a "nest egg" towards other "betterments."

A CORRESPONDENT writes to the *Glasgow Herald* as follows:—

"SIR,—Can any of your readers inform me, through your columns, whether there is anything in the regulations affecting Hospital Nurses which prohibits them from rendering aid when off duty in cases of accident? More than one instance of refusal to assist could be given, but one may suffice. A few days ago an accident happened to a baker's van in one of our streets. The horse came down, and the van boy was thrown violently to the ground, sustaining bodily injury. A Nurse who happened to be passing at the time was asked to give assistance, but she refused on the ground that 'being in uniform' she could not act. Now, what was the meaning of this? If Nurses are forbidden to give assistance in such cases it ought to be publicly known, as otherwise one is apt to attribute the refusal to callous indifference.—I am, &c., B."

There certainly is nothing in the ethics of nursing to prevent a Nurse in uniform from giving assistance to an injured person—in fact, all tradition and custom would be in favour of it. We should like to hear more of the incident, but certainly on *prima facie* evidence, it looks as if the Nurse were making a very weak excuse. It is only natural for the public to look for the assistance in time of need of Nurses, and the fact of "uniform" only strengthens the expectation on the part of the bystanders, that the wearer of it would not only be willing, but would be proud to come forward to exercise her skill on the injured and suffering. Her bonnet and cloak would give authority to her action, and the ignorant bystanders, who so often do so much harm in their efforts at "First Aid to the Injured," would gladly fall back and give place to a trained Nurse.

The incident brings us to the question: "Did the Nurse know what to do?" Unfortunately ambulance work is not taught as it should be to Hospital Nurses, and we have

seen, both in and out of the wards, the greatest ignorance on the part of Nurses as to the handling and undressing of injured patients. The writer remembers, after being a Probationer for only three months, being left in sole charge one afternoon in an accident ward, and being responsible for the undressing of two men patients with broken legs. Having had no definite teaching on the subject, she could only follow the dictates of common-sense. But one cannot help feeling that the "preliminary education" of a Nurse should certainly include ambulance work, and very special teaching as to the undressing of patients after accidents.

It is pleasant to glance from the picture of the Nurse who turned her back when she should have done her duty, to a little scene enacted a few days ago in the West End of London. A few doors from a well-known Nursing Home stood a heavy waggon drawn by a horse suffering from extreme bleeding in one of the fore-legs, occasioned by the severing of a vein in the leg. The carman in charge, with the callous indifference often shown by such men, was about to drive the horse away in this condition, but Providence awaited him in the shape of the Superintendent of the Home, who fled out in her charming uniform, lint and bandages in hand, to render "first aid" to the suffering creature.

The carman began by adopting a bullying tone and mutterings of "interference" and "other people's business," but being confronted with the choice of being given into custody for ill-treating his horse, or allowing the Nurse-veterinary to apply her skill to the animal, he sulkily chose the latter, and the Nurse in question proceeded, in the centre of an admiring crowd, to apply a styptic of perchloride of iron on a soft pad of lint, and this she firmly bandaged on. The clever horse, perhaps recognising in the hospital cap the badge of relief to suffering, whether animal or human, submitted without the least display of restiveness or impatience; or perhaps it was the tender touch of a hand used to the care of the sick which impressed itself on his consciousness.

SOME very excellent suggestions as to the improvement of the Nursing arrangements at the Bow Infirmary were brought before the last meeting of the Board of Guardians. A new Matron is being appointed, and with the advanced views held by the Guardians on the Nursing question, it is to be expected that they will appoint a progressive Matron, who will efficiently carry out the suggested improved curriculum.

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