

politan Infirmary a mother visited her child—an infant of fifteen months old—on a Sunday, and found the child recovering well from an attack of measles. On the following Wednesday, she was summoned to the infirmary, and found that the child had suddenly died that morning, the certificate stating that death had been due to convulsions. It is asserted, however, that this baby was placed in an ordinary bed and not in a cot, that a band was tied across it to keep it in the bed, that the child fell out upon the floor with this bandage round its neck, and that, when it was found, it was discovered to be dead. We will, of course, express no opinion upon these statements until an inquiry has been held into the matter, but we agree with our esteemed contemporary, the *Daily Chronicle*, that an inquiry should most certainly be held into these statements.

But, on the nursing question, and presuming that the statement is correct as to the child having been placed in an ordinary bed, we are compelled to express the opinion, which will be shared by all well-trained nurses, that an infant of fifteen months old should, in any public institution, be invariably placed in a proper cot in which its movements can be made without danger to itself. The facility with which young children fall out of bed, and the dangerous injuries which they thereby sustain, are well known to every hospital worker. In the homes of the poor, it is probably impossible to accommodate children at night except in one large bed, probably with other occupants; and the presence of the mother is, as a rule, sufficient protection for the child in such a case. But, in a public institution, with a nurse perhaps not always watching, it is easy to understand that an infant might fall from an ordinary bed with fatal results; and if a bandage had been tightly placed across the child to prevent such an accident, it needs little imagination to understand how easily, with an infant's restless movements, the string could become wound round its neck, and how the child could be strangled before its condition could be observed or help could be given. Putting, therefore, any particular case entirely on one side, the mere possibility of a fatal consequence being caused by such means becomes sufficiently apparent to make it a matter of importance that every nurse should understand these facts, and take the necessary precautions to prevent the occurrence of such a catastrophe.

Annotations.

THE VIRTUE OF PUNCTUALITY.

THE need of the habit of the observance of punctuality on the part of nurses is one to which our attention has been recently directed by the fact that the want of punctuality, when off duty, of their nurses, has been brought before the Belfast Board of Guardians. Absolute punctuality is a virtue which cannot be too rigorously insisted upon if the wheels of a public institution are to run smoothly, and it is not one of the least important of a matron's duties to enforce this. The times at which the nurses leave and return to the hospital should be noted down, or the nurses themselves should sign a book, which should every morning be placed in the matron's office for her inspection. All nurses who overstay their leave, or who are late on duty, or at meals, should, as a matter of course, report themselves to her. If this rule be carried out, unpunctuality will not be a common occurrence, but any laxity on the part of the matron in this particular is felt at once through the institution. "This matron, *she* don't care," once remarked the official responsible for recording the comings and goings of the nurses in an institution which, under another régime had been remarkable for its punctuality, and the moral of his remark was that neither did he; and his record was somewhat of a "work of fancy and imagination" in consequence. "I was only late once all the time you were matron" said a nurse to a lady well known to us, "and then you were at the top of the steps waiting for me when I came in, but after you left it didn't matter a bit whether we were late or not." "It will do now, it wouldn't have done once upon a time" was another remark made to a nurse with regard to an irregularity in her pass. It is obvious that laxity in one particular means laxity in all. Nurses who exceed their leave will probably be also five minutes late on duty. They will not think that a quarter of an hour or so matters in the administration of medicines, neither will their fomentations be changed up to time. The insignificance of the deviation of a few moments from the time allowed off duty is not, therefore, so unimportant as it may at first appear to a casual observer, and nurses who have been trained under a matron who was a strict disciplinarian in this particular will recognize

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