

The danger of nurses taking drugs, except under medical direction, is one to which we have often alluded, and cannot too strongly emphasize. The habit is a most harmful and insidious one, and nurses who habitually drug themselves, very seriously undermine their health, even if, as in the present instance, more serious consequences do not ensue. The moral deterioration of drug-takers is also well known. The consequences of taking drugs are fully as injurious as those which ensue upon the habitual and excessive use of alcohol; and nurses, from the very fact of the dangerous facility with which they can obtain both alcohol and drugs, should, in our opinion, abstain from their use, except under medical direction.

PRISON INFIRMARIES.

THE fact that a lad of seventeen years of age has hanged himself with his pocket handkerchief in the observation cell of the infirmary in Wormwood Scrubbs Prison calls attention to the necessity for further organization in the nursing departments of prison infirmaries, and also to necessity of punishing a young and emotional lad in some more merciful and rational way than by solitary confinement. To a boy who was not ashamed to cry for his mother such a method of punishment must have been exceptionally severe and inappropriate. We are glad to know that the nursing of prison infirmaries is one which is receiving the attention of the authorities. In our civil hospitals, no man or woman, however reprobate, is refused admission if seriously ill. Sickness, not character, is the recognised passport of admission, and no one would seriously deny the right of the inmates of our prisons to skilled nursing in sickness, or desire that their punishment should be increased by remediable and unnecessary suffering.

THE SIRDAR'S SHAMBLES.

THE above is the heading of an article in *Concord*, the official organ of the International Arbitration and Peace Association, from which we make the following quotations:—

"While the spokesmen of the nation, the bishops and other Christian elders included, were engaged in welcoming the Tsar's historic project, 20,000 dervishes were being blown to bits outside Omdurman; and the chaplains of the Anglo-Egyptian Army were reading a solemn service of thanks and praise to God

because, as the Sirdar put it in his official message, 'Gordon was at last avenged.' We hasten to range ourselves beside Mr. Wilfrid S. Blunt and Sir Wilfrid Lawson, who have written manfully in the *Times* and *Manchester Guardian* respectively in protest against this sickening and disgraceful spectacle. It is with a shock of horror that we have witnessed the outburst of ferocious joy with which large numbers of Englishmen received the news of this festival of Lyddite shells and machine guns. We challenge any sane man to attempt to realise that battlefield, and then to stand up in God's daylight and say that it is good."

Dealing with the allegation that Soudanese soldiers were told off to kill the dervish wounded, because, in their last extremity, "they made the battlefield impassable for our own soldiers, and because every wounded man who is saved must have proper medical attention, which means diminishing the precious stock of lint and other necessaries, besides making fresh demands on the limited staff," as recorded in one of the special correspondent's messages, the journal says:—

"It has been left to a British Army to reach the lowest depth of infamy in the soldier's bloody calling. Let us hear no more of the atrocities of savage tribes. One must go back to the Armenian massacres to find a parallel for this devilish battue. We begin to understand why the Sirdar objects to the presence of prying journalists. . . . And the wives and children and aged dependants of these 20,000 fighting men, where are they? Food for the vultures, no doubt; and those who are left, what an admirable nucleus of a contented nation they will make! England's sun sinks steadily in her eclipse, and against the falling orb goes up the smoke of the Sirdar's shambles. Does any man of us all really find comfort in the thought that Gordon is avenged?"

And still we call ourselves a Christian nation, and pride ourselves on our humanity, our enlightenment, and our civilization. We think that the Chaplains of the Anglo-Egyptian Army would be better occupied in calling for a day of humiliation, on account of our national disgrace, rather than in conducting services of thanks and praise for the avenging of Gordon—the most humane and generous of men. We cannot believe that the Queen, whose reign has been characterised by consideration for humanity, can approve of the butchery of wounded and defenceless men.

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