

trained as nurses. But, we emphatically hold that all attendance upon the sick, which is not medical or surgical treatment, is nursing; there is room for no third class. It is nursing to handle the bed-ridden, it is nursing to keep away from him things which are harmful to him, and it is nursing to keep his room in proper order. In the present case we learn that there is little doubt that one of the attendants gave the man the knife; this supports our contention, because, had the attendant been a trained nurse, he would have known the danger of allowing a delirious, or mentally deranged, patient to obtain possession of a knife, or of keeping it where there was a possibility of his obtaining it. No one supposes that the attendant handed the knife to the patient with the deliberate intention of allowing him to cut his throat, but, his ignorance prevented him realizing the danger of this action.

Another important point is, who was responsible for the nursing of the patient? Obviously, if a patient has two special nurses those nurses should be responsible for his safety and efficient nursing, but, if the persons entrusted with his care are not nurses, but simply watchers, then some one must be responsible, and the responsibility falls, unjustly, it appears to us, on the Sister of the ward to which the special room is attached. She cannot be in the room, and cannot consequently know what is going on there, but, nevertheless, she is liable to blame because her untrained assistant acts as no trained nurse would act. Lastly, it will be remembered that within the last twenty years these untrained watchers were the usual attendants of the sick at night. We ourselves have vivid memories of women night "extras," who pursued their own avocations in the day, and who at night were deputed, arranged in bombazine gowns, black stuff aprons, chenille caps, and false fronts, to attend the sick in hospital wards. Such a system has now been universally recognized as impossible. The sooner it is realized that male "watchers" are inadmissible in any place which professes to afford skilled care to the sick, the better. Of course, this involves the whole question of the proper training of male nurses—a problem which must be dealt with and solved in the near future; because there is no doubt that a large field exists for properly trained male nurses. The medical profession has decided to have no more unqualified assistants. Why should they have unqualified nurses?

Annotations.

THE WOMAN PAYS.

WE give publicity to an occurrence in which a nurse has been the loser of the sum of 12s. 9½d., owing to the carelessness of a Post Office official, because it involves a question of some importance to nurses, besides consequences which may be serious to the public.

The case is briefly that a nurse was telegraphed for to attend a case of diphtheria at Harrow. Owing to carelessness in the transmission of the telegram, upon delivery it appeared that the nurse was required at Harlow, and she at once left for the latter place. Upon arriving there, she found that there was no such address as that which had been given her, and that there was evidently a mistake. She accordingly returned to town, and was met at Liverpool Street by a representative of the office which had sent her, and by whom the mistake had been by this time discovered, and re-directed to Harrow. Upon application by the office to the General Post Office for the out of pocket expenses incurred by the carelessness of its official, the Department disclaimed all liability, having protected itself by a regulation that the Postmaster General is not responsible for loss or damage sustained by those using its services. The position therefore is that owing to the carelessness of the Department, a most critical case is kept without the services of a nurse, while the nurse takes a journey in an entirely wrong direction. The office which sent her is put to considerable inconvenience, and the nurse herself, besides suffering much annoyance, is compelled to pay for her needless journey, to the extent of a quarter of a whole week's salary.

The Post Office, therefore, actually encourages carelessness on the part of its officials by exempting them from all pecuniary responsibility when mistakes, owing to their carelessness, are made. It appears to us, and we think it will appear in the same light to the public, most unjust that a working woman should, besides suffering much annoyance, be compelled to pay for the negligence of a servant of a State department. The employé who makes a mistake should be made to pay, and we guarantee that the Post Office management would be considerably more efficient.

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