

Nursing Echoes.

* * *All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.*



A QUESTION of some difficulty has been placed before us which is, briefly, what redress has a Matron or medical man who has given a testimonial to a nurse who afterwards proves herself unworthy of confidence. In the case in point a nurse who was leaving an institution obtained some testimonials, and subsequently asked the Matron's permission to attend a Bachelors' Ball held in the town. The Matron declined to give the nurse leave, firstly because she was going out herself that evening, and, secondly, because she thought it an inadvisable proceeding. The Matron went out on the evening in question, and on her return desired a maid to tell the nurse that she wished to speak to her, when she received the answer that Nurse — went to the Bachelors' Ball some time ago. The Matron therefore waited up until the nurse returned, and about 2 o'clock the key of the back door of which the nurse had possessed herself, was turned in the lock, and the nurse appeared.

WHAT is to be done in such a case? It is usually said of nurses that, whatever their failings may be, they do not neglect their patients, and yet, here was a flagrant instance of it. But the nurse had taken the precaution previously to procure testimonials by which she could obtain another post. The story emphasizes the necessity for Committees in every case to apply directly to the authorities of the institution which a nurse is leaving, besides considering official testimonials.

HOSPITAL nurses all know the type of patient who longs for home when ill and warded, and how difficult it is sometimes to persuade these patients to remain in the hospital, and several deaths have lately taken place of patients determined at any cost, and regardless of warnings, to return home. Such a case came before the Lambeth Coroner's Court last week, when the wife and daughter of a man called Clark, removed by them in an ambulance from the West London Hospital, attempted to make the hospital authorities responsible for the immediate death of the patient. With forethought the Sister had obtained the

signatures of the parties to the statement "John Clark leaves the West London Hospital on his own responsibility," so that the jury exonerated the hospital authorities from all blame. Had the Sister not taken this wise precaution, another verdict might have been found.

WE are glad to notice that the cost of each nurse in connection with the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association is reckoned at from £80 to £100 per head. We do not think that if nurses are to be adequately paid that it is possible that they should be maintained for a less sum.

ATTENTION has been drawn in the press to the case of a death which occurred in the night in Kidderminster Workhouse Infirmary, and which remained undiscovered until the following morning. It transpired at the inquest that the only provision for the nursing of 189 patients during the night was the attendance of one probationer, who had the assistance of one male pauper over seventy years of age. The probationer, therefore, cannot be held responsible, except in so far as she undertook work which there was no possibility of her performing—always an unjustifiable proceeding. But those primarily responsible, and who are deserving of the gravest censure, are the Guardians who make such inefficient arrangements for the nursing of the sick under their care. We hope the Local Government Board will bring them up with a round turn.

AT the conclusion of the inquest into the deaths of Superintendent Nurse Evans and Nurse Barker, in consequence of an explosion of ether in the Rochdale Workhouse Surgery, the jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death," and made the following recommendations: (1) That ether be placed in the schedule to the Petroleum Acts as an explosive, (2) That it be kept in bottles stronger than those hitherto used in the workhouse surgery, (3) That the system of receiving medical goods at the workhouse requires considerable alteration, and (4) That the surgery door at the workhouse should have handles fixed on the inside. With regard to the last recommendation, it would seem that the surgery door was opened on the inside by a key, which, at the time of the accident Nurse Evans was wearing on a guard round her waist. The sad deaths of these two nurses will impress upon all those whose duty it is to handle ether the necessity for the utmost caution in approaching it with a naked light. The accident in the present case was due to no want of care on the part of either of the nurses, who died, as all nurses would wish to die, in the performance of their duty.

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