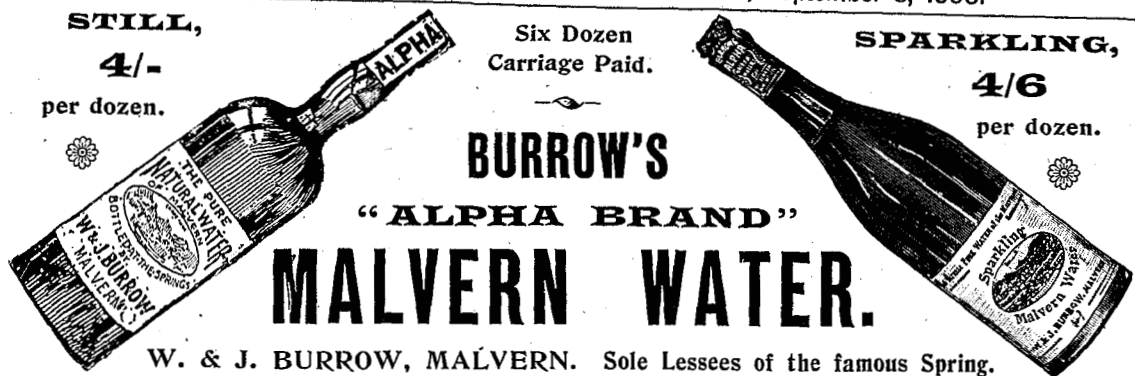


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Editorial.

PROFESSIONAL MANNERS.

THE assertion made by a dying woman at Walthamstow, who died after giving birth to a child, that the two "nurses" who attended her had "done nothing but laugh and giggle the whole time," is one which is worthy of the attention of the nursing profession, though at the same time we may hope that the women concerning whom it was possible for a patient to make such a statement were not members of the profession which quite unjustly has to bear the brunt of the misdeeds of many persons who are unconnected with it.

The facts briefly are that the woman who had had eight children, and on each occasion had been delivered by means of instruments, was attended by the two nurses. Dr. William Henry Bathurst, of Walthamstow, was eventually called in, and delivered the patient, but told the nurses that the woman was bound to die, and that nothing could be done for her. At the subsequent inquest he stated that if a doctor had been sent for earlier the patient's life might have been saved. She must have been in labour for two or three days.

The nurses absolutely denied the charges

of giggling and laughing, and declared that the patient had received every attention.

The jury returned a verdict entirely exonerating Dr. Bathurst from blame, and added that the nurses should have sent for medical aid earlier. This fact is so self evident that we do not propose to enlarge upon it. In a case in which instruments had been used eight times previously it was unquestionably a midwife's duty to call in medical advice. If the nurses were not aware of the fact, then they failed in their duty in not discovering it. At present we are concerned with the assertion of the dying woman that the nurses had done nothing but laugh and giggle the whole time. The lesson of this most painful incident should be turned to account. Nurses who are constantly in attendance on midwifery cases, and look upon them as "all in the day's work," are not always as considerate of the patient's feelings, and so careful of their own demeanour as they should be. Their manner should make it quite impossible for such an idea as the one quoted above to occur to a patient. Further the manner should not be put on with the uniform to suit the occasion, but should be instinctive, the outward expression of the deep inward sympathy with all sickness and suffering which is the hall mark of every true nurse.

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