



Letters to the Editor.

NOTES, QUERIES, &c.

Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not IN ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.

THE METROPOLITAN STREET AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION.

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."

SIR,—In view of the approaching London County Council elections, may I be allowed to call attention to the purpose of the Metropolitan Street Ambulance Association, of which Mr. Reginald Harrison, F.R.C.S., is President.

At present this Association is composed entirely of London medical men, and is thoroughly representative of the whole profession.

The members include the President of the Royal College of Physicians, the President of the Royal College of Surgeons, members of the staffs of all the London hospitals, and the best-known men from every County Council constituency.

The intention of the Association is to impress on the public and their representatives in the County Council the urgent need of an efficient street ambulance organisation for London, and to collect such irrefutable evidence from every metropolitan district as shall lead Parliament to sanction the establishment of such a service by the Council.

In order to carry out these objects, the Executive Committee have appointed one or more medical men in each of the fifty-eight constituencies to act as local secretaries, and, when necessary, to become the chairmen of sub-committees.

The reports received from every quarter prove beyond doubt that the public generally are keenly interested in furthering the adoption of a scheme of this nature, and it is expected that candidates of all parties will therefore give it their active support.

London has now at its disposal the following arrangements for dealing with the 12,000 to 15,000 street casualties requiring removal each year:—

1. Mr. H. L. Bischoffsheim has placed in various parts of London, at his own expense, fifty-six ambulances to be used by anyone who will fetch them.
2. The St. John Ambulance Association has about twenty-five stations where stretchers or litters are available for anyone who knows where to find them, besides three stations where officials are on duty.
3. The police keep at each of their stations one or more ambulances or litters, often of a very unsatisfactory type, to be used by themselves for drunken people or for casualties. They also have three horse ambulances for the whole of London, but these are not available at a moment's notice.

With such arrangements, not even aided by telephonic communication (except in the case of the chief station of the St. John Association), it is not surprising to learn that from 8,000 to 10,000 of these severe accident cases have to be taken to hospitals or to their own homes each year in cabs or in other unsuitable conveyances.

Only medical men can thoroughly appreciate the dreadful waste of life, added suffering, and further injury that must take place under circumstances of this kind.

Those who are accustomed to see the dangerous accidents occurring daily in the neighbourhood of the London Docks and elsewhere, and the manner in which they arrive at the hospitals, are astonished at the continued delay of the authorities in providing the necessary ambulances.

On investigation it would probably be found that the expense of an adequate scheme would not be so great as is often supposed, as many of the existing arrangements might advantageously be retained or adapted; the police might continue their excellent "First Aid" work, but could be relieved of the necessity of accompanying their patients for long distances. The telephones belonging to the post office and to private individuals might by arrangement be made available, and ample room could be left in any scheme for such philanthropic work as has been so generously done by Mr. H. L. Bischoffsheim and by the St. John Ambulance Association.

I am,

Your obedient servant,
ARTHUR JAMES, M.D., D.P.H.,
Honorary Secretary.

69, Gloucester Terrace,
Hyde Park, W.

TYRONE INFIRMARY: THE NURSING QUESTION.

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."

DEAR MADAM,—As the nursing controversy in the Tyrone County Hospital has been referred to in your largely circulated and influential journal, I shall feel obliged if you will have the kindness to insert the following letter which I have addressed to one of our local newspapers.

Yours faithfully,
EDWARD THOMPSON.

Omagh, February 19th, 1904.

To the Editor Tyrone Constitution.

SIR,—Although I have over and over again explained to the Right Rev. Monsignor M'Namee and the Board of the County Hospital the exact position of the nursing question, and notwithstanding that frequent and very unpleasant and acrimonious discussions have occurred in the Board-room, I have never yet been able to convince the Monsignor that his complaints are not justified by facts. Even the newspaper reports, which have been full and creditable to the reporters, have not put fully before the public the real facts. I shall, however, now do so. First I shall deal with the past under the old grand jury system, and, second, under the new Local Government Act. 1st. Prior to the Local Government Act, we, unfortunately, had only a few Catholic nurses. The sole and only reason for this was that when vacancies were announced we had very few applications from suitable Catholic candidates. I always recognised the justice of the contention that in the appointment of hospital nurses, as in all other things, there should be absolute equality between Protestants and Catholics, and, acting on this principle, I went out of my way to try and get Catholics to apply, but failed to do so. The old Board of Governors also wished for equality, but it was out of their power to appoint candidates who seldom pre-

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