

placing what might prove to be a grave temptation before their nurses, they would surely take some steps in the matter. The training of a nurse is not only a question of her efficiency while in the wards of the hospital, but of her whole future career and of the influence she may have over those with whom she is brought in contact. No good Matron thinks lightly of the enormous responsibility which rests upon her with regard to the welfare, present and future, of the nurses under her care. And I think she would shrink from the idea that even *one* of her nurses should fall into the terrible sin and degradation of intemperance, and be able to trace that fall to the habit of depending on alcohol which she acquired in the days of her training.

And now, when the temperance question is not the mere "hobby" of a few, but is one of the most important questions of the day, would it not be well for some definite temperance teaching to form a part of every nurse's training? It is, I think, as important for a nurse to understand the reason why alcohol is no longer so freely ordered as it used to be in a large majority of cases as it is for her to understand the principles of aseptic surgery. In almost all hospitals lectures are given to the nursing staff. Generally one course of the lectures is given by the Matron, and I think it would frequently be possible for her to introduce one, at least, dealing with the temperance question. Or would it be feasible for some of the temperance societies to send speakers to give one or more lectures conveying the information which would be most useful for a nurse to know?

These, of course, are mere suggestions, and there might be many better plans, but my object will have been fully gained if I have drawn attention to an opening for temperance work which, so far as I know, has hitherto been overlooked.

H. G. B.

### Legal Matters.

#### ACTION FOR SLANDER AGAINST A PATIENT.

At the Birkenhead County Court last week, before Judge Bowen Rowlands, K.C., the hearing of an action for slander, remitted from the High Court, was brought by Dinah Griffiths, "a ladies' nurse," of Wickliffe Street, Rockferry, against Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Taylor, of Bedford Road, Rockferry. Mr. Swift, for the plaintiff, said that in June, 1903, she attended Mrs. Taylor. Two days after the confinement she became rather seriously ill, and eventually left; she was in bed for four weeks. Subsequently both defendants had uttered slanders, to the effect that the plaintiff was drunk when in attendance on the patient, and had neglected both her and the baby. The defence was that the allegations had not been made, and that the words used had not the significance attributed to them.

The plaintiff stated that during the two days of

her illness at defendants' house she took a bottle of stout each night for her sickness, and had altogether about ninepennyworth of brandy.

After some evidence had been taken the case was adjourned, the judge making a strong recommendation that it should be settled.

#### THE STOCKPORT CASE.

Nurse Griffin, who recently was called upon to resign her appointment at the Stockport Corporation Hospital, has sued the Corporation for £8 6s. 5d. for salary and special expenses in lieu of notice, and the Corporation has paid into court the full amount claimed.

At a meeting of the Town Council last week, Dr. Smeeth said the trouble was brought about by a nurse who had been called upon to leave refusing to do so until she had stated her case. She asked three times to appear before the Committee, but it was not until she made certain complaints that the Committee agreed to hear her. Dr. Smeeth referred to various complaints affecting the usefulness of the hospital. Of these, two may be mentioned. He reported that:—

1. The cook came and told Miss Griffin to prepare a bed for an important case. The cot was prepared, and the cook came in carrying a "patient" wrapped in blankets. It was placed in bed, when suddenly the Matron's dog jumped out with a yelp. There were eight patients in the ward in the acute stage of scarlet fever.

2. About Christmas the Matron gave a dance in an infected pavilion, and outsiders were present. Dancing and "carryings on" went on until late in the morning, while in the next room a girl lay dying, and was being visited by a clergyman. It was barbarous, and ought not to have been tolerated. The dance should have been put off. He moved the whole matter should be referred back for consideration.

We have often expressed our views as to the incongruity of dances in hospitals, and entirely agree with Councillor Sharples, who said that pleasure in one ward and death in another were not in the best interests of the borough, and of the patients in the hospital. An institution devoted to the relief of the sick and dying is the last place in which dancing and merriment should be carried on all night. Added to this, surely the lack of appreciation of responsibility involved in inviting outsiders to an entertainment in an infected pavilion, if the facts are as alleged, is patent.

Lady Amphill is taking an active interest in the supply of trained nurses to the sick public in the Madras Presidency, and it has been decided to found an institute in Madras with an English-trained Matron and several locally-trained nurses, who could be supplied either up-country or in the Presidency town at reasonable rates.

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