

healthy habits of life without any invalid ways, and has learnt to believe that she is thoroughly recovered and to take pleasure in ordinary pursuits. In one case the patient, who had been great in the hunting field in her youth, was persuaded as she improved to begin to ride again. She had not been in the saddle for sixteen years, but her fears soon left her, and the exercise and exhilaration that accompanied this recreation had a most beneficial effect on her nerves.

During the later stage of treatment both pleasures and steady occupation with an encouragement in sympathy for others should form part of the system.

A. M. S.

### The Witham Disaster.

The railway accident to the Cromer Express, which took place at Witham as the train was entering the station on September 1st, was indescribably terrible. The advantage of having small nursing institutions scattered throughout the country was demonstrated when the events of last Friday taxed the resources of the neighbourhood to the uttermost.

The St. Alban's Diocesan Institution for Trained Nurses has its headquarters at Witham. When the news of the accident reached the Home the nurses went immediately to the scene of disaster, and with the help of others in the neighbourhood worked almost without ceasing all day and through the night. Doctors were speedily on the spot, and in an incredibly short time they, with the help of the nurses, were rendering first aid to the injured. The dead were removed to a building near by, and except for the cries of the children, a marked silence prevailed, as the workers set themselves to their awful task with admirable coolness and ability. The inhabitants of kindly Witham came forward and helped in every possible way; every door was thrown open, and "all things were in common."

The uninjured passengers were cared for and sent on their way, and in due time the greater number of the injured were removed to their homes or to Colchester and Chelmsford Hospitals.

The most curious fact in regard to injuries was the absence of crushing and mangling and the immunity of the lower limbs. Nearly all the injuries were to the head and upper limbs, and the number of fractures was comparatively small.

In the absence of the Matron of the Witham Institution, who was on holiday, Miss R. B. Crittall, being in temporary charge, did admirable service in attending to the injured, sitting up with them at night and generally organising the nursing arrangements. Nurses Whitehouse, Squibb, Willings, and Cannel, of the Witham Institution, also worked with great devotion and ability. Other nurses who assisted were Nurse M. Luard, of the Sussex County Hospital, Nurse Barwell, Nurse Easton, and the District Nurse from Hatfield Peverel.

### The Select Committee on Nursing.

The Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Registration of Nurses, together with the proceedings of the Committee and the Minutes of Evidence, has now been issued in a Blue Book, which is obtainable through any bookseller, or from Wyman and Sons, Ltd., 109, Fetter Lane, Fleet Street, E.C., in England; from Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh; and from E. Ponsonby, 116, Grafton Street, Dublin, price 1s. 8d. It should be procured and studied by every nurse who takes an interest in the affairs of her profession.

#### TERMS OF REFERENCE.

Let us briefly consider the terms of Reference of the Committee, and their verdict.

On June 24th, 1904, it was ordered:—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the expediency of providing for the Registration of Nurses."

At the close of the session the Committee agreed to report the Minutes of Evidence taken before them to the House, with a recommendation that a Committee be appointed in the next session of Parliament to continue the Inquiry."

On March 30th, 1905, a Select Committee of the House of Commons was again appointed, the Terms of Reference being the same.

#### VERDICT.

The Committee, after having examined a number of witnesses, report to the House of Commons the following decision:—

Your Committee are agreed that it is desirable that a Register of Nurses should be kept by a Central Body appointed by the State, and that while it is not desirable to prohibit unregistered persons from nursing for gain, no person should be entitled to assume the designation of "Registered Nurse" whose name is not upon the Register.

Briefly, after a most exhaustive inquiry, the verdict of the Committee vindicates the views of those nurses who for the last seventeen years, under the most adverse conditions, have worked consistently for the Registration Cause; thus proving that all the forces which can be brought to bear by vested interest, perversity and prejudice, can be overcome by steady work against heavy odds, when the worker is inspired by the enthusiasm and tenacity which have their root in a firm belief in the justice and rectitude of a Cause.

#### THE WITNESSES.

An analysis of the witnesses—we can find but thirty-three of the thirty-four mentioned by the Committee as having been examined—shows that numerically those who supported the principle of the Registration of individual nurses far exceeded those who were in opposition.

#### For Registration.

*Matrons and Nurses.*—Mrs. Bedford Fenwick (Hon. President International Council, and Hon. Secretary Society for State Registration of Trained Nurses), Miss Isla Stewart (Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital), Miss Huxley (President of the Irish Nurses' Association), Miss Amy Hughes (now General Superintendent Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses),

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)