

Legal Matters.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF POISONS.

The administration of medicines is one of the most responsible part of a nurse's duty, and, if she is to give these intelligently, she should be taught before she is allowed to undertake it, the usual doses of, and the effects which may be expected from, the drugs she is called upon to administer. Had this been the case in a recent occasion the fact that she was administering a grain and a half of morphia to a patient suffering from bronchitis must have caused a nurse giving it at least to suspect that there was some mistake.

The case which leads us to comment on this subject occurred at the Hanwell Asylum, and was the cause of an inquest on Saturday, January 9th, on the body of a patient who died there.

At the inquest, Nurse Carr said that she had prepared medicines for three patients, which were contained in different mugs. As she wished to go off duty she arranged with another nurse to give the medicines.

Nurse Morris said she had been told by Nurse Carr to give the deceased patient the dark red medicine, the second patient the light red, and the third the green.

The Coroner asked the witness if she walked round the ward saying to herself: "Dark red for so-and-so; light red for so-and-so; and green for the other"? This way of administering medicine was a most happy-go-lucky one.

Dr. Howell said that the dose of medicine wrongly given to the deceased contained a grain and a-half of morphia, but he was satisfied that it had in no way accelerated the patient's death, which was caused by chronic bronchitis.

The verdict was in accordance with the medical evidence, and the Coroner, asking for Nurse Carr to be re-called, informed her that the jury were of opinion that she had shown great carelessness, and it was lucky for her that the morphia had not been responsible for the death of the patient.

We are glad that Dr. Howell was able to give an assurance which justified the jury in exonerating the nurse from accelerating death, for a dose of $1\frac{1}{2}$ grains of morphia is certainly a large one to give to a patient suffering from bronchitis, and in some cases might have injured the patient, but the chief lessons of this case are that no nurse should give drugs, and especially poisonous drugs, to a patient without knowing what she is giving, and to administer medicines by the rule of thumb method of distinguishing them by their colour, is quite indefensible, and unworthy of a nurse of intelligence. Surely, also, after a patient has had a large dose of a narcotic, the nurse in charge should watch, and report on, its effect. Further, in giving medicines to several patients, one dose should be poured out and administered before the next is measured. In regard to dosage and the effects of drugs, these should be taught to the pupils in every hospital and asylum nursing school, but where this is not done we advise all nurses to procure Miss L. L. Dock's "Text Book of Materia Medica for Nurses," and teach themselves.

Examinations in Hygiene.

An intelligent knowledge of the laws of health is essential in order to maintain the standard and fitness of the race, and the Examinations held half-yearly throughout the country by the Institute of Hygiene have done much to stimulate this knowledge, and these Examinations are now recognised as a most practical and important branch of educational work.

The Institute acts as an examining body only, and does not hold classes; but the candidates, who are chiefly school teachers, have every facility offered to them in regard to their preparatory studies at home or under tuition. Good general knowledge must be shown to secure the certificate, and advanced general knowledge to secure the diploma of the Institute, while honours can be secured in special subjects, such as:—

The Hygiene of the Home.
The Hygiene of Motherhood.
The Feeding and Rearing of Children.
Food and Cooking.
Home Nursing and First Aid.
School Hygiene.
Physical Training.

The awards have just been made by the Examining Board, and the following are the successful candidates at the last examinations, viz:—

Certificate.—Ida M. Broadbank, Susanna A. C. Cann (honours in "School Hygiene"), Ethel R. Hambridge (honours in "Home Nursing and First Aid" and "School Hygiene"), Winifred Howe, Lilian Humphreys, Ethel L. Kitching, Mary S. Mayhew, Ivor C. Morrison (honours in "Hygiene of the Home"), Annie Newell (honours in "School Hygiene"), Jessie North (honours in "Hygiene of the Home" and "School Hygiene"), Margaret E. Richardson.

Diploma.—Linda Bagguley, Joseph H. Brailsford (honours in "School Hygiene"), John Bramall, Catherine J. T. Dalkin, Harrington H. Eaton (honours in "School Hygiene"), Ethelinda France, Annie M. Humphreys, Kate Jackson, Herbert Jelley (honours in "School Hygiene"), Edith Kelly, Elizabeth Mattinson (honours in "Hygiene of Motherhood"), Ivor C. Morrison (honours in "Hygiene of the Home"), Alice Rhoden (honours in "Home Nursing and First Aid"), George A. Roff.

QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S IMPERIAL MILITARY NURSING SERVICE.

The following ladies have received appointments as Staff Nurse:—Miss C. E. Aldridge, Miss E. R. Thomson, Miss M. O. Greenaway, Miss F. E. S. Manning, Miss O. F. Stinton.

Postings and Transfers.—Sisters: Miss B. N. Daker, to Mil. Hosp., Devonport. Staff Nurses: Miss I. M. L. du Sautoy, to Roy. Victoria Hosp., Netley; Miss W. M. Gedye, to Royal Victoria Hosp., Netley; Miss A. H. Esden, to Royal Herbert Hosp., Woolwich; Miss H. C. Johnston, to Cambridge Hosp., Aldershot; Miss A. C. W. Teevan, to Cambridge Hospital, Aldershot, on appointment.

Arrivals.—Miss M. E. Harper, R.R.C., Sister, from South Africa.

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