

Every available room has for some time been pre-engaged, and by the end of the week the whole of the first 54 patients are expected to be in residence, while 17 more have been accepted as suitable and are waiting for accommodation.

### The Hemel Hempstead Tragedy.

We have received for publication a letter on the above subject addressed to the President of the Local Government Board by the Workhouse Nursing Association, and signed on its behalf by its Patron, H.R.H. Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, and other officers.

The letter draws attention (1) to the state of things revealed by the case of Nurse Bellamy, including the deplorable uncertainty of the Local Government Board's Orders and Rules governing the administration of workhouses and infirmaries, the consequent laxity of the manner in which effect is given to them, and the grave distress and danger to the inmates which result; (2) to the cruel position in which young women may find themselves who obtain the positions of nurses in the smaller institutions; and (3) the undesirability of combining the offices of Clerk to the Guardians, Coroner, and Clerk to the Justices in the same person. The letter concludes by stating that it is a big blot on the laws of our land that it should be possible for our workhouse sick poor to be subjected to such incompetency and insufficient protection as this case discloses, and that nurses and others should be appointed who are unfit for the discharge of the duties they will be called upon to perform. The letter, however, fails to draw the logical and inevitable conclusion that until there is a definite standard of nursing education maintained by State authority, and the term "trained nurse" has a definite meaning, nurses with inadequate training will be employed by Guardians and others who have at present no means of judging of a nurse's qualifications and knowledge to the "grave distress and danger" of the sick.

The Hemel Hempstead Guardians, in consequence of the attitude adopted by the Workhouse Nursing Association, have asked for a local Government Board inquiry into the circumstances connected with the recent deaths of three inmates, and have passed a vote of confidence in their clerk.

#### NURSE BELLAMY'S DEFENCE FUND.

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

DEAR MADAM,—In reply to your letter, I should be glad if the Defence Fund is still kept open, as the expenses have been very heavy. The amount collected so far is about £42.

I should like to thank all for their great sympathy and generous help.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

WALTER M. ASTE.

1, Ballingdon Road, Battersea, S.W.

[We hope that when the legal expenses are paid there may be a little money over for Nurse Bellamy's personal needs, until she can get work.—Ed.]

### Legal Matters.

#### INFIRMARY PATIENT DISCOVERED WITH FRACTURED THIGH.

At an inquest recently held at Parkhurst, Isle of Wight, concerning the death of an epileptic girl in the Isle of Wight Union Infirmary, it transpired that this patient was discovered on July 20th last with a fractured thigh. The doctor who gave evidence regretted that he had not sooner been notified of the accident. When he arrived on July 20th first aid had already been rendered. He admitted that he should like the nursing staff increased, and stated that in his opinion the girl's death was due to epilepsy and not from the fractured thigh.

The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence, and expressed regret that the Head Nurse did not immediately report the occurrence to the Medical Officer or the Master, and were of opinion that the hospital was greatly understaffed in view of the fact that one night nurse was proved to have been in charge of thirteen wards at the time of the accident.

This verdict has been referred by the Guardians to a Committee of the whole Board. It is one with which everyone must agree. As we last week reported, a new Superintendent Nurse has now been appointed, but the Guardians must also maintain an adequate nursing staff if the sick poor, for whose welfare they are responsible, are to be efficiently nursed.

#### PATIENT'S ARM FRACTURED BY NURSE'S ROUGH HANDLING.

At the West Riding Court, Sheffield, last week, Annie Woodrow, a nurse at the Wadsley Asylum, was charged with ill-treating a patient, Hannah Batherham, on September 24th. Mr. J. E. Wing, on behalf of the Director of Public Prosecutions, stated that the defendant, with another nurse named Roland, was in the day room attending to the patient. Nurse Roland said the patient was sitting on the floor making a noise; she saw the defendant go up to her and take hold of her wrist, and heard the bones crack as the defendant twisted it. The patient cried out in pain that the defendant had broken her arm, and Nurse Woodrow then dropped it. Nurse Roland said: "Oh! Annie, didn't that arm crack?" The incident was not then reported, as Nurse Woodrow asked her to say nothing about it.

The next morning, when the patient was got up, she screamed with pain, and in consequence the arm, which was very much swollen, was examined by Dr. Vincent, the acting Medical Superintendent, when he found a fractured ulnar, and undue mobility of the wrist, caused by undue strain on the bones. The defendant pleaded guilty, but it was urged in her defence that the arm had been previously broken, and no more violence was used than was absolutely necessary.

The Bench, taking into consideration that the nurse had been dismissed from her employment, imposed a fine of £2 and costs, a sentence which will hardly act as a deterrent in other cases.

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