

Very Much at Sea.

EFFICIENCY FIRST—ALWAYS?

SCENE—A COUNCIL CHAMBER, POTTLE-ON-SEA.

Chairman: Ladies and Gentlemen,—We have met to-day to consider, as you will see by the agenda, the desirability of an Isolation Hospital for this town. We sometimes have cases of fever and often of diphtheria, and once we had a case of small-pox. The nearest hospital is twenty miles away; our town is growing, and though very healthy, many people think that an Isolation Hospital is a necessity, as we cannot send infectious cases to the Cottage Hospital.

Mr. Readyman: Mr. Chairman, I am sure we must all see the necessity of having an Isolation Hospital of our own, and I propose that we use the look-out station on Dead Man's Rock for the purpose. It would save the expense of building another, and would thus save the pockets of the overburdened ratepayers. The site is healthy, being open to every wind that blows, except the westerly ones.

Chairman: Let us decide first of all whether we are to have a hospital or not.

Dr. Black (Medical Officer): If I may be allowed to speak, I would object to Dead Man's Rock. The name is rather suggestive.

Alderman Stoggs: That could be altered.

Dr. Black: I am afraid you would never get any woman to spend a night on the Rock, however you might juggle with its nomenclature.

Ald. S.: We don't want any women on it.

Dr. B.: What are you going to do for nurses, then?

Ald. S.: Nurses are different; they are trained not to mind a little wind.

Dr. B.: A little wind? Are you aware that the last gale took away one of the doors of that building and carried it out to sea?

Mr. Readyman: We would have to alter the doors and put them on the landward side.

Dr. B.: May I ask how you are going to get your patients there?

Mr. Readyman: There is a donkey track.

Dr. B.: You cannot carry patients on a donkey's back. I suppose you would want me to go there in the same manner? I tell you my motor won't go within a mile of the place, and I won't walk.

Miss White: I was in a large hospital the other day, and I was distressed at the way the nurses walked and stood. May I suggest that we have our nurses trained to stand and walk properly; then they could be on their feet for hours without getting fatigue or flat foot.

Chairman: Order, please. Before we teach

our nurses how to stand let us decide if the hospital is a necessity.

Mr. Green: Hear, hear. I don't see that it makes any difference if a nurse walks or stands badly. Most Englishwomen have those faults.

Miss White: Indeed it does matter. We train our police, soldiers, and sailors to stand and walk; why not our nurses?

Mr. Green: We shall have to engage nurses who have been trained, so the chances are that they will be already flat-footed. Anyway, we can say in the advertisement that only flat-footed nurses need apply.

Rev. T. Porker: Has it occurred to anyone that these nurses will be our servants, and as such will come under the Compensation Act? It would mean a terrible burden on the rates if they were hurt by a portion of the edifice falling upon them during the progress of those fearful gales which often visit us.

Mr. Green: We will have unmarried nurses, so that there will be no one to compensate in case of accident.

Rev. P.: Pardon me, but I am told that many nurses help to keep their relatives. One whom I know personally helps to maintain her widowed mother.

Mr. Green: Well, that is easily managed; we will only take nurses who are orphans—flat-footed orphans.

Chairman: Really, gentlemen, this is wandering from the point.

Rev. P.: You may well say so. I never heard such nonsense talked at a meeting before. Dead Man's Rock is wholly unsuitable as a site for a hospital, and I am sure no one would ever go to it.

Mr. Green: A good thing, too. I am sure the way that people go to hospitals nowadays is disgraceful. They ought to stay at home and be ill.

Dr. B.: I am afraid the Council is forgetting that this is to be an isolation hospital, and we don't ask people if they want to go; we simply send them. There is another question, that of supplying the nurses: strong-minded enough to live on the Rock with provisions.

Mr. Readyman: Donkeys could carry all they would eat.

Dr. B.: I have heard of donkeys being blown off the cliff path into the sea.

Mr. Green: They could live on preserved and tinned things in bad weather.

Miss White: I object. Tinned things are most harmful. You could not expect nurses to eat things you would not touch yourselves.

Chairman: Come to the point, please. Are we going to have a hospital or are we not?

Mr. Readyman: It's like this—if we can use the building on Dead Man's Rock, we shall

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