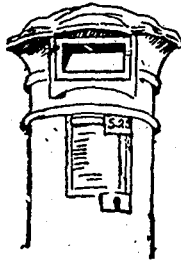


Letters to the Editor.



Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not in any way hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

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

DEAR MADAM,—The case reported by you of the death of an infant owing to the scalds sustained by being bathed in too hot water by a nursery attendant at the Horncastle Workhouse, and the decision of the Coroner that "although it was not a wise act on the nurse's part in placing the child in so hot water, yet she did it inadvertently, and therefore it was a case of accident," seems to indicate the necessity for amending the Children's Act.

The clause designed for the protection of children from scalding runs as follows:—

"If any person over the age of sixteen years who has the custody, charge, or care of any child under the age of seven years, allows that child to be in a room containing an open firegrate not sufficiently protected to guard against the risk of the child being burnt or scalded, without taking reasonable precautions against that risk, and by reason therefore the child is killed or suffers serious injury, he shall on summary conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding ten pounds:

"Provided that this section shall not, nor shall any proceedings taken thereunder, affect any liability of any such person to be proceeded against by indictment for any indictable offence."

If a kettle boils over and a child is scalded in the absence of a child's parent or guardian, it may reasonably be argued that it was "not a wise act" to leave the kettle unprotected, but "it was a case of accident," yet the law recognises the right of the helpless child to protection, and authorises the imposition of a fine of £10 on the person responsible.

Surely if the employee of a Board of Guardians—a public authority which has assumed responsibility for a child—immerses it in a bath of such hot water as to cause its death, a similar penalty should be imposed. The unfortunate infant would not benefit, but the punishment might impress the need for taking "reasonable precautions" in the future. If a definition of "reasonable precautions" is asked they consist in testing the temperature of the water with a thermometer before immersing the infant. Surely helpless children in the care of the State should be entitled to this amount of protection.

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,
A LOVER OF CHILDREN.

BARBAROUS CRUELTY TO PIT PONIES.

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

DEAR MADAM,—Many are the barbarities perpetrated in trade and encouraged—often unknowingly—by kindly people, but it is hard to conceive anything more distressing than the fate of that poor hopeless slave of modern civilisation, the pit pony, the treatment of which is a crying shame to this great nation. There can be absolutely no question as to the horrible and revolting cruelty which prevails among many of the men and boys employed in our coal mines. While it is quite true that the conditions under which the human workers are employed are far from what they might be, and in some cases are, I believe, very bad, those of the hapless ponies are many times worse. Besides being forced to pass their lives in unnatural surroundings, covered with sores and bruises, hardly ever seeing the light of day, tasting a blade of fresh grass, or breathing a whiff of pure air, they are kicked and cuffed, beaten with thick staves or pickshafts, and deprived of food and water for long periods. Barbarities even worse than these are not unknown. Such is the exceeding brutality in some mines that animals have had their sight deliberately destroyed, or had their tongues torn out by the roots; sometimes they have been fatally wounded or killed outright by a savage blow. All this may be safely and emphatically stated. Those of your readers who wish for further information should write to Mr. Francis A. Cox, the energetic Secretary of the National Equine Defence League, 27, Beaconsfield Road, New Southgate, who has issued several excellent leaflets on this terrible subject and has done so much to draw attention to the sufferings of the pit pony.

Yours faithfully,

JOSEPH COLLINSON.

London, N.

[At the Notts Police Court last Saturday a pitboy was sentenced to two months' hard labour for twisting a pony's tongue till he wrenched it out of his mouth.—Ed.]

Comments and Replies.

Private Nurse.—There is no legal method of detaining a non-criminal inebriate against his will, but, under the Inebriates Acts a person who signs a "Request for Reception" before a Justice of the Peace can be detained for the period for which he signed.

NOTICES.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE STATE REGISTRATION OF TRAINED NURSES.

Those desirous of helping on the important movement of this Society to obtain an Act providing for the Legal Registration of Trained Nurses can obtain all information concerning the Society and its work from the Hon. Secretary, 431, Oxford Street, London, W.

OUR PUZZLE PRIZE.

Rules for competing for the Pictorial Puzzle Prize will be found on Advertisement page xii.

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