

My landlady called me at 4.30. "Oh, nurse!" she said, "it is a terrible morning; not fit for you to go. In half an hour I was on my way to my patient. It was pitch dark, an icy wind was blowing, and it was snowing heavily. I reached my patient's house at last, everything was in readiness, and soon I was on the return journey. Having reached my rooms I changed rapidly and after a hasty breakfast, I set out for a four-mile walk to the station. By this time a violent snow-storm had set in, but I caught my train and sat for the written examination.

The next day I heard was to be my oral examination at 10 a.m. I was obliged to return to my district so that I could get up and do my necessary work before leaving for Hereford. This day dawned no better than the last. Rain instead of snow was coming down in torrents. As before, I was up at 4.30 a.m. and off to my work, and at 7 I set off for the four-mile walk to catch the first train to Hereford.

Half way to the station I met a man who said, "I am afraid you will find the water out, nurse." And to my horror I realised this meant "floods." Another half mile and I found his words were only too true. The road and meadows for a quarter of a mile were entirely covered with water. To pass was impossible, my only hope was an early milk float. The rain was coming down pitilessly and the cold and biting wind added to my miseries as I endeavoured to get what shelter I could under a friendly tree. I laughed aloud as I realised what a miserable figure I must appear, and thought hopelessly of the coveted R.S.I. Certificate rapidly vanishing out of my reach. By this time the chance of catching my train was growing more and more remote. Was it worth trying? Just then I heard wheels, and the next minute I was in Farmer Devereux's cart and we were ploughing through the water. Ten minutes more we were at the station. "Train gone, nurse," said the porter, and once more I felt fate was indeed unkind. The next train would make me two hours late for my oral. Was it any good trying? I wanted that certificate so badly, and so I decided to make one more effort, and immediately sent a telegram to the Royal Sanitary Institute Health Examiner saying, "Candidate A. E. unavoidably delayed by floods; regrets cannot arrive before twelve."

Needless to say, my journey to Hereford was a wretched one. Would they see me or not, that was the question. Arrived at my destination, I found all the women had gone. Cold, tired, hungry, wet, and unnerved, I anxiously watched the fateful door, waiting for the usher to appear. Could I face the situation? The next minute a voice said, "Madam, they will see you now," and before I had a moment to reply I was in the presence of the examiners, and rain, snowstorms, floods, winds and darkness were forgotten, and I was doing my best to rise to the occasion. Six days later I heard I had passed!

E. M. S.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON VENEREAL DISEASES.

At the thirty-eighth meeting of the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases evidence was given by Sir William Osler, Regius Professor of Medicine in the University of Oxford.

Sir William stated that the official statistics of deaths published by the Registrar-General were totally inadequate to represent the actual incidence of venereal diseases; for instance, in 1910 the deaths from syphilis in England and Wales were given as 1,649, but this was a very unsatisfactory and incomplete estimate. It was necessary to take into consideration and add a very large number of deaths appearing under other descriptions.

If regard were had to these he thought that it would be safe to say that of the killing diseases syphilis came third or fourth. Gonorrhoea he regarded as one of the great disabling diseases, causing an enormous amount of ill-health and playing a very large part in the production of blindness.

Sir William laid stress on the importance of early treatment of these diseases and was of opinion that every general hospital should provide in respect of them, out-patients' accommodation and proper accommodation in the wards. It was part of the work of the governors of hospitals to provide for these diseases and they ought not to be left out; in the past they had been too much neglected by the charitable public.

Sir William was in favour of compulsory notification of venereal diseases and thought there was a possibility that this would result in some concealment, but he thought that this was a risk that might now be taken.

On the question of the education of medical students Sir William was strongly opposed to their being dealt with as a special subject added to the curriculum, with special lectures and an additional set of separate examination questions. He considered that if this education could be given in out-patients' clinics and in the wards and by general teachers it was as much as could be expected of the student, looking at the short space of time at his disposal and the great congestion of the curriculum.

Sir William thought that it would have an immense effect if the public were instructed by means of lectures regarding venereal diseases. Lectures of this kind, he thought, should not be given by a layman but by a well-trained medical man who should be provided with proper diagrams and slides. It would be a very useful thing if the lecture could be widely given to the senior forms of the big public schools, in the universities and at large institutions employing many persons.

He was not in favour of teaching sex physiology or hygiene to young children.

At the thirty-ninth meeting, Dr. J. H. Sequeira, Physician to the Skin Department of the London Hospital, gave evidence. He stated that the

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