

paper—of the political records of Messrs. Clemenceau, Carson and Clynes.

“The Incurable Patient” (by Himself), is the subject of an article in the *British Medical Journal*, which nurses will do well to study, for the problems which confront the doctor in relation to his patients, also, in varying degree, confront nurses also. “Himself” writes:—  
“How shall a doctor behave towards an incurable patient? Here I do not refer to the exhibition of palliative drugs, such as opium in cancer. What principles shall guide him in advising a marked man how to spend the limited remainder of his life?”

After dealing with prognosis and treatment, the writer continues:—

“Then there is the matter of will making. It is not our business to pry into the legal affairs of our patients, but we are sometimes asked, ‘Do you think there is any danger? For if so I should like to see my lawyer at once.’ If the man is not too ill to see his lawyer there is no doubt what answer should be given; he should be advised in the affirmative, and it should be explained that this is no gauge of his condition. If we allow him to delay we may be asked the same question by another who has no time to put off, and the comparison of our answers, which takes place oftener than we know, is not cheering to the second man. If, on the other hand, the man is too ill to see his lawyer, then we cannot help it.”

(A nurse will not, of course, express any opinion as to whether the patient is in danger or not, it is a question to be referred to the doctor, but she can say, “Why wait to be seriously ill before you make your will? It is much better to do so when you can bring a clear mind to bear upon it.” It is so much the better if she is able to add, “I have made my own.”)

The writer goes on:—“In religion we must guard against indifference to the patient’s faith. However broad we ourselves may be, it may cause life-long anxiety to a survivor to think that a friend has died without being duly prepared. It is unkind carelessly to allow that pain. We need not intrude our advice unasked, but when asked whether it is time to call in a priest or other spiritual adviser, if our answer err at all, it ought to err on the side of gravity. Shakespeare has poured bitter satire on the false optimist in his description of Falstaff’s death (*King Henry V*, ii, 3).”

He concludes with the following brave words:—

“The writer bears the burden of doctor and incurable patient both. He has found it cheering to look at the black side of things. Things turn out mostly lightish grey, and sometimes white. He has seen his lawyer, made his will, and, on the assumption that he may die to-morrow, has kept his financial accounts well up to date. He does not shrink from looking forward, he can see no form through the mist, but he thinks there is a light; he thinks his hand is held. There are other doctor-patients like him, some of whom the Father honours as stronger children, not needing the hand-touch and the light. To all such he would shout ‘Cheerio!’”

## HOSPITAL ECONOMY.

An article recently appeared in the *Journal* of the Department of Public Health, Hospitals and Charitable Aid, New Zealand, under the heading “Need for Economy in Public Hospitals,” which now publishes the following digest of a poster which has been received from the secretary and superintendent of the Austin Hospital for Incurables, Heidelberg, Victoria, Australia. This has been printed and hung in wards, offices, kitchens, etc., in the hospital. It is self-explanatory, and the suggestion contained therein is worthy of adoption:—

AUSTIN HOSPITAL.  
TO THE WARD SISTERS, THE NURSES, AND OTHERS  
(PATIENTS INCLUDED).

Your Committee of Management cordially invites your loyal assistance in reducing as far as possible the expense of maintaining the Hospital.

Waste of material under any circumstances is altogether inexcusable, but at such a time as the present, when the cost of all hospital requirements, notably that of food, medicine, surgical dressings, and bedding, is so heavy, the observation of all possible economy is an imperative duty.

It is necessary in every case before the destruction of any article, or the abandonment of its use, that attention be directed to its possible renovation or repair; and in handling any of the furniture or utensils—particularly those of a fragile nature—due concern should be taken to safeguard them against possible damage or injury.

The Committee asks, in short, that you exercise the same extent of care in dealing with the property of the Hospital as you would over your own possessions.

W. J. G. TURNER,  
Secretary and Superintendent.

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