

A STREET ACCIDENT.

I have of course had to do with many accidents in my time, but never in the rôle of "leading lady" until a fortnight ago, when a taxi in which I was crossing Holborn was suddenly put out of action by a private car which descended upon it at right angles, with the force of a battering ram. Then I found myself the centre of a crowd, and of police taking names and addresses, and was conscious that I had been somewhat damaged in the impact.

Automatically I covered a cut forehead with a clean handkerchief, a bleeding, if superficial, scalp wound must wait till later.

Up into the taxi scrambled a somewhat excitable, though doubtless well-intentioned person.

"Lean back, right back," she commanded.

I protested. I had no desire to lean right back.

"You don't know how bad you are," she continued. "I'm a trained nurse, lean back, right back."

Well, perhaps you were a trained nurse, my friend, but I doubt if you were a State Registered one, for, surely, no earnest disciple of Lord Lister, as every trained nurse should be, would command anyone with a broken and bleeding head to put it "back, right back" against the questionably clean cushions of a taxi-cab.

Then my friend surveyed my sodden handkerchief.

"Anybody got a handkerchief?" she demanded.

Again I revolted. The handkerchief of a London crowd—"Anybody's." Subconsciously I visioned septicæmia and erysipelas, and pressed my own handkerchief, which at least began by being clean, more firmly against the wound.

By and by a kindly-disposed gentleman, who seemed to have an appreciation of the situation, offered me a handkerchief, with an assurance as to its cleanliness, which I gratefully placed over my own.

Then I suggested to a constable that I should go home; or, if not, to a nursing home of which I gave the address. But I found I was a "street accident," and, as such, must be taken to a hospital; that was a police regulation, in which dictum, being a law-abiding person, I of course acquiesced.

Swiftly the London County Council ambulance came up alongside, and I had a practical demonstration of an instance in which the ratepayers of London get value for their money, as "citizens of no mean city." Trained hands placed me easily and comfortably on a stretcher, on which I placed my head "right back" with confidence. Quickly we drove off to University College Hospital, the police in attendance, and then the ambulance men deftly removed the stretcher and carried me into the Casualty Department, where I was placed on a bed in a small room, covered up with a blanket, and given a hot-water bottle, when I contentedly resigned myself into the care of skilful and competent hands.

Soon Dr. Billing, the Casualty Officer, came

to see me. "Yes," he said, "you'll have to have some stitches in that. I'll send my dresser along."

Somehow I didn't fancy the idea of that dresser, being well acquainted with the genus medical student, who, as he plods his cheery way along the road which ends in his qualification as a Registered Medical Practitioner—and he presently develops into the friend and trusted confidant of a countryside—is apt to be, shall I breathe it? a trifle clumsy in the matter of putting in stitches. But the white-coated, soft-voiced dresser, who arrived proved to be an adept at the job. There are, after all, advantages in being used to the needle from one's youth up, as is the manner of women, and, when Dr. Billing had given his instructions, she carefully swabbed up the wound, and deftly and accurately set the stitches, so that the wound has healed, as one would expect a wound dealt with by University College Hospital to heal—if it had not been contaminated before it got there—by first intention.

I am, of course, acquainted with the training of nurses, but I was interested to note how carefully Dr. Billing gave his instructions, and how minutely he supervised the work of his student. One is accustomed to seeing a troop come round the wards with the visiting physician or surgeon, but I had not realised how much teaching they have, at the present day, from the house staff.

Then Dr. Billing said he would take me in if I liked, but he thought, after a few hours' rest, I might be allowed to go home, and asked with the insight of genius whether, later on, I would like a cup of tea. I hadn't realised it before, but I knew, at once, that it was the very thing I should like.

By and by my nurse brought it. "It isn't a patient's cup and saucer," she said, and added that she herself was going to tea now, but that another nurse would be on duty if I should want anything.

To Dr. Billing, my dresser of the unknown name, the Sister, and nurse who cared for me with such competent skill and thoughtful kindness, I here record my grateful thanks. It is good to know that this skill and care are available for and appreciated by the poor of London. M. B.

THE "MARGARET LYLE" MATERNITY HOME.

The "Margaret Lyle" Maternity Home, an addition to Queen Mary's Hospital for the East End, was opened on Monday by Lady Pembroke, at the cost of £30,000, of which £10,000 was subscribed by Mr. Charles Lyle in memory of his wife.

The foundation stone of an out-patient wing, which is being erected by the West Ham War Memorial Committee, was subsequently laid by Alderman Thorne. The wing will consist of an up-to-date dispensary, consulting rooms, operating theatres, waiting halls, &c., and is calculated to be a model department. Prince Henry, who is President of the Hospital, sent his regrets for his inability to attend the functions.

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