

THE HOSPITAL WORLD.

THE THANK-OFFERING FUND FOR THE KING'S RECOVERY.

The Thank-offering Fund for the King's Recovery, organised by the King Edward Hospital Fund and the National Radium Fund, is now closed, and Lord Donoughmore, Hon. Treasurer of the Fund, writing to the Press from 103, Kingsway, W.C.2., gives an account of its origin and the result.

The Thank-offering Fund was opened on April 29th, immediately after the King's gracious message to his people. The Hospital Section arose out of the munificent gift of £105,000 by "Audax" to the King's Fund to be the nucleus of a thank-offering for the King's recovery. The Radium section was first to obtain the amount required for the National Radium Fund to which the Government had promised £100,000 on a pound for pound basis, and if possible to obtain further moneys for the purchase of radium.

The Radium Section attained its original object in a few days. The Hospital Section was then extended to include donations from outside London earmarked for local hospitals. On July 7th earmarking for individual hospitals in London was also included. From that time onwards no further effort was made to solicit contributions, but the flow of spontaneous contributions has never quite stopped.

The General Council of King Edward's Fund have sent to Major the Hon. A. H. L. Hardinge, Equerry and Assistant Private Secretary to the King, an Address to His Majesty, signed by the Prince of Wales as President, and Lord Donoughmore, Chairman of the Management Committee, referring to the origin, history, results and distribution of the Thank-offering Fund, and have received a gracious reply from His Majesty through the Hon. A. H. L. Hardinge.

Sir Gomer Berry, when opening new wards at the Royal Bucks Hospital, protested against the fact that the Hospital Saturday Fund, the Metropolitan Hospital Sunday Fund, and the King Edward Hospital Fund collected large sums of money for London hospitals only. He thought that quite wrong, because they used the national Press, and the wireless, and they circularised everybody, but they always omitted to say that all the money given would go to London hospitals. He suggested that the King's permission should be asked for the opening of a fund, to be called King George's Fund, for provincial hospitals.

Following upon the offer by an anonymous donor of £40,000 for the enlargement and modernisation of the Royal Portsmouth Hospital, provided the town could raise another £40,000, it is announced that the object has now been achieved, and the £80,000 will be available for the hospital. The donor is Sir Woolmer White.

LEGAL MATTERS.

"DESERVING OF CENSURE."

Mrs. Gertrude Robinson, the proprietress of a Christian Science nursing home at Greenford, Middlesex, was censured by the jury at the inquest on a patient (Mrs. Amelia Lundy), who jumped from a window in the home.

Miss Helen Swain, a nurse at the home, deposed that Mrs. Lundy asked for some hot milk with her breakfast; while she went downstairs to give the order Mrs. Lundy got out of the window. After the fall she behaved normally, and was able to use her limbs.

Mrs. Robinson, the registered proprietress of the Home, in reply to the Coroner (Mr. Kemp), said that if she had realised that Mrs. Lundy had been badly hurt she would have called in a doctor. Mrs. Lundy did not ask for a doctor or complain of pain, she did not think she was badly hurt, and she did not want to upset her. Her

husband was a trained medical attendant, and examined her, but could find no serious injury.

Dr. Renall said death was due to a compressed fracture of the spine. In reply to the Coroner, he said that it would be exceedingly difficult to diagnose without X-rays. He thought Mrs. Lundy must have had much pain.

The Coroner said that it was apparently a case of suicide. It seemed to him that it might have happened in any home. He was sure the jury would be wise and broad-minded enough not to find fault just because it happened to be a Christian Science Home.

The jury returned a verdict of Suicide during temporary insanity, and the foreman said: "We accept the doctor's evidence with regard to the pain, and we consider the proprietress was guilty of neglect for not taking any precaution to protect Mrs. Lundy from the tendency of which she was made aware; in not immediately calling in a doctor; and in omitting to inform the relatives at once of the occurrence. On these grounds the jury considered she was deserving of censure."

Mr. Kemp, in conveying the verdict to Mrs. Robinson, said: "It is the jury's verdict, not mine."

The inclusion of Christian Science Homes in the Nursing Homes Registration Act by the late Minister of Health, while exempting them from inspection, is a great blot upon the Act; we protested when the Bill was before the House, and we are still of the same opinion.

"THE UNFORTUNATE RESULT OF A BREACH OF DUTY."

At an inquest at Camberwell on a patient at the Peckham House Mental Institution, who set herself on fire in a ward, Nurse Gwyneth Switten, who was in charge of the ward on the night of December 22nd, said that Nurse Harvey, the night sister, visited the ward at 3.55 a.m. All the patients were in bed, and appeared asleep. She went to the top of the stairs with Nurse Harvey, who had instructed her to do so. The stairs were only six steps away.

The Coroner (Mr. Cowburn).—Thereby you left the ward unattended?—Yes.

Why should you go to the top of the stairs?—I obeyed an order.

Why?—Nurse Harvey was terrified of the rats below in the kitchen.

The Coroner.—You realise now it was not the right thing to do?—I knew all the time it was not right.

Nurse Switten agreed that she had written instructions stating that Mrs. Brand, who was suicidal, should be kept under constant observation. The ward could not be seen from the top of the stairs.

Nurse Switten said that while they stood talking Mrs. Brand came out of the ward in flames. She called for Nurse Harvey, they threw her down, and put the fire out with a rug and a blanket. She found a piece of twisted paper afterwards in the hearth. Apparently it had been used to get a light.

Nurse Harvey said she asked Nurse Switten to come to the top of the stairs. She took the risk, and she was sorry.

The jury returned a verdict of Suicide while of unsound mind.

The Coroner said that the occurrence was the unfortunate result of a breach of duty by two nurses, who had admitted their fault in leaving the ward unattended. The nurses had admitted their fault, and he did not propose to ask the jury to censure them. The fire was adequately protected.

There should always be two nurses in a suicidal ward, so that if one has to leave it for a few minutes for any reason it is not left unattended. Surely also there should be no open fireplaces in such a ward, even if they are protected. Some investigation of the presence of rats in such an institution seems to be indicated.

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