

admit that 'my brain was in a whirl, and it will be some time yet before the strain will begin to lessen.' The horrifying fact is, that the experience of this day was in no sense accidental or exceptional. It is only a fair sample of what regularly occurs under the perverse mismanagement and defective equipment of which the author of the letter complains. During the twelve hours of night duty in which she was left with forty-two patients in the accident ward she declares that the surgeon did not appear on the scene. A man who was brought in vomiting blood after falling from a swing required her care for three uninterrupted hours, and no doctor came. She had not even the help of a dresser, for not only is the nursing staff short-handed, but for 300 patients there are, she points out, only two dressers. This non-appearance of the doctor is a fact which invites explanation. In cases, especially of typhoid, where death is sudden, the absence of a doctor during a spell of a dozen hours is an appalling piece of negligence. But it is on all fours with the rest of the want of system. The staff is small, and such staff as there may be is ill-organised and neglected, and the results are, as might be expected, that patients' lives are often lost where due care might probably have saved them, while the Nurses themselves are reduced to sickness through want of exercise and fresh air.

"Now, although the brave woman who brings this indictment against the over-working of Nurses, refers primarily to the case of the London Hospital, there is no reason for believing that the Metropolitan Hospitals generally are not tarred with the same brush. The causes which account for the suicidal lack of organisation are not far to seek. They arise almost entirely from the stupid disunion which vitiates every department of our present happy-go-lucky arrangements. There is a scandalous inequality in

the distribution of the funds which have to pay the way for the Hospitals, and there is not, as the recent inquiry proved, so much as a pretence of central and organised control. St. Bartholomew's, for example, finds itself from time to time in possession of more money than it well knows how to spend, while Guy's labors under the burden of chronic impecuniosity. Such money as is forthcoming is, consequently, used wastefully, and the Hospitals, rich and poor alike, of this great city are ill-managed, short-handed, and a disgrace both to London and to the nation.

"It would be hard to think that Englishmen could hear with indifference the tale of gratuitous suffering to which we have referred. In this respect, if in any, we claim to have made an advance upon the moral judgments of the ancients. They recognised the courage of the warrior that meets his fate in circumstances in which, as ARISTOTLE puts it, 'death is glorious'—in other words, where there is a gallery to applaud. But it has been the boast of moderns that they appreciate equally the less ostentatious ways in which it is possible to face bravely things of fear. There is accordingly, to our thinking, no greater courage than the courage of the Hospital Nurse. How wanton and disgraceful, therefore, is the neglect which imposes upon her not only excessive physical strain, but responsibilities so awful that they cannot be contemplated without a shudder. Some reform must, it is clear, be adopted, and we see positively no hope of adequate reform until the control of the Metropolitan Hospitals is placed where it ought to be placed—in the hands, that is to say, of the municipal authorities. Only from them can we hope for the unity and thoroughness of organisation that will put out of the question once and for all the recurrence of such unmitigated scandals as that to which we call the attention of our readers to-day."

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