

16 eggs and eight pints of milk; few healthy people could do it.

9. I do not enter on this subject at any length; it is disagreeable and loathsome. That creatures originally made in God's image should so far descend in the scale, owing to disease, as to eat with relish the most filthy, disgusting, and unnatural things is a matter of deepest regret. I have patients under my charge at present who I have seen eat their own fæces, drink their urine from the pot, and, even more abominable still, I have one patient who has to be watched to prevent him from emptying the spittoons. Such cases are truly horrible, and fill one with intense sadness that human nature can descend to such an abyss. Though I have frequently read of masses of hair, cloth, &c., being found in the stomachs of patients dying in asylums, only one such case has come under my observation, though post-mortem examinations are the rule in the Carlisle Asylum. A report of this case will appear in the July number of the "Journal of Mental Science." In this case I considered death to have resulted from slow starvation, caused by the presence of an accumulation of hair, string, and portions of blankets in the stomach.

If my paper elicits from those I see here an expression of opinion on the points touched on, it will have done its work well, even if my views on many of the topics are not at all borne out by others.

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*St. John Ambulance Classes for Asylum Attendants.* By G. E. SHUTTLEWORTH, B.A., M.D., Medical Superintendent, Royal Albert Asylum, Lancaster.

Much attention having recently been given (in the pages of this Journal and elsewhere) to the subject of the systematic training of asylum attendants, it occurred to me last autumn that some advantage might be gained in this direction by the instruction of the staff of this institution in "first aid to the injured," as prescribed in the scheme of the St. John Ambulance Association. I accordingly announced my willingness to give the necessary course of five lectures and demonstrations, and having obtained the moral and pecuniary support of my Committee, who granted £5 in

aid of the project, two classes were speedily formed, the one consisting of 28 men and the other of 39 women (the rules of the Association forbidding mixed classes). The fees were fixed at 2s. for the men and 1s. 6d for the women (including an anatomical diagram), and each pupil was advised also to purchase Shepherd's Manual of "First Aid," price 1s., and an illustrated triangular bandage, price 6d. The staff of attendants and nurses were so eager to enter the classes that the only difficulty I had was to exclude a sufficient number for the necessary service of the patients on lecture evenings, which were Thursdays, at 8 p.m. Each lecture occupied about an hour, and another half hour or so was subsequently devoted to practical work, in which I had the aid of the assistant medical officer, Dr. Taylor. The subjects embraced in the course included a general outline of the structure and functions of the body, with special reference to the formation of the skeleton, the course of the circulation, and the functions of respiration and the nervous system. The practical instruction was in the application of bandages, chiefly triangular, the various extemporaneous means of arresting hæmorrhages, and of protecting and securing fractured bones, and what to do in certain emergencies, such as suffocation, drowning, burns, scalds, &c.; also in the removal of the injured on ambulance stretchers and otherwise, and (for women) a cursory account of the principles of nursing. The classes were from time to time questioned on the subjects of the lectures, the matron undertaking the supervision of the practical work of the women. By these various means I think I may say that the pupils were well taught, and at the examination by Surgeon-Major Hutton, one of the Association examiners, out of 15 men and 19 women presenting themselves, 15 men and 18 women passed with credit. The examination was of a fair and specially practical character, the women having, in addition to *viva-voce* questioning, a paper of six questions to answer in writing, and the men being subjected to an extended examination in ambulance drill.

Some objections having been suggested to the course of instruction I have described (such as that "a little learning is a dangerous thing," and that subordinates might be apt to apply their "little learning" independently of the medical officer, &c.), I can only say that the course of events has not justified any such prognostication. It

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happens, on the contrary, that during the three months which have now elapsed since the course was given, the ambulance men have on two occasions been signally useful, as within a week of their examination they were called on to pick up and carry to the infirmary an attendant who had fallen 20 feet from a ladder in the course of fire brigade drill, and had sustained a Colles's fracture and other injuries; and quite recently they have rendered most useful aid to a medical man who was thrown from his gig whilst driving past the asylum. But it is not so much in regard to these greater emergencies which, however, are bound to occur pretty frequently in connection with large establishments, as in the daily routine of duty falling to the lot of an asylum attendant, that the elementary physiological knowledge, and instruction how to handle patients with care and discretion, seem likely to be advantageous. So far from subordinates being tempted to exceed their duty, I think the effect of lectures judiciously addressed to them will prove of value in enabling them intelligently to apply for, and to carry out, the instructions of the medical officers. Of course such lectures as those given in connection with the St. John Ambulance will not supersede the necessity of the specific instruction of attendants in their special duties, but there is the advantage that the certificates granted by the Association are fairly well understood by the community at large, and, the system of examination throughout the country being uniform, have a certain definite value. I venture, moreover, to think that in our large asylums, at any rate, the preparation and delivery of suitable lectures will be found of interest to some member or members of the medical staff; and, if experience elsewhere accord with ours, the pains devoted to this object will be fully appreciated by the officers, attendants, and nurses forming the audience.

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