

EXPERIENCES WITH FIRE.

Written by Iris Schaw.

Wellington Hospital 1909-10

We had a lovely Nurses Home where I was training to be a Qualified Nurse.

I was in my second year and had been promoted to a room on the Second Floor, and being on Night Duty I slept there during the day.

I remember going to bed feeling very tired as we were very busy at that time. I could hear the fire that heated the water all through the home, crackling away, and after awhile I dropped off to sleep.

About midday I woke up and it seemed to me as if some one had just lit a fire very close to me.

Then I noticed smoke in my room. I got up and had a look in my wardrobe.

To my horror it was a blazing furnace! I closed it again. I grabbed my dressing jacket and raced down the stairs as fast as I could.

I could hear the clatter of knives and forks in the dining room, so I knew the nurses were at dinner. A maid came out of the kitchen, she looked at me in surprise! I said, "tell Matron the Home is on fire." The maid just stood as if she couldn't move, so I gave her a little push into the dining room, saying as I did, "so tell Matron quick!"

Then I rushed off up the stairs again to see what I could do. I found a bucket and was filling it with water, when a young man came down the stairs. I called out to him, "the Home is on fire! He said, "here, grab this, it was the fire hose! So I did grab it tight too.

He rushed off to my room taking the long hose with us. "Now" said the young man, "hold this hose very tight in the wardrobe while I turn on the tap." Off he went.

Soon there was an awful rush of water, the hose seemed to rush through my fingers, but I held very tight.

Then I heard running feet, and the young man was by my side again. He just grabbed the hose from me and set to work to put out that fire.

I said, "may I save my mats?" They were burning merrily. He said, "No leave them." So I grabbed my coat. It was drenched and I collapsed into my bed which was also nice and wet.

I said, "I think the other room is on fire too."

By this time there was a scurrying of feet from all directions. I was dragged out of my bed and hurried along to some kind nurse's bed and given a nice cup of tea. They thought I had hysterics, but I had not.

I looked at my hands, they were red and sore with holding the hose. The Fire Brigade came but there was nothing to do.

When I got up I had to wear borrowed clothes as mine were all soaking wet. Everyone treated me as a heroine. The patients said I should have had a whole night off.

I got five pounds for the damage done to my clothing.

The young man that really put the fire out was very wild because he got no praise. I was really sorry for him, I did my best to get praise for him.