

1491. In one of his reports Dr. MacGregor says: "A most important feature of the management of this Hospital is the invaluable practice that prevails of always keeping one of the wards empty for the purpose of thorough disinfection and cleansing. A very great improvement has been effected in removing the lying-in ward, and devoting the space to a children's ward, which contains twelve beds"—that corroborates what Dr. Grabham said in an earlier report—"as I pointed out last year, the existence of a flourishing Medical School in connection with this Hospital gives a completeness and thoroughness to its medical and surgical arrangements that we look for in vain anywhere else in New Zealand"—That corroborates what I said before, that in his previous report Dr. MacGregor was specially alluding to the Medical School and not to the Hospital.

1492. In his last report but one—that for 1889—Dr. MacGregor says: "I inspected the Hospital on the 30th January, 1889. I was particularly careful to inquire of the patients in all the wards, without any official being present, as to how they were treated by the nurses. Although the fullest opportunity was afforded, I heard not a single complaint." Observe that he was very particular to inquire as to complaints, but "not a single complaint was made."—You will find, I believe, in all cases like this, that people are frightened to complain. Someone hears of such a complaint, and it gets to the authorities, and those who complain suffer for it in some way; that is my opinion, at any rate. They might complain when they go out, but they will not do so while they are in. That is my experience.

1493. Dr. MacGregor further says: "No one doubts the superiority of trained female nurses over the class of male nurses that have hitherto of necessity been employed in the Dunedin Hospital. Especially of late years, it has become possible to get for this work well educated ladies, who are very different from the old-fashioned type of hospital nurse; and no doubt it was somewhat trying that the Hospital, which in all the essentials of medical and surgical treatment of disease was ahead of all the other hospitals of the colony, should, nevertheless, be the only one of our large hospitals where the best system of nursing was unattainable"?—As to the nursing, that has been changed, and I am quite satisfied with the proposed alteration.

1494. Dr. MacGregor further says: "This is the explanation of the agitation that has taken place over the condition of this Hospital; and the rapidity with which the agitation answered its purpose—of hastening the building of a nurses' home and certain special wards—while it is a subject of congratulation to all, yet seems to me to have been dearly bought by the unjustifiably evil reputation which has been fixed on the Hospital all over these colonies. The evils complained of had all been previously pointed out so far as they were real, and steps were being taken to remedy them." Do you agree with that?—Yes, but I should like to make a remark about that: that I consider when those in authority fail to point out defects that they should point out that these defects are likely to go on. After my experience, I do not think that many medical men will in future point out defects which an Inspector has overlooked.

1495. Is it not the duty of someone to point out these things to the Inspector-General? Ought not the medical staff to point out these defects?—The medical staff have pointed them out, and I contend that they ought to have been emphasized by the Inspector-General. If the truth were to be told, the trouble arises out of the administration of the Charitable Aid Act. That is where all the serious trouble comes in in my opinion.

1496. Another passage in Dr. MacGregor's report says: "Except in these evils, which the structural deficiencies of the building caused, I affirm that this Hospital was well managed and the patients well treated."—Possibly that refers to medical treatment.

1497. Well treated medically? Is that all? He commends the nursing also. I understand him to mean that the patients are "well treated" generally?—Well, I will not go that length. It all depends on what the word "treatment" is intended to imply. If you mean general treatment, *i.e.*, nursing, dietetic, and hygienic, then I think they are not well treated; but if you mean medical treatment, then I think that they are well treated.

1498. But you recognize that a few reforms have taken place in the building?—Yes, there have been a few reforms.

1499. During the past twelve years?—I recognise, in fact, that there have been a good many minor improvements, but not what there should have been. The most important defects have not been remedied.

1500. What do you say they are?—Well, we will begin with the nurses. That reform has been promised during the last three months; it is going to be reformed. We are to have female nurses. That, in my opinion, is the great reform of all. Then there is over-crowding, and the unhealthy state of the wards: that is another great reform which requires to be done. Doing away with the waterclosets and baths in the wards is another reform that is needed. Another needed reform is special wards for special cases.

1501. Practically, all these things would necessitate a new building?—That is an opinion I have formed only lately.

1502. *The Chairman.*] About the nursing. Is it imperfect or insufficient? Have you not had enough nurses, or are they not sufficiently trained, or what?—We have had female nurses only for the female wards, and wardsmen for the men's wards. A certain section of the staff were opposed to this alteration. Female nursing has been accepted in all the large hospitals at Home and elsewhere. Money was collected by private gentlemen with the distinct object of enabling the Trustees to effect this reform in our nursing system. The Trustees, however, refused to accept the money until three months ago. The only reason that I could see why they would not alter the system was that they were afraid that it might involve additional expenditure. They made the alteration after inquiring all over the Australian Colonies.

1503. When was that decided?—Three months ago; but the change has not been carried out yet. I do not think that any steps have been taken in the matter up to the present.

1504. *Mr. Chapman.*] Do you say that the Trustees refused the money for that?—I do most distinctly. It was offered to them several times and refused.