

from the lungs whilst the wardman who was in charge during the night was absent. He was called away by Night-nurse Cameron on account of an accident that had happened, and, of course, he ought not to have gone until his place was supplied. It is not suggested that anything could have been done for the patient, but such a thing ought not to have happened, and it could scarcely have happened if the new nursing system had been fairly established. A man who had cut his foot was sent out of the Hospital before the injury was quite well, and afterwards a minute piece of glass was expelled by an abscess. The case is comparatively trifling, and might easily happen when the state of the Hospital forbids a long stay in cases where this is not quite necessary. Dr. De Renzi attended this patient after his discharge. A warder was seen to strike a delirious patient: the House Surgeon, upon inquiry, thought it might not have been an intentional blow, but a sudden movement of self-defence. I do not see what means now exist of reversing his decision.

The House Surgeon and matron are alleged to have made an arbitrary rule that nurses and probationers should rise when either of these superior officers enters the ward. If this rule creates any surprise, it must surely be that it should be needed, for intuitive politeness and sense of what is becoming might be expected to dispense with the necessity for it. But it is laid down in English manuals of nursing instruction, and I do not think the objection to it proceeds from the younger nurses, but from some quarter where there is more ignorance and false pride than "education and refinement."

The House Surgeon has been accused of discourtesy and roughness of manner by several witnesses, a complaint the weight of which it is difficult to estimate in consequence of the natural exaggeration usually indulged in by either party to a conversation partaking in any degree of the character of an altercation. Reasonable deductions must be made from such allegations, and I do not think anything has been shown beyond a little occasional irritability or quickness of temper, and a propensity to plain speaking, with a defective appreciation of the advantages of conducting an argument *suaviter in modo*. It is, of course, desirable that tact and patience should be cultivated as much as possible by an officer whose duties bring him so much into contact with all shades of human character, and perhaps in explaining the inevitably fatal result of delay in operating for a cancer it might be as well to refrain from telling a man "that he might as well get a rope and hang his stepmother as take her out of the Hospital." But why it was thought worth while to encumber the records of the Commission with such matter as this is not easy to see, unless, indeed, it was seriously thought that the doctor was inciting to murder.

There is one other matter upon which I myself called evidence, in consequence of what I found in Mrs. Neill's report about the case of a man named Berry, deceased, from which it appeared that a system of "terrorism" existed, or was asserted to exist, in No. 6 ward. The evidence of Thomas Brunsdon to some extent bears this out, and, at all events, goes to show that any high ideal of nursing-work was hardly to be found in that ward, and to justify the opinion of the heads of the staff as to the character of the older methods.

The state of the Hospital during the years preceding the appointment of the present House Surgeon and matron is a subject upon which no very clear light has been thrown, in consequence of the fragmentary and incomplete character of such evidence as has been tendered in relation to it. Hints have been given of considerable irregularity and disorganization, but these have not been followed out or particularised in such a manner as to lead to any definite result. An instance of this may be given from Dr. MacGregor's evidence, who says that in the year 1889 Dr. De Renzi made a statement to him which tended to implicate members of the Hospital Board in grave charges of irregular and improper conduct. The statement was of so serious a character as to cause Dr. MacGregor at once to see the Chairman and other members of the Board, and to point out to them the necessity of a thorough inquiry, and at the same time to call upon Dr. De Renzi to reduce his statement to writing. The latter, however, after consideration and advice, declined to do so, and Dr. MacGregor says that, in consequence of this withdrawal from the accusations he had made, he himself has ever since disbelieved the statements, but that Dr. De Renzi, having made and then failed to substantiate them, ought to have been immediately dismissed from his office. Few will dispute the correctness of this view upon the facts given, and it is difficult to understand how the Hospital Board could have refrained from insisting on one or the other alternative. But when Dr. De Renzi is called, whilst admitting that he did make this statement to Dr. MacGregor, he qualifies it by saying that he mentioned it as a mere rumour, and adds the surprising assertion that he himself had no belief in its truth. Whether Dr. De Renzi expected this denial itself to be believed I do not know, but there certainly seem to be difficulties in believing it. If these matters were only mentioned to Dr. MacGregor as mere rumours, why was this point not insisted on at the time in such a manner as to show him the futility of going to the members of the Board about it before the origin of the rumours was traced and the real accuser discovered? Why was not Dr. MacGregor also informed that until those steps had been taken it would be useless for him (Dr. De Renzi) to put anything in writing, instead of allowing the Inspector to go to Wellington, and then sending him a cautiously-worded letter declining for quite other reasons to do what had been asked? Again, if Dr. De Renzi did not believe the rumours, why did he mention them to Dr. MacGregor at all, without at the same time taking some other steps? Why did he not insist upon his informant within the Hospital substantiating his information, or accepting the only legitimate alternative? Dr. De Renzi has certainly failed, in my opinion, satisfactorily to explain the part he took in this business, which is here mentioned, not with any reference to the truth or falsehood of the statements made, but because it seems to indicate some decided weakness in the management that such things could be said and no further notice be taken of the matter.

Another question personally affecting Dr. De Renzi incidentally came up during the inquiry, but, as I consider it irrelevant to the business I had to deal with, it seems unnecessary to say more about it here than that, so far as the facts transpired, Dr. De Renzi's answer must be deemed sufficient.