

upon the subject of the relations between the Medical Superintendent and the Matron; but he knew that even under the present system it was quite possible to work very amicably with the Matron. Certainly, he had been very fortunate in his experience of them. Personally, he made it a rule not to interfere with the Matron's authority in regard to the female staff except in urgent cases. But if it came to a matter as to whose opinion or authority was supreme, he would not hesitate to enforce his own. As to Miss Mollett's paper, he did not see that it brought out any particular argument against the present system. The only impression it gave him was that there had been friction between the writer and her Medical Superintendent. He was fully convinced that the Matron should be a thoroughly trained Nurse; and he had little doubt that other Medical Superintendents were of the same opinion. They had no desire to interfere with the Matron's control if they felt she could be relied upon to enforce discipline in the Infirmary, to be kind to the Nurses, and, in short, to use an expression of the Chairman, to be the "mother of the family."

Dr. TOOGOOD, Medical Superintendent of the Lewisham Infirmary, said that as he was still awaiting the decision of the Local Government Board in regard to the late Inquiry, he would not venture to make more than a few remarks in reply to the lady who had just asked a question. Under an Order issued some time last year, the Matron of Lewisham Infirmary was certainly granted increased powers, for it was definitely stated that the Matron should superintend the Nurses and the Nursing arrangements. But then came the awful proviso, "subject in all things to the approval of the Medical Superintendent." That was where the hitch came. He wished to point out that in an Institution there could only be one head, namely, either the Medical Superintendent or the Matron. He would mention a hypothetical case. It would be admitted that Nursing is a part of the medical treatment. Suppose the doctor thinks an additional Nurse is necessary; the Matron thinks otherwise. What would happen if there were two heads? At present the Medical Superintendent would insist that another Nurse be supplied; and there the matter would end. He merely mentioned this to illustrate the point that it is impracticable to have two heads.

Brigadier Surgeon ROBERT PRINGLE (Lewisham Board of Guardians) said it gave him much pleasure to be present amongst so many engaged in the noble work of nursing the sick. He could not help thinking of his old student days in Edinburgh under Sir James Simpson, and then he remembered the Nurses of those days; and then, when he looked round upon those present, he could not but thank God for the change that had been brought about. With reference to the subject that had brought them all together, he said they had heard something about law; but they had heard nothing about power, and not even a whisper about responsibility. What does law and power mean but responsibility. You cannot take responsibility and chop it up. Responsibility must be fixed somewhere. But mankind is divided into two sexes; and it is proposed that a woman should be placed over women, and a man over men. They had heard, however, three delightful words, Give and take. How much can be done with that maxim! Oh, that people had the grace to drop miserable distinctions, and devote their whole soul to the noblest work in which human beings

can be engaged, and look upon tending the sick as the highest position to which man can attain or women aspire. It is true that tact often sinks into compromise; but let each side understand one another at the outset. That would stop much friction and prevent ignition. With regard to the Lewisham Infirmary, when the rules were submitted to the Board of Guardians, there was one thing in the by-laws that they had had altered, and that was the position of the Matron in regard to the Steward. By the amendment, the Matron was made subject to the Medical Superintendent only. Otherwise, she would have been made inferior to the Steward. Of course, the Lewisham Board of Guardians were much grieved about what had happened; but such friction would, he thought, be obviated if at the outset each is taken into the confidence of the other in regard to their important duties. Suppose the Medical Superintendent said, Gladly will I depute such and such powers to you; but remember I am absolutely responsible for everything. Responsibility! that is the whole point. The person who is made responsible must, and should, be given full control.

Miss WILSON (Hon. Secretary of the Workhouse Infirmary Nursing Association) said she had listened to the Paper with much interest, and she did not think the title misleading, for the words "Infirmaries under the Poor Law" limited the subject to separate Infirmaries. But it seemed to her that the discussion had confined itself in a surprisingly exclusive way to the question of London Infirmaries. There is, she continued, a large Infirmary at Birmingham, where the power given to the Matron illustrates the practicability of the point raised by Miss Mollett. At the outset, the Guardians sent a deputation to the various Infirmaries throughout England to take notes of what they approved and disapproved. From these they drew up a set of Orders, which were submitted to the Local Government Board for its approval. These Orders differ entirely from those which obtain in London and some other provincial separate Infirmaries. In the first place, the Matron is expected to govern and control the Nurses in practice as well as in theory. As matters exist in many Infirmaries, however, undoubtedly much friction is caused; and, consequently, it is sometimes difficult to get the best women attracted to the work. As to the question of responsibility, the Matron should be finally responsible to the Board of Guardians in the same way as the Medical Superintendent is responsible to the Board. Of course where duties clash, as they occasionally will even under the best system, is must be a question of "give and take." But unless the duties of each are strictly defined, there will continue to be friction. At present where there is harmony it depends not upon the system, but upon the principle of "give and take" being observed to a large extent by both parties. It was, therefore, incumbent upon all interested in the matter, to put on a strong front to the Local Government Board, which, she thought, was not unwilling to act.

Dr. FENWICK said the matter resolved itself into a question of principle. Two ladies bore testimony to the amicable manner in which they worked with their Medical Superintendents; but there were many others whose evidence would be different. If they remembered what has happened in the General Hospitals, they would be better able to estimate what would happen in Poor Law Infirmaries, if the law were placed upon

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