

## The National Hospital for Paralysis.

### THE BOARD OF MANAGERS AND THE LADY SUPERINTENDENT.

A GENERAL subject of discussion in Hospital and Nursing circles during the past fortnight has been the proceedings of the Committee of the National Hospital for Paralysis, Queen Square, in connection with the recently appointed Lady Superintendent.

It will be remembered that we commented last week on the fact that Miss Clinton—who was appointed to the post of Lady Superintendent of this Hospital on February 11th—had been requested to resign in order that Miss Rachel Tweed might be given the appointment.

The Duke of Westminster, as President of the Hospital, addressed on March 10th the following letter to Miss Clinton. It will be generally regarded in the Hospital world as one of the most extraordinary epistles which ever emanated from the managers of a charitable Institution.

The Duke says:—

"MADAM, —As President of the National Hospital for the Paralyzed and Epileptic I beg to state—

(1) On February 11th last the Board of Management met for the purpose of electing a Lady Superintendent, out of six candidates selected by a sub-committee out of numerous candidates who had applied in answer to a public advertisement.

(2) After careful consideration of the merits of the different candidates you were elected, and your election was formally notified to you.

(3) One of the six candidates was Miss Tweed, who had for eight years done effective work in the Hospital.

(4) Owing to a misapprehension on the part of one of the members of the Board as to Miss Tweed's claims, to election by reason of her past services, and to a mistake whereby her testimonials were not submitted to the Board, her claims were ignored."

In this last paragraph it is obvious that the whole statement of fact is not given. By what possible oversight were the testimonials of Miss Tweed not submitted to the Board. If she was a selected candidate her testimonials most assuredly should have been before the Board. If they were not submitted, by whom were they withheld? and for what purpose? The Duke of Westminster goes on to say:—

"(5) At a subsequent meeting of the Board specially called on February 26th to reconsider the case, it was decided to request you to extricate the Board from the difficult position in which they had placed themselves by resigning."

It is an obvious question to ask how the Board could have placed themselves in a "difficult position" by appointing a lady whose qualifica-

tions eminently suited her for the vacant post. And it is difficult to understand what could have occurred between February 11th and February 26th to make the Board determine that the lady they appointed on the former date should be subjected a fortnight later to the indignity of a request for her resignation.

In the next clause of this remarkable letter we learn that

"(6) The Board wish to state that your resignation was asked, not because they felt any sort of doubt as to your qualifications, but because they felt that they had not done full justice to Miss Tweed's claims: The Board feel great regret in having to lose your services and the benefit of your great experience, ability, and high character."

It is certainly curious that the Board should possess such a keen sense of the need of full justice to Miss Tweed, while their views of justice to Miss Clinton appear to be so very elementary. The Duke of Westminster admits in the next paragraph that Miss Clinton has suffered "injustice and injury" at their hands, and in this the public will be at one with him.

"(7) The Board hereby tender to you their thanks for acquiescing in their request, and offer to you their sincere apologies and regrets for the injustice and injury to which you have been subjected, and they hope that the explanation here given will remove any impression that may exist as to the causes of the change now proposed, and so prevent any possible injury to your professional prospects."

"(8) They trust that you may soon obtain another post that may be congenial to you in some other hospital, and they express their willingness to aid you in any way in their power to obtain such a post.

"(9) The Board have begged of you to accept £100 as some compensation for the injury and annoyance you have been caused, and they thank you for generously giving the same as a donation to the funds of the hospital."

A practical question which undoubtedly will be asked, is whether this £100 was intended to be paid out of the Hospital funds, if Miss Clinton had not been so extremely generous as to return it to the Hospital. It is quite open to dispute whether money intended for the benefit of the sick poor should be employed as a *solatium* in cases where the Managers of a Hospital have inflicted "injustice and injury and annoyance," as it is confessed has been done in this case. The Duke ends his letter thus:—

"(10) You are at liberty to publish this letter and any of the previous correspondence that has passed between you and any member of the Board, the secretary, or solicitor, and to make use of the same in any way you may think fit.

I am, yours faithfully,  
(Signed) WESTMINSTER."

Eaton.  
March 10th, 1896.

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