

## SOME ONE HAD BLUNDER'D.

WE have, from time to time, drawn attention to the mistakes which have occurred, and the distress which has been caused to relatives, owing to the mistaken identity of deceased persons in hospitals and workhouse infirmaries. A recent instance of a blunder of this description occurred at the Wandsworth and Clapham Infirmary, the circumstances being as follows. Information as to the death of a woman in that institution was sent to her relatives the same night, and her brother and husband visited the Infirmary at midnight, and were taken to the mortuary. In the mortuary were about seven bodies, wound in sheets, and placed on shelves, their names being written on the top shelf. It was discovered at the time that two of the names were wrongly placed, as the nurse who took the visitors to the mortuary uncovered first the wrong body, but subsequently the one underneath it was shown, and found to be the right one. It is the more extraordinary therefore that the mistake was not rectified. What actually happened, however, was that the following morning the undertaker visited the mortuary, and measured the wrong body, which was subsequently removed to the deceased woman's late home. Naturally the relations who discovered the mistake were considerably distressed.

The fact is that the mortuary arrangements of most of our hospitals and infirmaries require amending, and when the Local Government Board issues a new Order, we hope that it will lay down a regulation that in the infirmaries under the Board, the mortuaries and their arrangements shall be placed under the control of some responsible female official. In too many instances, the duties in connection with hospital mortuaries are assigned to porters, even that of conducting relatives to view the bodies being deputed to them. It is surely desirable that this office should invariably be placed in the hands of educated and refined women. It is scarcely possible to conceive one for which the average hospital porter is more unsuited. Again, to definitely place the charge of a mortuary in the hands of a competent woman would certainly have the effect of minimizing the danger of the occurrence of such mistakes as from time to time scandalize the public. That such mistakes should be rendered impossible there can be no doubt. Such an occurrence in connection with a private nursing home, and a wealthy patient, would cause a sensation all

over the country, and bring wide discredit upon the home. Why should less care be shown in the case of the poor than in that of the rich?

## THE LONDON GOVERNMENT BILL.

IT is a satisfactory sign of the times, that last week a debate of four hours duration took place in the House of Commons as to the eligibility of women for office as councillors under the new London Government Bill, and that nearly four columns of the *Times* has been devoted to a report of the proceedings. No stronger evidence is needed, or indeed could be brought forward, that the question of the position of women in the body politic is rapidly forcing its way to the front in the sphere of practical politics. The matter was introduced by Mr. Boulnois (women of Marylebone please note!), who moved an amendment that no woman should be eligible for the office of either Mayor, Alderman, or Councillor. If they allowed women to sit on these councils, they would not afterwards be able to withhold from them the Parliamentary Franchise, and the right to sit and vote in that House. Mr. Balfour was of opinion that in 1894 it was deliberately resolved to give women the administrative functions which are to be those of the borough councils, and therefore if they adopted the proposed amendment, the Bill would become a disfranchising one. Mr. Balfour further expressed himself in favour of extending the Parliamentary Franchise to women, but said that he had always felt that one of the dangers of this course would be a claim on the part of women for seats in the House of Commons, a state of things which he should regard as absolutely intolerable. Mr. Asquith said he was glad to find himself in agreement with the first Lord of the Treasury, and took a note for further use of the horror expressed by the right honourable gentleman at the contemplation of the presence of women as colleagues in the House. He further admitted that he shared these terrors. He however opposed the amendment. Mr. Courtney quoted the powers conferred on women in 1894, and said that they could not take away what they had already given. The real point at issue was whether women should be made eligible to sit as aldermen as well as councillors on the new bodies. When that point came up, he should look forward with confidence to the Committee agreeing to the proposition by a large majority. Upon the division the amendment was defeated.

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