

**The Hospital World.****THE NATIONAL HOSPITAL DISPUTE.**

THE breach between the House Committee and the medical staff at the National Hospital for Nervous Diseases, Queen Square, shows no signs of contracting. The medical staff demand voting power on the Committee of Management, and the Committee are of opinion that such representation is unnecessary, and further, that in Fardonian parlance it is "inexpedient in principle, of doubtful public benefit, and injurious to the best interests of nurses"! So blast and counter-blast resound through the press.

It is with the contention that, when discussing matters in which the medical and nursing officers are concerned, that justice is more likely to result if the lay Committee are quite free to adjudicate without the pressure of medical influence that nurses are most concerned, and in this point of view Mr. L. L. Ernest, writing to the *Times*, supports the Committee, in answer to a very strong letter claiming representation, signed by an imposing list of London's leading physicians and surgeons.

Mr. Ernest writes:—"There is a letter in your issue of to-day on the subject of hospital management, signed by a number of eminent medical men, in which it is stated that the inclusion on the board of management of representatives of the medical staff of the hospital strengthens it and conduces to harmonious working and efficient administration. I was for four years on the house committee of one of the London general hospitals where such representation exists, and this is certainly not my experience. On the contrary, I found that the presence of the medical staff was antagonistic to the efficiency and independence of the committee, especially when difficult and delicate questions between the medical officers and the nursing staff came up for discussion. Much time was thereby wasted and acrimony introduced into these usually futile discussions, and ultimately the matters in question were usually referred to a sub-committee or other committee, where the medical representation was proportionately stronger than on the committee itself. In cases, too, where the conduct of the resident medical officers was complained of, the presence of the medical staff was necessarily a hindrance to a free and proper investigation."

We are inclined to agree with Mr. Ernest, and the fact that the large majority of the medical men who signed the letter in support of voting power for the medical staff on the committee of the National Hospital have not that power on the committees of the great metropolitan general hospitals to which they are themselves

attached, weakens their claim very considerably.

We contend that the lay committee of a hospital maintained by public charity must hold the *balance of power* between the various sections of workers in the institution which they are appointed to *govern*, and this would become impossible if direct representation was accorded to any one department to the exclusion of others.

For the good government of hospitals the lay committee must keep in its own hands the *right to govern*, or chaos will naturally result. That there should be an independent medical committee, working in intimate harmony with and courteously consulted by the lay committee, goes without saying; and between these bodies no Directors, or Dictators, should be tolerated for a moment; also it appears to us that the lay governing body has a right to receive weekly the official reports of the medical department of a hospital, just as in a well organized institution they receive through the Superintendent of Nursing a report of the nursing department. But let them hold the scales of government firmly and impartially, if discipline is to be maintained and if the voluntary system of hospital management is to be continued. In the present temper of the charitable public a medical autocracy in hospitals means the inevitable downfall of the voluntary system of relief.

**Reflections**

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.



THE Rev. F. Laurence has left England this week for Berlin and St. Petersburg, with the object of obtaining the assent of the Kaiser and the Tsar to the widening of the scope of the Geneva Convention Articles to the inclusion of veterinary surgeons attending wounded animals to the same privileges now claimed for those attending wounded human beings.

Apparently the Government have been unable to obtain in this country anything to equal the German hospital huts, which are made of *papier maché*, and are prettily constructed, forming quite a romantic addition to the lovely scenery in which the camp is located near Netley. There is no concealment about the matter, however, inasmuch as they are all branded "Made in Germany."

The Committee of the Royal Hospital for Children and Women, in the Waterloo Bridge Road, are anxious to re-build the hospital on thoroughly up-to-date lines. The institution is the oldest in London for the treatment of children's diseases, having been started originally in 1816 at St. Andrew's Hill, and removed to its present premises in 1823. The first surgical ward was opened in 1851. The estimated cost to rebuild is about £25,000.

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