

of one department with the duties and business which belong to another, is quite certain to be productive of friction, disorganisation, and inefficiency.

Rule "No. 44" places the house surgeon—an office usually filled in country hospitals by a young man fresh from the absolutely subordinate position of a student in a medical school—in the position of "responsible head of the institution." To place in the hands of this inexperienced young man the responsibility not only for the general medical treatment, but also the control of the female junior officials in a large public institution is absolutely indefensible. To state that a house surgeon "shall take care that the nurses properly discharge their professional duties," and that if they do not do so "he shall report them to the house committee," places both the medical officer and the nurses in an anomalous and untenable position, by ignoring the matron, who must be, in all well-organised hospitals, the responsible head of the Nursing department. We maintain that the duty of a medical man, whether on the honorary or house staff, is to direct the medical treatment of the patients, and he has a right to demand that his directions shall be obeyed by the nursing staff to the extreme letter. We also maintain that failing this obedience upon the part of the nursing staff, it is the duty, if discipline is to be maintained, of the medical staff to report inefficiency, or disobedience, on the part of the nurses to their senior officer, the matron, and it is for this official to correct, and if necessary, to report to the Committee any delinquency on the part of the nurses. That a house surgeon should be empowered to deal with the personal conduct of the female staff is not only futile but inevitably demoralising.

We would, therefore, venture to suggest to the Chairman and Committee of the Macclesfield Infirmary that if they desire good order, discipline, and efficiency, in the conduct of the institution over which they preside, they should, in the near future alter Rule 44, or better still, delete it altogether from their regulations. We have had some years of experience in hospital management, and we emphatically endorse the fundamental principle upon which Miss Florence Nightingale founded the discipline of a Nursing School. She has written under the heading of "What makes a good Training School for Nurses?" No. 4. "The authority and discipline over all women of a trained lady superintendent who is also matron of the hospital, and who is also the best nurse in the hospital, the example and leader of her nurses in all that she wishes her nurses to be."

And again, Miss Nightingale writes under the heading of "Staff of Training School" No. 1. "The superintendent of the training school is the matron of the hospital, and the head of all the women in the hospital." And again, "Discipline is the essence of Training."

We would ask the Governors of the Macclesfield Infirmary if they consider it possible for their matron to maintain adequate control over her subordinates if she is deprived of her legitimate authority by this division of power with the house surgeon? We maintain that a matron under such regulations is being asked to make bricks without straw!

We have before alluded to the disgraceful arrangements in connection with the nurses' dining-room at the Warwick Infirmary. We find that at last week's meeting the Guardians passed a resolution in favour of expending £3,000 to provide new tramp wards. They received at the same sitting a report from the Infirmary Committee that the accommodation for the nurses could not be improved for £12. We should imagine not. Mrs. James commented upon the frequent change of nurses, who all made the same complaint. *The fact is that the wounds of the infirmary patients are dressed in the room in which the infirmary nurses take their meals.* Surely the Medical Officer for Health or the Sanitary Inspector has some power to deal with this outrageous condition of things. To compare the nurses' accommodation with a piggery would be to insult the pig. In the estimation of a Warwick Guardian it is evident that while £3,000 is not too much to make tramps more comfortable, £12 is too much to spend on nurses. A tramp takes precedence of a trained nurse. We are not surprised to learn that in the past year this enlightened Board has spent £25 in advertising for nurses.

Nurses who marry, formed an interesting topic in the address with which the Chairman of the Council of the Royal National Pension Fund for Nurses presented the annual report at the general meeting, held at the offices in Finsbury Pavement. It appears that no fewer than 62 nurses belonging to the Association married during 1896, against 29 in 1895.

At the weekly meeting of the Liverpool Health Committee, Dr. Hope reported that the lady inspectors had commenced their duties last week, and stated that it was intended to provide them with a distinctive uniform "such as the matron of the hospital might select." We hope that, whoever this matron is, she will not select

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)