

desirable that the Guardians should reconsider the question of Mabel Smith's appointment as assistant nurse at the workhouse, with a view to the appointment of a duly qualified person." There can be but one opinion in professional circles as to the wisdom of this decision.

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At a recent meeting of the Ashby Board of Guardians, two of the inmates complained of the treatment they had received from the nurses. One old woman stated that the under-nurse, in giving her her medicine, "tried to force her to swallow it, and, because she could not do so, she slapped her and pressed on her breast." This was denied by the nurse. Another old woman said the head nurse pulled her out of bed when the windows and doors were open. The nurse stated that "owing to the unhealthy smell in the room she was bound to get the woman up, and, as she declined to get out of bed, she had to pull her out." She did not say why it was necessary to have the door and windows open during the process.

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It was practically resolved that the nurses were "not guilty, but must not do it again." The whole statement of the case goes to prove the necessity for the supervision of the nursing staff by a trained superintendent of nurses. The Guardians had the word of the nurses on one side, and of the complaining patients on the other, and the evidence was directly conflicting. One Guardian proposed "that the nurses come before the Board, and be chastised." He was also of opinion that "the word of the old women was as good as theirs." It was held, and we believe rightly, that failing independent testimony, or direct proof, the nurses could not be censured, but the need of an efficient superintendent who could report to the Board is obvious.

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After other business had been discussed Mrs. Pratt asked if she should be in order in bringing up the nurses question again. She only came in at the end of the discussion. She then stated that a former instance had occurred, which she knew was true, in which Nurse Wheatley, the under nurse, had hit a patient. She had spoken to her about it at the time, as had also the master and matron. She had been asked not to bring it before the Board, but after what had taken place that morning she thought it her duty to mention it. The Chairman said that the matter was a very serious one. They had left the question perfectly open, and he thought they should further investigate it. We are of opinion that so grave a charge, coming as it did from a trustworthy source, requires the fullest investigation.

## The Hospital World.

### CLAPHAM MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

THE eighth annual meeting of the Clapham Maternity Hospital was held on Tuesday, March 30th, in the Board-room of the Hospital. Lady Henry Somerset, who had been expected to preside, was, at the last moment, unable to attend, and the chair was taken by Mrs. Pearsall-Smith, who, in her opening address, expressed her warm interest in, and sympathy with, the work, and her approval of the system by which such work is placed entirely in the hands of women. The business of the meeting was then proceeded with, viz., the re-election, as chairman, of Dr. Helen Webb, and the election of three new members of Committee, in place of those who had retired.

The General Report for 1896 showed an increase both in work and in expenditure. 1,168 maternity cases had been attended during the year, 355 in the hospital, and 813 in their own homes, in Clapham or Battersea, each patient having been visited not less than ten times. The audience was reminded that the institution also included three dispensaries, some distance apart from each other, where women could see doctors of their own sex, for themselves or their children, free of charge. During the year 1896 there had been 5,025 such patients (13,666 attendances). The accounts, which are kept on the system approved by the Hospital Sunday, and Saturday Funds, are audited each year by chartered accountants, show an expenditure, for all these branches of work, amounting to £2,230, of which only £123 was spent in management, the remainder being entirely the cost of maintenance, while the receipts amounted to £2,111, more than two-thirds of which were the proceeds of the Nursing School, and patients' payments.

On the ground, therefore, of the Hospital being so largely self-supporting, the Hon. Treasurer earnestly appealed not only for aid in paying off the deficit of £116, with which the year had closed, but for increased assistance in providing the one-third of the funds, for which the Hospital is, each year, dependent upon the subscriptions and donations of any who are willing to "help those who help themselves."

The Hon. Mrs. Talbot, wife of the Bishop of Rochester, and Miss Rodbur-Horton, Guardian of the Poor for the Parish of Lambeth, spoke in warm terms of the good work done by the Institution, and strongly emphasized their approval of the principle of assisting cases of this kind in such a way as not to pauperise the people.

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