

say have ever taken place in the wards, and the Night Superintendent has taken her supper in a ward-kitchen, where her nightly chop, sent over raw from the stores, had to be cooked. The nurses also deny playing any musical instruments in or near the wards, either on day or night duty, but have hired a piano, which is placed in the rodentious residence, which is situated some distance from the present infirmary wards.

The fact that the details of alleged misconduct on the part of the nurses, reached them through the medium of the local press, and that they have so far not been afforded an opportunity of refuting these accusations by the Infirmary Board, cannot be too severely condemned.

Now comes the question—Who has accused the nurses, and what evidence have the Infirmary Board before them that the accusations are true?

There is a wide spread suspicion on the part of the accused, as they have not been reported by the Matron or Medical Superintendent, that a nurse colleague has supplied information to the Board. A short time ago one of the subordinate nurses was reprimanded by the Day Superintendent upon the report of the now-accused Night Superintendent for leaving the lying-in ward, in which she was on day duty, absolutely devoid of stores. As reported to us: "The store-cupboard, when at last the key could be obtained, contained nothing for the use of the patients, face powder and dirty aprons alone were found therein." This nurse, upon being reprimanded, openly boasted "she had the ear of the Committee" and "would make us pay for it." She has also been seen to keep a note-book, and note down every incautious remark made by her fellow nurses.

Our advice to the nurses, who say they are defenceless because they cannot afford to employ legal advice, is to demand: 1. That the accusations made against them shall be definitely made in writing, and that they shall be given an opportunity of defending their characters. 2. That if the Guardians refuse this just demand, that they shall make a united appeal to the Local Government Board for a thorough investigation into the management of the Camberwell Infirmary.

And, in the meantime, we would suggest to the Camberwell Infirmary Board that before they rely upon *ex-parte* statements, they would be wise to make some inquiries concerning the personal character and professional reputation of the person or persons who spy upon their colleagues and then make grave charges against them.

The Royal Red Cross.

THE Queen has conferred the Decoration of the Royal Red Cross upon Sister Mary Elizabeth Joseph in recognition of her services in tending the sick and wounded.

Nursing at the Western Infirmary, Glasgow.

THE difference of opinion, in consequence of the lively discussion in the Glasgow press between the directors of the infirmary and Professor MacEwen, is interesting to nurses, as much of the dispute will ultimately revolve around the nursing question. It appears that when Professor MacEwen was appointed on the staff of the Western Infirmary in 1892 a ward of twelve beds was allotted to him, beyond the required number, "for the convenience of the directors." The directors in making fresh arrangements propose to deprive Professor MacEwen of these twelve beds; and very naturally he objects, as his world-renowned clinical teaching and work was organized under the belief that he would retain the use of the beds for his patients. The senate of the University of Glasgow have intervened and strongly support Professor MacEwen.

Incidentally the nursing question at the Western Infirmary has to be taken into consideration, as Professor MacEwen has complained that the supply of special nurses provided is not sufficiently large, and that he has been unable to obtain nurses when required. To this charge the Directors reply:—

"Reference has also been made to difficulties placed in the way of Professor MacEwen in connection with the nursing arrangements of the house. It is true some complaints were made to the managers on this subject, but, on investigation, it was found that the nursing staff, in point of numbers and efficiency, bore favourable comparison with other similar institutions; that the number of nurses engaged on the occasion to which Professor MacEwen referred was nearly double that of any other surgeon in the Infirmary in proportion to the number of patients under their care; that his permanent staff was more numerous, and that of the large emergency staff kept for the use of the whole hospital he had all but one-half employed in his own wards. The report of the sub-committee, which made careful investigation of the complaint, states that they were of opinion 'that his (Professor MacEwen's) requests for extra nurses have been adequately met by the superintendent. At the same time, they feel bound to put on record the belief that Dr. MacEwen does not fully recognize the fact that his wards are an integral part of the Western Infirmary, and that he himself is only one of the staff; that there are rules applicable to the institution which it is the duty of the managers and their officials to administer uniformly; that, on one hand, emergencies arise in the administration, in the inconvenience of which Dr. MacEwen must share, and, on the other, while a certain amount of work of the surgical wards comes without warning, a great deal of it can be arranged and distributed by the staff surgeons so as not to cause any strain upon the resources of the house, or put the nurses and others to unnecessary inconvenience.'"

In an interview with Professor MacEwen, which appears in the *Glasgow Herald*, the nursing difficulty is discussed, and it brings out very distinctly and in a very interesting manner, the

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)