

the following statements, which I quote verbatim:—(1) "as a consequence the wound re-opened and serious hæmorrhage resulted"; it is untrue. There was no hæmorrhage, and there is no proof whatever that the insertion of the pillow caused the wound to give way. (2) "Dr. Horn remonstrated with the Matron, and she partially admitted the truth of his statements." It is likewise untrue. I never admitted I interfered with the treatment. I acknowledged placing the pillow, but only in the ordinary course of nursing. (3) "She made an understanding impossible by retorting that the doctor had neglected to use bandages on the wound and therefore he was responsible." It is a misstatement. What I have maintained is this, and I am open to correction—that as the wound (from which there had been continuous slight oozing) was not strapped or otherwise supported after the removal of the last stitch, *except* by a bandage, it is unwarrantable to assume in face of the violent attacks of coughing to which the patient is subjected that the reopening of a portion of the wound was due to the pillow. In fact the patient told me he felt something give way shortly after the stitches were removed the day before. I may add that there is no desire on my part to "hush up" the matter for the very good reason there is nothing to hush up. On the contrary I should welcome the fullest investigation of the whole affair.—I beg to remain, etc., JOSEPHINE L. DE PLEDGE.

After these letters had been read Mr. Meinhertzhagen proposed that the recommendation of the General Committee—that no action be taken—be adopted. The affair to him seemed perfectly trivial; he felt that the Matron had committed an error of judgment, and she would not be likely to do such a thing again.

Mr. Jeffery proposed, as an amendment, that the entire correspondence on the question be submitted to the General Committee, and that that body be asked to enquire into the entire facts and report to the Board. They could see from the letters from the doctor and the Matron that there was a conflict of testimony, and that it was necessary to fairly allot the blame after a proper enquiry. Some one undoubtedly imperilled the life of Morgan, and it was necessary to determine the official who was responsible.

Mr. Margrie seconded the amendment.

Mr. Roddis supported the amendment and said it was obvious that the officials were contradicting each other in the boldest way, and it therefore behoved the Guardians to ascertain which of the two was telling the truth.

Mr. Smith commented upon the manner in which the Matron's response to Dr. Horn had been brought before the Board that day. Dr. Horn had made a statement to the Board, and the fact was promptly communicated to the Matron. With regard to the alternative proposals before the Board, he thought Mr. Jeffery's amendment would meet the wishes of the officials concerned and the public. The object of the

amendment was plain. As a result, the blame would be put upon the right shoulders.

Mr. Meinhertzhagen said no good could result from holding an enquiry, both the doctor and Matron were admirable officials, and if an enquiry was held they would be obliged to throw the blame upon one of them. He also considered that the case had been magnified. It was really a very small affair, and in every hospital and infirmary such things were likely to occur! Supposing the enquiry was held, it would increase the friction between the medical staff and the Matron, and, moreover, the Board must not forget that friction was almost inevitable where they had ladies at the head of departments!! Let the Guardians take a proper course and proceed to the next business. Finally, Mr. Meinhertzhagen pointed out that the result of the Committee's enquiry, if any, would be serious. It was a matter of resignation for one or other official.

Mr. Jeffery remarked that the case of Morgan was not by any means a solitary case at the Chelsea Infirmary. Cases had happened before which made it necessary for the Guardians to act. He was astounded at the flippant tone in which Mr. Meinhertzhagen had referred to the patients in the Infirmary.

Ultimately, the amendment to hold a Committee of Enquiry was defeated by five votes to four.

A SCAPEGOAT.

From the above correspondence and discussion it will be obvious that "some one has blundered"; and that the reputation which certain of the Chelsea Guardians have acquired for partisan conduct, whenever any question of the medical and nursing departments is concerned, has instigated them this time to extremities, and that in support of the Matron they have not hesitated now to question the professional skill and truthfulness of their medical officers. We have no hesitation in expressing our dissent from the refusal of the Chelsea Guardians to enquire into this scandal, because, however "trivial" it may appear to them, it involves the safety of the lives of the patients under their care. In supporting the Matron—although her statements flatly traverse those of Dr. Horn—they place the latter gentleman in a very difficult position, and one which we cannot for a moment suppose that Dr. Horn will quietly accept.

The medical officers at the Chelsea Infirmary have now not only to demand that their professional right to *treat the patients*, without the interference of the Matron, shall be enforced, but they have to demand that the slur cast upon their personal characters shall at once be publicly enquired into, and either proved or disproved.

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