

inquiry into the whole matter. There can be no doubt that Dr. Horn has right and justice on his side in making this demand, and we hope he will maintain it.

"THE LIE DIRECT."

MISS DE PLEDGE'S LETTER.

Chelsea Infirmary, Cale Street,  
August 11th, 1899.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I regret to find that the Junior Assistant Medical Officer, Mr. A. E. Horn, has considered it necessary, in a letter addressed to you on August 5th, to question the accuracy of the report which I submitted to the Board on July 26th with reference to the patient Morgan. Under these circumstances it becomes my duty to justify the statements therein contained, as they were not made out without most careful verification of all the facts of the case. (1) Mr. Horn alleges that it is stated in my report that "the abdomen was left unsupported after the operation," to which statement (*sic*) he gives an unqualified denial, and proceeds to explain that "a binder was firmly applied round the patient's loins immediately after the operation." In my report I said nothing whatever about the operation—the word is not used—nor did I in any way allude to it. What was done at the time of the operation has no bearing upon the point at issue, my reference was solely to the unsupported condition of the abdomen consequent on the removal of the stitches twelve days later—a very different matter. My report runs thus: "though the wound had not entirely healed when the last stitches were taken out, no support, in the shape of broad bands of strapping (i.e., sticking plaster) which is usual in such cases, was applied." To have so misquoted me, and perverted the sense of what I have written is inexcusable, as Mr. Horn had access to the document in question, and was afforded every opportunity of making careful notes. (2) Mr. Horn then goes on to say: "The report further states that the man turned in his sleep on the night of the pillow accident. This was denied to Dr. Moore by the nurse in attendance." It is again to be regretted that Mr. Horn did not take the trouble to verify for himself the truth of his assertion before contradicting mine. The nurse has never denied to anyone that she saw the patient on his side on the occasion mentioned, and I have her statement in writing to that effect, a copy of which I enclose.

Mr. Horn's comment on the improbability of bed-sores arising in "a comparatively young man who had only been confined to bed for fourteen days" is an opinion which he will probably modify after one or two years' experience in his profession, especially when the habits and condition of the patient predispose him towards one. The fact as to whether I was or was not aware that the hernia was umbilical, is begging the question, and as such unworthy of serious consideration. I beg to remain, ladies and gentlemen,

Yours obediently,  
JOSEPHINE L. DE PLEDGE.

NURSE BARNARD'S LETTER.

Chelsea Infirmary,  
11th August, 1899.

DEAR MATRON,—I understand that certain statements of mine, with regard to the patient Morgan, who was under my care on night duty, have been

misrepresented to the Board of Guardians. I am reported to have "denied" having seen the patient asleep on his side on the night of the pillow incident. I wish to state positively that I *did* see the patient on his side on the night in question, and that I have never denied the fact.

I am, yours obediently,  
(Nurse) BARNARD.

It will be observed that both these letters contain a flat contradiction of statements made by Dr. Horn, and that his request that he shall be exonerated from the suggestions made by Miss de Pledge, or that the Guardians should make a thorough inquiry into the whole matter, has not been complied with, for the resolution "that no blame is attached to either the Matron or the Doctor" in no way covers his request. We await with interest Dr. Horn's next step, as we cannot believe that he will be content to remain under imputations which are calculated to do him distinct professional damage.

THE OPINION OF MEMBERS OF THE BOARD.

It is interesting to notice the opinion of various members of the Board on the matter.

The Chairman: "I'm sick of it."

Mr. Thomas said he sincerely hoped that the Board would decline to appeal to the Local Government Board. Personally, he felt that the conduct of the Matron in this matter was very ill-advised. There was no reason why she should continually write letters to the Board and thus increase the difficulty of the situation. They could not go on discussing the matter for ever.

Mr. Smith said he had been in favour of an inquiry in the first instance, because it was the proper course to take, and these mutual contradictions and charges might have been avoided. However, he was, like the Chairman and Mr. Thomas, tired of the whole matter, and he thought the Board had better proceed to the next business.

Mr. Lansdell said it appeared to him that the Matron had made a mistake. That was the truth of the affair, although the Matron declined to admit it.

Mr. Jeffery said he could not allow the matter to end that way, because a very serious accusation had been made against a young and able medical man, who was at the outset of his career, and had done nothing but his duty; and unless Dr. Horn were exonerated from blame, the accusation could be thrown at him at any time in the future. It was unanimously resolved, at the Committee meeting that morning, that the whole of the correspondence should be forwarded to the Local Government Board. Now, at all events, they should exonerate Dr. Horn from blame. He did not think this at all satisfactory to Dr. Horn, but he was sick of the whole thing.

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