

when the minds of the public in this country are exercised on the subject of medical experiments will we fear increase the distress of mind, and the apprehension felt by many of the highly intelligent and educated artizans of the metropolis that hospitals exist not only for the relief of suffering, but to afford a ground where new remedies and experiments may be tried in the interests of the general public, although perhaps at the expense of the individual. That such experiments do take place it is impossible to deny. It is the imperative duty of Hospital Committees to see that they are kept within legitimate bounds, and to lessen the prevailing distrust. The methods which should be adopted are surely to treat the objections advanced with courtesy, and the objectors as reasonable beings, instead of meeting criticism with flat denial or intolerance. This attitude on the part of those who hold the purse strings, which is far too common, is not only unjustifiable, but arouses the inherent combativeness of the majority of the British Public to any injustice or want of fair play. Is this the reason why the methods of distribution of the Prince of Wales' Fund every year arouse more dissatisfaction? We have always objected to this centralization of funds, as tending to place individual hospitals in a position independent of public opinion. Each hospital should be supported on its merits, and not as is commonly rumoured by partial methods. In this connection we may point out that, as an editor, we strongly deprecate any editor of a medical newspaper having a share in the distribution of funds to medical charities. It is inevitable that accusations of favoritism will be made, and, moreover, it places the secretaries of these charities in a false position, for they must either support the newspaper edited by one who has power to influence the grant made to them, or they must run the risk of finding their institutions omitted in the list of awards in favour of more amenable, if not more deserving, institutions. At the present time, the composition of the Committee of the Prince's Fund by no means inspires confidence. Working men and women, who contribute largely to the support of our hospitals, and who have the keenest interest in them, as they furnish a large proportion of the patients, have no representation. The fact that no women have seats on the Committee of this Fund dooms it in the future to be recognised as inefficiently

constituted, because their interests are unrepresented, and the needs of the Nursing and Domestic Departments of our hospitals, departments which are all important to the efficient working of any hospital, are absolutely unvoiced. We therefore recommend the reconstitution of the Council of the Prince's Fund with due regard to all the interests involved. Amongst other new elements we would suggest that the Metropolitan Radical Federation should be accorded representation on the Council. This society has forwarded to the Prince of Wales an extremely lucid memorial with regard to practices to which they object, and which they assert to be in vogue in some of the London hospitals, hospitals which receive substantial assistance from the Prince of Wales' Hospital Fund. The Federation refers to the widely spread idea that "there is too much tendency, nowadays, for the medical students attending the London hospitals to regard the patients that come under their hands as so much material for experiment," and in support of this idea gives definite instances. It remains for this memorial to be met with an open mind, for the Council of the Prince's Fund to institute investigations as to the existence of the grievances complained of, and, to insist upon their removal, when they are satisfied that they do occur, before financially assisting the institution which permits them. In this way the confidence of the working classes will be restored.

Annotations.

NURSES' HOLIDAYS.

THE Bristol Board of Guardians seem to be a very obsolete body, a short time ago they refused to give the head nurses in their infirmary wards the title of Sister, a name now commonly adopted to distinguish the nurse in charge of a ward from her subordinates, and one which, no doubt, tends to good discipline by giving her a definite position and prestige. Now they have declined to allow their nurses three weeks holiday in the year. The condition of mind of these guardians may be gauged by the applause which greeted one of their number who said "the nurses had quite enough holiday already." There were thousands of tradesmen in the city who never had a week's holiday, and thousands of girls in shops and other establishments, who never had any more than a fort-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)