

The Case of Miss Rogers, R.B.N.A.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD INQUIRY AT EAST PRESTON INFIRMARY.

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EVIDENCE OF A PATIENT AND NURSES.

Miss Gates, of Worthing, who was in the Maternity Ward in October last, was called by Mr. Prince, and confirmed some of the complaints made by Miss Rogers.—Miss Hitch, who has had ten years' experience as nurse, and who has been at East Preston since December 4th, 1899, said there was nothing at all for the nurses' use at that time—neither dressing trays, forceps, syringes, nor, indeed, anything they wanted to use. It was also very difficult to obtain clean clothes for the inmates.—By Mr. Boxall: She was on good terms with Nurse Rogers, and also with all the other nurses.—By Mr. Davy: It was quite untrue that she spent in the Superintendent Nurse's room a lot of the time she was supposed to be on duty.—Nurse Byrne, who was called and examined by Mr. Boxall, adhered to the statements she had made in her communications to the Board. With reference to the case of a child who died from whooping cough, the Superintendent Nurse bullied her in the hearing of the other patients, and told her if she had exerted herself a little more the child would not have died. When Nurse Rogers had found fault with her she had taken her own part and defended herself.—By Mr. Prince: She wrote her resignation a few weeks back because she could not stand it any longer; but one of the Nursing Committee advised her to wait a little, and she said she would. She considered she had not been treated fairly by Nurse Rogers.

THE MATRON AND MASTER.

The Matron (Mrs. Sturtevant), who has been at East Preston for the past sixteen months, stated, in answer to Mr. Boxall, that she had had to supply labour for the Infirmary, and had given it whenever she could. The Superintendent Nurse had complained about not getting the linen in to time, but her only answer to this was that they had got the washing done as quickly as they could. The Infirmary linen was always attended to first in the laundry. If persons in the receiving ward were ill, she always called the Superintendent Nurse to see them in the absence of the doctor. She had never heard until that day that inmates had had to wear clothing for the time alleged.—By Mr. Davy: It was within her knowledge that there had been considerable friction between the Superintendent and the other nurses, but she had not interfered in the matter. The other nurses had complained of the way she spoke to them, and had told her that they were worked

to death, while the Superintendent did nothing at all. She had also been told that the Superintendent Nurse had been absent from some of the wards for two days at a time.—Questioned by Mr. Davy, with reference to the woman Gates, Mrs. Sturtevant said she was kept in the receiving ward from the Friday night till the Monday waiting for the doctor to pass her into the Infirmary.—The Master (Mr. James K. Sturtevant), who was called at the request of Mr. Prince, stated that he objected to the inmate Cager seeing Mr. Prince's representative by order of the Nursing Committee. No one had been interrogated by Mr. Wannop for the other side with the exception of the Matron and himself.—By Mr. Davy: He was aware there had been considerable friction between the nurses and the Superintendent. All the nurses had complained, he believed, with the exception of Nurse Hitch.

THE NURSING COMMITTEE.

Mr. Michael King, the Chairman of the Nursing Committee of the Board of Guardians, said he recollected the terms of the Superintendent Nurse's engagement; she was to assist the other nurses from time to time as required. All her requests for articles or other things had been complied with by the Committee as far as they possibly could. Besides applying for all these articles the Superintendent Nurse also made repeated complaints, and this was really the source of all the trouble. They thought the Superintendent had been the cause of all the friction, and they had come to the conclusion that no improvement was possible so long as she remained. They accordingly recommended the Board to ask for her resignation, which they did. He was away at the time himself, but he believed the resolution of the Board was unanimous. Personally he had had no reason to change his opinion since then. As to there being any feeling on the part of the Nursing Committee against the appointment of a Superintendent Nurse, he could only say that, although some of them thought it was not advisable, yet when it was decided they must appoint one, the Committee had sought, by every fair means, to carry the decision into effect, and make the change a success. The Guardians did not suspend the Superintendent Nurse at first, because they expected to get the reply of the Local Government Board every day; but by the next meeting they got tired of waiting, and decided on her suspension. A prompt rejoinder then came from the Local Government Board that they had no right to do this, and she had since been allowed to continue her duties. He was a frequent visitor to the Infirmary, and he considered they had always been kept scrupulously clean.—By Mr. Prince: When Miss Rogers made her complaints

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