

selves in the former cases well merited ridicule, and in the latter severe punishment, and it is to be feared, besides, much damage to the Institution for which he had worked well and long.

It is reported that the Matron of a small special Hospital lately used her utmost endeavours to prevent a proposed change solely affecting the Visiting Staff of the place. It is not surprising to hear that her meddlesome interference was brushed aside, and has only resulted in extinguishing the influence which she ought by virtue of her office to hold in the Institution.

The next case points the moral if possible even more forcibly. A Matron of a large Training School for Nurses lately applied to the committee to grant her entire power over the future careers and the present comfort of the Probationer Nurses. It will be admitted by all professional people that we are not overstating the case when we explain that this lady's proposal was that she should be empowered to engage and to discharge any or all of these workers as she might think fit, without explanation, and without redress. It is currently reported of the committee in question that it "only sits upon sufferance," and that its members are entirely ignorant of what transpires in the Institution, whose interests and reputation they are supposed to guard. Whether this be true or not, the conviction that so lamentable a condition of affairs exists is widely expressed, and we regret to say has been strengthened if not entirely created by the inaction of the governing body on several occasions.

We will not, however, at present, enter further into this matter, save as an illustration of the grave importance of the general principle, that all Hospital workers should faithfully discharge the duties with which they are individually entrusted, and for which in the public mind they are held to be responsible. Now, without fear of contradiction we assert that the duty of a governing body of a public charity is to govern, and the duty of the servants of the Institution in their several positions is to obey. Alter the arrangement in however slight a measure and disturbances are certain to arise. Change the order of things—transpose the rulers and the ruled—and chaos sooner or later is inevitable. With the keenest desire, therefore, for the well-being of Hospitals, we would most earnestly emphasise the essential necessity of each and every worker therein strictly limiting himself or herself to his or her own special duties. At present, in most Nurse Training Schools, the governing body has the entire power to select and appoint every officer from the highest to the lowest—from the Matron to the Probationer—and consequently to discharge any one of these

officials. To relegate its powers in this matter to any subordinate is impossible—must always be impossible—because it can never divest itself of its responsibility. It is not a question of the fitness of any given person to discharge such powers satisfactorily, but only of the abstract and fundamental principle that only those who are responsible for the performance of a duty should carry it out. Now, the more highly esteemed the calling of a Trained Nurse becomes, the more eagerly the position of a Probationer at a well-known Training School is sought after, the more important will it become to persuade the public that the selection of the few who can be appointed from the many who apply for such posts is above suspicion of favouritism, and beyond the reproach of unfairness. The pressure of competition for Probationerships is growing month by month ever more and more keen. So while we ever hope that for the credit and good name of the profession only the best and most suitable candidates will be chosen, for the harmonious working and welfare of each Institution we anxiously urge that the responsibility for the final appointment shall always be thrown on the shoulders of the governing body of the Institution. The choice of the workers must naturally be made by the individual most capable of rightly estimating their qualifications for the post—the Matron—but here her duty should most unquestionably end, and the power of confirming her opinion, and of electing distinct officials of the Institution, should remain with the self-same authority which gave the Matron her own place and position. Once appointed, the Probationers must of necessity be placed under the control of the Matron; but when the question of their dismissal is concerned, once more we say that, both morally and legally, it is beyond her jurisdiction. Only the authority which gave can take away, which granted the appointment can annul it, and for a Matron to attempt to usurp the power of discharging the Probationers of a public Institution is every whit as absurd as it would be for a commander of a vessel in the Royal Navy to attempt to cashier one of his sub-lieutenants. We do not believe that many Matrons would welcome such unenviable power and responsibility if it were offered to them. It is, however, reported that the Committee, in the instance to which we have alluded, unhesitatingly refused to entrust its petitioner with such powers, and gave in addition certain clear proofs of its belief that a person who could so trespass upon its credulity and compliance was not to be implicitly trusted to execute its orders. Such a rebuff may well point a moral if it does not adorn a very edifying tale.

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