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## EDITORIAL.

### OUT OF HAND.

The lack of discipline in many of the infirmaries and sick wards of workhouses—as revealed in constant reports in the public Press—point to the conclusion that the nursing staffs are out of hand in these institutions, which are under the control of the Local Government Board, and that further action is necessary to put an end to the frequent scandals which indicate the need for more effective maintenance of discipline amongst the nurses under the control of the Board, and for the better care of the sick; for, where discipline is lax, the sick are the invariable sufferers.

To mention some recent cases:—

(1) The strike of the probationer nurses at Fusehill Workhouse Infirmary, Carlisle. We have already reported the main facts in regard to this case; but, on the point of discipline—or the lack of it—we wonder how Guardians expect discipline to be maintained if they invite insubordinate probationers out to tea (whether with justification or not, is not at present the point), and then return with them to the Infirmary, and give their superior officer “a good talking to” in their presence. Yet this is what actually occurred in connection with the Carlisle incident, as admitted by one Guardian (Mr. Rutherford) in his evidence at the Local Government Board enquiry.

(2) The strike of nurses at the York Union Workhouse—in this case on account of their dietary. They may or may not have been justified in objecting to the diet supplied to them. But the manner in which they gave expression to their grievances certainly indicates a lack of discipline. For instance, the nurses having refused their breakfast sausages, two links of sausages were subsequently found suspended from a gas bracket in one of the

wards bearing the inscription, “No further use for you,” which certainly was not the right way to give expression to their grievance.

Another instance of lack of discipline in a public institution is shown in the case of the Aberdare Hospital, under the Aberdare District Council. Two of the nurses suddenly abandoned their duties; the first, Nurse Owen, calling upon the Medical Officer of Health, and at once consenting to submit in writing the charges she preferred against the Matron, Mrs. Knight.

Two days later, Nurse Templeman also left her work. She was asked to go on night duty that night (Saturday), but pleaded an engagement for an hour, but agreed to go on duty on her return. This was not acceded to. She kept her engagement, but drove up the next night for the purpose of obtaining her luggage, when, it is alleged, the Matron hurled accusations against her of a defamatory character, asking the cabman if he were a married man, and accusing the nurse of an attempt to entice her own husband to her bedroom. This degrading incident was followed by the suppositious suicide of the Matron (which apparently was only a dramatic incident, as no ill results supervened), and a meeting of the Hospital Committee. As a result of what there transpired, the summary dismissal of the Master and Matron followed.

There is only one remedy for the disorganisation in the nursing profession, namely, the legal registration of trained nurses by the State, under a central controlling authority with disciplinary powers. In the case of the institutions under the authority of the Local Government Board, the formation of a Nursing Department at the L. G. B. Office, under the direction of a Matron-in-Chief, is urgently necessary; as well as an increase in the number of Nursing Inspectors.

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