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EDITORIAL.

EXPERT INSPECTION.

We recently referred to the able report presented by Miss L. M. Wamsley, Nursing Inspector under the Local Government Board, in reference to the sick wards and nursery of the Newmarket Union Workhouse. The immediate result of this report has been that two additional Charge Nurses are to be appointed (Miss Wamsley recommended five), that the Master has been instructed to report on the alterations in the officers' dietary so that it may include fruit, and to obtain estimates for two bedside chairs. The value of expert inspection has thus been demonstrated.

We have now a further instance of the value of such inspection, and of the conscientious way in which the Inspectors of Nursing appointed by the President of the Local Government Board are doing their duty, in the report made to the Board by Mrs. Andrews upon a visit of inspection made by her to the Workhouse Infirmary, Guildford.

Extracts from this report were forwarded by the Local Government Board to the Guildford Guardians, and these were considered by the Visiting Committee, together with the observations made thereon by the Superintendent Nurse.

Mrs. Andrews reported that the staff was below numbers on the day of her visit (March 14th), that things had deteriorated since her last visit on July 18th, 1912, that the wards and lavatories were not so clean as they should be, that the lying-in wards were empty but not clean, that she was obliged to condemn one mackintosh, one blanket, and one sheet, on a bed which was stated to be ready made up for a patient, as unclean. She stated that the Superintendent Nurse accompanied her, but she was unable to obtain necessary information without appealing to the Matron and Charge Nurse, who constantly corrected her statements.

That there was an atmosphere of discontent among the staff. That in her opinion these things arose from lack of organization, supervision, and method, and an inadequate staff. These combined led to officers, otherwise competent, and who knew better, making shift and becoming content with a low standard. The absence of a "head" with a thorough grip on things was apparent.

The Visiting Committee having considered the question, reported to the Guardians that the medical officer of the workhouse had been in attendance on the Committee, and commented on the details of Mrs. Andrews' report. That he had endorsed her statement that there was an atmosphere of discontent among the nursing staff at the infirmary, which had been going on for some time, and considered that the Superintendent Nurse, though qualified, and understanding her work, could not impart her knowledge to others, and had not sufficient tact to supervise.

The Superintendent Nurse wrote denying the charges made by Mrs. Andrews, and further stating that they were indefinite, and that examples might have been given.

The committee decided in view of the Inspector's report, and the statement of the medical officer, to recommend the Board to terminate the appointment of the Superintendent Nurse, and its recommendation was subsequently adopted by thirty-two votes to two.

The report demonstrates the value of appointing expert nurses as inspectors of nursing. Many of the points mentioned by Mrs. Andrews would not come within the observation of members of the Board, as for instance, the preparation of a bed with soiled materials for the reception of a lying-in patient, yet the health and life of the patient might be affected. Once more we congratulate the President of the Local Government Board not only on the appointment of trained nurses as Inspectors, but upon the selection he has made.

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