

and in another addressed to the *Hornsey Journal* and published on January 9th, 1920.

The defence was that the words were written on a privileged occasion, *bona fide*, and without malice.

Mr. J. A. Hawke, K.C., for the plaintiffs, said that the Matron was away from May 21st to June 6th, and Miss Rainforth acted for her in her absence. The patient was admitted on May 27th, 1919, and operated on next day. He died on June 14th, and Dr. Ingram made certain allegations to the House Committee which were enquired into, who found them unproved.

The defendant, in the letter complained of, wrote to the Chairman that "there had been trouble over the patient, and the Matron, while knowing that a new method (the Carrel-Dakin treatment.—Ed.) had been used, and that the question of efficiency had been raised, took no steps to make herself completely informed of every detail of the case for two days after her return to duty in the hospital." The doctor further said that a statement made by the Matron at the meeting of the Committee of June 21st was the first intimation to him of a certain condition of the patient. He was never informed of it.

Concerning Miss Rainforth, the doctor wrote in the same letter: "Inexperience . . . might be excused on the first occasion . . . but it was the duty of the nurse-in-charge to inform me . . . and this is the real substance of my complaint of neglect.

He further complained that it was "a reflection on the part of the efficient management of the hospital for a water bed not to be forthcoming at any time for the use of the patient."

In the letter to the *Hornsey Journal* Dr. Ingram stated that the patient was allowed to remain "soaking wet" for 48 hours, and although he paid five visits during that period he was only informed of the fact on his last visit, after which the man was kept dry, and that a bed sore formed, followed by a secondary abscess which put the patient in the utmost danger.

Miss Grime considered that the letter above quoted and the one to the *Hornsey Journal* suggested that she was careless and inefficient in her supervision of the case, and not fitted to be Matron of the hospital.

Miss Rainforth complained of being accused of being careless and neglectful of her duties as a nurse.

In regard to the diet of the patient, Miss Grime, giving evidence, said that roast mutton and potatoes would not hurt a man who had had an incision in his leg and whose temperature was 99 degrees. It would not be proper nursing to allow a patient who was very ill to be on a bed which had got soaking wet. The difficulty was to keep the bed dry. It was protected by two waterproof sheets.

Mr. Arthur Edmunds, C.B., F.R.C.S., stated that Miss Grime was one of the most competent

Matrons in London, and he was not easily pleased, and Miss Rainforth was an excellent second.

Dr. Ingram, giving evidence, said that complete exposure of the knee-joint was one of the most serious operations in surgery; the patient required very careful nursing. The bed sore was due to the man having lain in solution, the nurse had never drawn his attention to it; he discovered it when he turned the man over.

Dr. W. P. Blumer, F.R.C.S., endorsed this and said there was a difficulty about getting mackintosh sheeting, and oiled paper was substituted.

The Judge having summed up, the Jury, after protracted deliberation, were unable to agree, and were discharged.

OUR CONCLUSIONS.

In relation to the lack of water beds and pillows, and the dearth of mackintosh, or jaconet, we may point out that Hornsey is not Kamchatka, and a number of firms supplying medical and surgical requisites could have delivered an urgent order within an hour. We cannot think that the nursing was expert if the patient was permitted to lie in solution, nor do we consider oiled paper an efficient substitute for jaconet or mackintosh.

In regard to the diet of mutton and potatoes, we think it unlikely that a patient suffering from septicæmia and recently operated upon would have an appetite for such diet, but as he required plenty of nourishing food, it should have been supplied in digestible form.

THE HOSPITAL WORLD.

HOSPITAL FOR NERVOUS DISEASES, EDGBASTON.

On Wednesday, February 23rd, The Lord Mayor of Birmingham (Alderman W. A. Cadbury) accompanied by the Lady Mayoress, visited the Hospital for Nervous Diseases, Edgbaston, and unveiled a tablet to the memory of the founder, Mr. Edwin Gilbert Smith, F.R.C.S.

The Lady Mayoress was particularly interested in the staff quarters and the domestic arrangements. During her visit to the women's ward she accepted a bouquet of pink carnations presented by one of the patients.

The hospital, which is the only special hospital for Nervous Diseases in the Midlands has accommodation for thirty patients, and being situated in its own grounds, is peculiarly suited for the treatment of functional cases.

Having no endowment fund it is entirely dependent upon voluntary contributions; the necessitous poor are treated free, other patients contribute to their maintenance during their stay in hospital according to their means.

There is a considerable waiting list and the beds are greatly in demand.

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