

into effect. In short, the strong light which the House of Lords' Committee has thrown upon these Institutions has already done immeasurable good; and the Report which Lord SANDHURST and his Committee will issue next Session will probably have still more wide-reaching effects. For there can be little doubt that their lordships will point out, as they have never been pointed out before, certain grave faults in the Nursing Departments of our Hospitals, and that they will suggest important reforms.

We propose to consider, briefly, the details of the Nursing arrangements at each Hospital, as revealed in the evidence given by its accredited representatives. But we must first review some statements made by Mr. WILLIAM RATHBONE, M.P. This gentleman has been a member of the Executive Committee of the Liverpool Infirmary for about thirty years, the President of the Liverpool Training School and Home for Nurses, a member of the Workhouse Committee of the Liverpool Vestry and of its Nurses' Committee; and for many years a trustee and a member of the Executive Committee of the Nightingale School for Nurses. He has, therefore, had very exceptional opportunities—we might almost say unique opportunities—of acquiring as accurate knowledge as any unprofessional person could obtain, of the work which is required from Nurses, and of the organisation of the Nursing Department of a Hospital. His views of the manner in which this department should be managed, are therefore worthy of the closest attention of Nurses. Mr. RATHBONE painted a gloomy picture of what the Nurses were in the Liverpool Infirmary in 1861, when it appears that the Matron only had three Nurses in the building whom she considered worthy of £16 a year wages; "the others she said got £10 a year, and if they gave them any more, the probability was they would get drunk the first holiday."

With reference to the present organisation at the Infirmary, the witness stated "the Matron during the first month's probation keeps or dismisses the Probationer without ever putting her on the books," and that the Matron had absolute power to dismiss any Nurse whom, and when, she pleased to do so. We have, on previous occasions, proved that this system is radically wrong; that no official of a public Institution should be able to engage and dismiss at her own unfettered will, her fellow servants; and that, in the case of Nurses, where skilled training is the

only passport to future livelihood, it is simply monstrous that the whole professional success or failure of hundreds of workers should be dependent upon the caprice of one woman. It reflects the greatest credit on the tact and kindness of English Hospital Matrons that this extraordinary anomaly has not caused so much friction and public scandal as to have been swept away long ago. The days of autocracy are over, and, despite Mr. RATHBONE's opinion, despotism is as much out of place in a Hospital as it is everywhere else. Lord KIMBERLEY, as usual, put the matter into a nutshell, and reduced the whole contention to absurdity by asking why the Secretary was not invested with despotic powers also. Mr. RATHBONE argued that, because the Committee could not judge of a woman's fitness for Nursing, therefore they ought to give the Matron absolute and unfettered control over her department. He seemed quite unable to grasp the views of several noble lords, which are undoubtedly held by the public at large, that there is a wide difference between supporting the authority of the Matron, and abdicating to her the essential function of the Committee—the ruling power. We know very little of the state of affairs at the Royal Infirmary, Liverpool; but reading between the lines of Mr. RATHBONE's evidence we shall not be surprised to learn that very considerable reforms are required in that Institution.

The next point in Mr. RATHBONE's evidence—which we must notice, and which we would unhesitatingly condemn—is his statements concerning Hospital Chaplains, which we cannot but consider quite uncalled for, extremely unjust, and most undignified. He stated—*apropos* of nothing—"There is another part of Hospital management which has been to me incomprehensibly bad, and that is the chaplaincy. I have never been able to understand why, but I never met with any but one Hospital Manager who could put his finger on one Hospital Chaplain who had been satisfactory, either in Workhouses or Hospitals." And again, "Sometimes they are too fond of talking to the Nurses, but they ought not to have anything to do with them. If they are active they are often an awful nuisance, worse than if they are passive, because they are centres of gossip and everything of that sort." As Mr. RATHBONE is a Nonconformist, his feelings on the subject of Church of England clergymen may be somewhat discounted; and the excellent work these gentlemen do for our Hospitals, the unblemished character they bear,

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