

5311. You recommended him to put his complaint in writing?—Yes, in such a way that I could put it before the Trustees.

5312. *Mr. White.*] She was operated on on the afternoon of the 21st, died on the morning of the 22nd, and that letter is dated when?—The 23rd. He called on me before her death and made his complaint, but he called again and left this letter, and asked me to look over it. He said that I was to look on his letter more as a kind of guidance to me as Chairman of the Trustees that the Hospital was in a bad state, and that he thought it necessary to have certain things remedied.

5313. I am afraid that you are mistaken, and that you are mixing two things up?—No. I know every word of his letter. Dr. Batchelor had several conversations with me in reference to Mrs. T——'s death, because he had complained to me about the want of light and the draughtiness of the ward in which he performed the operation. He complained very bitterly to me.

5314. *The Chairman.*] You had several conversations with him?—Yes. The letter was the result of these conversations. Then I made inquiries at the Hospital to ascertain if anything could be done to obviate any of the defects that had arisen in this case, and was told that the principal cause of the doctor's complaint was a bad light caused through a kerosene-lamp. I found that I could do nothing in the way of remedying what was complained of in the letter. At the time he left the letter I asked him if it was to be put before the Trustees, and he said that it was to be held over for the present; that he would let me know in the course of a day or two; and would meanwhile consult some of his own friends.

5315. He asked you not to act on it?—Yes.

5316. *Mr. White.*] What then?—So far as Mrs. T——'s death was concerned, the matter rested there.

5317. Did you receive another letter?—Simply that one asking me to take no further steps in the matter. [Letter of 27th July handed in.]

5318. Did you receive the original of that letter?—Yes.

5319. *The Chairman.*] That letter does not ask you to take no further action [letter read]?—I must say that the letter I received said so, and I think that Dr. Batchelor will bear me out in that.

5320. Was that the letter you got?—I cannot swear to the exact wording of the letter.

*Dr. Batchelor:* That is an exact copy of the letter I wrote.

*Witness:* Well, I was clear in my own mind, after reading it, that I was not to allow it to go before the Trustees.

5321. *Mr. White.*] Your understanding was that the matter was at an end?—Decidedly

5322. And that you were not to move in the matter?—I was not.

5323. Did you, as a matter of fact, ever bring that letter before the Trustees?—No.

5324. *The Chairman.*] Do you adhere to your statement that you received a second letter asking you to take no further action?—That is so.

5325. And you took no further action?—Exactly.

5326. *Mr. White.*] That was your understanding of the letter?—Yes.

5327. And that is the reason why you did not bring it before the Trustees?—Yes. And I made inquiries myself as Chairman of Trustees.

5328. Until this copy was brought before the Commissioners, where was the letter kept?—In my private house.

5329. Did you keep it yourself?—Yes. Nobody ever saw it except it myself.

5330. Until it was produced here?—Yes; until this copy was produced in Court here. My reason for doing so was that I was clearly under the impression that Dr. Batchelor did not wish that it should go before the Trustees in a formal manner.

5331. Will you kindly explain the position as to Mrs. S——'s matter?—I dealt with that in a similar way. Dr. Batchelor called on me on one or two occasions, and said that he was dissatisfied with the way his patients were doing. He thought he was having too many bad results; and, of course, he blamed the Hospital for those results. I said, "Very well; if that is so, the best thing you can do is to put the matter in writing; give me the document, and allow me to put it before the Trustees."

5332. Is that what you do when you have doubtful complaints?—That is the way I do with all medical gentlemen, and then we have time to consider their complaints. I think it is the best course to take in matters of this kind. Well, Dr. Batchelor did so. He came to me with the S—— letter—that is, the original complaint—immediately after her death. I think she died early in the morning, and he came to me about 10 o'clock with this letter. I read it through, and he asked me what I thought of it. I replied that it was a very serious matter, but I was not in a position to give an opinion one way or the other just then—that I should want time to think over it. He said that he would leave the letter with me, and call back in the afternoon; that, if there was anything in it which I thought was too strong—that if any of the details were unwarrantable or unnecessary—he was quite willing to take any portions of it back, or to alter it in any way, as he said that he had no wish to cause unnecessary strife or unnecessary noise over the matter. He left the letter with me, and called again in the afternoon, as he had promised. I then said that I had come to the same conclusion, so far as my lights had shown me—that the case was a very serious one, which demanded serious consideration; and, if the case was as he had stated it, there was not, to my mind, a single word which could be eliminated from the letter. I further said that the only course to be taken was, as I had said before in Mrs. T——'s case, and I should advise the Trustees, accordingly, to have a Coroner's inquest, as that, to my mind, was the best way of getting at the bottom of this matter, and having it thoroughly inquired into. Dr. Batchelor said, "Very well," that he was quite satisfied, and left.

5333. *The Chairman.*] Then, he agreed to that course?—Yes, he agreed with it.

5334. What took place next?—A meeting of the Trustees was held the same night, though it had been called for another purpose, and there was a general discussion on this matter. Some of