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EDITORIAL.

THE LONDON HOSPITAL.—II.

DURING the whole of last Thursday, and for part of Monday, the Matron of the London Hospital occupied the witness-box before the Select Committee of the House of Lords, and consequently, as we go to press, the evidence advanced to confute the serious charges brought against that Institution has not yet been completed. But the Matron has now entered her defence against the allegation which we discussed last week—that the patients are sacrificed in the struggle to secure large receipts from the Nursing Department. Her argument was simply a point-blank denial that the patients suffer any harm from insufficient care, and her only proof was, that she has never heard any complaint from either the patients or the Medical Staff of such harm resulting. In cross-examination, however, the Matron was obliged to admit that she was in the habit of employing Probationers who had only been a few days in the Hospital as Special Nurses upon critical operation cases, which incidentally proves the important fact stated by Miss Homersham that, when she had only been a fortnight in the Hospital, she was set to nurse

a tracheotomy case. But when pressed as to whether this was justifiable, the Matron stated that in her opinion it was, because the Special Nurse had no responsibility, seeing that there was always a Staff Nurse in the Ward at the time. The Matron omitted to explain to their Lordships that the Staff Nurse would probably have eighteen or twenty other patients to attend to, and therefore certainly could give little or no assistance. She also neglected to remind the Committee of a startling fact which was also elicited from her, that Probationers were frequently made Staff Nurses, and even Sisters, before they had completed their training.

Apropos of this we are informed upon credible authority that a lady was appointed as Sister, about a month ago, who had only been training for eleven months. Such facts need no comments—even if we desired to make them—to prove the entire and absolute inefficiency which must at present pervade the London Hospital Nursing Department.

We observe from the evidence that the Matron was asked whether the system was just to the patients. She replied that it was right, because no harm resulted. The only possible reply to this extraordinary argument is that evil results might very easily occur, and then what recompense could be made to a patient who suffered grievous hurt? It would, we imagine, be small comfort for him to be informed that the Matron was held responsible that the patients should be helped, and not hindered, in their recovery from illness.

Arising very closely from this matter, it was elicited from the Matron that a most remarkable rule is in force at the London Hospital. It appears that no Resident Medical Officer at this Institution is permitted to order a Special Nurse for any of the patients under his charge, but that whether one be granted or not for any particular case is

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