

ing of Ward cleanliness, that women accustomed to scrubbing from their youth upwards, should be separately employed to do such work. It is a sheer absurdity to talk of such a step as an "improvement." It was an absolutely unavoidable sequence of the admission of gentlewomen to Hospital work. But it is highly significant as part of the now notorious disorganisation of the Nursing department at the London Hospital, that whereas in 1880 the services of one "scrubber" were needed "to clean the grates and scrub the floors" in each block of four Wards, in 1890 only one "Ward-maid" is provided, not only to do the same work, but in addition "to relieve the Nurses of every bit of scrubbing," and of a variety of other duties, which formerly were done by the five or six Nurses in the division. The Matron omitted to state that these women come on duty at 6.30 a.m., and have to work with only brief intermissions until eight o'clock. It is needless to note that at every well organised Hospital at least double the number of Ward Maids per bed are employed than is the case at the London, nor to argue that it is physically impossible that one down-trodden, underpaid, overwrought, white slave of a Ward-maid can properly do the cleaning which ten years ago required six or seven people to carry out efficiently. It is, therefore, plain, as the evidence given before the Lords' Committee brings out, that the Nurses are obliged to do part of the cleaning which it is now pretended falls to the lot of the Ward-maids, or things would simply remain dirty. So much is this the case that we have heard on unimpeachable authority that one of the Sisters had to scrub her lobby tables, because in the prevailing chaos from overwork no one else could find time to do so. It may be easily granted, therefore, that the first "improvement" claimed has been utterly illusory—a change forced upon the authorities by the personality of their Nurses, and carried out in such a ridiculously insufficient manner as merely to transfer the work of six people to one pair of hands, and cloak the transaction by bestowing a change of name and a uniform upon the unfortunate new worker.

The article next gives a retrospect of the old type of special Nurses who were in vogue at the London Hospital only ten years ago. The inference is that it is due to the Matron that the class of Nurses has now so much improved—an idea which will cause no small amusement in Nursing circles. But then comes the most important statement in the whole production: "It was manifest (in 1880) that the Wards were sadly under-nursed, both on day and night duty, that the attendance on the patients was even less than it appeared to be, because so much of the actual

Ward work devolved upon the Nursing Staff." Since then the number of patients in the Wards during the year has increased, so that on the face of it a larger Nursing Staff should be requisite in 1890 than was required ten years ago.

But again the Matron omits to inform the public of a most important factor. The amount of Nursing treatment ten years ago is not a tenth of what is necessary now. Measures are to-day entrusted to presumably skilled Nurses' hands, which a few years ago the resident staff or the students would have been expected to perform, and many new methods have been brought into use or improved upon. Consequently, if the orders given by the Medical Staff are to be carried out, if the patients therefore are not to be neglected, a very great addition to the workers is necessary now to the number amply sufficient ten years ago.

Let us see, therefore, how the matter stands as regards the necessary increase of trained Nurses at the London Hospital.

The Matron states that in 1880 there were one hundred and twenty-eight Nurses, and that on July 19th, 1890, there were one hundred and seventy-nine, viz., one hundred and twenty-four on day duty, and fifty-five on night duty. We are informed on first-class authority that before this inquiry commenced the average number working on night duty was forty-four or forty-five. But leaving this aside, and merely taking the figures as given by the Matron herself, the proportions in 1880 on day and night duty may fairly be taken at the same ratio as was in force in July, which would give eighty-eight on day duty, and forty on night duty. The latter it will be noted is not widely different from the number on night duty three months ago, and the result is still more startling when the figures on day duty are worked out. The Matron states that there were one hundred and twenty-four actual workers in the Wards in July, 1890. But the House Governor (Q. 8,297) states that forty-two of these were paying Probationers—of whom there was not one in the Hospital in 1880—women admitted for three, a few for at most six months' experience—women whom even the Matron herself considers require constant oversight, and who, therefore, are sources of hindrance, not help, in the work. Put aside these amateurs, and we actually find that in this year of grace—three months ago—there were only *eighty-two regular Nurses—nearly all of them under two years' experience*—on day duty in the London Hospital, with its greater number of patients and its enormously increased Nursing responsibility and Nursing work, as against about *eighty-eight old, tried Nurses, most of them of many years' standing and experience,*

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