

## THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE LONDON.

THE charges levelled against the Matron were—to pack them in the briefest compass—that Probationers were employed as Staff Nurses, to the injury and discomfort of the patients; that they were sent out to attend private patients, and that the public were defrauded by getting partly trained instead of fully trained Nurses; that the number of Nurses in the hospital was insufficient, and that the staff was therefore over-worked; that the Nurses' food was insufficient and bad; that the health of the Sisters was injured by arrangements compelling them to sleep in the wards; that the Matron's powers of dismissal were excessive and arbitrarily and unjustly exercised; and that the Nurses were worn out by being employed to an unnecessary extent in menial work. We say nothing, now, upon the merits of these charges, and shall return to the subject in an article upon the Nursing aspect of hospital management. What we now emphasise is the ineptitude of the Governors in allowing the matter to become a public scandal. For a long time past Miss Lückes has been held up by her enemies to the reprobation of the Nursing world as a sort of ogress and the personification of petticoated tyranny, and by her friends as an angel of disciplinarian justice, tenderness, and consideration. It is not our province to say which view is correct. Probably neither is wholly true. The Lords' Committee have dealt so gingerly with the subject, and evidently have so wholesome a respect for Miss Lückes's prowess as a fighter of her own battles, that we shall decline to take sides. But the self-evident fact remains that there ought to have been no scandal at all, and that if the Governors had been men of sense and of action, they would either have cleared the hospital of the disaffected Nurses, or of Miss Lückes, long before the quarrel threatened to endanger the prosperity of the institution and lessen the esteem of the public.

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## HOW REFORM WOULD WORK.

In writing of a central board we are, of course, assuming that if it were a voluntary body it would be sufficiently authoritative to prevent scandals like this coming to a head. If it were not, its failure would be the best possible argument for its substitution by an elective body created by the public instead of by Hospital Governors, or by an official body subject to public opinion. A strong central board would establish uniformity of treatment of Nurses in the Hospitals. All this hubbub about the nursing arrangements at the London, is *prima facie* evidence—we do not say conclusive evidence—that the Nurses there are, or were, worse treated than in other London Hospitals. A central board could regulate the nursing at Hospitals on some uniform plan. It could influence the Hospitals in agreeing to a uniform arrangement of the hours of work, which are grossly excessive in some cases, as we shall afterwards show; it could fix a dietary standard; regulate the pay, which is now on the level with that of a general servant; and in many other ways improve the status of the profession of Nursing. What it could at least do is to prevent Hospital quarrels, like that at the London assuming the proportions of a public scandal. We have taken two cases of Hospital government by Governors, and tested the system by an examination of results. Though we have not exhausted the subject, we have said enough to show the necessity for a better system.

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It is quite wonderful how the articles on Hospital Reform, which our contemporary started, are, like all the previous discussions of this subject in other papers, beginning to hinge on the London Hospital scandals. A letter to the Editor, published on Saturday, and signed "Looker-on," has the following significant paragraphs, the truth of which will be at once recognized by all who know what has

been, and is, going on at the London Hospital. It is believed that if Mr. NIXON had chosen to tell what he knew, when he was being examined before the Lords' Select Committee, there would have been a cataclysm at the London Hospital or an indignation meeting in the City within three days. However, "Looker-on" says:—

"The writer of the article was certainly entitled to assume that Mr. Nixon had surrendered his authority over the Matron, finding her "too formidable a lady to control," but I am satisfied that if the inner secrets of the London Hospital could be penetrated it would be found that a higher power than the House Governor had practically left him no choice in the matter. Those who have ever been brought into contact with Mr. Nixon know him for a man of rare strength of will and character as well as of exceptional ability. He is, however, a man of the utmost loyalty; and, having watched in vain for any sign of self-defence on his part, or of attack upon others, during the prolonged agitation that has been going on, I am satisfied that this loyalty (none too common nowadays) has caused the reticence. Had Mr. Nixon (and probably others) spoken out all he and they knew at the Lords' inquiry, those whose habit is to "read between the lines," cannot help feeling that he, at any rate, would have appeared in a much more distinguished light, although the mischief and heart-burning shown to be at work in the institution would have been still more increased than it was. This, at least, is the belief of one, who himself a life governor—alas! an old one—and an East-ender nearly all his life, has watched as closely as an outsider could, and with keen interest, all that concerns the great charity of which we East-enders are so proud. Of the moral responsibility of the managers who allowed a woman, however talented and "masterful," to obtain a position and power practically uncontrolled, I do not feel called upon to touch. I gather, Sir, that in due time, your editorial opinion of them will be spoken out pretty distinctly. My object has simply been, if possible, to spare a worthy man from pain and injustice."

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THE following Resolution appears in most of the London daily papers, and those who know Mr. NIXON, even by reputation, as the *doyen* of Hospital managers, will feel that the praise and the reward for his incalculable and lengthy services to the sick poor of the East End is by no means excessive.

LONDON HOSPITAL, Whitechapel, E.—The Special Court of Governors held at the London Hospital on the 20th inst. to receive the resignation of Mr. Wm. J. Nixon, unanimously decided to place on record their thorough appreciation of the immense success with which he has performed the arduous and delicate duties of house governor since 1866, and of the great benefit that has accrued to this charity from Mr. Nixon's intimate connection with it since he was appointed secretary in July, 1846. The devotion and courtesy with which Mr. Nixon has carried on the work of the London Hospital, and the deep sympathy with which he has interested himself in the sufferings and needs of the poor, have gained for him the deepest gratitude of the governors of this institution.

In conclusion, the governors earnestly wish Mr. Nixon a speedy and complete restoration to health, and long life to enjoy his well-earned rest.—By order. G. Q. ROBERTS, Secretary.

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I AM glad to hear that the Lectures on Practical Nursing, recently given in Exeter, by Mrs. E. WILLIAMSON, M.R.B.N.A., have been very successful, and have aroused so much interest in the locality that the course is to be repeated next month, and that in addition Mrs. WILLIAMSON will give four Lectures at St. Luke's Convalescent Home, Exeter,

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