

### Miss Fisher's Case.

We have been requested to publish the following letter:—

THE AVENUE, HORNSEY,  
February 27th, 1893.

To the Governors of the London Hospital.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I append a copy of a letter which I addressed to the House Committee of the London Hospital, and the reply which I received thereto. I appeal to you from the House Committee for the sake of other Nurses who are subject to the same injustice which has been meted out to me; for the sake of the sick poor to whose welfare the Committee prove themselves so callously indifferent; for the sake of the magnificent Hospital which is now so utterly mismanaged. The reason why I have been thus summarily discharged—why my Nursing career has been ruined—is because I have dared to express my disapproval of the many and very grave abuses which exist in the London Hospital. No other reason for my dismissal can be advanced—I have fearlessly challenged the fullest inquiry. It clearly does not suit the London Hospital Committee, that the details of the working of their Institution should become known outside its walls. They have, therefore, empowered the Matron to discharge summarily—that is to say, to ruin—any Nurse who is “unsatisfactory”—the definition of which elastic term is left to her discretion. The majority of women who go to the London Hospital are poor and friendless, and they will, therefore, bear anything, and they have learnt, by the bitter experience of others, that they must say nothing until their training is finished and their Certificate is gained. In 1890, a public protest was made against the management of the Nursing Department, and although the Committee, to some extent, stifled that, they now assert that it did the Hospital great financial harm. I make a protest now, and although that may be speedily stifled also, I am convinced that Nurses will, year after year,—as they escape from the tyranny to which they are subjected—tell of the London Hospital abuses until the public conscience is aroused upon the subject.

I protest against the despotic power entrusted to the Matron. She was compelled to resign the post of Matron of the Children's Hospital at Pendlebury because she attempted to establish there what the *British Medical Journal* at the time stigmatised as “a Nursing despotism.” The Medi-

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cal Staff and Governors of that Hospital would not permit such usurpation of their authority. It is on public record that at the London Hospital the Committee and medical men have meekly submitted to it.

The Select Committee of the House of Lords reported last year, in reference to the charges brought against the Nursing Department, that they “consider that the difficulties would have been avoided had the governing board . . . not allowed their authority to fall into the hands of salaried officers.” And again—“They are strongly of opinion that no absolute power ought to be given to any Matron, but that the appointment and dismissals (of Nurses) should be made by the chief executive authority of the hospital.” I submit that the defects which the Lords' Select Committee thus referred to, should have been remedied before now, and that their continuance reflects discredit upon you as the ultimate governing body of the Institution.

I protest against the careless indifference to the health and strength of the Nurses which characterises the management of the London Hospital, which was abundantly proved to the Lords' Committee, and which is equally well marked at the present time.

I protest against the manner in which Nurses are defrauded of the training promised to them. The Matron, who is paid, apparently, nearly three times the usual salary of this officer at other Hospitals—and who has three times the usual number of assistants—does not fulfil the first duty of her post—the personal supervision of the Nurses. In the nineteen months I worked in the Hospital, I only saw her three times in the wards. Then the Sisters upon whom devolves the duty of teaching the Nurses, are, at the London Hospital, often only inexperienced pupils themselves—a fact which, I believe, is unique. The blind lead the blind, and the results to the sick poor under their care may be imagined. To complete the educational farce, after a few months of such searching after knowledge, many Probationers are sent out to nurse the sick in private houses, and so are deprived of their lectures and what opportunities of learning their work are vouchsafed to them.

I protest against the Nurses being thus compelled to participate in defrauding the public. The Hospital advertises every day in *The Times* that it supplies “thoroughly-trained Nurses.” It will not certificate its Nurses as “thoroughly-trained” until they have been for two years in its service. Yet it sends out its inexperienced pupils to people who believe in the good faith and

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