

The Battle of the Standards.

QUOTES FROM THE PRESS.

This month's *Nursing Notes* devotes an editorial in large type to "The Matron and the Training School." It is, of course, a highly orthodox contribution to the burning question of the hour. It expresses the belief that the "Bart's" election of Matron was "a perfectly conscientious selection" (we beg to differ), and then proceeds to point out that

"Any hospital that has been training long enough for its probationers to have passed through all grades of the profession, and to have shown their capacity in good outside appointments, should be able from amongst its own pupils to select the blue ribbon of its training school, or it does not speak well for its selection of the woman or its training of the nurse; hence the acute feeling that has been aroused among Bart's nurses."

"What would the world of St. Thomas's Hospital say to a new matron not a 'Nightingale'? The position is unthinkable. St. Bartholomew's and the London are the two hospitals whose matrons have not been trained within their own walls, but the matrons of both have been long enough there to have trained many generations of nurses. Is it possible that the authorities at Bart's are dissatisfied with the training of their nurses, and desire to see another system introduced? To the outside world it would appear so, and therefore it is easy to understand the feelings of St. Bartholomew's graduates."

"One cannot but feel that the appointment to a long-established training school of a matron not trained there is not a good precedent for the popularity, influence, or solidarity of that training school."

The conclusions of *Nursing Notes* are those of the world at large. Thus intended injury is done to the life's work and memory of the noblest of women and to every pupil she trained.

The *Journal of the Victoria and Bournemouth Nurses' League* says:—

"From St. Bartholomew's one hears of what appears to be a gratuitous and unprovoked insult to the memory of the late Matron and to the School of Nurses—past and present—who have trained there, or who are now training, in the appointment of a matron from a school whose standard of training is diametrically opposed to all that Miss Stewart held so strongly and courageously, and whose appointment must be distasteful to all most concerned. Every hospital has a right, and is bound to use it, to secure the very best materials for its working, but to make fresh rules with so palpable an object as to exclude those well fitted for the post is a different matter; it is clever, but scarcely an example one desires to see followed."

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL JOURNAL.

The attitude of the medical staff at St. Bartholomew's Hospital is unsparingly condemned

wherever this question is discussed, and the whole nursing staff in and out of the hospital realise that their interests have been sacrificed. The truth is that a reactionary minority of the medical staff are in entire sympathy with the mischievous official policy which has done much—and, if permitted to continue, will do more—to injure the reputation of this hospital in public opinion. It is rumoured that one man of science has stated that "it is not necessary that the Matron should be a trained nurse—what is wanted is someone in the office!" Why not apply to Mme. Tussaud's? A smiling wax effigy in the matronal chair would be a decided economy, and, where the nurses are concerned, economy appears to be the order of the day, to judge from the deplorable condition of their Home. Such assurances as "the Matron is to have no power. She will not be permitted to alter this and that" are surely almost as banal.

A Matron has the power of making or marring the reputation of a whole hospital. The patients don't care a fig for the secretariat, and in their ignorance but little for the reputation of the medical staff, but as they come into intimate personal relations every hour of the day and night with the nursing staff and those who control the domestic routine, it is on the management of the nursing department that the reputation of a hospital stands or falls, and the happiness and efficiency of every nurse in it largely depends.

The thorough practical standard of nurse training, the exquisite standard of cleanliness maintained in the wards, the high ethical code in force in the Home, the loyalty to authority, and good discipline inspired and enforced with so much devotion by the late Matron, are apparently neither to the taste of the office nor the medical staff. Let us hope that a régime of superficial training of nurses, blatant advertisement, and social patronage will produce better results. According to *St. Bartholomew's Hospital Journal*, the medical staff are anxious to try it. It offers compliments and good wishes to the lady, whose inferior certificate and method of selection as Superintendent of Nursing of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, are realised by the whole world to be an affront purposely directed at the professional reputation of her predecessor in office, and an attempt to subject the nursing staff by the inquisitorial, anti-registration London Hospital system of control, which Miss Isla Stewart held in well deserved detestation. The attempt to placate Bart's nurses by stating in the same paragraph "that the School ranks amongst the highest in the world" is cold comfort for their world-wide humiliation, and professional damage.

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