

persons whose general education has been of the most limited character. Nearly everywhere Probationers are admitted upon a one-sided agreement by which they bind themselves, under various penalties, to remain in the Hospital service for a certain specified time, but the Hospital authorities are left free to discharge them at any moment if they choose so to do. They receive a nominal salary on the ground that they are being taught a calling, by the exercise of which they may, thereafter, earn their livelihood. Yet the Governors of a Charitable Institution actually reserve to themselves power, without assigning the slightest reason for their action, to discharge a Probationer from their service, and so, to all intent and purposes, to wreck her chances of earning her living as a trained Nurse. Probationers in British Hospitals, in fact, hold, in the eye of the law, the position merely of domestic servants—a position which, I am compelled to maintain, renders them liable to great injustice, if they are dismissed without definite cause being shown; and a position which is so detrimental to the whole progress of Nursing education that I ardently hope to see a reform made, and Probationers in all British Hospitals placed on the footing of apprentices or pupils.

Then there would be swept away another grave abuse which has crept into some of our largest hospitals—the practice of advertising that “thoroughly trained Nurses” are supplied to private families, and then, when these are sought for, of sending out inexperienced pupils under this designation, interrupting the ward-training promised to them, depriving the sick poor in the Hospital of their attendance, overworking the remaining Nurses, and deceiving the persons to whom they are sent. It is marvellous that such a system should have been permitted to arise in connection with great charitable Institutions. But it is only part of the same trading principle which again reveals itself in the manner in which many private Nursing Institutions have made immense profits by farming out Nurses. Or, turn again to the system of education in some Hospitals where the commercial spirit shows itself in certificating some Probationers at the end of one year, and declining to guarantee by certificate the efficiency of others until they have worked for three years; the only difference being that the former pay, and the latter are paid by, the Hospital. Yet once more, the self-same principle shows itself in the custom still prevailing in a few Hospitals of only promoting to the Sisterships and other superior posts, those Probationers who have paid for their training—entirely irrespective of other

qualifications. This system, which has been aptly termed “Promotion by Purchase,” is surely the very acme of snobbishness—which probably accounts for its survival.

In brief, therefore, while equality and justice are the bases on which an American Nurse's education and employment are founded, the Spirit of Cent. per Cent. overshadows many Nurses, in this country, from the cradle to the grave of their professional career.

There is another matter in which I believe we can learn much from our American sisters. They undoubtedly excel us in the care which is bestowed upon the bodily comfort, as well as upon the mental training, of their Nurses. And this is due, beyond doubt, to the great attention which is paid to the details of domestic management in American Hospitals, which in its turn arises from the significant fact that most of their Committees have lady members, whose special duty it is to supervise the housekeeping, while their male colleagues overlook the general management and finance. It is, perhaps, not too much to hope that some day, in the dim and distant future, this same eminently sensible arrangement will come into effect in English Hospitals, and that women will be elected on Committees of Management to undertake duties which they can best perform; household details, which few, if any, men can thoroughly supervise, and which, consequently, in nearly every Hospital in the United Kingdom today, are most effectively *overlooked*—in quite the wrong signification of that word. I cannot refrain from pointing out that one essential result of this detailed attention to housekeeping matters in American Hospitals, and of the omission thereof in our Institutions, is that the manner in which the dieting, both of patients and Nurses, is carried out, compares very greatly to our disadvantage. Their provisions are more carefully examined, much better cooked, and very much more elegantly served, than is the rule in our Institutions. In short, those residing in a Hospital, however large, are cared and catered for as units—not as multitudes.

Time does not permit me to say more at present concerning the lessons which I think we may learn from our American sisters on Nursing matters, and I will not attempt, on this occasion, to define in what particulars they may perhaps learn somewhat from our methods of work, further than to say one word. I believe that we are more thorough in our practical work—in the details of our actual Nursing

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[previous page](#)

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