

ments are not in accord with the conclusions of the Lords' Committee, on whose judgment the authorities appear to place great reliance; a perusal of their report will well repay those who are interested in the dispute, and convince the majority of readers, I think, that solid grievances did really exist. To merely deny the accuracy of the charges will prove quite insufficient to convince the public. I must say, I find it difficult to conceive of any three officers of such an institution less likely than these to know the intimate details of nurses' life. Their mere presence in the ward, or in the Nurses' Home, or private apartments, would cause a buzz of excitement, and at once put everything and everybody on their mettle. I take it no one of these gentlemen has any personal or direct knowledge—what he may know is learnt either from the matron or from the secretary, and at best such knowledge must be insignificant as compared with what your Commissioner acquired during her actual residence among the Nurses.

It is not your Special Commissioner alone, however, who disapproves of the nursing arrangements, for the present system is seriously, though unconsciously, condemned by some who are professedly friends of the Hospital. It will be instructive to note some of these points. Thus "A Friend of the Hospital," "one having special cause for gratitude," writes (issue of August 2nd):—"I found the secretary and house governor of the Hospital—for Mr. Roberts combines both posts—sitting in his inner room, immersed in work connected with the house property of the Hospital. From the free and easy way in which the clerks and Nurses came in and out to converse with Mr. Roberts, my first impression did not convey an idea of a reign of terror." Just fancy! Nurses coming "in and out" of the house-governor's private rooms, and that, too, while he is "immersed in work connected with the house property of the Hospital!" Mismanagement, it would seem, is not confined to the nursing arrangements. . . . The Hospital shares, with nearly all others, the evil system of excessive work; and power is, perhaps, *thanks to the weakness of the Committee*, placed in too few hands."

Mr. Rathbone's experience, he tells us, "dates from the time when there were only two Hospitals—St. Thomas's and King's College—in which Nurses were systematically trained for their work." I would strongly recommend him to study the general nursing arrangements of the London Hospital and contrast them with those of these two pioneer schools. He will learn a great deal, and that in many essential respects the London school is woefully behindhand. Notwithstanding the many years St. Thomas's and King's have existed, I would ask Mr. Rathbone if ever he remembers any similar complaints; while in connection with

the London these complaints have recurred, and been discussed in public, again and again.

Lady Dorothy Nevill's letter of the 6th, written in defence of the nursing arrangements, states that "the blind women's ward is opposite the Nurse's bedroom, the two doors being exactly opposite each other, two and a half feet apart. The door is left open, so that every sound can be heard at night. The men's ward has a window looking into the Nurse's room, so that there also she can both see and hear what is going on." In my opinion such an arrangement is utterly wrong. The Nurse, after being on duty all day, certainly ought not to be called upon for night duty in addition, the less so as the eye wards are in the basement of the Hospital—not an ideal place for a hard-worked Nurse to live in both day and night, even under the most favourable circumstances.

Sister Sophia, also writing in favour of the Hospital, lets further light into weak points in the nursing arrangements. "I am on my feet," she says, "all day when the wards are busy, and have occasionally to spend my time off duty in matters of business connected with my ward." Surely a considerate Matron would provide extra hands when there is any extra stress of work, so that the Sister's hours off duty—which she needs more than ever after being extra busy and on her feet all day—should not be interfered with. In the two Hospitals mentioned by Mr. Rathbone, I believe that neither Sisters nor Nurses are allowed in the wards at all during their hours off duty—surely a most salutary rule.

Among nursing schools, the London has the rather unenviable reputation of being the easiest to get into—that is to say, that probationers are received here for short periods of training more easily, I think, than in any other school. The large number of short-period probationers is, in my opinion, highly detrimental to the best interests of both the schools and the profession of nursing. In nine cases out of ten a probationer is not only of no use for several weeks, but she is really in the way; for she needs supervision (if justice be done her), and thus adds to the duties both of the ward Sister and the staff Nurses.

If the arrangements are all as perfect as Mr. Buxton would have us think, an independent inquiry could hardly fail to be of service to a Hospital which depends so largely on the public for its maintenance. The training of Nurses is a national affair; the demand for good Nurses is so great, the services they can render are so important to the community at large, to say nothing of the field for work for women otherwise largely unprovided for, that every one must regret to see a great public training school decide to rest beneath the cloud which at present hangs over it.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

London, Sept. 8th.

A HOSPITAL SURGEON.

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