

## "The Truth about the London Hospital."

**D**URING the last week, the following letters and Editorial have appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* :—

*To the EDITOR of the PALL MALL GAZETTE.*

"SIR,—As a probationer who has but recently left the London Hospital, I beg to protest against the false and misleading statements that are appearing in your paper.

Your 'Special Commissioner' states 'that there is a great waste of food in the wards.' I maintain that that statement is untrue. The diet of each patient is ordered by the medical attendant, and is served with exactitude. Of course, the appetite of the patients varies, and it sometimes happens that they are unable to eat their portions. If these leavings were given to the poor as suggested, it would, without doubt, be the means of spreading disease. Your Commissioner says 'that there are too few Nurses for the amount of work to be done, and that, therefore, the patients cannot be properly attended to.' If she would take the trouble to compare the average number of patients to the average number of Nurses she would find that there is over one Nurse to each three patients. Naturally there are times of extra pressure in the particular wards, such as during the 'take-in,' but it is only temporary. I beg to contradict the statement 'that Nurses are treated with injustice, are over-worked, indifferently fed, &c.' The work is no more than a woman in good health can manage. (If your 'Special Commissioner' were combining the work of a spy with that of a Nurse, it is not at all unlikely that she had too much to do.) The food is good, plain, and plentiful, and the comfort of the Nurses is materially increased by the supplies of bread, tea, butter, &c., which are served out at stated periods. I have repeatedly heard Nurses say that their health was better during their training than ever before. That hardly looks like starvation. 'That the safety and comfort of the patients are endangered by the ignorance of the Probationers, who are placed in charge of wards as day or night Sisters,' is absolute nonsense! As a matter of fact, when a Probationer is made a Sister she works under an experienced Sister for some time before having a ward of her own. It is both untrue and absurd to say that patients are treated with cruelty. If that were the case, how is it that so many are anxious to return to the Hospital? I emphatically deny "that Nurses have been known to faint in the lecture-room from lack of nourish-

ment." It is not at all an unheard-of thing for a person to faint in a hot room, and does not by any means indicate lack of food. I cannot speak too highly of Miss Lückes, her one thought is for the good of the Hospital and the comfort of the patients and Nurses. I am proud to have worked under her. It is hard, after all she has done for the Nursing world, that she should be repaid in this way! I shall ever be grateful for the kindness I received at the London Hospital. I look upon the time I spent there as almost the happiest in my life.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

ELIZABETH POTTER.

*To the EDITOR of the PALL MALL GAZETTE.*

SIR,—I am afraid your readers and the public must be getting heartily tired of both the attacks and defences of the London Hospital which have appeared in your columns. Nevertheless, as a hospital reformer of thirty-five years' standing, working directly under Miss Nightingale, I feel that my opinion on hospital matters may claim as much weight with the public as that of your Special Commissioner. My experience 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. To obtain the Nurses necessary for hospitals, as well as for district and private nursing, I, in conjunction with others, established the first training school in the North of England. Finding that the sick, even in the best poor law infirmaries in the kingdom, were under the charge of untrained pauper women, we induced the Liverpool vestry to introduce for the first time a staff of trained Nurses, and established a training school under the superintendence of the late Miss Agnes Jones, and these systems of Nursing have now spread to the length and breadth of the land. From the establishment in Liverpool in 1859 of the first district Nurse for nursing the sick poor in their own homes, now so rapidly extending under the influence and direction of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses, of which I have been from the first a member of the executive governing body, I have taken an active part in promoting the training of Nurses and Superintendents.

This long and varied experience of Nursing work in all its branches surely entitles me to ask from you and the public greater confidence in my testimony than in that of any woman going in to the London Hospital as a Probationer for two or three months, sure to be the recipient of the complaints of discontented and disloyal Probationers and Nurses (of whom there must always be some in a

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