

fees received from the Probationers, who pay for their year's training.

\* \* \*

FOR some time past it has been quite apparent from letters, articles and comments in the local press, that the Nursing department of the Macclesfield Infirmary is in a very unsatisfactory condition. And from the following "programme" of the "new Nursing scheme" issued by the Matron, it appears high time that the case should be tried before the court of professional opinion, and that protest should be made against such retrograde measures.

\* \* \*

At a recent meeting the Mayor laid before the Governors the following letter:—

*To the Chairman of the House Committee.*

SIR,—I beg to forward you the following resolution, which was proposed by Dr. Averill, and seconded at a meeting of the honorary medical staff, held on July 26th inst.:—"That the Matron's scheme of the management of the Nursing be accepted, *i.e.*, (1) That there be three Sisters to take charge of the wards during the day. (2) That two Nurses of two years' training be appointed three months day and night alternately, the trained Nurse on night duty to exercise supervision over the night Probationers. (3) That there be five Probationers appointed for twelve months, with the option of being taken for a further period of twelve months without further premium. (4) That a written certificate be given after examination by the honorary medical staff on the result of the examination and their general fitness and character."

I have the honour to be, sir,

Yours faithfully,

J. BRIERLEY HUGHES,

Chairman of the Hon. Medical Staff.

July 29th, 1895.

The Matron, who had been called in, then explained the scheme at greater length.

\* \* \*

Many innovations have been made and fresh "schemes" adopted at the Macclesfield Infirmary, but none so strongly out of harmony with the elementary requirements of modern Nursing as this last. During Miss Wingfield's tenure of office as Matron a better system of training was inaugurated by her, and the term of training for Probationers extended from one to two years. But the "spirit of reform" did not animate the Governors in her time, any more than it does to-day, and she, unfortunately for the Infirmary, if happily for herself, resigned her position. The reforms she instituted have been undone, and the Macclesfield Infirmary has reverted to the original degenerate standard, the only difference being that the pupils have the option of remaining for two years, which they are hardly likely to do as they can get their certificates in one.

Mr. Whiston, in moving the adoption of the Report, confessed that the scheme is a "reversion." He remarked "that the adoption of it would be reverting back to a former scheme which acted so well for so many years. He approved of the one year's training, because there were a good few ladies who could afford to spare one year, who could not afford to spare two. About thirty lady Probationers had passed through the institution, who were now holding important positions in the Nursing world, and in one case he found they had taken no less than seven Probationers from that Infirmary. This (he thought) was a good testimonial as to the class of Nursing teaching in the past."

\* \* \*

His argument that the two years' training should be abolished, and the pernicious "certificate after one year" system adopted because there were a "good few ladies who could afford to spare one year, who could not afford to spare two," is not only illogical but is ridiculous. If a woman cannot "spare the time" to study her profession honestly and conscientiously, she must take up some work of a rougher and less skilled type than the art of Nursing. And the sooner these Nurse "smatterers" are branded as amateurs and therefore inefficient, the better it will be for the sick community.

\* \* \*

With regard to Mr. Whiston's statement, that thirty lady Probationers who had passed through the institution were holding important positions in the Nursing world, this, instead of expiating the error of one-year training, only accentuates its dangers. What are we to expect from a "Nursing world" if its members are quacks? But we suspect that our and Mr. Whiston's views as to "important positions" would somewhat differ.

\* \* \*

Further on in the Report the "cloven hoof,"—we were going to say, peeps out—but the display is so open that "peep" is a most inadequate term. It appears that the scheme is a commercial speculation—and a very bad one for the probationer Nurse, who pays her fees and receives at the end of her year's work a "written certificate," which in the eyes of the Hospital world will be hardly worth the paper it is written on.

\* \* \*

So that the unwary probationer falls a victim to her ignorance of professional matters. She believes that her certificate will be an open sesame to important Hospital appointments. And she will surely waken to the fallacy of her hopes. She will find in the light of modern views on training, that the one year "certifi-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)