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### Editorial.

#### WOMEN'S WORK OF NO VALUE.

The bestowal of the Matronship of St. Bartholomew's Hospital upon an applicant holding an inferior certificate shows how negligible a quantity is women's work—the work which the late Matron and generations of Bart.'s nurses have loyally given to that school, proud of its high standards, its efficiency, its honour. They have built up its reputation with care, until to hold a Bart.'s certificate is equivalent to holding a foremost position in the nursing world.

And what is now the position of that nursing school—the value of its certificate? By the action of the authorities the school is condemned, the certificate degraded—for surely if the election committee had considered that one of its certificated pupils was capable of superintending the school, the most elementary sense of justice would have prevented them from appointing a stranger; and if, in the last thirty years the school has not been able to train one nurse capable of assuming its direction, the Governors should ask, as the outside world is asking, to the detriment of the certificate, and the prestige of Bart.'s nurses, "What is wrong with the training at St. Bartholomew's Hospital?"

The recent appointment is one of the strongest arguments which could possibly be advanced in favour of the State Registration of Trained Nurses. It was wisely said by the late Miss Louisa Stevenson, "Without the firm foundation of the Parliamentary franchise for women, there is no permanence for any advance gained by them." So, until a standard of nursing education is defined, there is no security that in a few minutes a committee of laymen may not destroy the prestige of a certificate

which it has taken many years to establish—a prestige which has, it must be remembered, a definite commercial as well as professional value.

We do not assume that the authorities of St. Bartholomew's Hospital have, of malice prepense, injured the reputation of their nursing school and done its pupils this injury. They are evidently ignorant of the value of women's work, and do not appreciate that to the hospital, as well as to individual nurses, the reputation of its school is important. In the case of medical appointments they are restricted to the consideration of applications from registered medical practitioners, the fact of whose registration denotes the attainment of a professional standard decided by the heads of the medical profession. Nursing education, in spite of the strenuous efforts of trained nurses to secure legislation regulating their profession, is still in a chaotic condition, and the soundness of the training of any school, therefore, depends largely upon the conscientious determination of a Matron that the nurses trained under her authority shall have an efficient practical instruction before being sent out to the public as thoroughly qualified. How high a standard has been maintained at St. Bartholomew's under the late Matron all the world knows! What is the guarantee of its permanence? None! The lesson for all nurses to take to heart is that without the foundation of a definite standard of nursing education, defined under State authority, there is no security that the fruit of long years of work may not be wrested from them. Those who desire to belittle that work will leave no stone unturned to prevent their attaining registration, for reasons which are sufficiently apparent. The moral, therefore, is to redouble the efforts already made to secure it.

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