

required. It is not specified that the candidate should be an educated gentlewoman, that she should have held any similar position of authority, that she should have been in charge of a training school for nurses, or should have been responsible for the training and control of nurses, or of administrative duties. The advertisement contained one important proviso, an age limit of 40, and therefore whilst requiring no qualifications, it made ineligible for this responsible post the majority of those ladies who had earned it, and operated adversely in the case of the six leading Matrons certificated at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, whose ages were carefully scanned in the hospital records. Can we wonder that such an extraordinary advertisement aroused the suspicion that some favoured candidate did not possess these necessary qualifications?

So strongly did the nurses certificated in the School feel that the appointment of a stranger would be an unmerited injustice, that some 250 who were independent took the constitutional step of forwarding the following memorial to the Treasurer and Almoners, which merely received a curt acknowledgment from the Clerk:—

MEMORIAL TO THE TREASURER AND ALMONERS OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL.

MY LORD AND GENTLEMEN,—

We, the undersigned, having been trained and certificated as nurses at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and being deeply interested in the welfare of that great institution, and in the reputation and status of its Nursing School, venture most respectfully to submit to your Lordship as Treasurer, and to the Almoners, the following considerations:—

1. For the last thirty years the Nursing School attached to St. Bartholomew's Hospital has been steadily growing in importance and professional prestige, not only in the United Kingdom, but all over the world.

2. During that time it has trained and certificated hundreds of nurses, many of whom have obtained positions of great responsibility and influence, and who, by their professional skill and personal characteristics, have worthily maintained the traditions of their training school, and brought distinction upon it.

3. Owing to the late age at which probationers are admitted to the best training schools, usually 23 years, the extended contract for service, usually four years, and the increasing competition in the nursing world, subsequent promotion is slow. To serve an adequate period of experience as Sister of Wards, Home Sister, Assistant Matron, and Matron, the age before a woman can qualify for the few most responsible positions in her profession has of late years considerably risen.

4 In this connection the insistence of an age

limit of 40 for the vacant post of Matron at St. Bartholomew's Hospital is, in our opinion, unfortunate, as it excludes the great majority of the nurses trained at that hospital who have since obtained appointments of importance, and have shown by their successful administration in such positions fitness for the high office of Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

5. To prove how hardly this age limit may affect otherwise eligible applicants, may we give as an instance the case of the Matron of the General Hospital, Birmingham, age 42, who was trained at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and was twelve years in its service as probationer, Staff Nurse, Sister, and Assistant Matron. She was also the Gold Medallist of her year. Since leaving St. Bartholomew's in 1906, she has earned for herself the highest reputation as a first-class administrator and trainer of nurses. This lady is, by the terms of the advertisement, prevented from applying for the position of Matron and Superintendent of Nursing at St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

6. There are other trained and certificated nurses of the Hospital, now Matrons of General Hospitals, who, were it not for the above-mentioned age limit, would as candidates, we feel sure, deeply impress the Governors by their merits.

7. Within the last few years the Matronships of other great Hospitals and Nursing Schools—*e.g.*, those of St. Thomas's, King's College, and Guy's have fallen vacant, but in none of these instances have the Governors found it necessary to advertise the office; they have invited ladies trained under their direction to assume the position of Matron, thus proving that they have confidence in their educational methods, and consider their pupils as efficient as any available in the profession, and by such preferment have greatly encouraged and gratified every nurse whom they have certificated. Indeed, the precedent has now been established at St. Thomas's, Guy's, the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, and the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, of applying to the Nursing School, the principle which has worked so well in connection with all the leading Medical Schools, of awarding with preferment their most distinguished pupils.

8. Hitherto the Nursing School of St. Bartholomew's Hospital has ranked with those of St. Thomas's, Guy's, and the London as one of the four leading Training Schools for nurses in the Empire, with the result that its certificated nurses can compete on equal terms with others for preferment in their profession. Should the Governors of St. Bartholomew's Hospital consider it necessary to supersede their own pupils and to place a lady trained elsewhere at the head of its School, we, its Certificated Nurses, feel that it would inevitably reflect adversely on the value of its certificate, and depreciate the status and prestige of the School which is now held in so much honour.

9. We would add that our colleagues, still working in the Hospital, are not associated in our action in approaching the Treasurer and Almoners; as a matter of discipline, we have not taken them into consultation, but we cannot fail to be aware that their feeling, like our own, is deeply stirred, and

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