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## Editorial.

### PROFESSIONAL DAMAGE.

The splendid public meeting convened by nurses trained at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, which we report in another column, demonstrated convincingly the solidarity of Bart.'s nurses in their attitude towards the recent appointment made to the Matronship of that historic hospital, and in regard to the policy to be pursued in connection with it. It demonstrated most clearly also that public opinion is with the nurses.

There was deep feeling at the action of the Election Committee in ignoring the high standard of nursing education and practical training which it had been the pride and life-work of their late Matron to maintain, by the selection, as her successor, of a Matron's Assistant from the London Hospital, where the certificate awarded after two years work is of indefinite value.

There was strong indignation at the professional damage inflicted on every certificated Bart.'s nurse by the same committee by its contemptuous depreciation of the certificate of their school in the public mind. Nevertheless, true to their training, they made their public protest in a manner, which, though effective, was dignified, and worthy of the traditions of St. Bartholomew's, so that no one could fail to recognise it as the protest of disciplined women, placing a strong restraint upon themselves.

No animus was exhibited, still less was self interest the motive of the meeting. It was a loyal defence of the silent and defenceless dead, and a self-respecting expression of determination to uphold professional standards. For twenty-eight years the certificate of St. Bartholomew's Hospital has stood to the world as a guarantee of a well-defined standard of nursing—it means

that each woman who has earned it has passed through a systematic three years term of practical service in the wards and the necessary theoretical instruction, and, after examination, has been certificated as efficient. No nurse who does not hold this certificate is eligible for promotion to a Sister's post.

At the London Hospital, from which institution the Election Committee have seen fit to promote a Matron's Assistant, who has never had an independent charge, to the position of Matron and Superintendent of Nursing at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, a certificate is awarded after the short term of two years' experience. No definite curriculum of training is secured to the pupil, even in this inadequate term, as during the two years she may be called upon to do clerical, domestic, or office work, or may even be promoted to the position of Sister. Perhaps this is why no examination is considered requisite for second-year nurses. The certificate is, moreover, qualified by the addition of remarks at the discretion of the Matron, in spaces left for that purpose, and by "damning with faint praise" may be practically useless to its possessor.

Is it surprising that Bart.'s nurses should be indignant that it is proposed to place their school under the superintendence of a lady holding a certificate so inferior to their own?—a certificate which does not even guarantee that the holder has spent the inadequate period of two years in the wards of the London Hospital, while their own certificate, as we have shown, stands for three years' practical training and work in the wards, tested by examination at its conclusion.

As it appears that the Election Committee are unwilling to protect the pro-

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