

## The Battle of the Standards.

What are known in the nursing world as the "London Hospital" papers, in other words those which "freeze out" and suppress every letter and article addressed to them in support of nurses' opinions concerning their own affairs, which clash with those of their employers, the distributors of advertisements, have during the recent lively protest been busy attempting to batten down what Miss Lückes, of the London Hospital, calls "this strangely unreal controversy," by the usual vulgar invective in the quack nursing press, and by insidious misrepresentation in the inspired dailies.

The point at issue in this dispute is one of nursing efficiency. Women thoroughly trained and certificated under the three years' complete curriculum in force at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, hotly resent, and rightly so, a woman who "secured her certificate" after only two years' training at the London Hospital—a standard unanimously considered insufficient by the authorities of every first class nursing school in the kingdom—being given authority over them as Superintendent of Nursing. This is the just cause of complaint of every certificated "Bart's" nurse. And, in protesting against the depreciation of their efficient standard, their time-honoured Three Years' Certificate—they have the sympathy of every nurse who holds a certificate of equal value.

How are the mighty fallen! Imagine the Matron elect of the Royal Hospital of St. Bartholomew's having recourse to the publication of her nursing qualifications in the quack nursing press! Sir Henry Burdett, a Governor of St. Bartholomew's, in his furious and ill-advised advocacy of his London Hospital candidate, gives away her case in his journal.

Under the heading of "Miss McIntosh's Certificate," he publishes: "The following is a verbatim copy of the Certificate of three years' training of the new Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital." The Certificate of Training is then printed, in which it is stated that Miss Annie McIntosh . . . completed her full term of two years' training in the medical and surgical wards of this Hospital, both on day and night duty.

This certificate of training is signed first by the Matron, under whose signature that of the Chairman appears, and is dated 3rd day of March, 1899.

An addendum, dated April 3rd, 1900, states that Annie McIntosh has completed her third year in the service of the hospital—a

document which has nothing to do with her *Certificate of training as such.*

The Governors of the "London" certify their nurses as fully trained after two years in the hospital. Why squirm and attempt to evade the truth? And we repeat the two years' certificate is not a guarantee that the whole time has been spent under supervision in the wards.

In support of these assertions, the following evidence of the Chairman of the London Hospital, before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Registration of Nurses, in 1904, in reply to questions from the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. H. J. Tennant, M.P., concerning sending out partially trained private nurses, is conclusive.

*Question 597.—Mr. Holland:* Nurses are not sent out now until they have done two years in the hospital, *except in exceptional circumstances.*

*Question 598:* Do you not think you ought to state the fact that she has not had three years' training?

*Mr. Holland:* No, none of our nurses have had three years' training. I could mention a number of good nurses holding leading hospital appointments, *e.g.*, Matrons of Westminster, Metropolitan, Addenbrooke's Cambridge, Radcliffe Oxford, Poplar, Bristol, Principal Matron, Q.A.I.N. Service, and so on, who had not had three years' training."

Thus the statement made by Sir Henry Burdett that Miss McIntosh holds a "certificate of three years' training" is not true. With the statement that she was in the "service" of the hospital for a third year Bart's nurses have no concern. What odd jobs she may have performed, as "required by the Matron" from the day she was awarded her two years' certificate of training is not their business. They resent a woman with an inferior certificate superintending their professional work and signing their certificates, and no verbosity on the part of Miss Lückes or abuse in the press will convince them that their resentment is not just.

In this connection we are reminded by a "Londoner" that many find themselves handicapped by *service* instead of *training*, as the three years' certificate is thus denied to them at the London. As Office Sister, in her third year, she states that one of her weekly duties was to carry up 100 pairs of clean sheets to as many bedrooms in the Home, "presumably to save the housemaid varicose veins and flat feet."

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