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Editorial.

THE VALUE OF HOSPITAL CERTIFICATES.

Probably no class of workers are more loyal to their Alma Mater than trained nurses, and it is equally true that no women are more patriotic than Irishwomen—Irish nurses therefore who have proved themselves fully competent to hold their own in comparison with those holding good certificates from hospitals in other parts of the kingdom, and who have shown that they are animated by professional ideals, and a strong sense of public duty, may justly feel injured when they are repeatedly passed over by hospital boards in their own country when making appointments to the higher posts; more especially is this feeling accentuated when candidates who are not in sympathy with their professional ideals, and whose views on professional questions are repugnant to Irish nurses, are imported to assume the position of Matron in Irish Training Schools.

Rumours of discontent have on more than one occasion reached us in recent years, and this feeling has been definitely expressed in a letter to the Dublin press by "An Irish Trained Nurse," who writes:—

"For some years now it has become the fashion whenever any important post in the Irish Nursing world has fallen vacant, to fill up the gap by importing a Matron (or otherwise) from one of the great training schools outside Ireland. This is constantly done, even when most capable and experienced Irish trained nurses, with the very highest professional qualifications, are also candidates for the post. In fact it is becoming a foregone conclusion at Dublin Hospital Elections for the higher posts, that no nurse with an Irish training need apply."

It is, of course, the duty of Hospital Boards to select the best candidate for a given vacancy, but they must bear in mind two things (1) that if they discount the prestige of their own certificates they cannot expect other Boards to have a higher opinion of these certificates than they have themselves, and (2) that if, in a long term of years, a school is unable to train a pupil ultimately capable of discharging a Matron's duties then they had better set their house in order, for the fact is evidence that their system has failed, and their methods of training need revision. We do not believe that the nurse-training schools of leading Dublin hospitals merit an impeachment of this kind, or that it could be proved that Ireland cannot find women, trained in its hospitals, to superintend its training schools, but if, as is alleged, no nurse with an Irish training need apply for the higher posts when vacant, it is inevitable that women with professional ambitions will elect to train in English or Scotch hospitals, and thus Ireland will be deprived of just the candidates whom it is most important to keep, and the quality of pupils who enter Irish training schools will inevitably deteriorate.

A great disadvantage to hospital committees, which are almost invariably composed of lay persons, is that at present there is no professional authority which defines standards of education for Nurses and Matrons, and they, therefore, depend mainly on testimonials concerning the qualifications of applicants. Inflated testimonials from hospital chairmen and persons with social influence may be impressive for the moment, but their statements are not always justified by results.

The first essential in considering the eligibility of a candidate for the position of

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)