

time to see what action the London Hospital authorities take. But if they maintain their present lethargic attitude, he will for the sake of Nurses take care that the facts already detailed, and others about which nothing has yet been said, are known throughout the length and breadth of the country. The following, however, is the letter to which I referred.

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SIR,—I was a Paying Probationer in the London Hospital for three months, entering in August, 1888. From my experience in that time I am able to corroborate the chief points brought out in Miss Yatman's evidence before the Committee of the House of Lords.

Upon my arrival I was put into a division of a Ward containing seventeen beds. The Staff consisted of the Staff Nurse, who was a Probationer, who had been in the Hospital four months only; one Probationer, who had one month's experience; and myself, who, of course, was quite ignorant of the work. The Sister of the Ward, which consisted of four divisions, overlooked all, but the main responsibility of those seventeen beds rested with the Probationer of four months' training. Another very serious drawback to the efficient Nursing of the patients was the inadequate number of Nurses. I was afterwards in a Ward of two divisions—thirty-one beds—where I was the only Probationer. I was for part of the time sent on special duty—*i.e.*, devoting all my time to one patient—and as no other Probationer could be supplied in my place, the two divisions, one containing eighteen beds and the other thirteen beds, were left uncared for two hours each day when the Staff Nurses were off duty.

Another of my experiences was this. In a Women's Medical Ward of fourteen beds there were four children (three of them in extra beds), three of whom cried almost continually—to the great discomfort of the adult patients. I could always amuse and quiet these children, when I had time to do so, but as this was seldom the case, the piteous entreaties of the women for quiet had to be disregarded. In the Children's Ward children must be allowed to cry unheeded, simply because Nurses have no time to attend to any but their absolutely necessary wants. The evils arising from the inadequate supply of Nurses is often much aggravated by the overcrowding of the Wards. I was in a Ward for a month, and during that time two of the four divisions were always overcrowded—seventeen beds instead of fourteen, and twenty or twenty-one instead of seventeen. This, of course, aggravated another evil—the want of a proper supply of linen. The Nurses had to exercise a great amount of ingenuity in keeping the beds outwardly clean and tidy with the very small supply of sheets allowed weekly. One towel a week, or in some Wards two, was supplied for the use of all the patients who did not bring their own. By the end of the week it is easy to imagine the state it was in; and the one tea-cloth allowed weekly to dry the breakfast, tea, supper, and most of the dinner utensils of from seventeen to twenty-one persons, was filthy at the end of that time. In a Women's Ward I worked in there was a baby, for whom only one set of clothes was supplied—these had to be washed nightly by the Probationer, and, needless to say, were always hard and utterly unfit for any baby's use.

Much has been said about the food supplied to the Nurses, but the complaints are in no way exaggerated—the quality of the meat was bad, and the cooking and serving most unappetising; and the quantity as well as the quality of supper was a matter of constant complaint. For example: at 9.30 p.m., after a hard day's work and no substantial meal since one o'clock, supper consisted of a hard-boiled egg, or stale potted beef or a sausage, or a small herring, always with

butterless bread. This applied to the Day Nurses. I believe the food of the Night Nurses was worse, but of this I had no personal experience.

Nurses were constantly breaking down, and unless really seriously ill were very carelessly attended to. I was on one occasion on special duty on a bad case of typhoid fever, and so evidently unwell was I that the Sister sent me off duty on one of the days for an hour. If the Nurses had been properly looked after, I should not have been allowed to return to this case at all, for "special duty" means attending a special case from 9.20 a.m. till 9.20 p.m., having tea by the bed-side and dinner in the Ward—if it is not convenient for you to leave long enough to dine with the Nurses.

What I think is wanted in the London Hospital is: more Nurses and Nurses of greater experience; less crowding of the Wards; and sufficient supplies of necessary furnishings, such as knives and forks and specially linen. I think, too, that the Nurses should have more time for rest and recreation, should be better fed, and their health better attended to.—I am, yours truly,

A. L. GUTHRIE SMITH.

Mugdock Castle, Milngavie, N.B., August.

[The writer of the above letter, corroborating so forcibly and so much of Miss Yatman's evidence, was considered a very good Probationer.—ED. C. R.]

The Rev. W. H. C. Malton, late assistant chaplain of the London Hospital, writes: "It is precisely because nursing is becoming a profession that Nurses ought, in common with the members of other professions, to be properly paid, fed, and housed, and equitably treated."

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A GOOD deal has been said about the Nurses at the London Hospital not being overworked. There is a correspondence now beginning on the subject in the *Daily News*, which will doubtless throw some light on the matter. But meanwhile the following statement in last week's *Charity Record*, which I advise all Nurses to get and read attentively, is instructive, as showing the necessity of increasing the staff of Ward-maids; for, in point of fact, the whole of the housemaid's work in a Ward is performed by the Nursing Staff except scrubbing the floor. It is not the character of the menial work which is objected to; it is merely that it takes up time which should be devoted to attendance on the patients.

Cleaning lavatories and bath room, scrubbing the bath with turpentine.

Waiting on Ward Sister, *i.e.* :—

Taking her bath water.

Emptying her bath and slops.

Making her bed.

Dusting and sweeping her rooms.

Preparing and serving her breakfast.

Clearing away and washing up her breakfast things.

Washing up of crockery for patients' breakfast, tea, and supper.

Washing dusters.

Washing flannel jackets (in children's Wards only).

Cleaning Ward lamps and Ward inkstands (usually six each).

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