

aware of any other Institution in the country which adopts such a wonderful method of obtaining gratuitous assistance. Then it was confessed that, at the end of four, five, or six weeks' work, many of these women are summarily dismissed, and without the slightest chance of appeal or redress. There is not the least doubt that no member of the Committee would for a moment dream of treating a domestic servant in this manner. And yet it permits its Matron, under the shadow of its authority, to subject educated gentlewomen to such extraordinary treatment. It is unnecessary to explain that at every properly managed Institution each employée is treated as an official, and, whether on trial or not, can only be dismissed for good reason given, and subject always to the power of appeal to the governing body; while every worker is at any rate requited according to some definite scale of payment.

The next revelation was that when a Probationer had been regularly appointed as such, the Committee obliterates itself, deliberately breaks the spirit, if not the letter, of the Bye-Laws, and certainly casts fair dealing and common justice to the winds, because it delivers over the Probationers entirely to the autocratic will of the Matron. It compels these young women to sign a legal agreement whereby they bind themselves under penalties to serve the Hospital for the full term of two years, and yet upon the side of the Hospital it gives the Matron unrestrained power to cancel the articles of apprenticeship at any moment, at her own pleasure, and so mar or altogether end the future career of any Probationer. To make this extraordinary unfairness still more marked, the worker is given the power of appealing to the Committee against dismissal, a right which the Chairman of the Committee acknowledged had never been exercised, and which he considered would be entirely unavailing if it were employed. Because it is callously avowed that if any Probationer made a complaint or an appeal, the Matron's word would be accepted, perhaps even without the Probationer being heard at all in support of her case.

Then came the calm admission that the London Hospital considers itself justified in deliberately deceiving the public. Its managers know that the sick can obtain most excellent attendants from old-established and highly respectable Nursing Institutions. It enters into a commercial competition with these Institutions, which we earnestly contend that a Hospital, supported solely for charitable purposes by the subscriptions of the benevolent, has no earthly justification for doing, except upon the ground that it can thereby benefit the public by supplying, for example, a better article than can be otherwise obtained.

Instead of which, the London Hospital sends out to the sick, who, trusting in the honour of its managers, apply to them for the thoroughly Trained Nurses it advertises to supply, semi-Trained Probationers, women who have only had a few months' experience and training, women whom the Hospital itself does not consider thoroughly trained, because it has not given them its certificate of efficiency.

This fraud upon the public in their hour of need is bad enough, but its results are very far-reaching. Because, in the first place, it is a deliberate contravention of the contract made with its apprentices to teach and train them systematically under supervision, and board and lodge them for the full period of two years. By sending them out it breaks their education, and materially debars them from the full advantages of a regular training, while it casts the expense of their subsistence on other shoulders. In the next place, it is a most unjustifiable sweating of its workers. The Hospital pays them £20 a year. It makes the public pay for their services at the rate of £80 to £110 a year, according to the case. Last year this great charitable (!) Institution, after the payment of all the expenses of the private nursing department, cleared a profit of more than £1,200.

These are some of the facts acknowledged by the officials of the Hospital, not merely advanced without proof by its critics. And while every one has been expecting that the Committee of the London Hospital would prove themselves honourable men—and would indignantly disclaim all responsibility for such injustice, and deceit—the public has been amazed beyond measure to learn that a few of their number have met together; have declared that they have implicit confidence in their Matron; have, instead of refuting the statements of their officials, hysterically asserted that there is an organised attempt to damage the London Hospital; and disregarding the just proposal that the Governors of the Hospital should not be asked to express their opinion until they have the full evidence and the facts before them, have attempted to close the whole matter by an empty vote of confidence. They have practically failed in this, as might have been expected; but by their action they have now dragged their Institution before the bar of Public Opinion. We congratulate our powerful contemporary, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in having taken up the matter, and doubt not that it will not relax its efforts until justice has been done.

THE very nearest approach to domestic felicity on earth is the mutual cultivation of an absolute unselfishness.

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