

THE *Pall Mall* has this week had the following letters amongst others, which also clearly show what public feeling is upon the matter, and our contemporary now heads its remarks and correspondence on the subject, "Death Traps for Nurses":—

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"FROM THE MATRON OF A COUNTY HOSPITAL.—I am very glad to see that you have taken up the question of the treatment of the public and the Nurses at the London Hospital, as I feel it is only through public opinion being aroused on the subject that reform can be secured and the public be protected from deception, the Nurses from overwork and injustice, and the patients from neglect. I was at the London for three years, and can speak from personal experience. The food was constantly very bad, and the Nurses were overworked, and Probationers were sent out to private cases as "thoroughly trained Nurses," some who had been only a few months at the Hospital, and having had no previous experience. No Nurse dare make a complaint, because she would either be dismissed or her life made miserable until she resigned. Every one knows the Committee and the Doctors are all under the thumb of the Matron, so who is likely to complain to them? Even the Chaplain, a clergyman of the Church of England, was persecuted until he resigned, because he made complaints on behalf of the Nurses. So what chance have poor helpless women, dependent for their daily bread, of securing justice, unless public opinion is aroused to help them? And when the truth is told, the Committee whitewash the Matron and then themselves, and none of the papers (except yours) will take up the matter 'for fear of hurting the hospitals.' Let the stones and wood of the London Hospital look after themselves; I say let the public know how the Nurses are terrorized, patients neglected, and the public defrauded, as proved in the Blue Book. Let the public know for whose benefit all this has been going on for years, and then reforms will be made which will make the London Hospital what it ought to be. It is the cowardly plan of burking inquiry and veiling the abuses which perpetuates the evil. Boldly recognizing and removing them can only be for the good of the Hospital and its poor patients."

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"FROM THE REV. H. T. VALENTINE, LATE CHAPLAIN OF THE LONDON HOSPITAL.—One of the chief things to be desired now at the London Hospital is that a sufficient number of the Nurses shall be 'thoroughly trained,' in the ordinary acceptation of the term—that is, not apprentices. As you are perhaps aware, from the evidence before the Select Committee of the House of

Lords, I suggested months ago to the London Hospital House Committee four necessary reforms, namely—(1) That no Probationer should have her apprenticeship cancelled until after the case had been submitted to the committee, and they or a sub-committee had carefully investigated the case; (2) much greater care needs to be taken of the Nurses in sickness; (3) the number of Probationers who only stay for three months should be reduced, thus increasing the number of full-term Probationers, consequently the efficiency of the staff—at present both the patients and the Nurses suffer unnecessarily; (4) since you advertise to send "thoroughly trained" Nurses to private patients you should not send Probationers who have no certificate, and who, as a matter of fact, sometimes have received barely twelve months' training.' I have regretted that my first point has not been taken up with greater sympathy by the governors and the public, and can only suppose that its importance has not been realized. Will you allow me, therefore, to quote from one of my letters which were given in evidence a passage on this subject? 'It is a very serious thing to cancel an apprenticeship, necessary sometimes, no doubt; and then in the interest of the public it should be made difficult indeed for the woman to get other Nursing work. But a gross injustice is done to a woman if for insufficient cause you send her away. With no certificate she cannot get good work, and to gain a certificate must begin all over again, and will, indeed, be likely to find it difficult to do even that in a first-class hospital, on account of having been dismissed from yours; and at the very least is thrown back and has lost the time she spent in your service.' I understand that a Nursing apprentice has no legal protection in the matter of her apprenticeship, and it is obvious that the sufferers would be shy of airing their grievances, however unjustly treated. Surely, then, it is apparent that the apprenticeships should not be cancelled at the will of the Matron, as has been abundantly proved to have been the case at the London Hospital. When this last defect has been remedied, with the others mentioned, and those discussed in your columns, I shall consider the London Hospital, from an intimate knowledge of it, as well organized and managed an institution as can be inspected in an imperfect world."

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I AM asked to mention here that the Quarterly Meeting of the General Council of the B.N.A. will be held to-morrow (Friday) at five p.m., at 20, Hanover Square. The business to be transacted is very important. The advertised agenda is—(1) Reports from the Executive Committee; (2) Election of Executive Committee; (3) Rules.

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