

for the Institution. So that the net result is, as we said last week, that there were, three months ago, probably few, if any, more regular Nurses in the Wards than there were in 1880, when the Matron considered that the Nurses were over-worked and the patients neglected.

The rest of the article chiefly consists of a historical account of the building of the Nursing Home, and a sentimental analogy between Nurses' meals and those of other people, including the statement that there is no regular tea for the Nurses, in order that "cosy afternoon tea arrangements" may be made by themselves. The idea is truly beautiful, but if ordinary individuals saw a Nurse having her "cosy afternoon tea," sitting as "special" between two glaring, gibbering cases of *delirium tremens*, they would be inclined to doubt the Matron's statement that this "touch of home life, amidst the inevitable routine of a large institution," is "popular."

And there is the sum total and end of the defence. Not one word is said in extenuation or explanation of the most serious charges advanced against the Hospital. The whole drift of the essay is to prove that things were lamentably bad in 1880 at the London Hospital, and the inference is that, thanks to the Matron, matters are wonderfully good in 1890. The admitted or uncontradicted facts that the Hospital defrauds the sick public by sending out semi-trained Probationers when it has promised to supply "thoroughly Trained Nurses"; that the Committee has permitted the officials to break the Bye-Laws and Standing Orders; that cases of gross injustice to individual Nurses have occurred; that the death-rate and sickness amongst the Probationers is simply terrible; that the Nurses are overworked and the patients neglected; that so little care is taken of the Nurses' health that one was sent to the Erysipelas Ward with an open wound and died in a few days, that another though she pleaded illness was ordered on duty, and when in the Ward was found to be suffering from scarlet fever, and that yet another was sent away with the scarlet fever rash upon her to a country house full of children—these and many other startling facts are complacently unnoticed in the defence. We venture to believe that it would have been wiser if the Matron had omitted disquisitions upon "cosy afternoon teas" and given the public some explanation upon a few at least of the more important matters to which we have referred.

And especially might she have elucidated the first charge. Some of our readers may remember that, about sixteen months ago, we were compelled to criticise very adversely a pamphlet issued by this same lady, which was a feeble onslaught upon

the British Nurses' Association, and especially upon the idea of Registration. We were then well aware of the reasons which prompted this remarkable production, and laid especial stress upon the one argument which was brought forward—that Registration was unnecessary, as no one could "seriously entertain the idea that the public cannot protect itself from untrained Nurses," seeing that thoroughly-trained Nurses could be obtained from well-known Hospitals. At that moment, before, and since, the Matron of the London Hospital was sending out women who were *not* "thoroughly trained." And the Committee of the London Hospital it now appears were aware of the fact, and must have known that the first effect of Registration—by giving the public a list of thoroughly Trained Nurses—would be to show that they were defrauding the sick by sending out women who were only semi-trained. So that it was clearly simply to bolster up its deception upon the public that the London Hospital fulminated and pamphleteered against Registration.

On June 20, 1889, believing that the Committee of the London Hospital could not be aware of facts which were notorious in nursing circles, we wrote as follows:—"Miss Lückes would have it believed that the fact that Hospitals 'keep highly trained private Nursing Staffs' effectually protects the public from being imposed upon by untrained women. For the moment we will take the argument upon her own ground. We will say that this certainly should be the case. We presume that the Committee of the London Hospital, and, indeed, the committees of all Hospitals, will say the same thing. We presume that they would not for one moment tolerate that the public should be imposed upon by means of the institution which they control. Then we suggest that the Committee should ask three very simple questions, and for their own sakes require true answers. Have Probationers—untrained Nurses—ever been sent out from the Wards of the Hospitals to nurse the sick outside their walls? If so, were the Doctors and the patients to whom they were sent led to believe that they were receiving what they wanted, and were paying for—'highly-trained Nurses'? If not, will not everyone 'seriously entertain the idea that the public cannot protect itself from untrained Nurses'? We advise the Committees to inquire when each Private Nurse who has been sent out received her Certificate; and, if the first question is answered in the affirmative, we ask the committees how they will protect themselves from public disapproval and distrust."

The questions have been answered now in public, but the Committee has still to explain

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)