

tion of the Hospital which will be caused, entirely rests, on the shoulders of the Committee. Because it is quite evident that Mrs. HUNTER and Miss YATMAN have been markedly anxious to avoid personalities, while we, in attempting to second their efforts, have been most scrupulous to keep in the background many scandalous matters which are open secrets in Nursing circles. The Committee has declined to move—it has certainly declined to reform.

To our readers we would explain our meaning. Some of our readers think that there are more interesting subjects to which we should devote our attention. We tell them that this London Hospital question dominates all others. The future of Nursing, the future training, education, and practice of Nurses, all hinges upon its settlement. Are Probationers to be properly treated? Are Nurses to be cared for as human beings? or worked to death like dumb cattle? Is the public to be protected from fraud? Those are the issues which must be decided. And we shall never rest until they have been decided. We are well aware that many of our contemporaries hesitate to touch this question—some because they do not understand it, others because they hope the London Hospital will itself institute reforms. But first one, and then another, will come forward and help us in our crusade against oppression and wrong, and reforms shall be made.

The Reporters then have taken "five allegations," the first of which is given thus: "*That too much power is entrusted to the Matron with regard to the dismissal of Probationers for inefficiency.*"

This is typical of the quibbling which runs through the entire document. The original charge was that the Matron had been given absolute and autocratic power over the entire Nursing Department in defiance of the bye-laws of the Hospital. We will refer to this hereafter.

But let us see how the Reporters meet the allegation they have so ingeniously limited. "The scheme of management which the House Committee has adopted, so far as the Nursing Department is concerned, is in the main that recommended by Miss Nightingale." For example, "I may perhaps again point out that the Superintendent should herself be responsible to the constituted Hospital authorities, and that all her Nurses and servants should in the performance of these (*sic*) duties be responsible to the Superintendent only." Precisely what we have again and again argued in these columns. But does the Committee not see that their very quotation destroys their position? Who is the constituted authority of the London Hospital to whom by the bye-laws the Matron is responsible? The House

Governor. And yet that gentleman stated upon oath to the Lords' Committee that the bye-laws had been "allowed to lapse," and that the Matron was no longer responsible to him, although the bye-laws had never been altered. Yet the Reporters have the hardihood to say that "in these recommendations of Miss Nightingale's (*sic*) we entirely concur." All the other quotations which the Reporters give are ridiculously irrelevant. To our knowledge Miss Nightingale has never asserted that the Matron of a Hospital should be practically under no authority at all, nor that she should be entrusted with the absolute power of retention or dismissal of the other officials of the Hospital. These are the points in dispute, and upon those points the Reporters carefully avoid quoting Miss Nightingale, or any other Nursing authority.

The Reporters, after a few harmless truisms, "willingly admit that the practice of other Hospitals affords no justification for abuses in our own." And yet they immediately proceed to make an attempt to prove that other Hospitals are all very much like the London Hospital, only rather more so. To do this, they have "caused inquiries to be made of nine of the other leading London Hospitals, and of the Edinburgh Infirmary." Why of only nine? Surely the Reporters were told that there are twelve General Hospitals with Medical and Nursing Schools in London. We call upon the Committee to state the names of these "leading Hospitals," because, as we shall show hereafter, their statement cannot, at any rate, refer to the other eleven recognised General Hospitals of the Metropolis; and that, in fact, such evidence as they produce, in this loose way, is eminently misleading. But it is alleged that "in ten out of the eleven Hospitals (including the London) the power of dismissing the Probationers is vested in the Matron"—subject in the case of five Hospitals to the approval of some controlling authority. That infers that in the remaining five Hospitals the Matron is able to dismiss the Probationers subject to no controlling authority at all. Putting aside the undeniable fact that two wrongs do not make a right, and that if other Hospitals have invested their Matrons with autocratic powers, it is no excuse for the London Hospital Committee to take such a step, we challenge the Committee to give the names of the Hospitals they are quoting, because we entirely doubt the accuracy of their statement. Still we take it, and their other figures, for the present, as their Reporters give them, and will show next week how completely these very figures prove the truth of the allegations they are advanced to confute.

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