

diction, that to advance as an excuse for duplicity the private opinion or ideas of any individual is supremely ridiculous.

If a prisoner at the Old Bailey were charged with passing spurious bank-notes, and it was proved that he had manufactured them himself, one can hardly imagine that he would have the effrontery to plead that he was not guilty because he considered himself qualified to issue bank-notes. Were he to do so, it is hardly to be imagined that the plea would greatly assist him. Yet such an excuse stands on all fours with the one we are discussing. The London Hospital does not consider, nor certificate, its Nurses as "thoroughly trained" until the end of two years. Yet at the end of a year, or even a shorter length of service, as we can prove, its Matron sends out these women to tend the sick when they apply for "thoroughly trained" workers, because she says she considers them trained, although her Hospital does not.

The Committee of the London Hospital has, therefore, quietly impaled itself upon the horns of this dilemma. Either it has for many years been deluding successive relays of Probationers by refusing to certificate them as efficient until the end of two years, or it has been deluding the public by sending out Probationers who were only, in fact, as well as in Hospital standing, semi-trained. And, to clinch the argument, we assert that the authorities at the London Hospital have been very well aware that they were deceiving the public. Perhaps the Committee—which does not seem to be entrusted with much information—has not been told that a Probationer sent out to people known to be inquisitive and critical, has been dressed up in the green cloak and bonnet—the outdoor uniform of the Private Nursing Staff—hastily borrowed for her adornment. Perhaps the Committee does not know that the first time a Probationer is sent out she is warned not to tell her employer that she has not acted as a Private Nurse before. Perhaps the Committee has never heard such a narrative for example as the following. A gentleman wrote asking for a Nurse specially well trained in mental work, and received a letter from the Matron that such a one should be sent. A Probationer who had been in the Hospital about a year, and had never seen a mental case in her life, was despatched. The employer, shortly after her arrival, asked as to her experience, and was naturally most indignant when she truthfully replied that she had had none. The Nurse wrote at once to the Matron, and received a letter in reply, the contents of which can be imagined. It ended, however, most significantly by informing the Nurse that it "would be very detrimental to her

future career if she did not succeed with her first private case." Comment on such facts and on many similar ones which we could adduce is, we imagine, entirely unnecessary.

To come to the second argument above advanced. We unhesitatingly assert that many suffer and that there is the clearest presumption, if not actual proof, that some persons gain pecuniarily by the Probationers of the London Hospital being thus sent out as Private Nurses. It has been admitted by the authorities of that Institution that if they had more funds, and more accommodation, they would be glad to take in more Nurses, and that those already engaged are overworked. Yet in the face of this patent fact the Committee of this Charity permit some of this already insufficient number of workers to be sent out as Private Nurses, necessarily therefore to the increased work of those left behind. Is not the Committee aware that this must also mean of sheer necessity a reduction of the care bestowed on the sick poor in the Institution? So the Committee of the London Hospital are permitting their employées to be overworked, and their patients to be neglected, in order to make money out of their Private Nursing department.

But the evil does not end here by any means. Not only do the overworked Nurses break down in health in numbers, which we solemnly warn the Committee will arouse a tempest of public indignation when the facts become known, but there is a deliberate system of deception perpetrated on the Probationers thus sent out to act as Nurses. These women enter the Hospital service for two years, for wages at which a scullery maid would scoff, on the express condition that during the whole of that term they shall be systematically and thoroughly trained under skilled supervision in the art and practice of Nursing. When they are sent out, they learn what they can, how they can, without help or oversight, at the expense of the sick. The Hospital takes them away from their lectures, breaks their training, and therefore deliberately breaks its contract. It charges for their labour five times the amount it pays them. And what does this great English Charity gain from all this deception and extortion? Last year, after paying all the expenses of its Private Nursing Department, *it made a clear profit of more than £1,200*—made it by giving the sick an inferior article than that for which they sought, and for which they paid.

Now one final word as to our own part in this matter. For many months we have known all these facts, and many more, but rightly or wrongly we hesitated to publish them, for the Hospital's sake. Quite independently, the matter was brought before the public, and for the last six

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