

was brought forward, not for this reason at all, but to prove the treatment accorded to its Nurses by the London Hospital. For on August 6 Nurse SABEL went back to the London Hospital, and in a week she was dead of the disease from which she had been suffering whilst sent to two private patients to earn funds for the Hospital. Further comment is surely needless.

III.—THE NURSING DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN CONVERTED INTO A MONEY-MAKING MACHINE.

It has become customary to admit ladies into Hospitals for terms of three months' experience in Nursing, upon their payment of thirteen guineas. Most Institutions, however, only admit a very limited number, and certainly those alone who are fit for the work—upon the supposition that if proved suitable they will be transferred to the regular Staff, and their preliminary training thus turned to account. The London Hospital takes in ladies as paying Probationers, for short terms, far above the age stated as the limit for those engaged on the regular Staff, and therefore of necessity they can only be temporary workers.

The Committee in its Report (p. 4) states that the number of paying Probationers "*is limited to thirty.*" The House Governor (Q. 8,297), who made a census of the workers in the Hospital for the Lords' Committee, found there were then *forty-two paying Probationers.* The House Governor, Mr. W. J. Nixon, is one of the most generally respected Hospital officials in the kingdom. We decline to doubt his sworn statement. Nor do we assert that the Committee wilfully attempts to deceive. We take the facts simply to prove, what we unhesitatingly do assert, that the Committee is evidently ignorant of what is done in the Nursing Department of its Hospital. But what do the figures given by the House Governor incontestably prove? That one out of every three women on day-duty in the Wards (Q. 8,992), one-third of the attendants on the sick poor in the greatest Hospital in the Kingdom, were merely short-term workers—ladies in for three or six months' casual smattering of Nursing knowledge. That is bad enough, but the evil does not end there, because all new Probationers naturally require to be incessantly watched, lest they make some grave mistake.

The defence made by the Committee is, once more, very instructive. In its Report (p. 4) it states that in the last nine years 538 have entered as paying Probationers. From 1883 to 1887 inclusive, the average was 60 per annum, but in 1888 and 1889 no less than 191 were admitted, so that the average then rose to 95 per annum. Until November in 1890, however, there had only been 47 taken in, or at the rate of 56 for this last

year. How does the Committee explain this marvellous fall? It has denied flatly that before the inquiry commenced the Hospital admitted too many of these short term workers as the complainants alleged. There can be no dispute that once more while denying the abuse it has been forced to institute a reform, even if it be only temporary in its duration. We insist that it ought to be made permanent. The figures given on this subject are vague and misleading. These state, for example, that 128 paying Probationers of the 548 altogether admitted were transferred to the regular Staff, and that 82 "renewed engagements"—in other words, took out a second three months' course. The Committee implies that these 128 and 82 represent different and distinct people, but we greatly doubt it, because it is notorious that many ladies have entered the Hospital as paying Probationers on the distinct promise that as soon as a vacancy occurred they should be made paid Probationers, and that they have paid for two or more separate terms in order to secure the regular training.

We might easily multiply instances to prove this charge, but have space for only one. Miss HOMERSHAM entered the London Hospital as a paying Probationer in December, 1884, and after three months became a nominally paid worker on the regular staff. At the end of April her father was taken dangerously ill, and she requested leave from the Matron to go to see him. The Matron refused to allow her to go unless she paid 13 guineas (Q. 5,753). Miss HOMERSHAM was astounded, and requested permission to consult her brother. He "could not imagine such a demand to be possible" (Q. 5,926), so he interviewed the Matron with his sister. The demand was repeated, and explained in this way. Miss HOMERSHAM paid until March. If she had paid for a second term she could now have leave of absence as a free agent—a paying Probationer. But she was instead a paid servant of the Hospital, and to go to her dying father when the Matron refused her consent would be considered "disgraceful and dishonourable." The Probationer's agreement provided that anyone leaving, without consent, forfeited all payments due. Miss HOMERSHAM acting on this—being refused temporary leave—went to her father, who died three days afterwards, and thereby forfeited her seven weeks' salary. What followed is highly significant. Her brother wrote on her behalf to the Chairman of the Committee, who replied that he had "inquired into the circumstances," and that "the conduct of the Matron was in strict accordance with the bye-laws of the Hospital and the wishes of the Committee." Mr. HOMERSHAM appealed direct to the Committee, who supported the

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