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EDITORIAL.

A RELIC OF AN OBSOLETE SYSTEM.

It is announced that "the authorities of the London Hospital have determined to make a new departure which is sure to be criticised" and to take as probationers those V.A.D.s whose hospital work has shown their aptitude for this vocation, providing they agree to undergo a course for two further years of complete training as probationer nurses at the London. In the case of V.A.D.s who pass the requisite examinations it is agreed to give them, when successful in their examinations, a three years' certificate of training at the end of a two years' course.

The authorities of the London Hospital have for over a quarter of a century depreciated the three years' standard of training which by general consent is the shortest compatible with thoroughness. While other institutions have insisted on a three years' term of training, the London Hospital has certified its probationers at the end of two, and bound them for another two years of service, with the result that these probationers are competing in the private nursing world with nurses from whom three or four years' training in the wards has been demanded before certification. This procedure at the London is very unfair to the probationers, who, if their third year is not spent in the wards are not eligible for the majority of public appointments, it is unfair to the nurses holding certificates of three and four years' training from other schools, and it is economically unsound that the services of these short-term trained nurses should be used for profit for the hospital, in competition with those of thoroughly trained women.

Further, the depreciation of standards is felt beyond the limits of the London Hospital, as influential members of its committee, by their presence on other boards,

exercise a prejudicial influence in the matter of standards. Thus the standard of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, and its Reserve, is three years' training *and service*, instead of certification after three years' training, as is the case in the Territorial Force Nursing Service; and the College of Nursing, Ltd., has made preferential terms for London Hospital nurses on its Register, and classes them with those who hold a three years' certificate, thus perpetuating the evils which the London Hospital system of underselling standards has for years encouraged.

It is stated that there is a shortage of probationers at the London Hospital. Just conditions would soon increase the supply. Let the Committee bring its system of training up to date. Let it deal fairly with its probationers, the nursing profession and the public. Let it adopt a three years' practical course of training in the wards, and, after examination, bestow a certificate on its successful pupils. Let it do away with the huge nurse farm, and the exploitation of short-term private nurses, and it need have no fear of results. With the splendid clinical material available for teaching and experience the London should rank with other leading Schools of Nursing, instead of standing alone as a relic of an obsolete system, inspired by a keen commercial instinct, but devoid of professional aspirations and ethical sense. V.A.D.s who hanker after a short cut to a nursing certificate are the very type of women calculated to injure and depreciate the standard of our work. We believe that this proposal will meet with the disapproval of the authorities of nursing schools in favour of the highest standards of nursing.

It would be the irony of fate if the only three years' certificate given at the London Hospital were to be bestowed on V.A.D.s.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)