

dangerous a phase of the system as can well be imagined. We take it for granted that the Committee has fixed the amount of the fees to be paid by the pupil-Nurses; but we presume the inference will not be disputed that, in the case which we are considering, the commission is offered as an inducement to the Matron to obtain Probationers, who will pay the Hospital, instead of being paid for their labour. It is perfectly plain, moreover, that the Matron will desire, and probably the Committee will approve of, the admission of as large a number of these pupils as possible. This may, perhaps, be acknowledged and the assertion made that no harm would thereby be done. But how would such a system work out in practice? In the present state of the Nursing world, gentlewomen who could afford to pay continuously for one or two or three years' training would naturally gravitate to one of the large Metropolitan Hospitals. The majority of those who would go as paying pupils to a country hospital would be ladies who lived in the locality and desired, not to undertake Nursing as a serious occupation but, to acquire some rudimentary knowledge of its details; and such it is needless to point out would rarely work for longer than three months; in fact, it may be taken for granted that their average stay would not exceed this period. It is, therefore, to the direct interest of the Matron to have as many of these short-term workers admitted each year as possible. Does it need any words of ours to point out what this means? Everyone knows that it takes the most facile learner some weeks before she can be at all useful—that is to say trustworthy—in a Hospital Ward, and that the average pupil at the end of three months is just beginning to realise the dangers of carelessness when life and death are hanging in the balance; just commencing to comprehend how intensely little she knows, what an immense amount she has to learn, and what an infinity of harm she can do. And at this point, and before her assistance becomes valuable to the sick, if she be a short-term worker, she leaves the Hospital and her place is taken by another in precisely the same condition of ignorant incapacity as she herself was, three months previously. If this worker be multiplied by the number of the paying Probationers, admitted for thirteen weeks' instruction, some idea can be gained of the amount of helpless assistants thus provided for the sick poor. We are most anxious not to be misunderstood. We entirely approve of the principle

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that women who desire to be Nurses should defray the cost of their education. But we protest with all our strength against this modern refinement of cruelty—this conversion of a Hospital into a manufactory of Nurses—this perversion of a Charity into a mere money-making concern. We insist once more, as we have frequently insisted before, that Hospitals are intended primarily for the benefit of the sick and injured, not to furnish a field for experiments for young ladies desirous of gaining a smattering of Nursing knowledge. We contend that Nursing is a serious occupation, and only those should be admitted as pupils into Hospitals who are able and willing to devote sufficient time and labour to become proficient. Then, on the other hand, we protest against the popular idea that Trained Nurses were invented by a beneficent Providence to be underpaid and overworked, because the present system of short-term paying Probationers is only the natural outcome of that doctrine. We constantly hear of benevolent schemes which are proposed for the benefit of the poor, and the expenses of which, it is calmly suggested, should be provided by the earnings of Nurses; and this is, in fact, just at present, a special species of cheap philanthropy. News reaches us of a right reverend Bishop who considers that a little Nurse sweating should be practised for the benefit of a local charity in which he is interested—that Nurses, in fact, should be underpaid, in order to provide funds for a benevolent object. His lordship, if he sees these lines, will perhaps deem our remarks profane and our words painfully unpolished. We do not mention his name at present, and we do not desire to hurt his feelings, because he is only following an example which has been frequently set. But it is time the truth was told on these matters, and we shall always do so without any hesitation.

For the same reason, we do most earnestly trust that the Committee which has issued the advertisement upon which we have commented, will alter its expressed determination before it appoints a new Matron. The principle of a commission of any kind, we are convinced, should never be admitted except in business, and a charitable institution is certain to suffer if it is turned into a trading concern. If the Committee will inquire it will find that in two Hospitals the Matron was given commissions on the pupils' fees, and in both cases the results were disastrous. The number of short-term Probationers ought, beyond the shadow of a doubt, to be strictly

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