

strictly to lauding the great work which the Hospital has to do. The Committee admits that there have been "difficulties"—a somewhat euphemistic expression—and flatly accuses the governing body of the Hospital of having neglected the trust confided in them. With all deference to the *Lancet* and the *Hospital Gazette*, we consider that a more scathing condemnation on the Managers of a public institution could not have been more guardedly expressed. From all sides, we hear that the public, generally, read their lordships' judgment in its plain sense, and as we shall proceed, next week, to show, when the Select Committee descend to details and speak on broad general grounds, they condemn, root and branch, one after another of the abuses shown to exist at the London Hospital, while in the same breath they recommend for most flattering imitation the precise system of Nursing organisation which has, for some years, distinguished the management of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and of the many important London and Provincial Hospitals whose regulations have been formed upon the same excellent model.

#### CHECK-MATE.

THE Select Committee of the House of Lords have sounded the knell of Nurse sweating. The profits of farming-out private Nurses to the public have been immense, because at most Institutions the salaries paid have been directly proportional to the inexperience of the worker, and a gullible public has paid the London Hospital for its pupils, and other Nurse farms for their "prentice hands," the same fees that well-trained Nurses elsewhere receive. It is notorious that nine-tenths of the opposition of the Royal British Nurses' Association has emanated from these commercial undertakings, because the names of their ignorant employées could not appear on the Register of Trained Nurses. Now "the game is up" and the opposition to the Association may be expected soon to die down from the annihilation of its motive. Because there can be no doubt that the public will accept the conclusion at which the Select Committee has arrived, and that institutions which do not conform to the rule will speedily lose their custom; for the Committee is "of opinion that the minimum period after which a nurse can be advertised as thoroughly trained is three years."

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#### A DOOMED DESPOTISM.

WE have, on many occasions, protested against the absolute autocracy of certain Hospital Matrons, chiefly upon the ground of the gross injustice and oppression which can exist when such a system is permitted. It was proved to the Select Committee of the House of Lords, which inquired into Metropolitan Hospitals, that at the London Hospital the Matron was entrusted with uncontrolled power to dismiss any Probationer, at any moment; in short, that some hundreds of women to whom their education and certificates as trained Nurses mean their future ability to earn their livelihood, and to whom dismissal from the Hospital implies a failure little short of ruin, are, at this public Charity in this so-called free country, at the end of the nineteenth century, placed in helpless dependence on the will or whim of one woman. Whatever the personality of the Matron may be, and upon that we express no opinion, we have again and again insisted that such a principle is radically wrong and unjustifiable. The Select Committee has expressed its judgment, and there can be little doubt that the system is doomed. They say that "they are strongly of opinion that no absolute power ought to be given to any Matron, but that the appointments and dismissal (of the Nurses) should be made by the chief executive authority of the Hospital." We earnestly hope that our contemporaries will join with us in insisting that this reform shall be carried out at the London Hospital and elsewhere.

#### COMING EVENTS.

SOME of the shadows are very plain. For four years, the Royal British Nurses' Association has been striving to protect the public against ignorant and untrustworthy nurses. In the face of immense opposition, incessant abuse, and misrepresentation, the Association has maintained that three years' Hospital training and experience, under skilled superintendence, is essential in order to fit anyone to perform with full efficiency the unsupervised duties of a private nurse. The standard of registration and of membership set up by the Association is based on the three years' principle, and it is well known that many of the largest London and provincial Hospitals have recently extended their length of training from one or two years, up to the triennial term. A few antiquated institutions have struggled vainly to stand still, and, like St. Thomas's Hospital, to maintain in 1892, the regulations framed twenty years ago. Even the classic cobwebs of St. Thomas's must have shaken last week, when it became known that the Select Committee of the House of Lords had expressed its opinion that the three years' standard is essential for the thorough training of nurses. We congratulate the Royal British Nurses' Association most cordially, because it is undeniable that this verdict is largely due to its active efforts for nursing reform. We congratulate the public still more heartily, because an immense impetus will undeniably be given to a greatly needed improvement in the education of nurses.

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[previous page](#)

[next page](#)