

No. 2. The Nurses complained that the holidays were too short—one day a month from 10 a.m. (having been on duty for three hours) to 10 p.m.—and irregularly given—and twenty-one days during the two years' training being the maximum they were entitled to.

The officials professed to desire to see the holidays increased, but though two years have now elapsed since the evidence was given, have done absolutely nothing to improve the condition of the Probationers—they still work 11 hours and 50 minutes, per seven days a week, and the public have been told by the Chairman of the Quarterly Court, "that the Probationers prefer" 21 days in two years' work, to three weeks a year—which the more humane Governors desire shall be given to them. The lords suggest, "that every Nurse in the large and busy Hospitals in London should have at least two days off in the month; and not less than one full hour should be allowed for dinner."

No. 3. The Nurses complained that their food was insufficient, badly cooked, and badly served, and that they were obliged to spend money on food, and received supplies from their homes; and that the Matron never attended their tables. The officials denied the accusation. But the public learn from the London Hospital Report of 1891, that £1,000 per annum more have been spent over the food of the Nurses in that year, than was the case in 1889, when the evidence was given.

The Lords remark: "From the nature of the occupation of Nurses, special care ought to be exercised that as well as being sufficient in quantity and in quality, it should be served in an appetising manner. To bring about this end, the Committee are strongly of opinion that at the Nurses' dinner one of the head officials of the Hospital should preside, and that the dinners should be frequently visited by members of the governing body."

No. 4. The Nurses complained that in sickness they were neglected, and quoted two cases—of Nurse Pairman, who, after an operation in the nose, was sent on duty in the Erysipelas Ward, thirty hours later, with an open wound in her nose, and who died a few days later from inflammation of the brain—of Nurse Sabel, who, having contracted liphtheritic poisoning in her finger from a tracheotomy patient, was sent to two private cases with the bad finger, and returned to the Hospital ten days later suffering with diphtheria, from which she died in two days—of Nurse Lawson, who, feeling ill, was sent to friends at Stroud, to a house where were several children, and was found to be crimson with scarlet fever upon her arrival.

The officials could not deny the gross neglect in connection with these sad cases.

The Lords, I regret to find, have omitted to express an opinion concerning these cases.

No. 5. The Nurses complained that an absolute autocracy existed at the London Hospital, and that the Matron had the power to engage and discharge Probationers, and to qualify their certificates, so that they worked under a rule of intimidation and tyranny. That the Nurses were placed in the position of Sisters long before they were trained or efficient, so that, being liable to discharge at any moment by the Matron, the system of autocracy was complete, and in consequence many Nurses had suffered from great injustice.

The officials tried to deny this accusation, but failed. The House Governor owned his authority "had lapsed." Mr. Carr-Gomm, the Chairman, admitted that the Committee were not capable of judging in matters concerning the Nurses, and always acted upon the suggestion of the Matron. It had therefore become an acknowledged fact amongst the Nurses that they have no redress.

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