

The Lords have grasped the dangers of a "Nursing autocracy," and remark: "While the Committee recognise that the Matron must be greatly responsible for the appointment, and dismissal, and general conduct of the Nurses, they are strongly of opinion that no absolute power ought to be given to the Matron, but that the appointments and dismissals should be made by the chief executive authority."

They remark about the important subject of certificates: "It appears that at the London Hospital, in the form of certificates for Nurses, certain blanks may be filled up in different ways according to the discretion of the Matron. The Nursing capabilities and conduct of the Nurse may be described respectively as "excellent" and "exemplary," which constitutes a first-class certificate; or as "good" in both cases when the certificates rank as second-class. It would seem that the latter form is used when the Matron is by no means satisfied with a Nurse; and the Committee think that words indicative of inferiority should be inserted in all certificates below the best, if, indeed, it is desirable that any such certificate should be issued at all." I am strongly of opinion that so long as a paid official may make or mar the career of junior officials by giving or withholding, or qualifying their certificate (a guarantee of professional efficiency), so long will that official remain an autocrat, and in some instances gross injustice will be done to her subordinates. Autocrats can seldom brook individual liberty of thought, much less of action, and, in consequence, the bright, intelligent, and healthy-minded Probationer, whose services would become of untold value to the sick poor, yet who may venture to express an opinion, and refuse to grovel, will speedily find her services considered superfluous, and in consequence "dispensed with"; while her less conscientious companion, who is profuse in the offering of frankincense and myrrh, or, in other words, panders to the insensate vanity of an all-powerful Superior, soon finds herself extolled--

promoted and highly certificated. The system is rotten to the core and must be remedied, and for the sake of Nurses and the public, the sooner the better. Let the Governors of the London Hospital look to it.--Yours, etc.,

AN EYE WITNESS.

[This opens up a most important question. We observe that one a witness before the Select Committee of the House of Lords in July, 1890, said:—"I should like to point out that at St. Bartholomew's there is no such thing as modified certificates. A Nurse either proves herself to be efficient or she does not. In the former case she should receive the certificate in justice to herself; in the latter case, in justice to the Hospital, she should not be certified as efficient. In any event, it is, to my mind, extremely unfair to the public, to the Hospital, and to the Nurses themselves, that a public document, like a Hospital certificate, should be granted, withheld, or qualified in any way at the caprice of an official.--E.D.]

A CORRECTION.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

SIR,—Will you kindly permit me to correct an error which appeared in your issue of this week. I am not an All Saints' Sister, and, beyond the fact that I work under the Sister Superior of the Metropolitan Hospital, who is a member of the All Saints' Community, I have no connection of any sort with it. The uniform I wear is that chosen by the Sister Superior for ladies working under her, in positions of responsibility, and has no more connection with the All Saints' Community than the uniform of any other London Hospital.--I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

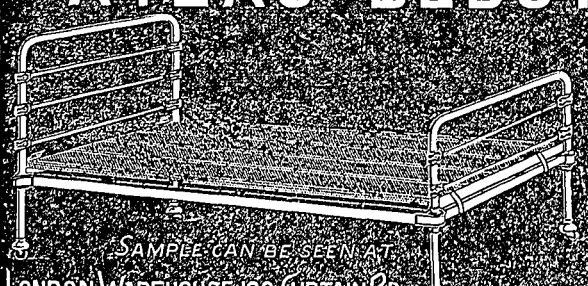
MARGARET BREAY,

Acting Matron for the Sister Superior.

Metropolitan Hospital, Kingsland Road, E.

July 9th, 1892.

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