

therefore, of prime importance to the medical profession. We have given our steadfast support, for example, to the Royal British Nurses' Association, which has done so much in the past few years, under the wise guidance of Her Royal Highness PRINCESS CHRISTIAN and of various leaders of the profession, in welding nurses together into a homogeneous body, in controlling them, and in bringing about improvements in the standard of their training. The Association has from its foundation insisted that no woman should be sent out as a private nurse unless she had received at least three years' systematic hospital training, and it must be considered highly creditable to the Association that the Select Committee of the House of Lords, after an exhaustive inquiry into this matter, have reported that 'they are of opinion that the minimum period after which a nurse can be advertised as thoroughly trained is three years.' It was proved to their Lordships that many of our leading hospitals send out private nurses to the public. With proper precautions we see no harm, and, indeed, much possibility of good, in this practice. But the evidence showed that, at certain institutions, these nurses were paid very small salaries, yet that they 'bring considerable addition to the funds of the hospitals there can be no doubt;' that they are admitted into these hospitals, and bound by agreement to serve for a certain term of years in return for the training promised to them, but that before the hospital has certificated them as trained, while, in fact, they are being paid and treated as pupils, they are sent out to the richer classes as 'thoroughly trained nurses,' while the sick poor in the wards are left with so much, of course, the less attendance. We have scrupulously refrained hitherto from any comment upon the evidence. But now that judgment has been delivered we feel constrained to say that a strong impression has been created by this palming off of mere

pupils as thoroughly skilled workers upon medical men and the public who have applied to great hospitals for the best possible assistants, trusting implicitly to the good faith of the committees to send them such nurses. Moreover, we cannot but consider the system unjust to women who have entered these institutions at very meagre salaries in the belief that they would receive a complete and consecutive education, and with no expectation that they would be used as sources of revenue; and we entirely concur in the opinion expressed by their Lordships (p. 98), that 'to prevent the wards from being denuded of nurses in order to bring funds to the hospital, a separate staff should be employed for this purpose.'

We earnestly counsel all whom it concerns to act as speedily as possible upon these pronouncements, and we consider that medical men would do wisely only to recommend institutions which conform to this three years' rule of training for their private nurses. It is quite clear that the public is becoming awake to the importance of their attendants being experienced and trustworthy, and we believe that institutions which do not openly undertake to send out nurses who have had the recommended term of pupilage will obtain little patronage in future. The Committee recommends that nurses in hospitals should only work for eight hours a day, and, herein, we are compelled to differ from them, because we believe that it would practically be impossible to organize the work, with due regard to the patients, with a lower minimum than nine and a-half hours for day, and ten hours for night, duty. The suggestion 'that the period of holiday should not be less than three weeks,' and that 'where the funds of the hospital permit, pensions should be provided for nurses,' will meet with universal approval. But, seeing that it has been proved that the National Pension

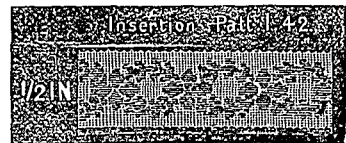
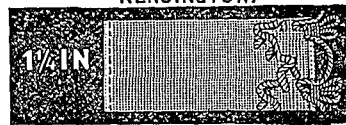
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