

We should not have troubled to correct Mr. HOWITT, in this matter, were it not that his information—for which we desire to thank him—as to the conditions upon which Probationers are received at the Cumberland Infirmary opens up questions of considerable Nursing interest. We much regret to learn that the Cumberland Infirmary maintains the old-fashioned double Certificate, which is bad in theory and worse in practice. To make one woman work for two years before she can obtain a certificate of efficiency, because she is paid a salary, and to grant a certificate to another after one year's training, because she has paid a premium, is a plan which cannot be defended upon any possible ground except that of commerce. A Hospital Certificate is a guarantee to the public that its possessor is a thoroughly competent Nurse. Therefore, the Cumberland Infirmary is either deluding the public, by giving its Certificate to women who are not thoroughly trained at the end of one year's work, or it has no right to withhold its Certificate from any Nurse until she has been trained for two years. It is merely quibbling to say that the two Certificates are quite different. The sole object of the document is to impress the public, and a Hospital Certificate, to the uninitiated, is a Certificate of Nursing efficiency—nothing less or more—for the niceties of distinction in its wording are to them only meaningless and redundant words. We, therefore, hope that the Cumberland Infirmary will discontinue the practice of issuing these dual Certificates, as speedily as possible, for the sake of its own reputation as well as for the benefit of the public.

In reference to the next point in Mr. HOWITT'S letter, his very inaccurate belief that it "is a practice universally adopted" for Nurses to be made available for private nursing during their third year of training, requires correction, for it is well known that the exact reverse is the fact, and that very few honourably-managed Hospitals pursue this practice. For what does it mean? Simply that a woman, whom a charitable institution has persuaded to enter its service, on the pretext that she shall for three years be taught her profession in its wards, is in the

third year made a commercial medium—is sent out to make money for the Hospital, and to learn what she can, by practising on the sick, in private houses. We are thankful to be able—for the credit of English Hospitals—to repudiate the suggestion that this is their conception of the manner in which the richer classes should be treated by the Institutions which they support. Few Hospitals, happily, adopt the same position as the Cumberland Infirmary.

It would be possible to go further, and express a belief that the recommendation of the Lords' Committee that no woman should be sent out as a thoroughly-trained private Nurse until she has gone through a minimum of three years' Hospital work, is one which will be universally adopted in this country during the next year or two. It furnishes too important a protection to the public and too valuable a guarantee that their Nurses shall be competent to fulfil the duties expected from them, to remain a dead letter. And from the past proceedings of the Royal British Nurses' Association it is, we imagine, very improbable that that influential body will permit this important verdict to be overlooked or forgotten. It will certainly not be the fault of this journal, moreover, if the Press and the public are not reminded of the fact, again and again, until the lesson requires no further enforcement. It may be taken for granted that, within possibly a very brief space of time, only those Institutions which promise and supply three years' trained Nurses will be applied to for these assistants, by the public. Already, as from time to time has been pointed out in these columns, immense advances have been made, and there are numberless Hospitals, both in the United Kingdom and its Colonies, which have, during the past five years, raised their standard of training to the three years' term.

Until the Cumberland Infirmary takes the same step the question may well be asked: Why should this Institution be behind others of less size and importance? The North was wont to boast that it took the lead in all improvements. Why should the County Infirmary of Cumberland remain behind its sister Institutions in the southern parts of the

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