

given on the authority of a public Institution, that the person to whom it has been awarded is a thoroughly trained, efficient, and trustworthy attendant upon the sick. But when, after a trial month, a woman, concerning whose qualifications the authorities at any given Training School must be, to all intents and purposes, entirely ignorant, is accepted and bound to their service, the manner in which she will conduct herself must be largely problematical; and it is a matter of common knowledge that, if she conforms to the rules, and is not densely stupid and careless, the chances are that no occasion will be found to dispense with her services. She may be hopelessly unobservant and unable to learn; her fingers—to use the ordinary phrase—may be all thumbs; she may be utterly devoid of sympathy and human kindness; she may be lacking in all and every characteristic which goes to make a good Nurse. In a busy ward, her deficiencies will be covered more or less completely, and her mistakes corrected by the Sister or Staff Nurse who are working with her. Yet it is a fact beyond dispute, that it is possible for such an one to exist through her term of service, and then, by her agreement, she must perforce be granted the Hospital Certificate—the highest reward which can be given to the most hard-working and valuable Nurse.

It is impossible to defend such a system. It is manifestly unfair to good Nurses and to the public. It has been found indefensible even in the case of Barristers; and to permit a man to wear a wig and to argue in a court of law it is now held to be necessary that he should give some further proof of fitness than is exhibited in the eating of so many dinners in so many years. Consequently, the more advanced Hospitals have, of late years, instituted examination in order to test the knowledge which their pupils have acquired. But even this has, in some Institutions, been rendered farcical by the fact that even to those who failed to pass this examination, a certificate of training is awarded. At the best, as we have previously pointed out, this examination is but a partial affair, seeing that it is, in every case, conducted by the authorities of the

Hospital themselves, while it is a standing ordinance at all other examining bodies that no teacher shall examine his own pupils. In addition, then, to the reforms which we have already suggested, we would now add that Certificates should only be granted to those Probationers who prove their possession both of theoretical and practical knowledge of their work, and that the examinations should always be conducted by strangers; but the Matron, and Medical Staff, we consider, should have the power to materially influence the result of the examination by giving or withholding marks for the general conduct and Nursing qualities displayed by the candidate during her training.

It is, perhaps, needless to point out that this reform would not only be more equitable to Nurses, but would be more fair to the public. It is difficult to estimate the direct and indirect evils of such a system as that upon which the Lords' Committee comment. "It appears," they say, "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 Certificate ranks 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." (The italics are ours.) We earnestly hope the London Hospital, because no one is now that this crushing sarcasm can only apply to surprised at any thing which happens in the Nursing Department of that woefully mismanaged Institution. It is difficult to believe that any other Nurse Training School would certify to the public that women, who had proved themselves by no means satisfactory, were good Nurses—as in the case, which was inquired into by the Select Committee, of a Nurse who had been discharged for alleged

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