

to the work, till they have realised their daily duties.

It, therefore, needs no lengthy arguments to prove the point, nor, conversely, to show that that Hospital will be the best served—and therefore the most efficient—in a Nursing sense, which has the largest proportion of Probationers, who are prepared to throw themselves, heart and soul, into their duties, with the fixed intention of devoting themselves to Nursing as their life-work. But it is necessary, we regret to find, to lay considerable stress upon this point. For we are aware that there are Hospitals, which, either because they are in financial difficulties, or because the Committees of Management are not aware of the evil they are permitting, are constantly admitting large numbers of ladies for “three months’ training.” One London Hospital, in particular, has become notorious in the Nursing world for the number it passes through its Wards every year, until, in fact, it has become simply a huge guinea-grubbing manufactory—deluding the public into the belief that ladies, by paying twenty-one shillings a week, can learn anything of Nursing—reducing the reputation of its Nurses to the lowest ebb in professional eyes—and inflicting the greatest injury upon well-trained Nurses, by flooding the labour market with utterly untrained and unskilled women.

But, as we have said, not only does a Hospital suffer in reputation and efficiency, but its patients, individually and collectively, suffer exceedingly. We are most anxious not to be misunderstood. We do not say a word against the admission of Lady Probationers into Hospitals. On the contrary, we commend it, and regard it, as we have often said, as good for everyone that educated gentlewomen should enter the Nursing profession in larger and larger numbers. But what we recognise as a most serious evil—what we desire now to point out, and what we shall again and again revert to, until the evil is remedied—is the gross abuse, which permits the authorities of Hospitals to use paying Probationers, admitted for three or six months’ work, in the place of permanent Probationers, or even of Staff Nurses; to forget the very *raison d’être* of such Institutions; to ignore the fact that they were built, and are maintained, by the charitable public for the care of the sick poor; and to attempt instead to transform them into mere manufactories of amateur Nurses.

In the name of humanity we desire to know what right Hospital Managers have, to permit patients entrusted to their care to be experimentally Nursed. For we say, most unhesitatingly, that the system is most prejudicial to the patients. Where there are many of these “Quarterlies” there

must necessarily be fewer regular Probationers than the exigencies of each Ward demand. Then, actual experience reveals a state of affairs which any of our readers can well understand. The Sister—dependent entirely upon her Staff Nurse, whose whole time is taken up with overlooking and correcting the mistakes most innocently made by the Probationer, who entered the Ward for the first time yesterday, and will leave it this day week—overworked, over-harassed, is quite unfitted to do justice to herself, or to her patients. In desperation, at last she demands an extra Nurse, and another Lady Probationer appears on the scene. She sweetly sympathises with the Sister’s anxiety and worry, and promises to do her best to help, and in very truth does so. But she has only been in Hospital a fortnight; and as soon as Sister is called away to a patient with hæmoptysis, whom Pro. No. 1 has been feeding with hot beef-tea, the second comer supplies the gastric ulcer case, and the one just conscious from the delirium of typhoid, with the full diet dinners intended for the two convalescent chest cases in the next beds, and then kindly assists the aneurism case to get out of bed.

Our readers know that this is no impossible picture—nay, many know how it understates the terrible dangers which can be wrought in a Hospital by simple ignorance, not even by mere carelessness. We absolve the Sister and the Staff Nurse of an ordinary-sized Ward entirely of all blame. To do their work, they must have efficient and intelligent assistance, and must not have their whole time occupied in teaching the rudiments of the Art to strangers, who are like unto the flowers of the field—here to-day, and gone to-morrow. We consider that it is the authorities of Institutions who are at fault, and to whom the public will apportion the blame. We warn the heads of those Hospitals which are now pursuing this pernicious system of admitting unlimited quarterly Probationers, and so keeping from their Wards regular and settled workers, that they are bringing the gravest discredit on the Institutions, for whose efficiency they are responsible. Nay, more, we warn them that they are living on the crust of a volcano, for at any moment accidents might happen such as those we have described, and come to the knowledge of the public; and the storm of popular anger, which would naturally be aroused, would be deservedly levelled against those who had wilfully permitted such dangers to the sick to be possible, and even probable.

AS OTHERS SEE US.—The *Nursing Record* is a well-edited journal of women’s work in connection with Hospitals and similar Institutions.—*England.*

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