Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability

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ROYAL HOSPITAL FOR NEURO-DISABILITY: Administration : Governance records : Letters received by the Board of Management

Letter received by Dr Balfour from Florence Nightingale, dated 14 May 1881

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May 14/81

10, SOUTH STREET,
PARK LANE. W.

My dear Sir

I am grieved to find that we cannot conscientiously spare one lady among those whom we have trained & proved, the only ones whom we could recommend for such a post as yours, the Lady Supt. of the Putney Royal Hosp.l for Incurables. They are all serving in posts from which we could not suggest a removal, even for promotion. We have no reserve. And we never recommend from those who

have had only a year's training for a position as Head. They must have passed thro' Ward Listership, (i.e. Head Nurseship) or Assistant Matronship or Matronship of small Hospitals & the satisfaction of their employers fixed before we offer them such a responsible post as that you mention. Then there are others in important posts whom we cannot disturb.

We have never anything like the number ready for the posts that are offered us. The harvest truly is ready but the labourers (of the right

Lord) are still few.

There is nothing I should have liked so well as to have been able to help you with a Lady Supt., both for the sake of the poor patients in your great institution — which I rejoice to know is creating such a position as you describe. & for auld lang syne between yourselves & us.

That you may find some lady to carry out your wise intentions is my most earnest wish. I am so glad you are united with the Putney Hospital.

I have consulted our Matron,

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Mr. Wardroper, & our Secretary, Mr. Bonham Carter, & some thro' all our experienced "ladies" with the result I am so sorry to report. May you be more fortunate!

I will write again about other things. May I give you joy, you & Mr. Balfour, upon your boy? And may he realize all you would have him be!

You kindly ask after me. It is always severe pressure of overwork & illness - & I am not growing younger.

You are working as Statistics, I am sure. And I may perhaps be troubling you soon about some matters of Military Hospitals

formal References given were are always the Matron & Secretary of our Training School. Not myself. I have not time to make this tedious explanation shorter. But I am sure that you, — who are so well skilled in the great care required in these kinds of negociations, & in the total want of conscience displayed by Testimonials in general, — will approve I think necessary the kind of carefulness we are obliged to ~~take~~ observe, in order

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not to make our recommendations as much a 'dead letter' as most are.

Keeping up, as we do, our interest in the Cadets of our trained women for a great number of years, during which they are not immediately under our own eye.

Mr. Bonham Carter told Mrs. Lincke that she must rely upon the testimonials of her own (Dublin) Comm.ee as the best proof of her capacity for supervision.

Please forgive me: & let Mrs. Lincke's position rise

10, SOUTH STREET,
PARK LANE. W.