

leave, which she did not care to do. She is, therefore, still in the Hospital, on the sick list, with but little chance of recovering health.

"(Reality). This Sister's illness was not more severe. She went into Cornwall on sick leave for a few days and received no benefit; she subsequently left for her home up the country several days since.

"Surely, Mr. Editor, the public has been fed with a sufficiency of sensational stories about Hospitals, I should think *usque ad nauseam*. With regard to strictly sick leave not being granted by the Admiralty, I would infinitely prefer relying on the judgment of the Board to do what is right in the interests of the public service, than on that of so very reliable a person as your informant. If the object is to convert the Sisters in question into interesting martyrs, which I feel sure neither they nor the public would desire, your informant has lamentably failed.—Yours truly,

"August 3, 1888.

VERITAS.

"[We should not have inserted an anonymous contradiction of statements made by a correspondent had not the card enclosed by 'Veritas' been that of an official holding a responsible position, and who probably could not, by the rules of the service, write publicly in his own name. On the other hand it is fair to state that the writer of letter criticised by 'Veritas' is also a gentleman occupying a respectable position, and who said when communicating his letter for publication that he was 'able to vouch for the accuracy of all his statements.' We must ask him now either to corroborate or to withdraw them.—ED. *W. M. News*.]"

The cudgels were then taken up by "Truth," who says:—

"ROYAL NAVAL HOSPITAL, STONEHOUSE.

"Sir,—Some evidence may be afforded of the value of the contradictions of your correspondent 'Veritas' if he will give categorical answers to the following questions:—

"1. When he speaks of one of the Sisters having been 'in Cornwall,' is the locality to which he alludes Torpoint?

"2. Is it or is it not the fact that during her stay 'in Cornwall' she had to report herself daily at the Hospital?

"On his answers to these plain questions, it appears to me, hangs the further question—whether or not he has been guilty of a contemptible quibble?—Yours truly,

"TRUTH."

Then we have an Editorial comment, with a further letter from "Veritas" in reply to "Truth's" strictures.

"SICKNESS AT THE ROYAL NAVAL HOSPITAL, STONEHOUSE.

"The correspondence in these columns respecting the sickness among the Nursing Sisters of the Royal Naval Hospital, Stonehouse, has opened up a question which it is hoped will be thoroughly investigated. It is understood that the subject was brought to the notice of the Director-General of the Medical Department of the Navy, Mr. James N. Dick, C.B., R.N., on the occasion of his recent visit to the Hospital, and that, acting on instructions received, the authorities at the Hospital are taking steps to ascertain whether the sanitary conditions of the institution are above suspicion. About four years since a new system of drainage was carried out at the Hospital, but it is said that the house occupied by the Nursing Sisters was not included in the general scheme. The belief is entertained that the drainage of the Hospital is defective, and it may be hoped that no pains will be spared by the authorities to clear up this point, especially as the head Nurse is understood to be so ill that none of her friends are allowed to see her, and that the symptoms in her case are said to be similar to those developed in the case of another sister. Respecting the statement that sick leave was refused one of the Sisters, a correspondent points out that she was enabled to go to

Torpoint for a day or two, through the kindness of the local Inspector-General, but the statement is adhered to, that she had to report herself daily to the Hospital. No complaint is made as to action of the local staff, but apparently the authorities at the Admiralty have acted in a somewhat arbitrary way in refusing sick leave to a Nurse wholly unfit for duty.

"In reply to 'Truth's' letter in yesterday's *Western Morning News*, 'Veritas' writes as follows:—'When your correspondent "Truth" condescends to such expressions as "contemptible quibble," he neither strengthens his case nor reflects any credit on himself. He should receive most comprehensive answers to his two queries, but it must be patent to anyone who understands the Navy, that as the Sisters, although recommended from the Hospital, were refused leave by the Admiralty, doubtless on good grounds, it would be most despicable in me, were I to be the means of causing the indulgent acts of the popular Inspector-General of the Hospital to be called in question officially. I will, therefore, content myself with answering thus:—

"1. The expression "in Cornwall" certainly included Torpoint, but had reference primarily to a place in the heart of the county.

"2. That any daily report was made at the Hospital is decidedly untrue. The amount of acrimony introduced into this discussion is significant. It may be all summed up thus:—The Head of the Hospital voluntarily put himself into an unsafe position to do an act of kindness, and the recompense is a revival of the old story of the snake turning on the hand which fostered it."

And finally, "Truth" has a parting shot, and a very effective shot it appears to be, at "Veritas."

"ROYAL NAVAL HOSPITAL, STONEHOUSE.

"Sir,—Whether it 'reflects less credit' on a man to use 'such expression as "contemptible quibble"' than it does to be guilty of the thing itself, is a question I will leave to your readers, though I would point out that 'Veritas' has only evaded, not answered, the two questions put to him, and has only endeavoured (with the aid of 'that snake' and the popular and indulgent 'I. G. ') to raise a cloud of dust, which he may hope will obscure the points at issue. I will only say that I am thoroughly acquainted with the facts and the details of the matter in question, and that I adhere in every particular to the opinion indicated in my former letter. I would also remark that it does not appear to me to be very high-minded for an official who has appealed to the public press to establish his case to shelter himself, when tackled, behind 'rules of service,' and such like.

"However, I will not pursue this veracious 'Veritas' any further, but will take leave of him, earnestly advising him to look up his Latin again, for it is clearly somewhat rusty, and to assume a different *nom de plume* in future.—Yours truly,

TRUTH."

We are entirely at one with the *Western Morning News*, when it says, "The correspondence has opened up a question which, it is hoped, will be thoroughly investigated." And we shall await with considerable interest and curiosity the report of Mr. J. N. Dick, C.B., R.N., the Director-General of the Medical Department of the Navy, or his subordinates, who may be authorised to investigate the matter. We need hardly say that it would be a disgrace upon our Naval Hospital Administration, were it to go forth that the authorities had permitted the drainage to get into the condition it is assumed to be, in the absence of evidence to the contrary.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)