

richest, and oldest Hospitals in the Kingdom, have been obliged to confess that their Institution, for twenty years, has been neglecting its primary and essential duty, and that to all appearances, for years to come, it will continue to neglect it. The facts are perfectly simple and beyond dispute. In 1862, old St. Thomas's Hospital, which then faced Guy's Hospital, was bought by the South Eastern Railway Company for the purposes of their terminus at London Bridge, and the work for nine years was done in temporary buildings in Surrey Gardens. The sale of the site produced £296,000, and the savings during all these years of lessened expenses, with the ordinary income of £50,000 a year, ought to have been very considerable. Yet, in 1871, when the new Hospital was opened, there was a debt upon it of no less than £100,000, for the whole expense of building and the freehold had amounted to about £556,000. As, perhaps, most of our readers are aware, the Hospital is built in separate blocks, along the river frontage, facing the Houses of Parliament on the other side, and extending in length no less than a quarter of a mile. For administrative purposes, of course, nothing could have been more inconvenient, and, in fact, efficiency, economy, and everything else appear to have been recklessly sacrificed to secure an empty show of magnificence. And then, again, the move brought with it increased expenses, which apparently had never been even anticipated by the authorities of this wonderfully managed Hospital. Because in their old position in the Borough their rates had been small, they seem to have actually expected that they could take one of the most expensive sites in London, and occupy a large part of the ground in a poor parish—which otherwise would have been utilised by buildings contributing largely to the parochial expenses—and yet escape the incidence of such taxation. Common sense, if not the most ordinary prudence, should have impelled them, before moving to Lambeth, to have ascertained with absolute accuracy what the amount of their future expenditure would be. But everything appears to have been left to chance, and the authorities seem to have been startled beyond measure to discover that St. Thomas's Hospital was called upon to pay rates like every other building in this mercenary metropolis.

The Hospital disputed the claim, and appealed even to the House of Lords against it, thus adding some £3,000 more to its debt. It was then stated that as the parish made the Institution

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pay rates, some of its beds must be closed, and, until this year, this has been the accepted tale. It now transpires that the rates are only £2,300 per annum, but that it would require at least £6,000 a year more income to enable the empty beds to be utilised, the balance representing the burden of debt due to the outlay of twenty years ago.

But why, asked the Committee, again and again, does not St. Thomas's Hospital appeal to the public for funds to carry on its work properly? and to this no conclusive reply was given. The Treasurer admitted that some years ago they applied for £20,000 and got it, but seemed to believe that it would be useless to make a further attempt. But the Hospital is neglecting its bounden duty. The sick and the suffering come to its stately doors, and are turned away to seek for help elsewhere. The purses of Englishmen are easily opened by such a statement, but St. Thomas's Hospital prefers that the sick poor should suffer, rather than ask for help. Is it the fact that St. Thomas's Hospital publishes no accounts, and does not desire to be brought under popular inspection, as would naturally be the case if public help were asked for? If that is the reason why St. Thomas's Hospital continues to neglect its duty to the sick poor in its neighbourhood, a graver fact has rarely been brought to light. Whatever the reason be, the public should demand to know it. If the benevolent refused to give the necessary funds because they "have not confidence in the management"—which Lord Cathcart queried as the reason—then, at least, the authorities having appealed, would have cleared their consciences. But we have no hesitation in expressing our opinion that the Treasurer and Governors of St. Thomas's have completely mistaken their duties and their position in this matter. They are not spending their own money, nor are they at liberty to please themselves. They are merely the Trustees of the public for a great Charity. They or their predecessors have made extravagant mistakes. Englishmen will easily condone these if they are frankly admitted; but the authorities must do their duty now.

For twenty years they have kept more than a quarter of the Hospital closed against the poor, knowing that every day they were depriving large numbers of those for whom the Institution exists, of benefits to which they were morally entitled. It was their clear duty to have made this publicly known, and to have thrown the

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