

case; nor to increased parsimony and illiberality, because other schemes have received, as of old, unstinted help; nor to the fact that grandiose projects of wholesale upheavals of fractions of the population have been "boomed," because the full tide of British generosity is not diminished by any petty and temporary overpassing of its ordinary boundaries. So we are forced to the conviction that it is a loss of public confidence in our Hospitals, and no other reason, which has caused so enormous a diminution in their receipts.

It, therefore, is a matter of the greatest moment to discover how public confidence has been shaken, because it will then become possible to understand what measures must be taken in order to obtain its restoration.

We trace it back to the inquiry into the London Hospital before the Select Committee of the House of Lords. There is no necessity to remind our readers of the grave scandals which were then revealed. At the time, we urged upon the Committee of the Hospital with all our force to boldly institute, at once, a public inquiry, to court the fullest and most complete investigation, and to institute whatever reforms were necessary. We expressed our conviction that if this were done, the Hospital would be immensely benefitted by the public approval which such straightforward and honourable conduct would elicit. Our advice, unhappily, was not taken. A vain attempt was made to hush up the whole matter. Our contemporaries were implored to keep the subject, as far as possible, out of their columns, and very naturally the public imagined that the secrecy meant that the facts were considered too serious to publish. Then came the historical Court of Governors, when the objectors were howled down and utterly denied a hearing. The result was that the British public buttoned its pockets. There was felt to be no need for further discussion. A great Charity which permitted such grave scandals to be committed under its management that the Press felt compelled to suppress the evidence given before a Select Committee of the House of Lords, and which was afraid to let a Lady Governor criticise its defects in public, was not one to which people cared to entrust their charitable donations. Down sank the subscriptions, and, indeed, it will be years before the full extent of the loss becomes known, for we have ourselves heard of one instance in which a legacy was cancelled, and can

quite believe that the same course has been taken in other instances. Indeed, it is significant that in the years 1888-1889-1890, the only years for which we possess Reports, the legacies received amounted to more than £19,400 a year, on the average. Last year these amounted only to £6,600, a loss of almost exactly two-thirds, while we showed, last week, that the voluntary contributions have fallen off by one-fifth. But the worst feature is that, by the public at large, the London Hospital has been taken to be typical of all our Hospitals, and the discredit which this Institution has incurred has been reflected upon all, to their great and manifest injury.

We have referred to this matter, at this juncture, because we can see very clearly that not only is the danger not over-past, but that fresh disasters may be impending. There can be no doubt that if an inquiry be held by the Privy Council into the case of the Royal British Nurses' Association, it will have an immense effect on the public mind. On the one side, this Association, supported by the leaders and by the rank and file of the medical and Nursing professions, attempting to protect the sick against ignorant and untrustworthy, and even dangerous, women, who term themselves Nurses. On the other, the authorities of a few Hospitals, who have for years privately attempted to hinder and thwart the efforts of the Association, because the protection of the public will involve a diminution in their receipts. The fact must be faced that, unhappily, the case of the opposition is tainted—all the verbose arguments as to Registration "placing Nurses on one dead level" will be sneered out of court when the public realises the very patent fact that a Register of Trained Nurses would not include the names of the inexperienced pupils which opposing Hospitals and Institutions palm off upon the sick in private houses, to the danger of the latter, and the great pecuniary profit of the former. We do not know what other facts the Association may be ready to advance, but from what we know ourselves we can well believe that the *exposé* of its opponents could be made most crushing. We feel that the revelation of the facts to which we have alluded will have a disastrous effect on the opposing Hospitals. And when it is proved that absolute falsehoods were told to the Board of Trade by responsible officials of these Hospitals, with deliberate intent to deceive that department in the exercise of its statutory powers—and the great gravity of this, we imagine,

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[previous page](#)

[next page](#)