

—but, in order to disprove it, they produce, with much pomp and circumstance—a lengthy letter, which they assert was signed spontaneously by the entire Nursing Staff with some twelve exceptions, stating in effect that the Nurses in the London Hospital are only one short degree less angelic than the members of the Committee. There are only a few remarks which we need make upon these documents, which we reproduce in another column—following our invariable custom of giving equal publicity to both sides of a case. We congratulate the Committee upon the literary genius latent amongst their Nursing Staff, and we trust that it will be utilised still further in future. But with the memory of the list—or rather, the last but one—memorial from the Nursing Staff of the London Hospital in our minds, we do not consider the present effusion worth the paper on which it is written. It is very noticeable that, on this occasion, the Committee do not print the names of those Nurses who are stated to have signed this document—a fact which is highly significant, considering that, at the Lords' inquiry, it was discovered that, at least one Nurse's name had been forged to the indignant and spontaneous letter from the Nursing Staff at that time. In the next place, we are informed, on good authority, that the statement that this letter was a spontaneous outburst, is quite erroneous and misleading. It was drawn up, ostensibly, by a lady whose literary light has hitherto been successfully concealed under a bushel, and a copy of it was sent round to the Sister of every ward in the building with the instruction that her nurses were to have "the opportunity of signing it." Considering the admitted Nursing despotism at the Institution the marvel is that twelve members of the Nursing Staff dared to refuse the "opportunity." We should be glad to know who these twelve ladies are, and trust, for their own sakes, that they have all received their certificates. And yet the Committee had the assurance to state that the letter was an independent act upon the part of the Nurses. Equally spontaneous, we are told, is the letter signed by former workers at the Hospital—and we believe with quite equal truth—for we have heard of Nurses in

various parts of the country, and even abroad, who have received urgent letters, requesting them to write strongly to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, denouncing as "false," "malicious," and so forth, statements which they had never seen. And the Committee now expect the public seriously to swallow the palpable absurdity that 246 old London Hospital Nurses, all knew each other's addresses, held a spontaneous meeting, drew up and signed a spontaneous letter, and sent it in to the Committee, as a little surprise. The whole story, in fact, only proves the verdant innocence of the Committee, if they really believe it themselves, or if they do not, then the verdant innocence with which they endow the British public. This second spontaneous document was, we doubt not, written by one individual, and duly sent out to the hundreds of Nurses, whose addresses could be discovered; and a good number of them, doubtless, were kind enough to sign it and send it back. That was their share of the spontaneity, and as the Committee once more refrain from giving names, they are to be commended for the moderation of the figures. There is a pleasantly happy ring between the 246 who signed the one petition and the 264 who signed the other—we quote the figures as given by the Hospital organ which, of course, therefore, must be accurate, although there is a discrepancy between these figures and those quoted in other journals; but the world is made up of such changes and chances, and if the figures had been reversed, it is difficult to say who would have been the wiser—or the better. Upon one point, however, we must lay stress. The manner in which the charges have been met is utterly inconclusive. The Committee of this great public Institution have been accused of the gravest faults of mismanagement. They have not only evaded inquiry, but they have definitely refused to permit any inquiry to be made. We have no hesitation in saying that they have wrought a fatal wrong to our voluntary Charities, and that the inevitable consequence of their attempt to stifle criticism at the London Hospital, will result in an immense alienation of public sympathy and support, not only from that Institution, but from all other voluntary Hospitals.

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