

regarding the nursing department of the London Hospital. I, moreover, tell Sir Andrew Clark and his co-signatories that I am not a 'partisan,' and I call upon the former to prove his words, or to withdraw them and apologise. The attempt made by Sir Andrew Clark and his co-signatories to draw a red herring across the scent and quibble about the precise date upon which I entered the London Hospital is beneath notice. I have no intention of indulging in such quibbling. The question for the public is: *are these charges true or are they false?* My personality is entirely irrelevant to that question. Emphatic denials, even from Sir Andrew Clark, when unsupported by one shred of evidence, are quite an inconclusive and insufficient method of reply to such a serious matter. If Sir Andrew Clark will forgive me for saying so, such statements are merely 'irresponsible utterances.' I am prepared to prove every word I have stated. If Sir Andrew Clark believes what he has written, he will agree with me in demanding an immediate public inquiry as to which of us is correct, and in desiring that the matter should be sifted to the bottom.

With regard to 'A Friend of the Hospital' and 'A Hard-worked One,' I beg to thank your correspondents for a complete corroboration of my charges against the management of the Nursing Department of the London Hospital. Once more, abuse of me personally is made to take the place of disproof or argument—a proverbially feeble method of defence. The head official of the Hospital expresses the deepest feelings of officialdom!—cordial detestation of any one who dares make an independent inquiry behind the official scenes, thus 'approaching the whole business in a wrong spirit.' Undoubtedly! The right spirit, of course, consists in seeing everything through the official spectacles—that enlarge benefits and obliterate defects.

'A Friend of the Hospital' is taken into the wards, and even he is surprised to find nothing in the waste tubs. I wonder if it occurred to this most innocent gentleman to inquire why there were any rubbish pails or waste tubs there if they were not at all used? Would he be much surprised to learn that undoubtedly on the day my first article appeared there was not only an immense 'fluttering in the dove-cotes,' which he describes, but for the first time a searching investigation was made into the contents of the waste tubs? I am glad to learn that my investigations have already saved so large an amount to the finances of the Hospital; and this being the case it surely seems rather ungrateful to abuse me so forcibly. But will you please notice how these defenders of the Hospital, even while denouncing me as a 'spy,' an unmitigated prevaricator, &c., are kind enough to prove that my words are true, and therefore that your independent inquiry was greatly needed to reveal the actual 'Truth about the London Hospital.'

I complained of the extraordinary waste and extravagance at the Institution. The innocent 'Friend,' of course, and the Committee 'emphatically deny' this; the 'Hard-worked One,' however, unlike the committee and their 'Friend,' but like myself, has worked in the wards, and quietly gives away those whom she has arisen defend. She admits that this 'waste of good food' 'doubtless goes on more or less in all the wards,' but excuses it on the ground that it is the 'result of individual extravagance rather than mismanagement,' and tries to parry any contentions of the Hospital by pleading that I 'give no suggestion of how it can be remedied.' I would suggest that it is not my duty, but that of the committee

to remedy this evil. In my humble judgment the waste of good food evinces gross mismanagement, that 'individual extravagance' should be permitted in the London Hospital. My charge that ignorant Probationers are made pupil-teachers and ward superintendents—that is, 'Sisters'—is also admitted to be true, although the committee 'emphatically deny' this with my other statements. A 'Hard-worked One' attempts to argue that it is good for them that this course is pursued. I would venture to inform her that the Hospital exists and is maintained for the benefit of the sick poor, and *not* for the benefit of future Matrons; furthermore, I decline to recognize any Institution as 'well organized' which 'lets the blind lead the blind,' to the inevitable injury of patients and probationers.

My serious charge in connection with the possible conveyance of infection from the erysipelas and isolation wards ('emphatically denied' by the Committee) is also admitted to be true, and the excuse advanced is that the Hospital cannot afford to build new wards—a plea which must be regarded as ridiculous considering that no number of new buildings can improve the Nursing arrangements, which is the real point in question. I understand that less than six months ago the Chairman of the Hospital solemnly asserted at the Court of Governors that the lives of the patients were not risked in the isolation ward, as I have shown to be the case, and as a 'Hard-worked One,' a Nurse now in the Hospital, admits to be true.

In conclusion, I need only point out that 'A Friend of the Hospital,' while endeavouring to deny my statements, makes the following valuable admissions concerning the truth of what I have written. He deliberately expresses his belief—though writing against me and on behalf of the Hospital—that at night there 'is undoubtedly too great a strain for the number of Nurses left in charge.' . . . 'There is no doubt that Miss Lückes, the Matron, is a strong ruler with a weak Committee.' (I beseech Sir Andrew Clark, Mr. Buxton, and Mr. Hale to note this cruel remark from their 'Friend.') . . . 'She is virtually an autocrat' . . . 'She is certain to slip sometimes' . . . 'You must expect to find grievances' . . . 'The Hospital has the evil system of excessive work.' . . . 'Power is, perhaps, thanks to the weakness of the Committee, placed in too few hands.' . . . 'Perhaps there is a defect of sympathy in the treatment of Nurses,' &c. I ask, sir, have I said anything so absolutely crushing and condemnatory of either the Matron or the Committee as their 'Friend' is forced to say? Do not the defenders of the Hospital more than corroborate all of my criticisms? And is it well for any Hospital to be governed by a 'weak Committee' when the Matron is 'virtually an autocrat,' and there is a 'defective sympathy in the treatment of Nurses'? Is it not time that some radical change should be brought about either by 'placing some competent hard-working ladies on the Committee,' or by other means, in order to ameliorate this state of things? And in face of the evidence of the friends of the Hospital, notwithstanding that my statements are 'emphatically denied' by the Committee, I feel that no further corroboration is necessary to convince you that I have told 'The Truth about the London Hospital.'—I am, Sir,

YOUR SPECIAL COMMISSIONER.

August 2nd.

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