

neither this fact nor any cognate fact precludes us from taking an impartial consideration of the merits of the case. Nor do we make any claim to act as judge and jury. What we could do we have done, and that was to select a commissioner, in whose veracity and judgment we had confidence, to examine the documentary evidence on which, in addition to her personal experience, her criticisms were based, and then give the result to the public. So far nothing has occurred to throw doubt on any material point raised by our Commissioner, and, indeed, many of her criticisms have been confirmed by correspondents who have taken up the cudgels in defence not of the Hospital—the distinction is important—but of the present management of the Hospital. Neither we nor the public can be satisfied with a mere flat contradiction on the part of a Committee which is itself charged with having taken a wrong view of its duties towards the institution and its supporters. Nor can we accept as conclusive the diatribes of a journal which avowedly acts as the champion of the Committee, if not as its mouth-piece. We have thrown our columns open freely to all who wished to controvert the criticisms made by our Commissioner, and by those who have corroborated her statements. But the majority of these correspondents seem to ignore the nature of the controversy, and to have acted on the principle of the Irish barrister who met the evidence of two eye-witnesses of a murder by a dozen witnesses who could swear that they had not seen it committed. They deny what was never asserted, and do not traverse the truth of the actual statements. What is wanted in the matter is “a judge and a jury.” We are quite willing to meet the Committee of the London Hospital in this matter. If they will suggest a certain number of names to form a Commission of Inquiry, we will nominate an equal number, on the understanding that the conditions of the investigation are such that witnesses may be called and examined and cross-examined. If the result of the inquiry be to show that our Commissioner and those who have corroborated her criticism were mistaken, we should be as delighted as any one, and the London Hospital would once more command complete confidence, and receive increased support. If, on the other hand, investigation should confirm the justice of the criticism, then there would be a clear and simple method by which the Hospital could remedy its defects and appeal with renewed confidence to the charity of the well-to-do and the benevolent.”

Then on August 16, 1893, there appeared the following letters, the similarity in which is very striking:—

“SIR,—I feel compelled to write in answer to many of the vile and untrue accusations sent to you and published in your paper on various dates. I

may as well mention I am writing it privately, and without the knowledge or consent of any second person. Hospital management I do not profess to understand, but everything in connection with the comfort of the Nurses I feel I can explain satisfactorily. I have been over two years in this Hospital, and can truthfully say that during that time I have been treated with great kindness and consideration. The food is good and wholesome, though plain, of course. It is quite true that we spend our money as stated by your Special Commissioner, but it is in little luxuries, not the necessaries of life, and we do as we like about it. The arrangements for the sick Nurses are very good, and no Nurse is allowed to leave the sick room or to go on duty without the consent of her medical attendant. I can say from experience that we meet with a very great deal of kindness and consideration from our Matron, both in times of sickness and in health. Of course, in a large community of women, there is sure to be a few grumblers, and it would be hard indeed to consult the individual taste of between two and three hundred Nurses.

During my two years' training I have never seen any avoidable waste of good food, either in or out of the wards.

One of your correspondents also states that she has seen typhoid sheets thrown down the ordinary dirty linen shoot. Surely this would be the fault of the Nurse and not the authorities; and I do not consider that being tired is any excuse for carelessness in this respect, especially in a Nurse. I, myself, have never seen it done, and as a matter of fact, there is a paper of rules fastened over the bed of all our patients suffering from typhoid fever. I cannot help noticing that your correspondents are all Nurses who have barely finished their training, and they must be clever to find out in a few months more than I know from over two years' experience. I may also add that I am personally acquainted with one or two of them. You have been asked the general opinion of the Nursing Staff with regard to the present scandal. As one of the Nurses I may say at first it was indignation, but it is now indifference and contempt. I presume they feel too strong in the knowledge of the good work they are doing, or trying to do, in the Hospital that they do not care to write in answer to so many paltry and contemptibly mean accusations made by ladies who do not understand themselves.

That we ever are or have been unkind to the children is a base lie. I trust we are women, and not fiends. Moreover, nothing is ever done without the knowledge and full consent of the doctor in attendance, and the sister in charge of the ward. I have worked in the children's ward, both surgical and medical, and have never seen the least unkindness on the part of the Nurses. On the contrary, the little ones often cry bitterly at leaving those

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