

staff of over two hundred and fifty) she knowing nothing of the management of other hospitals, and the immense difficulties which hamper the managers of a great hospital like the London, with no large endowments, and with a public not yet fully recognizing that large funds are necessary to carry out improvements which most institutions would be only too ready to make, if they could rely upon the necessary means. No inexperienced person is capable of estimating the value of the evidence she thus obtains, especially at a time when the tendency to discontent and grumbling, not uncommon among all large bodies, has been fostered and encouraged by the unscrupulous attacks which have been for more than three years directed against the hospital and its Matron.

The majority of the accusations now brought forward were endlessly discussed and disproved before the Select Committee of the House of Lords. That the management of the London Hospital was considered sound after this most searching inquiry, was evidenced by the fact that after issuing their Report, Lord Sandhurst, the Chairman of that Committee, qualified himself as a governor of the London Hospital, and, subsequently, at the quarterly court of the governors, and at a Mansion House Meeting on behalf of the London Hospital, raised his voice in praise of the management, and warmly seconded the Duke of Cambridge in his appeal for funds. I myself became a life governor shortly after this unjust attack upon the London Hospital, because I desired to unite with the large number of subscribers to the London Hospital who have throughout encouraged the managing committee in supporting one of the ablest Matrons and nursing reformers in the kingdom. Do the public consider the fatal danger that must ensue to the cause of Hospital reform throughout the country if competent officials, duly appointed and controlled by the governing bodies, cannot do their duty towards the patients by getting rid of incompetent Probationers and untrustworthy Nurses, without being called upon repeatedly by these discharged persons to prove their incompetence to outsiders and Quarterly Courts? The fact is, the sort of management which exists at any Hospital must be known by its fruits, and the fruit of the London Hospital management in times past has been such as to convince me, and those who have the best means of judging of the relative merits of Hospitals in London and elsewhere, that, under the careful supervision of the Committee of Management, the course of the London Hospital has been one of progressive reform; and all Hospital reformers and the public owe a debt of gratitude to it for the admirable Nurses it has qualified, and for being one of the best managed training schools in the United Kingdom. If a carefully organised system is to be interfered with by the rash and ill-conceived ideas

of inexperienced and emotional Probationers, how is it possible for discipline to be maintained, and any sound system of work to be carried on?

If all these petty accusations (some of them seven years old) are to be brought up again and again, and after the incapable Probationers or Nurses have been dismissed, their cases are to be repeatedly inquired into, and the officers summoned from their work, and the Matron from her duties, to refute the idle charges brought against these officials; and if the unprincipled makers of these charges are to be allowed to send round to the medical staff and all connected with the Hospital down to its very porters, *as has been done*, unfounded attacks upon its Matron, I do not hesitate to warn the public that they must then be prepared for an utter breakdown in the admirable work now done by the London Hospital. If I were one of the Committee, I should entirely decline to continue in that capacity, to be held responsible for the frightful scandals which then must inevitably ensue. It must not be forgotten that Hospital mismanagement may involve terrible consequences to our sick and suffering fellow-creatures, and lax discipline produces disastrous effects with amazing rapidity.

One object of my letter is to show the committee and supporters of the London Hospital the futility and danger of permitting old charges to be indefinitely brought forward, and of attempting any further refutation of them, merely to afford gratification to the malicious agitators who first suggested them.

Believing that you have taken up the subject with the wish to promote the cause of good nursing and Hospital management, I venture to hope that the above arguments and opinions may obtain approval and support from you.—Yours faithfully,

W. RATHBONE.

18, Princes Gardens, S.W., August 21.

The only comment which need be made upon this letter is that it conclusively proves that Mr. Rathbone knows nothing of the subject. He admits that he is a prejudiced partisan, and that he became a Governor to support the system in vogue—at the request, we dare venture to say, of his niece, Miss Rosalind Paget, who, we are informed, is a special protégée of the Matron of the London Hospital. Mr. Rathbone innocently talks of “competent officials duly appointed and controlled by the governing bodies.” Has he not yet learnt that the Lords’ Select Committee ascribed the whole difficulties at the London Hospital to the notorious fact that the Committee had no control over their salaried officers, and that the very defenders of the Hospital admit that the Matron is “virtually an autocrat,” while the Committee is very weak.

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