

support, and so cares for all the Hospitals. It has never, however, failed to censure whenever occasion has arisen, as a reference to our columns will prove. Permit us to add, as the result of much experience and full knowledge, that if the lay press would refuse to publish anonymous letters about our Hospitals, while throwing open its columns to signed communications, their letter-bag would be materially lighter and justice would come by her own again. We have been deluged at times with anonymous letters. Each case has been carefully investigated, and in the result it has been proved that malice very often strives to hide her face behind the cloak anonymity.

The most remarkable fact about the correspondence on this subject in the *Pall Mall Gazette* is that the attackers have not ventured to sign their letters, with one honourable exception, whereas the defenders nearly always give their names or addresses. It has not been difficult, however, to identify the anonymous writers, who, as Mr. Rathbone points out, have been hashing up the same petty accusations for several years past. It is not the voluntary Hospitals, but a considerable number of the rate-supported institutions, which sadly need reform. We are inclined to believe that the abuses and horrors connected with the sick wards of some workhouses in this country, controlled by the guardians of the poor, equal, if they do not even surpass, the worst phases of official cruelty which the world has ever seen. If you would send a commissioner into some of these places with instructions to describe what actually takes place, some facts would probably prove unfit for publication in your columns. Being rate-supported institutions, and therefore under the management of the people, your commissioner would find considerable difficulty in obtaining admission, as the public are carefully excluded. Yet one result of the attacks on the London Hospital in the *Pall Mall Gazette* has been to induce certain editors of extreme opinions to advocate the degradation of our great voluntary Hospitals to the level of those supported by the rates, in the interests, forsooth, of the poor, the suffering, and the sick. The facts being what they are, surely ignorance has never produced a case of greater irony than this.

Since the above was written we have seen your leader of August 23rd entitled "A Final Offer." Permit us three remarks thereon. First, "difficult" or not as it may be "to imagine such a thing," it is nevertheless true that a small clique, notoriously malicious, are "so wantonly cruel as to attack a charitable institution for the relief of the suffering poor of London without at least believing that there is some foundation for the charge." They know that in judicial language the charges they have made have no substantial foundation in fact.

Second, we are sure you have acted from the best intentions, and that, as a matter of courtesy, you will now express regret that you should have been led to state in error in your leading columns that "the *Hospital* is intimately connected with the management of the London Hospital," seeing that it has no more connection with it than the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Further, we have never written with "real or assumed authority on behalf of the Committee of Management," whom we have reason to believe are as much out of sympathy with our views as with yours in regard to the present controversy.

Third, we cannot understand your position. The *Pall Mall Gazette* has published five contributions by its Special Commissioner, three leading articles, one signed and seventeen anonymous letters, all against the London Hospital, and seventeen letters in favour of that Hospital, fourteen of which were signed or identifiable, and only three anonymous. The signed letters include contributions from the President of the Royal College of Physicians, the chairman and treasurer of the Hospital, Mr. W. Rathbone, M.P.; the Nestor of Nursing in this country, Lady George Hamilton; Lady Dorothy Nevill, and a number of Sisters and Nurses, either now at work in, or who have been at work in, the London Hospital during the period to which the charges relate. In addition to these seventeen letters, the *Hospital* has published a careful analysis of all the charges of your Commissioner, and has shown by the production of facts that with two exceptions they are either false or misleading. In these circumstances, how can you argue as you do in your leader that this volume of precise and attested testimony in favour of the Hospital is no evidence at all, and "that it does not dispose of the specific charges made," when you contend further that the statements of the anonymous assailants (and be it remembered that all the assailants are anonymous with one exception) must be treated as evidence of truth? All credit to the one exception, Mrs. Hunter; but one swallow does not make a summer, and you must be aware that the publication of the names of those who prefer to remain anonymous would be calculated more than anything else to destroy the case on which you depend. This is so, because the charges made in your columns have already been disposed of to a great extent by the inquiry and report of the Lords' Committee, which contains the names of the people who gave evidence on that occasion.—We are Sir, your obedient servant,

THE EDITOR OF THE "HOSPITAL."

[We must refer the editor of the *Hospital* to the article in his journal in which we were threatened with an action for libel. That threat was either made "with real or assumed authority" on behalf of the London Hospital, or it obviously ought not to have been made at all.—ED. P.M.G.]

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