

the London Nursing system, such a reply to her strictures will probably cost the London Hospital more in public sympathy than all the evidence given before the Lords' Committee taken together."—*Lancet*, December 6, 1890.

"THE committee of the London Hospital, and such governors as they had collected together for the meeting yesterday, deprived of their lunch and exhausted by a string of verbose reports, shouted as well as voted Mrs. Hunter down in overwhelming force. It is clear that with the present committee nothing can be done, and that unless the governors at large can be aroused there is little hope of supplanting the committee with another pledged to inquiry and reform. A few general assurances are bandied about, from the officials impugned and from medical birds of passage who know absolutely nothing of the details of Nursing administration; an appeal that subscriptions may not be frightened away is made in the interests of the patients; and no one seems to think that the Nurses have any interests which need be considered. All this is an old story, where the class appealed for consists of working women crowding for a place, without voice or backing or combination; and it may well be that this particular chapter will have the usual end. It may be, on the other hand, that the public will yet realize its duty to a devoted and deserving class; that the spirit of reform will overhaul the long hours and scanty benefits of Nurses at other Hospitals as well as the London; and that the result will not stop short of the creation at every Hospital of a Committee of Management specially concerned with Nursing, and with plenty of women among its personnel.

"A WORD of protest must be said on the behaviour of the majority at yesterday's meeting. Judging by the reports, 'the interests of the Hospital' had been committed to a disorderly and unmannerly *claque*, thoroughly in harmony with the personal key in which its spokesmen pitched their arguments. These gentry have learned their own tune well. Do Nurses work eighty-four hours a week? we ask. They reply, 'The Matron is a most able woman.' Was a Nurse with an open wound sent to nurse erysipelas, and did she die? 'The Matron is a most able woman.' Are Nurses of a few months' experience left in charge of an onerous Ward? Are their numbers further drawn on to eke out, under false pretences, the money-earning private staff? Did eight of them die in two years? Can their careers be ruined in a moment, without appeal, upon one person's whim? 'The Matron is a most able woman,' comes the same old parrot cry. But

one rendering of it in the speech of Sir Edmund Hay Currie must be gibbeted verbatim. He said:

"The cause of these charges was not far to be seen. It was the old story of one woman getting her knife into another woman. (*The Claque*: That's it.) Give a woman a chance of getting her knife into a woman whom she disliked, and she would do it. (*The Claque*: Hear, hear, and disorder.)"

And this Sir Edmund Hay Currie is by way of being an English gentleman. We wonder if the 'interests of the Hospital' will benefit by his disgraceful insult to a lady who has spent time and money in trying to help some of her working sisters, and whose acquaintance with the Matron of the London Hospital began before the Select Committee of the House of Lords."—*Pall Mall Gazette*, December 4, 1890.

"MR. J. H. BUXTON, treasurer to the London Hospital, who presided over the Special General Court of the Governors, held yesterday, in connection with the allegations made against the Nursing department of the institution, complained bitterly of the harm which had been done to the Hospital by the publication of these charges. But he did not show any disposition to take the sting out of the published charges by meeting them in the only satisfactory way possible: that is, by publicly proving them to be unfounded. 'We are now asked,' he said, 'to institute as against the Matron what is called a searching public inquiry. We (the House Committee) cannot conceive any course which would be more unjust, and at the same time more detrimental to the discipline and welfare of the Hospital.' These are particularly unfortunate words. If, as the House Committee contends, the charges made are unjustifiable, how can it be unjust to anybody to hold an inquiry? If such an inquiry would disclose no mismanagement, how would it be detrimental to the discipline and welfare of the Hospital? Surely a convincing demonstration that the management is all that could be desired would be the best sort of justice to those affected by the charges, and would have the happiest effect both on the reputation of the Hospital and the discipline of the staff? As it is, the House Committee reports favourably on itself and its officials, and the four people who had the courage to support an amendment proposing that the Nursing arrangements of the Hospital should be improved were howled down by the gathering of Governors and officials of the Hospital, all of whom are more or less touched by the allegations made."—*Evening News and Post*, December 4, 1890.

"THE conduct of the Governors of the London Hospital at their meeting yesterday was disap-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)