

inquire into the management of Metropolitan Hospitals was brought about by the feeling to which we have alluded. To all who have carefully followed the evidence given before the Committee, two facts have become clear. Quite sufficient has been elicited, by the acumen of their lordships, to prove that there is an urgent need for reforms. But it is equally manifest that the Committee never had a fair chance of getting below the surface, except in the case of the London Hospital. All the official witnesses whom they examined, whether medical or lay, evidently fought to maintain inviolate the credit of their own particular Institution, and, therefore, painted its picture one suspiciously monotonous *couleur de rose*. It cannot be believed that men of such conspicuous astuteness and well-known ability as, for example, Lords SANDHURST, CADOGAN, CATHCART, KIMBERLEY, THRING, and MONKSWELL have failed to notice this patent fact, nor to draw from it the most natural deduction. If they had only had one or two Medical and Nursing assessors, it is certain that many of their shrewd inquiries would have been pressed home, and then would have elicited most valuable information, instead of being merely fenced aside. Lord SANDHURST'S Committee deserve the deep gratitude of Nurses for the incalculable service they have done in lifting the veil—even a little—from the unjust and hard conditions under which some Nurses work. But only the surface has been touched, and it is earnestly to be hoped that their lordships will recommend the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole subject, in order that professional experts could be added to themselves. It is for the welfare of all, that the whole truth should be known, and all necessary reforms instituted as speedily as possible. At present, there is a serious danger that in a wholesale distrust of Hospitals the many that are innocent may suffer with, and for, the few that are guilty.

HOSPITAL SCANDALS.

THE latest of these—that connected with the Fever Hospital at Homerton—has now been closed, it is to be hoped, by the report of the Local Government Board Inspectors. With their findings probably no professional person will disagree, because to all who have followed the evidence carefully, it is clear that the disorganization and lack of discipline must have been very considerable. It is but fair to draw attention to the manifest difficulty under which the Inspectors laboured in their efforts to discover the truth, because quite half of the evidence was directly contradictory of the other half; indeed, had not the examiners been experts, they would probably have been unable to distinguish the true from the false, at all. The morals of the scandal seem to have been quite overlooked by most of our contemporaries. Firstly, it proves the incalculable advantage of Hospitals being controlled by an independent body, to whom complaints can be made, and by whom they can, at once, be thoroughly sifted. We have no hesitation in saying that all Hospitals, whether voluntarily, or rate, supported, should, for the welfare of the sick, for the well-

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being of their Nurses, and for their very efficiency, be under a Governmental department. In the next place, the inquiry proves that the present system of management of Poor Law Institutions is radically wrong, inasmuch as the Medical Superintendent is called upon to act practically as a general secretary and steward, and thus supervise details detrimental to the due conduct of his professional work, and do duties which few men have the necessary capacity or liking to effectively perform. But especially would we condemn the principle adopted by the Poor Law, that the Medical Superintendent should control the female staffs. In all public Institutions, women should be controlled by women. With reference to the much-discussed question of the justice of dismissing Dr. Collie from the post of Medical Superintendent at the Homerton Hospital, it appears to us that he has been made the scapegoat for the faults of the organisation, for we feel convinced that it is the system which is in fault, more than the individual officials. And we, therefore, predict that unless the arrangement of the respective duties of the Medical Officers, Stewards, and Matrons in Poor Law Institutions is altered, in conformity with that now adopted by most voluntary Hospitals, scandals due to lack of discipline will continue to occur. The great want in voluntary Hospitals, we believe, is for some efficient control outside; that of the Poor Law Hospitals is for some efficient control inside.

BUMBLEDOM.

THE remarks which have appeared in this Journal from time to time upon the absurdities committed by officialdom, have naturally brought down upon us no small measure of abuse. It is extraordinary what a thin-skinned person Mr. Bumble is, and how eagerly he fits upon his head any unnamed cap which his uneasy conscience impels him to claim as his own. Some few weeks ago, we published an article by Miss RUNELL, on the "Balance of Power in Hospitals." It gave an amusingly vivid account of a typical Ladies' Committee, and, we are informed, described the elements of one upon which the writer herself once acted, and many of whom have now probably departed to a land where Committees cease to trouble, and Nurses are at rest. Until to-day, we have received no less than seven indignant letters, from seven different Ladies' Committees, in seven different towns. Every writer informs us, somewhat bluntly, that we need not trouble to deny that the article in question refers to her Committee, because evasion of that "disgraceful fact" is impossible. Several are kind enough to give us the names of ladies to whom our contributor's "description undoubtedly applies." Three ladies, with many graceful pleasantries, request us to state whether the writer is not the Matron, or, at any rate, one of the Sisters or Nurses at their particular Institutions. To save ourselves further correspondence, therefore, we desire to state that we do not divulge any private information which we may possess about our contributors, and that the article in question only referred to a most impersonal Committee.

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[previous page](#)

[next page](#)