

which many of the most eminent medical men in this country so keenly disapprove that they have retired from the Association altogether. But, nevertheless, there are some twelve thousand members; and they are, therefore, represented by their *Journal*—or, at least, ought to be. With much regret we call attention to the fact that our contemporary, not only refers with extreme rarity to important Nursing questions, which perhaps are even occupying a considerable share of public attention, and therefore proves itself behind the times, but also that, in these rare references, it exhibits a lack of acquaintance with the subject, which is neither complimentary to its editorial management, flattering to the intelligence of its readers, nor expressive of the opinions which a great majority of its proprietors undoubtedly hold. We confess that we fully share the astonishment which is so widely felt at this editorial independence both of accuracy and of control, and the wonder which is often expressed, if the many masters will ever rebel against the despotism of their servant.

To prove our statements, we have only space for two examples. Some months ago, the hardships under which the Nurses at the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, were working, attracted a wide public notice. We supported the Nurses strongly, after having visited the town, and carefully investigated the matter in person. Our medical contemporaries seconded our efforts, with the exception of *The British Medical Journal*, which only made the most cursory allusions to the grave scandals which were revealed. And we were informed, at the time, that a medical man connected with the Infirmary, and a member of the Association, came to London on purpose to lay the real facts of the case before the Editor, and obtain the assistance of the *Journal* on behalf of the Nurses, but was informed that no action could be taken in the matter. Justice, however, prevailed, complete success was achieved, and the grave grievances were redressed without that aid. There can be no dispute that, in his casual references to the subject, the Editor proved himself unaware of the strong public and professional feelings which existed on the matter.

The other example is supplied in the issue of our contemporary for January 9th. This contains, in an annotation referring to recent remarks made in the daily London papers concerning the Hospital Scandals, the following sentence: "But we only assert what every rational person acquainted with the fact knows and must confirm, when we

say that the London Hospital, to take the stronger case first, is one of the most admirably-conducted and one of the most beneficent Institutions which exist even in London, the greatest centre of public charity which the world has ever seen, and that even to hint at scandal or corruption in such a connection, is to betray a very imperfect sense of public responsibility, and to use a very heated and unsuited vocabulary."

Passing by, without further comment, the ponderous verbosity of this effusion, which irresistibly reminds us of the diction chiefly affected by "Uncle Pumblechook," we must express our deep regret at our contemporary's real, or feigned, ignorance of well-known facts at the London Hospital, and our surprise at its forgetfulness of some sentiments which it expressed just twelve years ago.

It seems to us almost incredible that any editor of a London paper—and especially of a medical periodical—should be so ignorant of what is transpiring in the world as to be unaware of the evidence given before the Select Committee of the House of Lords concerning the London Hospital. We must, therefore, inform our contemporary that it was proved, and practically admitted, that at this Institution the resident Medical Staff are not allowed to order Special Nurses for dangerous cases, unless the Matron considers such a course necessary; that the Matron very rarely visits the Wards, and knows nothing, therefore, about the patients; and that during her frequent absences from the Hospital the decision upon this purely medical matter is entrusted to one of her subordinates. We presume that our contemporary will not object to our terming this "a Nursing Despotism." Then we would recall its attention to its stringent remarks, prefaced by these very words, in its pages exactly twelve years ago, when it was referring to the "scandals" at the Pendlebury Hospital for Children.

Without going any further into the serious facts revealed, and to which the Select Committee's Report will doubtless do full justice, we must express our regret that *The British Medical Journal* should ever—according to its own verdict—have "betrayed a very imperfect sense of public responsibility, and used a very heated and unsuited vocabulary." Because precisely the same Nursing despotism which we and other journals now maintain is indefensibly bad, *The British Medical Journal* itself, in 1880, stoutly maintained to be a "scandal."

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