

suffering poor. Reform is possible, perhaps, at every one of them; but we do not deem it our province to discuss their management, except, and in so far, as it relates to their Nursing Departments. And, in relation to these Hospitals, we are most anxious that the necessary reforms should be made quietly from within, without being compelled by an indignant outburst of popular feeling, which would, perhaps, destroy financial confidence, even while it swept away abuses. We believe—nay, we feel confident—that if the London Hospital—the largest general Hospital in the country—were reformed, every other similar Institution would immediately, and of its own accord, make the necessary reforms in its management. The London Hospital, we have for long been quite convinced, is the key of the position; the active abuses and the scandals there, cause the passive lethargy, the backwardness, and the want of improvements which exist elsewhere, to pale and fade into comparative nothingness. Some years ago, as we heard from every part of the country, the despicable tales which successive generations of Probationers carried forth with them, and noted the growing, although unvoiced, public disapprobation, we hoped on, against hope, that the Committee of the London Hospital would discover for themselves the absolutely false position in which they were being placed in popular estimation. In these columns, we made no allusion to the matter until the memorable inquiry, by the Select Committee of the House of Lords, brought part of the truth before the public. Then we saw that further reticence would be unwise. We argued, that the fire, which had for so long been smouldering, had broken out, and would not—could not—in the very nature of things, be extinguished, except by immediately, and for ever, removing the cause of its existence. We argued, again and again, that it was infinitely wiser to recognise the danger of the conflagration spreading, and to take steps to prevent such a catastrophe; in other words, that the Committee of the London Hospital should at once confess their mistakes of judgment in trusting their officials too much; should punish those officials; make the

necessary reforms; and throw their Charity on the mercy of the public. Then, we contended, other Hospitals would make the same reforms voluntarily, and the danger of further outbreaks, from the same causes, would be effectually prevented. We believed, then, that our argument was sound. We have had the melancholy satisfaction of seeing our words verified over and over again, since then. Our contemporaries permitted their kindness to outweigh their judgment. They received piteous appeals not to hurt the Hospitals by letting the whole truth be known. Consequently, they maintained just that silence which made the public imagine that the real truth was too bad to tell. Then the London Hospital Committee most fatuously attempted to stifle discussion by permitting independent Governors—who tried to criticise their management—to be howled down by a rowdy mob. And the English public has never recovered from the shock of that proceeding. But the harm has steadily spread far beyond the London Hospital. Popular belief in the good management of all similar Institutions has been thoroughly shaken—and excellently managed Charities, all over the country, are suffering from the resulting loss of financial support. It is, in our judgment, most unwise not to face the very grave situation, because we say, in all solemnity—strengthened by the accuracy with which our former prediction has been fulfilled—that if the true difficulty of the situation—the loss of public confidence—be not recognized and dealt with speedily, and with discretion, the pecuniary embarrassments of our Hospitals will assuredly deepen and extend. It is useless to close one's eyes to the existence of a disease which must either kill or be cured. We believe that the cause of the great want of support from which all Hospitals, at present, are more or less suffering, is the disrepute into which the London Hospital has fallen. Of course, we have no means of knowing, but we would almost venture to predict, that, when the accounts of that Institution for the current year are published, it will be discovered that the receipts once more show a lamentable falling off.

As we have often said before, so we would repeat—the London Hospital, with the many

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