

Memorandum respecting the London Fever Hospital.

Contributors

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MEMORANDUM

RESPECTING THE

LONDON FEVER HOSPITAL.

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MEMORANDUM

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THE LONDON FEVER HOSPITAL.

THE reduced number of Patients received in the London Fever Hospital, and the consequent reduction of its income, appears to suggest, as a possible consequence, some diminished power of usefulness, and a consequent lessened claim on public sympathy and support.

In some respects this change may however be traced, at least partially, to causes not dispiriting. From the Returns made by the Registrar-General, the mortality in London attributed to Febrile disease, is exhibited in the following Table :—

Years.	Deaths.	Total Deaths in 3 years.	Average Deaths in each period of 3 years.
1854	2715	} 7764	2588
1855	2575		
1856	2674		
1857	2203	} 5901	1966
1858	1904		
1859	1796		

This reduction in the number of Deaths in London, on the three years' average falling

from 2,588 to 1,966, concurrently with a population rapidly increasing, is satisfactory, whether attributable to improved habits of life, seasons of greater healthiness, better food, clothing and lodging, more active medical relief, more effective sanitary measures, or to a combination of these causes. The diminished number of Deaths must, however, imply a diminution of the prevalence or of the virulence of Febrile disease.

The Admissions into the London Fever Hospital during the last Six Years, and the Deaths during the same period, have been as follows:—

	Yearly Admissions.	Total Admissions in two periods of 3 years each.	Average in two periods of 3 years each.	Yearly Deaths.	Total Deaths in two periods of 3 years each.	Average Deaths in two periods of 3 years each.
1854	1152	} 3939	1313	184	} 646	215
1855	1026			173		
1856	1761			289		
1857	901	} 2041	680	164	} 379	126
1858	547			156		
1859	593			109		

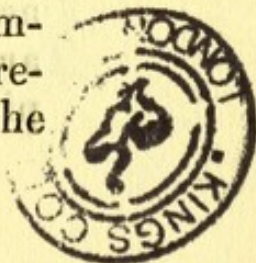
In the Report on the Fever Hospital for 1858, it is stated that the Admissions to the Hospital in 1858 have been considerably below the Hospital accommodation, and consequently below its powers of giving relief. If the number of Admissions had been raised to the full amount of Hospital accommodation,

the increased expenditure would not, by any means, be in proportion to the increased numbers relieved.

It should be borne in mind, that the Fever Hospital is practically free to all Poor Fever Patients. Such applicants are invariably held to be admissible on their own application, without the production of a recommendation from any Governor or Subscriber. Indeed, the widest interpretation is given to the rules for admission. In the Hospital Report for 1858, it is stated (p. 7) that out of 547 cases, 190, or above $\frac{1}{3}$, were admitted being cases of acute disease in which "the febrile condition was a *secondary*, not a *primary* affection;" 350 cases only being reported as the *real number of Fever cases.*"

These facts appear naturally to suggest an enquiry whether the Governors of the Fever Hospital, after providing adequately, as at present, for Fever Patients, and maintaining this class of sufferers as the primary objects of the Charity, might not greatly extend its usefulness by applying the unoccupied space to the authorized admission of Patients suffering under other diseases, thus becoming more of a general Hospital. I am informed that the populous district of Islington stands much in need of extended Hospital relief, and that the proposed change would consequently be highly acceptable in the neighbourhood.

It may be here observed, that the policy of maintaining Fever, or other Hospitals, as exclusively applicable to one particular disease has been doubted, and that many of the great general Hospitals of London systematically admit Fever Patients, which I presume could not have been the case, if the



practice of such indiscriminate treatment had been found productive of evil.

The consequences of this change may be estimated by the following facts. The Fever Hospital is calculated to receive 200 Fever Patients, or 250 general cases; but under the present restricted system of Admission, the following have been the very limited result :—

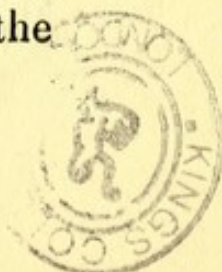
Years.	Maximum Number of Patients at one time.	Minimum Number of Patients at one time.
1857	96	51
1858	67	15
1859	68	21

If this proposal for extending the Rules for Admission be one which merits serious consideration, it becomes necessary to inquire whether such change can be carried into effect without any change of the existing law, or expensive legal proceedings.

On this subject I have been enabled on high legal authority to ascertain that, assuming the Committee and General Meeting of the Hospital to be favourable to the suggestion, the object might be accomplished through the instrumentality of the Charity Commissioners, who could be appealed to for their assistance, without expense or delay. The architectural arrangements of the Fever Hospital are so good as to admit of an easy adap-

tation for more general Hospital purposes, as already suggested. But to attain this object, and thus to entitle the Institution to a greater amount of public support, if this change should take place, it is also necessary to consider how far its efficiency can be increased and secured. For this purpose, the recorded opinions of Miss Nightingale would suggest that in all Hospitals an efficient Nursing Department should be provided, improved, and a system adopted that shall secure the co-operation and aid of Ladies and Nurses who are well qualified by training and experience, and whose performance of duty is influenced and guided by high motives of charity and beneficence. Such a system has been adopted at King's College Hospital, as I am assured with the most entire success. The whole female duties of that noble establishment have been transferred to the Lady Superintendent and the trained Nurses of St. John's House, an establishment for Nurses countenanced and aided by the late Bishop Bloomfield, and continuing under the patronage of the present Bishop of London. The entire Nursing Department of King's College Hospital is confided to Miss Jones, and to the Ladies and Nurses acting under her direction. I earnestly entreat my colleagues to visit that Hospital and judge for themselves what have been the consequences of the system there introduced.

In the Report of King's College Hospital for 1858, the Committee of that Charity, after alluding to the agreement subsisting between themselves and the Council of St. John's House, express their conviction "that the



Governors will unite with them in congratulating the Hospital in having secured the services of a staff of Ladies and Nurses of whose exertions it is impossible to speak too highly, and whose zeal and self-denying devotion have earned the gratitude of the *Patients* and of the Committee, and have contributed in no small degree to the high reputation the Hospital so deservedly enjoys."

It may probably be thought difficult to secure the co-operation and services of persons qualified to undertake and carry out with perseverance and success at the Fever Hospital a system similar to that of King's College Hospital. But here again favourable circumstances exist at the present moment.

But here again favorable circumstances exist at the present moment. I have learned that it may be possible to introduce a system into the Fever Hospital similar to that which governs King's College Hospital, and which appears to have been attended with such complete success. It is not unlikely that we might obtain the co-operation of the establishment of the Devonport Sisters, who have devoted themselves to charitable duties of a similar kind. For testimony respecting the efficiency of those ladies to fulfil such an important trust, I have applied to Miss Nightingale, who had the means of judging of some of these ladies during her memorable services in the Crimea, and who has not lost sight of them since that time. I am permitted to say, that she believes we might anticipate that the Devonport Sisters would be competent to perform the duties required at the Fever Hospital, as efficiently and satisfactorily

as the Sisters of St. John's House have done at King's College Hospital, therefore, that her opinion is entirely in favor of endeavouring to make such an engagement as I have suggested. I therefore venture to urge it on your attention, as one worthy of consideration, with an earnestness, which might appear presumptuous, were it not for the high authority and the conclusive experience to which I have alluded.

I see no reason to anticipate that the King's College Hospital system need materially increase our expenses. We now expend an annual sum of £500 on our Nursing Department at a time when our Patients do not amount to 40. It will not be difficult to ascertain after communication with the authorities of King's College, what would be the expense of introducing the King's College system at the Fever Hospital. But of this I feel confident, that if we do our best to deserve public support we shall not fail to obtain it. In this vast metropolis the sources of charity will not be frozen up, if we can but exhibit the success of our exertions, to render our Hospital more effectual for the relief of human suffering, and contributing, perhaps, to form one of those establishments where really good nurses may be trained in the discharge of duties, without a knowledge of which all experience and authority have demonstrated, that our medical charities may become a name and a shadow rather than a reality.

Allow me to call your attention most seriously to one closing, but to me, a most important observation. Of all the Hospitals

in London, I do not believe there is one which stands more in need of thoroughly good and vigilant internal government. Our admirably constructed building is erected on a site which secures most excellent ventilation; but it stands in a district unfortunately remote from the residences of most of its Governors and Subscribers. This renders it impossible for some and difficult to almost all, to perform as fully as they could wish, those duties of visitation and supervision that would be cheerfully fulfilled under more favorable circumstances. I most thankfully recognize the zeal and services of many colleagues, among whom I confess myself to stand as a very unprofitable servant. More than ordinary benevolence and activity is required on the part of those who direct the internal duties of our Hospital, and especially of the Nursing Department. Let us now make an effort to render that department thoroughly effective, and hope that we may hereafter be able to justify the course we take, by reporting a satisfactory progress to our Governors and Subscribers, and that we may ultimately, with God's assistance, furnish still more unquestionable proofs of our final success.

MONTEAGLE.

Park Street,

9th Feb. 1860.



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LONDON FEVER HOSPITAL

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