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THE WOMAN'S HOSPITAL IN 1874.

A REPLY TO THE PRINTED CIRCULAR

OF

DRS. E. R. PEASLEE, T. A. EMMET, AND T. GAILLARD THOMAS,

ADDRESSED

"TO THE MEDICAL PROFESSION,"

"MAY 5th, 1877."

BY

J. MARION SIMS, M.D.,

FOUNDER OF THE WOMAN'S HOSPITAL OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK,

AND FORMERLY SURGEON TO THE SAME,

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Doctors' quarrels, in whatever form, are always a disgrace to the profession. And when they take the shape of cards and pamphlets they become a lasting shame. There never was a dispute of this kind in which the right was all on one side. Each party is more or less to blame.

In this instance I shall frankly acknowledge how, when and where I was in fault, and I will show conclusively how and where my former associates are mistaken.

I approach this controversy with much regret, and with mortification to my self-respect.

When I look into my own heart, it seems to me that I am more sorry for Drs. Peaslee, Emmet and Thomas, than I am for myself. For in self-defence I shall be obliged to say disagreeable things, which I would have preferred not to say. But having been publicly assailed I can no longer remain silent. I am now free to tell the story of my resignation, (almost expulsion) from the Woman's Hospital.

In this I shall do my duty to myself, to truth, to justice, to honor, and to my profession. I shall use no disparaging epithets. I shall deal in no questionable inuendoes, nor in constructive interpretations of facts which may lead to wrong conclusions.

Such words as "unqualifiedly false," do not belong to my vocabulary, and can, under no circumstances, be applied by me to any statement of principle, or fact made by a member of my profession, however far from the real truth his statements may seem.

The instincts of my nature revolt at phrases of this kind. My education and training have raised me above their level. Those who have not had these advantages are more to be pitied, than censured.

I shall have the charity then to say, in speaking of my late associates, that they are mistaken. I will not disgrace the profession to which I have belonged for more than forty years, by saying that their statements are "false." But they have made a mistake in policy, and a mistake in facts, and I am sure they will regret it as long as they live.

I write not in anger, though deeply wounded, and profoundly grieved.

The following printed circular issued by Drs. Peaslee, Emmet, and Thomas is the foundation of this controversy.

"TO THE MEDICAL PROFESSION."

"Statements respecting the Separation of Dr. J. Marion Sims from the Woman's Hospital, New York."

"In November, 1874, Dr. J. Marion Sims tendered his resignation as a member of the Medical Board of the Woman's Hospital above mentioned; since which time insinuations—and more recently, distinct charges—have been widely circulated, of unworthy conduct in connection with that matter, of ourselves as his colleagues in that Board. Had they been confined to New York, where all the parties concerned are well known, we should still have remained silent; but the recent extensive distribution to the profession in this country of a biographical sketch containing such charges, compels us, in justice to ourselves and to the Woman's Hospital, to make the following statement of facts:

In January, 1874, the Board of Governors of the Woman's Hospital, passed the two following regulations: 1st. That no cases of Carcinoma Uteri should be admitted into the

Hospital ; and 2d. That not more than fifteen spectators, in addition to the Hospital Staff, should be present at any operation. The Medical Board formally discussed these rules and decided *unanimously* to abide by them, as being called for, and conducive to the best interests of patients and of the Hospital—Dr. Sims voting affirmatively with the undersigned. And from this time the Board worked, as it had previously done, in entire harmony, so far as we were aware, until Dr. Sims resigned, several months afterwards.

As the Medical Board is required to make its Annual Report at the Anniversary Meeting of the Hospital in November, said report was on the preceding day presented by the Secretary, as usual, to each member of this Board for examination, alteration and endorsement, and was *unanimously* approved, without any suggestion of alteration by any member of the Board. It alluded specially to the regulation respecting the number of spectators, stating that "the Medical Board desires, and has ever desired, in the interest of the patients and of themselves, that the number of the spectators should be limited," and "announces its determination to do its utmost to observe the law that had been passed."

On the following day, after the customary exercises of the anniversary meeting, including the reading of said report, were concluded, Dr. Sims rose and delivered a speech severely reflecting upon the tyrannical course of the Board of Governors, as he termed it, in establishing the two rules above specified—and which, as has been seen, he had himself unqualifiedly indorsed ; said he would no longer submit to such treatment, and threatened to resign unless the Board of Governors rescinded these rules at their next meeting. Col. Davis, a member of that Board, after expressing his regret that Dr. Sims had obtruded his private greivances on that occasion, replied at some length, when the meeting adjourned.

The undersigned were surprised and astonished at the course taken by Dr. Sims, and in conversation with the members of the Board of Governors and the Lady Managers, after the adjournment, disclaimed all sympathy with it, as an unwarrantable misrepresentation of the feelings of the Medical Board. In a few weeks the regular meeting of the Board of Governors was held, and Dr. Sims' resignation was unanimously accepted.

The charges above alluded to, are, that we urged Dr. Sims to a bold and dignified stand for the interests and honor of the profession ; and then meanly deserted him "in the time of conflict."

Each of these charges is unqualifiedly false. We neither urged nor suggested *any* course to Dr. Sims, he having acted entirely unexpectedly to us. Nor did the issue he made, touch the interest or the honor of the profession at all. He made it entirely on his own account and for his own personal reasons, some of which were given in his speech. We may also remark that he had at no time been the recognized champion or spokesman of the Medical Board, and that he admitted he was speaking for himself at the time.

In regard to deserting Dr. Sims in the time of conflict, we merely say that we could scarcely stultify ourselves so far as to defend him in his violent contradictions both of the letter and the spirit of the report of the Medical Board, which he, with ourselves, had, only 24 hours before, agreed to in every particular. We could only deplore his inconsistency and regret its consequences; but not interfere, unasked, in his own business.

If, therefore, Dr. Sims is to be a martyr in connection with this affair, we protest against his being regarded by the profession as one of our making."

"May 5th, 1877." "E. R. PEASLEE,"
"T. A. EMMET,"
"T. GAILLARD THOMAS."

When I was abroad last year, at the urgent solicitation of friends, I promised to return to Paris in May of this year, and remain there till the 1st of November, for a definite purpose. It is unnecessary to state my obligations on this point more minutely. For the last three or four months it has been generally understood that I would sail for Europe on the 12th of May. But circumstances occured to prevent my departure, and it was announced in the *Va., Med. Monthly*, and known all over New York that I would sail on Saturday, the 19th, for Liverpool, on the steamer "City of Richmond."

Dr. Peaslee, Dr. Emmet and Dr. Thomas all knew the day and date of my intended departure.

The steamer was to sail at 10:30, A. M., on Saturday. At a quarter to seven on the previous evening I received by mail the foregoing printed circular. At eight o'clock, I received another by messenger. The superscription on each was by the same hand, and with the same ink.

In the latter, the writer affected to mis-spell my name. The circular bears date the 5th of May. It was sent to me on the 18th, about fifteen hours before I was to leave home.

Was it really written on the 5th, and detained till the 18th merely for annoyance? Or was it concocted at a later period, and ante-dated for a purpose, I will not stoop to hint at? These are suggestive but not important queries, which will, in all probability, never be answered.

It did not require a second's thought for me to determine what to do. Disappointments and the loss of time and money are as naught compared with honor. And I have remained over for the purpose of vindicating myself.

In October, 1853, I came to New York to reside; soon after, I conceived the idea of establishing a hospital for the treatment of the diseases of women.

My programme was to enlist the leading members of my profession in the enterprise, and through them to reach influential citizens.

Dr. John W. Francis was the first friend I made; Mr. Henri L. Stuart was the next, and through him I reached the Hon. Peter Cooper, and the Hon. E. C. Benedict, who have remained true friends ever since. Mr. Stuart alone knows the thousand little annoyances, and trials, and troubles I passed through in New York in establishing the Woman's Hospital. He alone knows the opposition and persecution I endured, all of which I forgave long ago.

It was Mr. Stuart who placed me in a position to command the profession, whether they would or not, and to lead them to do what they should have done. Mr. Stuart knows, as I do, that but for his influence exerted in a way that was irresistible, I would have been lost, and the Woman's Hospital could not have been.

All this may seem irrelevant, but I give this hint at the private history of the Woman's Hospital, as a reason, for Mr. Stuart's unswerving attachment to me. But his devotion sometimes overleaps the bounds of prudence. Now and then, he is hasty and indiscreet, even in the defence of right.

This controversy has grown out of his indiscretion, and (he will excuse me for saying) his obstinacy.

Mr. Stuart has voluntarily assumed the self-imposed task of writing biographical sketches of me. He wrote one for Appleton's Cyclopedia, and another for Johnson's, neither of which have I ever seen, and he seized the occasion of my Presidency of the American Medical Association last year, to write sketches for the illustrated papers.

These he has always written of his own accord, and from his own personal knowledge of my labors since I came to New York, and without any consultation whatever with me.

Last fall, at the solicitation of Dr. Landon B. Edwards, of Richmond, he agreed to write what he termed a complete sketch of my life for the *Virginia Medical Monthly*, of which Dr. Edwards is editor.

To this end, Mr. Stuart asked me to give him an evening, to tell him about my work abroad, of which he knew nothing. I did so ; and at the appointed time Mr. Stuart came, with his stenographer, Mr. Edward F. Underhill, who took down the facts he wanted. I requested Mr. Stuart to let me look over his sketch before publishing it. In reading it over I suggested many alterations and modifications of language, and in one instance I struck out a whole page, because it alluded to my resignation from the Woman's Hospital, and reflected on the moral courage of my associates at that time. We had a sharp dispute over the matter, which ended in his leaving it out.

The "Biographical Sketch of J. Marion Sims, M. D., prepared by Henri L. Stuart, of New York," was published in the January number of the *Virginia Medical Monthly*, 1877.

On the 14th February I went South to make a long promised visit to the home of my childhood, in South Carolina, after forty-two years' absence, and to the home of my early professional struggles in Montgomery, Alabama, after an absence of twenty-four years.

I was absent till the last day of March, and was ill all the time I was gone.

On my return home, I was shocked to find that my devoted

and zealous friend, Mr. Stuart, had published his sketch of me in the *Medical Eclectic*. Not only this, but he had inserted that portion of his sketch which I had stricken from his original manuscript, and had altered the phraseology in many other places. [I take this occasion to say to my professional brethern that I was exceedingly surprised to find that Mr. Stuart had published his sketch in the *Medical Eclectic*, and much more mortified when I heard that the Doctors in town were talking about it, and censuring me for it. If I had been at home it could not have happened, and I solemnly declare that I had no more to do with its appearance in the *Eclectic* than had Dr. Peaslee, Dr. Emmet or Dr. Thomas, who are so much aggrieved by it. I am only surprised that any man of common sense could, for a moment, suppose I could do such a thing].

On page 737, *Virginia Medical Monthly*, January, 1877, Biographical sketch, Mr. Stuart says:

"In 1868, Dr. Sims returned to New York, taking up his residence permanently, but leaving his family in Paris two years longer, to complete the education of his younger children."

"In 1870 he was on a visit to his family in Paris, when the Franco-Prussian war broke out."

In the *Medical Eclectic* March, 1877, pages 54 and 55, we find the following whole page of matter placed between the two paragraphs above quoted from the *Virginia Medical Monthly*, and this is the matter which I struck out of Mr. Stuart's original article for reasons already given:

"Soon after Dr. Sims' return from Europe, in 1868, he was elected one of the Board of Governors of the Woman's Hospital. In 1872, he induced the Governors to enlarge the Medical Board of the Hospital, appointing four surgeons instead of one.

Early in 1873 this change was made, and Dr. Sims, with three associates, Drs. Thomas, Emmet, and Peaslee, were appointed Surgeons, the beds being equally divided between them. In 1874, some difference of opinion arose, not between the members of the Medical Board, but between this Board and the Board of Governors in regard to admitting Cancer Cases to the Hospital, and

also on the admission of physicians to witness the operations performed by the several surgeons. Dr. Sims defended the honor and interests of the medical profession with such independence and zeal that he was forced, unwillingly, to resign his position as one of the surgeons. His professional associates, though brave and 'invincible' in urging him on to assert their professional claims, to a man, proved 'invisible' in the hour of conflict. No one can deny that Dr. Sims created the Woman's Hospital—obtained its charter, procured the first appropriations of money from the City and State for its aid, and secured the admirable site on which the Hospital now stands, and has also given the best years of his life and labor to its advancement—created its Board of Governors; also, its Board of Lady Managers; and its Medical Board who were originally taught by him all that is novel, or in any way recognized as distinctive in practice in the Woman's Hospital. Yet he was obliged to leave his Hospital, and that, too, without a word of protest from his brethren of the Medical Board.

If Dr. Sims had been wrong in the position he assumed he should have been tolerated, and continued in consideration of the great work he has performed. But he was entirely right in the position taken, though unwise, perhaps, in the time and place for asserting it, and the profession and the public, when the facts are known, as they surely will be everywhere, will sustain him in the noble stand he took in defense of right upon principle. Dr. Sims, from the first, intended his Hospital to be a school and an educator of the medical profession in the highest interests of woman, society and humanity."

Several of my medical friends, among whom I may mention Hammond, Darby, Sayre, O. A. White, Pallen, and others, have asked me why Mr. Stuart in his sketch in the *Virginia Medical Monthly*, made no mention of the circumstances attending my resignation from the Woman's Hospital. I invariably answered that he did write it, and that it was suppressed intentionally by me, because his account of it was not very complimentary to my associates in the Hospital.

Having now shown that I had nothing whatever, directly or indirectly, to do with the offensive part of the biographical sketch, I might end this matter here, and leave Mr. Stuart

to defend himself against the assault made upon him, (but intended for me) for having published what has been termed by Drs. Peaslee, Emmet, and Thomas, as "unqualifiedly false."

But however able Mr. Stuart is to defend himself as the real author of the article, he must stand aside for the present. If necessary he will appear later.

The circular of Drs. Peaslee, Emmet, and Thomas, was intended for me, and not for Mr. Stuart. I accept it in the spirit in which it was sent forth, and I am now to the front to battle for the right, and for the honor of my profession. For the time being, I adopt every word of Mr. Stuart's suppressed, offensive page. But when Mr. Stuart says, "His professional associates, though brave and 'invincible' in urging him on to assert their professional claims," he speaks figuratively, and I repudiate it. But when Mr. Stuart concludes the sentence with—they "to a man proved 'invisible' in the hour of conflict"—he meant literally what he said, and more than he said. And it will be seen directly that I fully endorse Mr. Stuart's meaning, but in language much more definite.

According to the circular of Drs. Peaslee, Emmet and Thomas, it appears that

"In January, 1874, the Board of Governors of the Woman's Hospital passed the two following resolutions:

1*st*. That no cases of carcinoma uteri should be admitted into the hospital; and

2*nd*. That not more than fifteen spectators, in addition to the hospital staff, should be present at any operation.

The Medical Board formally discussed these rules, and decided *unanimously* to abide by them, as being called for, and conducive to the best interests of patients, and of the hospital—Dr. Sims voting affirmatively with the undersigned."

Is this literally, or only constructively true? Let us see.

Just one week before the action of the Medical Board as above, Dr. Thomas, as secretary, called a meeting of the Medical Board at the residence of Dr. Emmet, to consider

what ought to be the action of the Board of Governors on the two questions already alluded to.

After some informal conversation on the subject, one of the Board, (I think it was Dr. Emmet,) suggested that we should adjourn, to meet again in the course of a week, (the day was designated, Jan'y 12th, 1874), and that each one of us should come with a written opinion as to our course of action.

At the appointed time and place we met. The chairman, Dr. Emmet, calling the meeting to order, asked me for my report. I then read a dignified and manly protest against the action of the Board of Governors, such as I would not be ashamed to publish to-morrow, if it were necessary.* When I had finished, Dr. Thomas said: "If we take the stand you suggest we shall all be turned out at once." I replied: "No, Dr. Thomas, the Board of Governors could turn out any one of us, but they could not afford to turn us all out. They would not dare to do it."

Dr. Emmet then said: "Dr. Sims take care of that document, we may need it to fall back on."

I then said, if they did not at once adopt my protest, and take the stand, that the Board of Governors had no right whatever to interfere in matters so strictly belonging to the Medical Board, they would never have any use in the future for protests.

A few minutes after this conversation, Drs. Peaslee, Emmet and Thomas adopted the resolutions as published above, in which they say: "Dr. Sims voting affirmatively with the undersigned."

I did not vote at all. True, I did not rise, and formally say—"Mr. Chairman, I protest against the adoption of these resolutions, and I wish it to be so recorded in the minutes."

These gentlemen know as well as I do, that I did not vote at all; that it was impossible for me to vote in the affirmative after the protest I had read, and the stand I took only a moment before.

They have simply construed abstention into approval—

* There was no formal report made by the other members of the Board.

more, they have chosen to misconstrue, and misrepresent an act of politeness, and it is not the only time they have done so with me. But, for the question at issue, it is really of no importance whether I voted for the resolution or not. What if I had? Did that rob me of all freedom of thought, or speech, or action forever afterwards? Did that place me in a position in which I should not dare to protest against tyranny, or defend right? By no means. Slaves have the right to protest against oppression. And yet Drs. Peaslee, Emmet, and Thomas affect to deny this privilege to me; and they lacked the manliness and courage to assert it for themselves.

True, I respected the passage of the resolutions of the Medical Board so far as not to admit cases of carcinoma uteri into my wards of the hospital. But these gentlemen know very well that I never heeded the injunction to limit the number of spectators to fifteen.

I took my friends to the hospital whenever it suited me to do so, without regard to the rule of exclusion.

It is true that the annual report, to be made at the anniversary meeting, was submitted to each member of the Board for approval. I approved it without reading it. And I would have approved it even if I had read it. It was enough for for me to know that it emanated from Dr. Thomas to meet my approval. And I have no doubt I should have approved it just as readily if it had been written by Dr. Peaslee, or Dr Emmet.

I have been, repeatedly asked by my medical friends in all parts the country, from here to California, and all through the South, why I resigned from the Woman's Hospital. And when I have told the story, I have been met with the question, "Why have you not published the facts?"

My answer to all, has invariably been. "I did not publish them because they would scandalize my profession." The injury inflicted by such publications is not confined to the parties to the act, but it is felt by the entire medical profession everywhere.

It is not my fault that they are now published.

The fault lies with Drs. Peaslee, Emmet and Thomas, and they must bear its entire responsibility.

For their unwise attack on me, but fifteen hours before I was to sail for Europe, gives opportunity, and demands the fullest exposition. Their document unfortunately necessitates a reply, not from its force, but from its animus, and the respectability of its authorship.

Once a year, usually in November, we have the Anniversary Meeting at the Woman's Hospital, where reports are made by the governing boards, and the Medical Board. These meetings are pleasant occasions, when reviews of the past years' labors lay open to the public, the great work of this grand institution. They are mutual admiration meetings, when everybody thanks everybody, and everybody praises everybody. This is as it should be. I would not have it changed. It was inaugurated under the presidency of the venerable Dr. John W. Francis, at the first Anniversary Meeting, in February, 1866, when he delivered his memorable and eloquent address depicting the usefulness of the Woman's Hospital, and prophesying its future greatness. I hope that these annual jubilations may be continued for all time.

Could there be anything more inopportune, more inconsiderate than to disturb the harmony of an occasion like this? And yet I must acknowledge that I committed this offence; and, at the same time, I frankly say it was a great mistake, and is the great regret of my life.

On the 19th November, 1874, the Anniversary Meeting was held as usual at the Hospital Building, 4th avenue and 50th street. The ceremonial was grand, imposing, harmonious.

When the reports were read, and we were about to adjourn, I arose, and addressed the chair as follows: I report this unfortunate speech, that everyone may see exactly where and how I was to blame, and then I will show how others are in fault.

"*Mr. President.*"—

"The reports of the Governors, Lady Managers, and of the Medical Board, which have just been read are all that could be desired. They show that the Hospital was never in a more flourishing condition, and that its future usefulness is as-

sured beyond question. Every thing seems to be rose-colored, and on the surface all is tranquil.

Far be it from me to say, or do aught to rudely mar the happiness and harmony of this occasion. And I pray you to forgive me if I take this opportunity to say a few words on some matters that have for some time been the theme of contention among us. This is not, perhaps, the best chosen time for such discussion. But it is the only time in the whole year when we are all face to face. To-day, as usual on Anniversary occasions, we have present the whole Medical Board, the entire Board of Lady Managers, and the Board of Governors is represented by its highest intelligence.

Three questions have disturbed the harmony of these several Boards during the last two years.

The first is that of the name of the hospital. The charter of this hospital was obtained from the Legislature under the name of "The Woman's Hospital *of* the State of New York." By a clerical error of the copyist it was made to read "The Woman's Hospital *in* the State of New York."

Contrary to the expressed wishes of the Medical Board, you have insisted that we shall call the hospital by the misnomer, "The Woman's Hospital *in* the State of New York," and I believe you have officially ordered the Medical Board to do so, saying that you would not in future receive any communications from the Medical Board if they did not conform to this order. In this I am frank to say, you are wrong, and there is no difference of opinion among the members of the Medical Board.

The Hon. Mr. Benedict, of your Board, one of the original corporators, drew up our charter, and he knows that I am right in this matter. And so does your president, the Hon. Mr. Beekman, who gave us his powerful aid in getting the charter through the Legislature. And as I am the father of the hospital, it is presumable that I ought to know by what name it was christened.

I would therefore most respectfully suggest that you take the proper steps at the next session of the Legislature to have this clerical error in our charter rectified.

The next subject of dispute between us is, that of introducing cancer cases into the hospital for operation.

Your Boards have forbidden us to admit such cases, even in their mildest forms, and in their earliest stages. I have no hesitation in saying that in this instance you have transcended the bounds of your authority. But your Medical Board, feeling themselves powerless to resist, have submitted to your dictation, and we have admitted no such cases since we adopted the rule, acted upon at your command, not to do it.

We had great trouble to procure a title to the land on which this hospital stands, and it was done at last by agreeing to give twenty-five free beds forever to the city for the use of the land.

Now, if your Medical Board had been obstinate on the cancer question, they could very readily have filled a ward with cancer cases by appealing to the municipal authorities. But they have chosen not to pursue a course which, however right in the eye of the law, would have been an end of harmony between us.

The third cause of contention between us is the limitation of the number of spectators to fifteen on operating days. I have always thought that this is a matter in which your Board had no right whatever to interfere, and I think so still. If it is right to admit 15, it is just as proper to admit 17, 18 or 20. You might safely have left this to the discretion and better judgment of the surgeons.

If we do our duty to our patients; if we treat them in a kind and considerate manner; if we give them the time and care necessary for their restoration to health; if we give them all the advantages of treatment that you yourselves could command in your own homes, we have done our whole duty, and this should end your personal supervision over our actions.

But when you see fit to invade the sanctity of our operating room, and to dictate to us who shall be present, and who shall not be present to witness operations, you evidently overstep the limits of your authority. And when you come

to count the number of doctors we invite to witness operations, it seems to me, you are not confining yourselves to your own legitimate sphere.

The Woman's Hospital is to-day one of the great lights of gyneological science. The profession throughout the country look to it for instruction in the department that it has done so much to elucidate. Medical men come up to New York every winter to study the clinical advantages to be found in the metropolis.

They come to study various branches, some one thing, some another, and some another, but all come to investigate the proper treatment of such diseases as are admitted into the wards of the Woman's Hospital.

They go home with enlarged views and improved methods of treatment. They thereby become friends and patrons of the hospital; they send such cases to the hospital, as they do not care to be troubled with in a general practice, just such as this hospital was founded to take care of, and thus they become feeders of the hospital, keeping its wards always full.

But by our illiberality in excluding our country friends from the hospital, I find we are making enemies of them. They are dissatisfied and complaining. And we are dissatfied, but have been shut out from the privilege of complaining. Besides all this, your ostracism of the profession may place us sometimes in a very awkward position. It may make us appear rude, and impolite to our brethren; when in reality it is not our fault, but yours.

Only one hour before entering this room, Dr. Harry Sims related to me an incident that should make your Medical Board blush for the power that overrules their action.

And it is this—the day before yesterday, Dr. Peaslee met an old friend, an eminent physician living in the country. After a little conversation, which naturally turned on the Woman's Hospital, Dr. Peaslee invited his friend to the Hospital the next day (yesterday) to witness an important operation. He was invited to come at 3 o'clock. The invited guest presented himself at the Hospital at about 10 minutes after 3. Dr. Peaslee was already in the operating room

Fifteen gentlemen had registered their names, and gone up to the amphitheatre.

Your Board had on this occasion, (and for weeks previous), placed a man in the Hall to see that only fifteen doctors should be admitted. When Dr. Peaslee's friend asked the man in authority to show him the way to the operating room, he was bluntly told he could not do it. Then said the gentleman, "Please take my card to Dr. Peaslee, he invited me specially to come, and witness an operation that I would like to see. I am sure he would let me go up if he knew I were here."

The man replied, "Sir, I am very sorry, but I have no authority in the matter. Even Dr. Peaslee could not admit you now, for there are already fifteen doctors there, and I have orders to admit no more."

And thus Dr. Peaslee's friend, and three or four other medical gentlemen who were present, and asking to be admitted, were rudely thrust from the walls of this hospital, when common politeness, and the honor and interests of the hospital, demanded that they should have been kindly received.

Sir, such a breach of etiquette as this is injurious to the members of the Medical Board, who are bound by your tyrannical decision, and it is detrimental to the interests of the hospital, which we all have at heart.

Sir, you have taken the engineer—the man who runs the machine that keeps this building warm in winter, and cool in summer—and placed him as a spy over your Medical Board, to report to you any violation of your rule limiting the number of spectators on operating days to fifteen.

Sir, such an act as this is unworthy of the Board of Governors from which it emanates. For myself, I have never heeded your edict, and never will; and if you are aggrieved at this, you can have my resignation at your next meeting, if you wish it."

I have reported this speech *verbatim*. Every word of it

is true; and every position assumed defensible. I was defending "the interest and honor of the profession," although Drs. Peaslee, Emmet and Thomas in their circular declare otherwise. I was defending Dr. Peaslee and the interests of the hospital, not for my "own personal reasons," as they assert, but on the broad principles of right, and without a thought of selfish interests.

My great mistake was in making this speech on the occasion of the anniversary meeting. It was in this sense, a violation of good taste and propriety, and I have never hesitated to say so.

From the time I took my seat, I regretted having made it then and there, and I have never ceased to regret it. The moment the meeting adjourned, Drs. Peaslee, Emmet and Thomas, rushed to the president's chair to assure him and the governing boards that they were in no way responsible for this violent speech. Nor were they. Nor did I ever hold them responsible for it in any way, directly or indirectly.

It is almost useless to say that this ill-timed speech, falling like a clap of thunder from a clear sky, produced intense excitement in the minds of many who heard its unwelcome truths.

Having declared, upon the impulse of the moment, that my resignation should be placed at the disposal of the Board of Governors, I felt in honor bound to make good my declaration.

Of course it was not my cool, considerate purpose to sever my connection with the institution, of which I was the founder. Nor did any one understand that I really meant, or wished to retire from the hospital.

Anxious still to share in the good work done in this noble institution I resolved to accompany my resignation with the frank avowal that I hoped it would not be accepted, and with such an apology for the impropriety of my remarks on the occasion as my sense of courtesy dictated.

At the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Lady Managers, following the anniversary, Dr. Thomas represented them to me as being in a very excited state.

He came to see me while they were in session at the hospital, and said I must write an apology to them. I told him to write it, and I would sign it. He kindly did so, and returned with it to the meeting at the hospital. But the apology did not seem to appease the Board of Lady Managers, although Dr. Thomas made a neat little speech, and begged the ladies not to enact over the old story of "Columbus in chains after his great discoveries."

A few days after this the Medical Board held its regular monthly meeting, when I told them that I did not wish to resign; did not wish to leave the Hospital at all, and I read to them my letter of resignation, and asked if they thought it was sufficient. They thought it was all I could say by way of apology, and that the Governors would be satisfied with it, and would, doubtless, retain me in the Hospital.

In substance it was as follows:

Gentlemen.—

Having said at the annual meeting that I would send in my resignation as Surgeon to the Woman's Hospital, I feel in honor bound to do so.

In taking leave of your honorable body, allow me to say that I feel great regret at having said aught to mar the harmony of the anniversary meeting, and I further regret that I seized that time and occasion to lay my views before you.

(Signed) J. Marion Sims.

A day or two after the meeting of the Board of Lady Managers, this letter was sent to the Board of Governors, then in session, and when the question came before them Mr. Davis rose, and preferred charges of insubordination against me, and for such alleged insubordination he insisted on my expulsion from the Medical Board.

After a heated discussion my resignation was accepted.

Two or three days after this, Dr. Thomas and Dr. Emmet both told me that they had used their influence with their friends in the Board of Governors to retain me in the hospital, and they each expressed to me great surprise at the acceptance of my resignation.

Subsequently I told Dr. Thomas that I could not but blame my associates of the Medical Board, for the acceptance of my resignation by the Board of Governors, as I did not think they had done their whole duty by me, although they professed to me a wish for me to remain with them.

Dr. Thomas said they had done all they could. Then I said, "Did your Board, as a Board, send a protest, or even a request to the Governors to retain me in the hospital." He said, "No; they had only acted individually." I then said, "Why did you not act collectively as a Board." He replied, "We never thought of it." I rejoined, "If you had been in my place, and I in yours, I would have thought of it, and it would have been done."

Still entertaining the hope of being restored to my place in the hospital, I wrote as follows to Mr. Davis, on the 12th January, 1875, three weeks after I left the hospital: "In a state of momentary excitement I verbally tendered my resignation, and thus honor compelled me to send it in. But I accompanied it with an apology as proper and complete as any gentleman ought to require of another. I read this apology to your Medical Board, and they each said that it was all that could be desired, and Dr. Emmet and Dr. Thomas have both expressed to me their surprise that the Board of Governors thought fit to accept my resignation under the circumstances."

This shows that up to the 12th January, 1875, I believed my former associates in the Medical Board were my friends, and were doing all they could to retain me in the Hospital.

I was so blind to the real facts of the situation as to commit the folly of writing to Mr. Davis (Jan. 12, 1875), as the

leader of the opposition to me, asking him to reconsider his course, and to allow me to be restored to the hospital.

I then called on one of the Board of Governors, who had always been one of my best friends, and asked him to take a stand to reinstate me, and to my great surprise he told me that my associates in the Medical Board were opposed to me, and desired the Governors to accept my resignation; urging that the best thing for the interests of the Hospital was to get me out of it, as I was a reckless operator, and was injuring the reputation of the Hospital.

I could not have believed this if it had not been told me by one of the purest and best of men. Soon after this Mr. Stuart ascertained that my pretended friends in the Medical Board had furnished Mr. Davis, one of the governors, with some statistics of operations performed at the Woman's Hospital, and that Mr. Davis had used them in the Board of Governors, to prove that I was the most reckless, and unsuccessful of the surgeons to the hospital, and should therefore be put out. These gentlemen may deny technically that they furnished Mr. Davis with these statistics. They may say he got them from the House Surgeon. But I hold Drs. Peaslee, Emmet and Thomas responsible for the act whether they furnished them directly or indirectly. They did it, and it was done at the very time they pretended to be my friends, and also pretended to be surprised that the Board of Governors should have accepted my resignation.

No wonder they could not as a Board enter a protest against my going out of the Hospital, when they were privately using their influence with Mr. Davis, and other members of the Board of Governors to put me out.

Now let us inquire for a moment into the table of statistics furnished by my associates of the Medical Board to Mr. Davis, and which he used with such effect against me in the Board of Governors.

It is as follows:

Number of operations performed in the Woman's Hospital from the 1st May, 1872,, to the 22d December, 1874, (being from the day Dr. Sims entered the Hospital till he left it):

Number of Patients Admitted.	No. of Operations.	No. of Deaths.
By Dr. Sims.....237	215	14
" Dr. Thomas.....207	93	11
" Dr. Peaslee.....132	88	6
" Dr. Emmet.....143	116	1

Mr. Davis flourished this table of statistics before the Governors, and proved by it, to the satisfaction of a majority, that I was the most unsuccessful of the surgeons connected with the Hospital. He refused (I understand,) to let any of the Board see the document, saying it was private. I do not blame Mr. Davis, but I blame my associates of the Medical Board, who armed him with this document without explaining to him its true significance. What then is the real interpretation of the figures in this statistical table?

Of all operations performed,

Dr. Sims lost $6\frac{17}{100}$ per cent.
" Thomas " $11\frac{82}{100}$ "
" Peaslee " $6\frac{81}{100}$ "
" Emmet " one in 116.

Dr. Emmet should be counted out of this table altogether, because the chronic cases he treated, such as vesico-vaginal fistula, &c., and which we generally turned over to him, were not of a dangerous character, and never resulted fatally.

The foregoing table shows that I admitted 30 patients more than Dr. Thomas, 88 more than Dr. Emmet, and 105 more than Dr. Peaslee.

I preformed 99 more operations than Dr. Emmet, 122 more than Dr. Thomas, and 127 more than Dr. Peaslee. With a larger number of purely surgical cases than any of my associates had, it is reasonable to suppose that I would have had relativly a larger number of bad cases, and a larger

relative mortality. But my per centum of mortality as seen above is less than Dr. Peaslee's, and but little more than half of that of Dr. Thomas.

Drs. Peaslee, Emmet, and Thomas know very well, and knew it at the time they gave Mr. Davis the statistics of the operations performed at the Woman's Hospital, that they were, in a scientific point of view, of no value whatever. But Mr. Davis of course did not know this.

Mr. Davis saw that Dr. Emmet lost but one patient, Dr. Peaslee six, Dr. Thomas eleven, and Dr. Sims fourteen. Ergo, Dr. Sims was a reckless, dangerous and unsuccessful surgeon.

But one of my cases was a woman who was admitted with peritonitis (following the use of a sponge tent before she came to the hospital), who died within forty-eight hours after admission, and upon whom no operation was performed, and should therefore be excluded. Another was a poor woman with extra-uterine pregnancy, where the umbilicus was opened by ulceration, and there was nothing else to do but to enlarge the opening which nature had already made, and remove a decomposed fœtus which was floating in an immense quantity of diffluent pus. There was no chance, no hope of saving her life, although, to the surprise of everybody, she lived eight or ten days afterwards. With these two cases excluded, it makes the mortality of my operations $05\frac{58}{100}$, while with them included, it is $6\frac{17}{100}$, as above stated.

Dr. Peaslee's mortality was a fraction greater than mine. and Dr. Thomas' nearly twice as great, although Mr. Davis did not so represent it, nor so understand it.

But all this caviling over statistics, and per-centages on such a small scale is ridiculous in the eyes of medical men who know anything about it. Drs. Peaslee, Emmet, and Thomas, when they were using this table through Mr. Davis, *ought* to have known that it was deceptive.

Operations must run up into the hundreds before we can tabulate them to prove the success, or non-

success of the operator, or rather to prove the actual value of one method over another.

Mr. Spencer Wells has more than once lost in succession seven or eight cases of ovariotomy. Suppose he had had these unfortunate results at the outset of his brilliant career? Why, he might have been denounced as a reckless and unsuccessful surgeon. But he has had more than twenty successful ovariotomies consecutively under the same general plan pursued in his unsuccessful cases.

All this shows that at one time he had a run of bad cases, which must have proved fatal under any circumstances. I have known this to happen to Dr. Emmet. It has happened to Dr. Peaslee, to myself, and may occur to any one engaged in a large practice.

During my connection with the Woman's Hospital, I saw Dr. Peaslee operate on two cases of ovarian tumours, where a fatal result was inevitable, in spite of his acknowledged skill. But this proved nothing against him as a surgeon.

The first ten ovariotomies I performed were all successful, but a series of bad cases afterwards spoiled the statistics that might have been based on the first ten.

I heard the young men at the Woman's Hospital in 1873, say, that one of our assistant surgeons, a man whom everybody loves, was the most successful ovaritomist living, as he had cured a hundred per cent. while Spencer Wells and Keith cured only ninety per cent. of theirs. The joke was seen in the fact that our friend had operated but once, and cured his case. Statistics based on decimals are an absurdity, and every medical man knows it.

I would not have noticed the circular of Drs. Peaslee, Emmet and Thomas, if they had not unwisely used the phrase "unqualifiedly false," leading our profession and the public to belive it was applicable to me.

I need hardly say, that those who know me even but slightly, know very well that I could not connive at any thing "false." I leave the subject with a feeling of con-

fidence that I have explained everything to the satisfaction of every honest and impartial man in my profession.

I am obliged to leave home for a few months, and I therefore, turn this whole affair over to Mr. Stuart, who is the real defendant in this case.

Having finished, I leave it to my professional brethern to judge whether Mr. Stuart was guilty of writing what was "unqualifiedly false," when he said "Dr. Sims defended the honor and interests of the medical profession with such independence and zeal, that he was forced unwillingly to resign his position as one of the surgeons."

Was Mr. Stuart guilty of writing what was "unqualifiedly false," when he said Dr. Sims "was obliged to leave his hospital, and that too, without a word of protest from his brethern of the Medical Board?"

And I leave it to Drs. Peaslee, Emmet and Thomas to determine from the facts herein stated whether Mr. Stuart was guilty of writing what was "unqualifiedly false" when he said that they "to a man proved 'invisible' in the hour of conflict."