

A second letter to the general court of contributors of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh; containing remarks on the proceedings at the meeting held on the 30th March, 1818. To which are annexed, the report of the committee, the reported speech of the Lord President, and the resolutions of the general meeting of the 30th March / By a contributor.

Contributors

Contributor.

Thomson, John, 1765-1846.

Publication/Creation

Edinburgh : Printed by J. Ballantyne for G. Robertson, 1818.

Persistent URL

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SECOND LETTER
TO THE
GENERAL COURT OF CONTRIBUTORS
OF THE
ROYAL INFIRMARY OF EDINBURGH.

SECOND PART

TO THE

GENERAL COURT OF COMMONS

OF THE

ROYAL INFIRMARY OF EDINBURGH

A
SECOND LETTER
TO THE
GENERAL COURT OF CONTRIBUTORS
OF THE
ROYAL INFIRMARY OF EDINBURGH;
CONTAINING
REMARKS ON THE PROCEEDINGS AT THE MEETING
HELD ON THE 30TH MARCH, 1818.

TO WHICH ARE ANNEXED,
THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE,
THE REPORTED SPEECH OF THE LORD PRESIDENT,
AND THE
RESOLUTIONS OF THE GENERAL MEETING OF
THE 30TH MARCH.

BY
A CONTRIBUTOR.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by James Ballantyne and Co.
FOR JOHN ROBERTSON, 132, HIGH STREET.

1818.

SECOND LETTER

GENERAL COURT OF CONTRIBUTORS

OF THE

ROYAL INFIRMARY OF EDINBURGH

CONTAINING

REMARKS ON THE PROCEEDINGS AT THE MEETING

Held on the 30th March 1818.

BY JOHN HENDERSON, ESQ.

THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

THE REPORTED ACTION OF THE LORD PRESIDENT

AND THE

REMARKS OF THE GENERAL MEETING OF

THE COURT GENERAL

A CONTRIBUTOR.

EDINBURGH

1818.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author of the following Letter is fully aware of the well-founded prejudice which exists with regard to anonymous publication, and his name certainly should not have been withheld, could he imagine it would have added any weight to that side of the question, respecting the late Inquiry into the State of the Royal Infirmary, which he has felt himself compelled, by an imperious sense of duty, to adopt. But, in delivering his opinions with the freedom which the nature of the subject seemed to him to require, he is conscious that he has endeavoured to avoid every thing which might give offence to those connected with the management of that Institution ; and he trusts, that he has, in no respect, expressed himself differently from what he would have done, had he judged it proper to subscribe his name to this, or to his former Letter.

To the Second Edition of his former Letter,

the author annexed the Note of the Managers, in order that the reader might have an opportunity of referring readily to it. For the same reason he has added to this Letter the Report of the Committee, and the Reported Speech of the Lord President, together with the Resolutions of the General Meeting of the Court of Contributors on the 30th of March. The reprinting of these documents, so necessary for the illustration of his statements and reasoning, by exciting a curiosity to see the Minutes of Evidence upon which they are founded, must, he conceives, tend to promote, rather than to injure the sale of that Publication ; and as a proof that it is the good of the Infirmary, and not the desire of private gain, which has led him to reprint these documents, he begs leave to state, that the profits arising from the sale of his Letters, (if there should be any) shall be faithfully made over to the funds of the Royal Infirmary. Whatever, therefore, the intentions of the Managers may have been in entering the Minutes of Evidence at Stationer's Hall, the author trusts, that in re-printing the documents he has annexed, which have already appeared in the

“Caledonian Mercury” Newspaper, he invades no right, and injures no interest, by disregarding the threat held out in the following letter :

(COPY.)

10, LONDON-STREET,
Edinburgh, 20th April, 1818.

SIR,

On the part of the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, I have to inform you, that the Report of the Committee of Contributors to the Royal Infirmary, with the relative Evidence, &c. taken before that Committee, were regularly entered at Stationer’s Hall on the 6th current.

Observing from the Courant of Saturday, the 18th current, that you advertise the above Report, to be annexed to a Letter to be immediately published and sold by you, I beg to intimate to you, that if such publication takes place it will be at your peril.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

(Signed)

ALEX. BOSWELL, W. S.

Clerk to the Incorporation.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON, Bookseller,
132, High-Street, Edinburgh.

"Catholion Mercury" Newspaper, the insertion
 no right and interest to interest by their
 ing the interest held out in the following letter:

(Copy)

10, New York
 18th Nov 1858

On the part of the Managers of the "Catholion Mercury"
 we have to inform you that the Board of the Committee of
 Contributors to the "Catholion Mercury" have the right to
 choose the editor of the paper and the Committee have
 chosen Mr. [Name] as the editor of the paper.

Observing from the "Catholion Mercury" the 18th Nov
 that you had written the above letter, we are glad to
 hear that it has been published and that it has
 been so printed to you that it has been published in the paper
 it will be at your service.

I am, Sir,

Yours most obedient servant,

Alfred Foxwell, W.S.

(Signed)

Copy to the Incorporated

Mr. John Foxwell, Secretary

122, High Street, Edinburgh

LETTER, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

WITH many of the other Inhabitants of Edinburgh, I had presumed to hope, that the measures adopted by you at your late Meeting, would have been such as to render all further observations on the subject of the management of the Royal Infirmary unnecessary, if not improper. The perusal of the account which has been given in the newspapers of the proceedings of that Meeting, has led me, however, to form a very different opinion; and I should feel myself guilty of a dereliction of duty, in a matter involving so deeply the interests of the Sick Poor, as the management of the Royal Infirmary, were I to suffer these proceedings, and

the Resolutions voted by a great majority of the Court of Contributors, to pass altogether without remark or animadversion.

After having appointed a Committee to enquire into, and to report upon the state of the Infirmary ; after the very great pains which this Committee had bestowed upon the subject ; and after the production of the temperate and judicious Report, which they had submitted to the consideration of the Court of Contributors, it is with astonishment I find this Court, specially appointed to receive, consider, approve, modify, or reject that Report, passing over altogether the proper business of the Meeting, and proceeding to vote Resolutions, said “ to rise out of, and to be grounded upon the able, intelligent, and valuable Report of the Committee ;” but which every one, who will take the trouble to read the Minutes of Evidence, must perceive are, in several essential particulars, utterly irreconcilable with that Evidence, and in direct opposition to the spirit and statements of the Report of the Committee, to whose suggestions, even the mover of the Resolutions acknowledged, that the highest attention was due on the part of the Managers of the

Royal Infirmary. The short period that was permitted to elapse between the printing of the Minutes of Evidence, and the passing of these Resolutions; the small number of copies of these Minutes in circulation at the time of the Meeting; together with the private acknowledgments of many of the Voters, give good reason to believe, that only a very small proportion of those who composed that Meeting could have had opportunity or time to read the Report of the Committee, far less to consider the Minutes of Evidence upon which that Report is founded. The activity and success of the Managers and their friends in procuring the attendance of Contributors, and the readiness with which a majority of these Contributors voted the Resolutions proposed to them, while they prove the great influence which the Managers of the Royal Infirmary possess over the minds and conduct of their fellow-citizens, afford another proof of that facility with which men can be brought in a body to support measures and vote Resolutions in public, to which, on deliberate consideration in private, they would be very unwilling to put their names.

Nothing which took place at the Meeting of the Court of Contributors seems to be more unaccountable than the silence with which the Committee suffered their Report to be set aside, and allowed the very able and specious representations of a Right Honourable Manager to pass without remark or explanation. The Members of the Committee, from the knowledge they had acquired of the concerns of the Infirmary during their investigation, and from the talents and habits of public speaking which many of them possessed, were well able, I conceive, to have given such a statement of the palpable errors committed in the past management of the Royal Infirmary, as must have made many of the Contributors hesitate at least before they gave their assent to the Resolutions which were submitted to them for their approval. That some one or other of the Committee did not give such a statement, has been matter of surprise to their friends, and of regret to many a sincere well-wisher to the improvement and prosperity of that Institution.

No one can approve more sincerely than I do of the adoption of conciliatory Resolutions in every thing that concerns the management of

Charitable Institutions. But in order that such Resolutions could have been adopted with advantage on the late occasion by those who take an interest in the concerns of the Royal Infirmary, it was necessary that they should have been founded on truth, and calculated to promote the permanent good of that Institution. In my apprehension, the Resolutions of the Court of Contributors, on the 30th of March, 1818, were lamentably defective in both these particulars.

The First Resolution, "That the Meeting do return thanks to the Committee for the great zeal and attention with which they have conducted this inquiry," though it contains nothing objectionable, is abundantly sparing of praise to a Committee that had granted to the Managers of the Infirmary the indulgence of being present at its meetings, and had allowed them to examine and to cross-question the witnesses. This admission of the Managers to the meetings of the Committee, which some have regarded as a great and fundamental error, certainly gave the Committee a right to expect at least the praise of candour and impartiality.

The Second Resolution, "That the Meeting

are happy to observe, that, after so anxious and minute a scrutiny, the Committee have not discovered any abuse in the management of this Hospital, and that such instances of inattention as had accidentally crept in, had been discovered by the Managers themselves," consists of two parts. For the sentiment contained in the first of these, the Managers are, I believe, indebted, though without acknowledgment, to my former Letter; and certainly if by the term "abuse" be meant, "corrupt practice," or peculation, none such has been detected by the enquiry; nor indeed do I believe that any such has ever been suspected to exist in the management of the Royal Infirmary. If, again, by the word "abuse"* be meant, "bad custom," "unjust censure," "rude reproach," and "contumely," I fear it will be difficult, with the evidence before you, to deny that such things have occurred in the management of the Royal Infirmary.

The assertion, contained in the last part of the second Resolution, seems liable to objection on three separate grounds.—1st, It does not appear

* See Johnson's Dictionary.

to arise out of, nor to be founded upon, the evidence.—2dly, It is inconsistent with facts incontrovertibly established by that evidence; and, 3dly, What is assumed as being true in this assertion, is, from the nature of the case, impossible. For the proofs which establish the validity of the two first objections, I can with confidence refer the Voters of the Resolutions to the Minutes of Evidence, and to the Report of your Committee. They will not find, I believe, in these documents, an example of inattention in any department of the Infirmary, that had ever been discovered, in the first instance, by a Manager; but they will find the Managers sometimes complaining of the superior Medical Officers, and sometimes blaming, and even censuring the Clerks, for having concealed from them inattentions, defects, and errors in the practical details of the Infirmary, of the existence of which, the most charitable supposition is to believe, the Managers themselves were profoundly ignorant. How, indeed, could it be otherwise? for who, before the present inquiry took place, ever saw a Manager in the Infirmary, except at the time of the Monthly Meetings? At this time, indeed,

the two visiting Managers for the month, have generally been observed gliding for a few minutes hastily along the Wards, properly arranged for their reception, in order to qualify themselves to sign the Report required of them by the bye-laws of the Incorporation. With the Porter only in attendance, and having no intercourse at these Meetings with the Medical Officers of the Infirmary, it was impossible for the Managers, from the documents placed before them, to know any thing of the Institution under their charge, besides its expenditure, and the names and recommendations of those who were soliciting them for the appointments of Clerks and Dressers. Pretensions to any other kind of knowledge than this on the part of the Managers, previous to the late inquiry, will not easily be admitted by those who know any thing of the past history or concerns of the Royal Infirmary; and the Minutes of the Managers will best shew what discoveries of inattentions, defects, or errors, have ever been made or recorded by *themselves*, in any of their Monthly Visitations and Meetings.

The Third Resolution, “ That some of these were actually rectified, and the rest in the course

of being rectified by the Managers, before the Committee was appointed, or the inquiry thought of," would have required to have been voted with many explanations and limitations. The defects and errors that are proved to have existed in the internal economy of the Infirmary, have been very properly reduced to three heads by your Committee.—1st, "Those in the state of the Hospital as to cleanliness, and other circumstances, in the domestic arrangement and economy of the House, immediately connected with the personal comfort of the Patients.—2dly, Those in the state of the ordinary diet, as actually administered, both as to its quality and its quantity; and, 3dly, Those in the general character and conduct of those subordinate attendants in the House, to whose personal care and attention, in the absence of the Medical Officers, the patients are principally intrusted." Now, I should be glad to be informed, which of the inattentions, defects, and errors, proved to have existed for a series of years in these three points so essential to the proper management of the Infirmary, had been actually rectified, or were in the course of being so, before the commencement of the inquiry, instituted

on the 7th July, 1817. The Diet at that time, and for a considerable period afterwards, is proved to have been extremely defective, both in quantity and quality; the state of the Sheets and Bedding is proved also to have been disgustingly filthy; and a great proportion of the Nurses, the Managers themselves admit, are still of the very worst description. That public inquiry took place, and that a Committee was appointed to report upon the internal state of the Infirmary, are occurrences for which the Managers have themselves solely to blame; for this Committee and its inquiry owed their origin to that most ungracious reception which was given by the Managers to the Statement of the Clerks; to the unwillingness on the part of the Managers, to acknowledge the existence of the gross defects and negligences, notoriously prevailing in the department of the Matron and Nurses; and to the aversion which the Managers manifested to suffer any thing like interference in the domestic concerns of the Infirmary, even by those who for a long time had benevolently contributed to the support of the Institution. If instead of attempting to controvert

the information given in to them by the Clerks ; of resisting the friendly hints of some well-wishers to the Institution ; and of defending the very improper conduct of the Matron, and making themselves parties in her practical errors, the Managers had heartily, and at once corrected, as they easily could, and have since in some degree done, the defects which were pointed out to them by the Clerks, in the Diet and Bedding of the Hospital, no one, I am convinced, would have been found to propose, support, or carry on the late inquiry. The Friends of the Managers, therefore, should have contented themselves, at the late meeting, with resting their defence of the Managers where the Committee had so properly placed it, in their ignorance of the internal state of the Hospital, and of the defects which existed in its Food and Bedding, as well as of the conduct of the Nurses ; for the public will assuredly never sustain any other apology for those numerous gross defects and palpable errors that are proved to have existed for a series of years in these three essential points of domestic economy in the management of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

After a repeated perusal of the Fourth Resolution, "That the Meeting are, therefore, of opinion, that it is quite unnecessary to give any recommendations to the Managers on the subject, and resolve,—That the cordial thanks of the Meeting be offered to the Managers for their uniform and zealous attention to the interests of the charity, assuring them, at the same time, that the Meeting place the fullest reliance both on their diligence to discover, and on their zeal to rectify, any occasional defects which may possibly, from time to time, occur in the management of so great an Establishment," I am at a loss to understand what is meant by the opinion expressed in the first clause of this Resolution. Your Committee had presumed to suggest various subjects of improvement in the management of the Infirmary, for the consideration of the Managers, the adoption of which they had reason to believe would have been recommended at least, if not enjoined by you. Even the Mover of the Resolutions had stated it to be his opinion, that these suggestions were entitled to the highest attention on the part of the Managers. Are we to understand, that his own private opinion, so just in itself, and so

properly expressed, was at variance with the Resolutions which were put into his hands, and which he had been requested to submit to you for your approval; or can a new light upon this subject have broken in upon his mind, between the time of his stating his opinion of the value of the Report, and the degree of attention due to the suggestions of the Committee, and that of his reading to you this part of the 4th Resolution? The recommendations alluded to could, I conceive, have been unnecessary only in one of two ways: either because you were satisfied that all the defects formerly existing in the management of the Infirmary, had been remedied, or because you deemed it sufficient that the Managers had shewn a disposition to rectify them, by taking them into their consideration. It must be granted, that several very flagrant defects in the management of that Institution have been rectified; but, notwithstanding the late activity of the Managers, many still remain to animate the zeal, and to exercise the diligence, of these Gentlemen.

Every one must approve of the disposition which the Managers have of late shewn, and of the efforts which they have made, to bet-

ter the condition of the Sick Poor admitted into the Infirmary : but how far the manifestation of a good disposition can render the recommendation of duty unnecessary ; and whether, without proofs of the willingness of the Managers to adopt the suggestions of your Committee, you were justifiable in withholding your recommendation of these suggestions, are points which I will not pretend to determine. I wish that some of the Reverend and very Vociferous Friends of the Managers, instead of attempting to cry down, as they did, a man certainly not their inferior in piety and charity, in talents or in learning, and whose superior knowledge of the subject in question demanded their respect and the attention of the Court of Contributors, had spoken to these points, which they must understand so much better than I do. And I wish also that these Gentlemen, whose peculiar function it is to recommend duty as well as to administer reproof for the neglect of it, had explained to the Meeting, what degree of perfection in virtue can place any class of men, and more especially the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, in the predicament in which they stood, beyond the necessity of being admonished of their duty.

Had the word "present" been introduced in place of "uniform," in the second, and before "diligence," in the last clause of the 4th Resolution ; and had "at present" been added after "this Hospital," in the last Resolution, which states, "That this Meeting feel themselves called upon to declare that this Hospital well deserves the confidence and support of the Public," I should have had great pleasure in giving my sincere and warmest vote of thanks to the Managers, and in recommending the Infirmary to the confidence and support of the Public. But we must remember that the zeal of the Managers has in it at present something of the pleasure of novelty, and that when this impression wears off, there may be a danger of their relapsing into their former state of ignorance and security. This is another point, concerning which I should have wished to have had the opinion of the Reverend Friends of the Managers, because I know they are great advocates for moderation in zeal, and approve only of the exercise of that which is according to knowledge. If it would not be considered as trespassing on the province of these Gentlemen, or anticipating a duty which they may wish to perform themselves,

I would beg leave still to recommend the suggestions of your Committee to the most serious attention of the Managers of the Royal Infirmary. They may be assured that they will never again receive advice delivered with more mildness, or advice, the adoption of which is better calculated to procure for them the blessings of the poor, and the good will and approbation of benevolent minds, than that which is conveyed to them in these suggestions. If they reject it, they will have themselves to blame, should the Inhabitants of Edinburgh withdraw their subscriptions from the Infirmary, and seek to establish an Hospital for the Sick Poor more immediately under their own superintendence and controul.

That Resolutions so inconsistent with the Report of your Committee, and containing so many assertions capable of being disproved by the Evidence, should have been passed by a great majority of the respectable body of men whose names appear in the newspapers, as having been present at the Meeting of the Court of Contributors, can be accounted for only, I conceive, by the great personal influence of the Managers,—by the ignorance of those who voted for these Resolutions of the evidence on which they were

said to be founded,—and by the effect produced upon the Meeting by the very plausible statements and eloquent speech of a Right Honourable Manager.

I have to regret that I have not had it in my power to judge of the merits of that speech, except from the necessarily imperfect sketch which has been given of it in the newspapers. As there are, however, many positions in the reported speech which are at variance with the opinions I have expressed in my former Letter, and which seem to be at variance with the evidence before you, I trust I may be permitted, with all deference for the rank, abilities, and information of the Right Honourable Manager, to state some of the more material points on which my sentiments still differ from those which are stated to have been delivered by him in the meeting of the Court of Contributors.

Few, I believe, will be disposed to concur with the Right Honourable Manager in the opinion which he is reported to have expressed respecting the injurious effects of public discussion on the management and condition of Charitable Institutions ; and no one who has read the Minutes of Evidence, and the Report of your Commit-

tee, and who has learned from them what the precise state of the Infirmary was as to Diet and Cleanliness, previous to the 7th July, 1817, compared with what it is at present, can doubt for a moment of how much utility public discussion has already been to this Institution.

It was the opinion of your Committee, founded on the evidence of several Medical Gentlemen, some of them long connected with the Infirmary,* that the communication between the Medical Officers and Managers of that Institution, is by no means so easy, direct, and frequent as it ought to be; and it is obvious that the evils which are proved to have existed in the internal condition of the Infirmary, were all of such a nature as could not possibly have occurred, or have been permitted to exist, under a free and proper intercourse between these two bodies. It is somewhat surprising that the Right Honourable Manager should have been 12 or 14 years in the government of that Charity, without having perceived this want of communication to have been a great defect in the constitution of the Infirmary, and without having been told that the Medi-

* See Evidence of Mr Russel in Minutes of Evidence, p. 59.

cal Officers had been often heard to express their dissatisfaction at the situation in which they stand in relation to the Managers, and at the result of the communications which they have sometimes been induced to make to that body. The Right Honourable Manager has not stated that he ever saw the Medical Officers of the Infirmary, as a body, in free communication with its Managers ; and I doubt much whether these Officers, certainly the best qualified, from their situation, to give information and advice, have, for a long period, been consulted on any thing connected with the management of that Institution. It is seen, from the evidence indeed, that some of these Officers were sometimes consulted, and are stated to have been upon a particular occasion "*in attendance*" upon the Managers,* and I believe that had the rest wished to approach the Managers, and "knocked at the door," they would have been admitted also, though it is somewhat doubtful what the nature of their reception might have been. This kind of intercourse, depending entirely on the courtesy of the Managers, and more like that between menial ser-

* See Extract of Minutes of the Managers. Minutes of Evidence, p. 110.

vants and their masters, than between those engaged in discharging the duties of two distinct, but equally important departments in a Public Charity, is the very evil which has been so much felt and complained of, and so far from proving that a proper communication has subsisted, proves directly the contrary. I have been at some pains to inquire into this matter, and I have reason to believe that there is not a medical Gentleman in Edinburgh, out of the management of the Infirmary, who does not know the accuracy and feel the truth of the statement contained from page 13th to page 17th of my former Letter.

It is in vain to pretend, as the Right Honourable Manager has done, that a wish on the part of the Managers to avoid giving additional trouble to the Medical Officers, is the reason why there has hitherto been little or no communication between these two bodies. Will it be said, that it was to save the Medical Officers trouble that they have never been consulted in the appointment of their Clerks and Dressers, who assist them in performing their duties in the Infirmary ; when it must be obvious that a confidence in those who are to assist them, ari-

sing from a knowledge of their character and qualifications, must not only be highly beneficial to the Hospital, but of great importance to the Medical Gentlemen themselves, by saving them much anxiety and trouble? With the recollection of the appointment which took place not longer ago than Monday the 13th April, 1818, will the Managers of the Royal Infirmary venture to allege, that they have ever had any other object in view in this matter, than “to secure to themselves the unlimited and uncontrolled use of their own vast influence, under the sole direction of their own private favour?”

It is true, that when the Medical Officers have had any complaint to make, or improvement to suggest, it must be in writing; but can any one believe, that this is for the reason given by the Right Honourable Manager, when it is known that no record whatever has been preserved by the Managers of a very important written Memorial, given in to them in 1811 by Drs Hamilton and Spens, in which these gentlemen pointed out many improvements that were necessary in the state of the Infirmary at that time, nor of any steps that were taken by the Managers, in consequence of receiving that Memorial?

It would seem probable also, from the silence observed by your Committee, that they had not discovered in the Minutes of the Managers the Memorial, by which the attention of the Managers was called, in a particular manner, to the subject of a Lock Hospital. And is it not a little curious, that the written statement of the Clerks, which has given rise to so much discussion, and upon which the Managers themselves instituted an inquiry, is not to be found in the Minutes of that body? After this, will it be believed that memorials given in in writing *must* be entered in the Records of the Hospital?

It is not easy, from the report of this speech, to conjecture, what the objections are which the Right Honourable Manager has to that part of the Report of your Committee, which recommends the reform of the great practical error that has been committed in the perpetual re-election of the same individuals to the management of the Infirmary; or what the circumstances may be, which he contemplates as preventing this recommendation from being overtaken. There can be no doubt, however, that the practice alluded to is a violation of the spirit of the Charter, as well as of the express terms of the

bye laws ; * and it cannot but be matter of surprise, that this should have occurred in a body of which the Right Honourable Gentleman, in particular, is a member. The total exclusion of the Extraordinary Managers from the government of the Infirmary, the perpetual re-election of themselves by themselves to be Ordinary Managers, and the great apparent unwillingness of these Managers to admit of any change in this mode of election, are all calculated to create a suspicion in the minds of the Public, that, however “ laborious, unpleasing, or dangerous,” the duties of the Managers of the Royal Infirmary may be, there must be something in the office which induces these Gentlemen to cling to it with as much avidity as if it were indeed a “ *sinecure*.”

A picture has been drawn by the Right Honourable Manager of the condition of Patients in the Royal Infirmary, much more disagreeable than any representation that has ever been given of it, even by those who have been accused of exaggerating the defects of that House. “ When it was considered that the family consisted of 250

* See Statutes of the Royal Infirmary, p. 51.

Patients, who, from the very nature of the Institution, must be supposed, as they really do, to belong to the very lowest classes of society—when it was considered that these were left to the superintendence of 30 or 40 Nurses, selected from among the most miserable of their sex, how was it to be expected that no cause of complaint should ever creep into such an Institution?” I cannot subscribe to either part of this statement. The Patients who enter the Infirmary are by no means all of the very lowest classes of society; but are, many of them, respectable trades-people, or people from the country, who resort to it, not from absolute poverty, but from a wish to obtain there the benefit of superior Medical advice and assistance; and many of them, also, are the servants of the best families in Edinburgh, sent in by their masters. Some of the Nurses are bad, very bad, indeed; but I can assure the Right Honourable Manager, that if he had been fully acquainted with the state of the Infirmary, and the characters of the Nurses, he would have known, that they do not all deserve that character which he has given of them. One is surprised to find it asserted, that no woman

will ever adopt that line of life who can possibly earn her bread in any other, since it is well known that, in Catholic countries, women of every rank and condition in life voluntarily devote themselves to the service of the sick in hospitals ; and since it is known, that, even in this country, many women in the lower ranks of life prefer, from feelings of humanity, and a natural disposition to sympathise with those in distress, attendance upon the sick to every other kind of employment. That superior wages would procure superior attendance, is a proposition, I believe, which has never appeared dubious to any one, except to the Managers of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, who, for a series of years, seem to have resisted making any trials with regard to this matter, so important to the welfare and comfort of the Patients in that Institution. A very slight acquaintance, however, with other Hospitals in these kingdoms, where the situation and comforts of the Nurses are superior to those in the Infirmary of Edinburgh, would have taught them that it is not so difficult a matter as they seem to imagine to “ procure Nurses of a better description,” than most of those who

are at present employed in the service of that Institution. I cannot allow myself to believe that the other sentiments expressed, and the comparisons stated in the paragraph to which I have alluded, were uttered by the Right Honourable Manager, as they have been reported, for they are sentiments and comparisons, not only ungenerous to the other sex, but which betray great ignorance of the good principles inherent in human nature.

I have already expressed my opinion respecting the injudicious nature of the comparison that has been attempted to be made, in the Note of the Managers, of the Edinburgh Infirmary, with other Civil Hospitals in Britain. The allusion that has been made by the Right Honourable Manager to the Naval Hospital in Plymouth, inferior, I believe, to none in Europe, except the Haslar at Portsmouth, is, in my opinion, equally injudicious. I doubt whether any of those who have had the immediate charge of Naval and Military Hospitals, will assent to the opinions so confidently delivered respecting the superiority of tile to wooden floors in Hospitals. To dry speedily is undoubtedly an advantage,

but it does not from this follow, that even the tile floors of an Hospital should be often washed. This practice has been prohibited, I have been informed, in Military Hospitals, and the custom denominated “pernicious.”

I agree in some measure with the opinion expressed by the Right Honourable Manager respecting the use of knives and forks in the Infirmary. Provided that the meat to be eaten is supplied in due quantity, and of a proper quality, the luxury of a knife and fork to each person will not afford, I believe, much additional gratification to the greater part of the patients admitted into that Institution. There ought, however, to be a few knives and forks in every ward of the Infirmary, and there must be something materially wrong in that part of the domestic arrangement that permits these to be easily stolen. But it will be remembered, that it was the slovenly and improper manner of administering the food, which was found fault with, and which is proved to have existed, and that the complaint, with regard to the want of utensils, was not confined to that of knives and forks alone, but extended also to the want of spoons and plates, articles still more necessary to a due de-

gree of comfort in the meals of the patients.* The confession now, that these articles were not supplied to the patients in the Infirmary, contrasts strangely with the surprise of another Manager, at the Meeting of the Court of Contributors, on the 4th January, 1818, on its being alleged that every patient in the Infirmary was not supplied with a plate.† These defects, I am glad to hear, have, since the Meeting in January, been, in a considerable degree, remedied, and I am satisfied they never could have existed had any of the Managers been in the habit of visiting the Hospital at the time of meals, or had they taken an opportunity of seeing the food of the patients, or of observing the manner in which it was served out and consumed.

It is curious to observe the manner in which the Right Honourable Manager has attempted to gloss over the very filthy state of the sheets in particular, that is proved to have existed in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, even for several years previous to the com-

* Mr Gillespie's Evid. Minutes, p. 17, 18. ; and Dr Beilby's, p. 29.

† See Proceedings of Court of Contributors, as reported in Scotsman newspaper of 10th January, 1818.

mencement of the late investigation. Of what importance could it be to the patients in the Infirmary, who were allowed to lie without sheets, or in sheets extremely dirty, and who were found to be many of them in sheets and blankets, that were seldom, if ever changed, to be told that the Managers had, as early as the summer of 1816, taken this matter into their consideration, or that the Right Honourable Manager had procured, for the inspection and consideration of the Managers, the model of a drying machine? The Statement given in by the Clerks, upon the 7th July, 1817, proves, in an undeniable manner, that however long this matter may have been under the consideration of the Managers, no improvement whatever had been made at that time in the state of the Bedding in the Infirmary,—a state which had become matter of notoriety to every student attending there; but more particularly to a very numerous class of Naval and Military Surgeons, who may be considered as tolerably good judges of such matters, many of them having themselves had the charge of Hospitals.

Nothing can illustrate better the difference which exists between poetical description and

plain matter of fact, than that part of the Right Honourable Manager's speech, which relates to the washing of the linen of the Infirmary. The very filthy state in which many of the sheets, washed in the country, are proved to have been when first put on the beds of the patients, might have satisfied a mind less scrupulous in these matters than that of the Right Honourable Manager, that there is very little danger to be apprehended, that, by the establishment of a washing machine in the Infirmary, the patients will have any reason to complain of the loss of the "caller smell of a country bleachfield;" but if this consideration is not sufficient to remove his doubts upon that head, I am sure they cannot exist, after he has been informed of the particular manner in which the linen of the Infirmary was actually washed and bleached in the country. I have good authority for stating, that, instead of being "bleached on the gowany brae, and beetled in the burn," the sheets of the Infirmary were put into a splash-mill, with cold water, "there fretting in their own grease;" and that neither hot water, soap, ashes, nor alkalies of any kind, were used, except on very particular

occasions ; that they were required to be returned in forty-eight hours after being sent out of the Infirmary ; and that the price paid for this operation, on each pair, was *two-pence*.

The statement, with regard to the number of blankets washed in 1817, is very satisfactory ; but it would have been agreeable to know how many of these had been washed before July of that year. The present state of the bedding is such, I am informed, as to meet with the approbation of all who visit the Hospital ; and it is to be hoped, that the lesson which the Managers have received upon this point, will, in future, insure due attention on their part to a matter of so much importance to the credit, comfort, and healthiness of the Institution.

It is impossible, I conceive, that the paragraph beginning with the words, “ And now with respect to the period at which this business was agitated,” can give an accurate account of the opinions delivered by the Right Honourable Manager, respecting either the time or circumstances in which the Statement of the Clerks was made, or of the motives in which that Statement originated, because I know that this part

of the Right Honourable Manager's speech, as reported, is a continued series of errors and misapprehensions.

That the dangerous illness of an only daughter should have occupied much of the attention of the late Matron, about the period at which the Statement was given in by the Clerks, is most natural; but this surely can never be admitted as an apology for the very dirty and slovenly state of the Hospital, which is proved to have existed for a long time previous to this period, or for the ignorance in which the Managers seem to have been of that state. No person could conceive that the Managers should have interposed their authority to prevent the Matron from visiting her dying child, but it was surely their duty to take care that no inconvenience or injury should accrue to the Infirmary from Mrs Montgomery's necessary attendance on her daughter. Because Mrs Montgomery's daughter was dangerously ill, were 250 people, many of whom might also be on their death-beds, to be deprived of the benefits which the public intended they should receive, by their admission into the Royal Infirmary? The evils which are allowed to have ari-

sen to the Institution, from Mrs Montgomery's very natural and proper attendance upon her daughter, may point out to the Managers the propriety of the first Regulation with regard to the Matron, to be found in the printed Statutes, which directs, that "The Matron of the House shall be unmarried, *without a family*, and capable of keeping accompts ;"* a Regulation which appears to have been infringed, by Mrs Montgomery's appointment to that office. But with regard to the period at which this Statement was made, could any time call more for strict attention to cleanliness in an Hospital, than that in which a contagious and dangerous disease is acknowledged by the Managers to have made its appearance? Or can any person, who knows any thing of the character of the Clerks, suffer himself to believe, that they could wish to add to Mrs Montgomery's distress, by bringing forward their Representation at the time it was given in?

I have reason to believe, that the Members of the Society for the relief of the Destitute Sick, will be not a little surprised at the account which has been given by the Right Honourable

* Statutes of the Infirmary, p. 59.

Manager, of the time when, and the manner, in which their deputation was received, or to hear of a cordial disposition having existed on the part of the Managers of the Infirmary to co-operate with that Society, in endeavouring to arrest the progress of the Contagion of Fever; and they cannot be less surprised at the account which the Right Honourable Manager has given, of the circumstances which gave rise to the fitting up of Queensberry House, and the time of its being opened for the reception of fever patients. Is it possible that the Right Honourable Manager could have been ignorant, that there was no unusual influx of patients into the Infirmary in the month of July, 1817;* that the deputation from the Society for the relief of the Destitute Sick, was in October, not in July; that Queensberry House was not opened till the month of February, 1818; and that this Hospital was obtained, not in consequence of a Statement made by the Society to the Managers, but by the unwearied and repeated application of that Society to the Lord Provost and Magistrates? The Managers of the Infirmary best know whether they ever

* See Table in Minutes of Evidence, p. 128.

seconded the Society in any of these applications. It is curious, also, in reading the statement of the Right Honourable Manager, to recollect, that long after the commencement of the present contagious Epidemic, considerable pains were taken by various individuals, and even by Managers of the Royal Infirmary, to persuade the Inhabitants of Edinburgh, that the reports of its prevalence, which had been made through the medium of the periodical Journals, were unfounded; and that the efforts of the Society for the Relief of the Destitute Sick, in relation to this Fever, were not only unnecessary, but calculated to do mischief, by exciting alarm.

The Statement of the Clerks was given in in July, 1817; and it is difficult to conceive how the increased influx of patients into the Infirmary during the following winter, or how the fitting up of 70 beds in Queensberry House, in January, 1818, should have produced any scarcity of sheets or bedding in the Royal Infirmary previous to July, 1817. In point of fact, it is agreeable to know, that neither any scarcity nor irregularity with regard to the matters in question, have been observed to occur in the practice of the Royal Infirmary, since the commence-

ment of the labours of your Committee in the beginning of January, 1818.

It had been asserted by the Clerks, "that it appears from the testimony of several of the Nurses, that the beds of the Fever Wards circulate indiscriminately through the whole House;" and it is added by the Clerks, that, "during the last five months, several patients, originally affected with local diseases, were attacked, after admission, with continued fever, which in some cases proved fatal;"* and these assertions were supported by the discovery, in a particular instance, of a bed having been brought from the Fever Ward to a patient admitted into the Surgical Ward.† This account, which had been given by the Nurses to the Clerks, than which, I believe, none was ever better founded, has not hitherto been attempted to be disproved by any other kind of evidence, besides the statements obtained by the Managers from the Nurses, contradictory to those which they had given two months before to the Clerks, and by the negative declaration of one of the Physicians, that he

* Statement of the Clerks in Minutes of Evidence, p. 101.

† Minutes of Evidence, p. 75.

had not known fever communicated in that Hospital by the bedding. It may be that the attention of this very respectable person had not been so much directed as it ought to have been to this point; but I feel confident, that even he will not affirm, that fever has not occasionally been communicated in this manner to patients in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. For, to say nothing of the communication of this disease, from one patient to another in the Medical and Clinical Wards, how otherwise can we account for the very great number of patients who have been affected with Typhus in the Surgical Wards, during the prevalence of the present Epidemic? This disease is understood to require for its production the application of a specific poison, and this poison must have been communicated to the Surgical patients, I conceive, if not by the bedding of the Infirmary, by too free a communication with patients in other parts of the House. I shall leave it to the Right Honourable Manager to reconcile as he best can, his reprobation of the conduct of the Clerks, on the subject of the fever bedding, with the praise which he has bestowed upon the vigilance and attention of the Medical

Person on duty, who, on a particular occasion, detected the indiscriminate use of the bedding practised in the Infirmary, and who, the Right Honourable Manager might have seen from the Evidence, was no other than one of those Clerks themselves.* It could not have failed to be extremely agreeable to the Court of Contributors to have been assured by the Right Honourable Manager, that pains were even then taken to separate the fever from the other bedding of the Infirmary, and also that precautions were used by the Managers to prevent the danger which formerly existed of fever being sent out of that House to different parts of the Town, by means of the unwashed and unpurified body-clothes of fever patients. Indeed there seems, from the Minutes of Evidence, but too much reason to believe, that the four Clerks, whose conduct has been so strongly reprobated by the Right Honourable Manager, were the first persons connected with the Royal Infirmary who had ever given particular attention to the important subject of the management of the fever bedding in that Hospital. Had it been otherwise, it is dif-

* Minutes of Evidence, p. 75.

difficult to conceive, why, in a point which concerned so nearly the proper domestic management of that Institution, the Managers should have contented themselves with endeavouring to controvert, by the contradictory evidence of the Nurses, the statement of the Clerks, instead of having adduced proofs to show that pains had actually been taken in the Infirmary to separate the fever from the other bedding of the House. I am convinced, that had the Right Honourable Manager been in the slightest degree acquainted with the state of the bedding of the Infirmary, or known how much the disposal of it was intrusted to careless and drunken Nurses, he would never have applied that epithet which he has done to the assertion of the Clerks, but must have perceived that the word "villainous," if it was to be used, could with propriety be applied only either to the state of the bedding, or to its disposal in that House.

I trust the public will not think it necessary for me to take notice of the insinuations in which the Right Honourable Manager has so freely indulged himself, with regard to the motives by which he supposes the Clerks to have been actuated in the Representation which they made to

the Managers, unless to express my belief that they are totally groundless. This is a matter which must be left to the feelings of the Clerks themselves. But whatever their motives may have been, these motives surely could not have produced that deplorable state of the internal economy of the Royal Infirmary, which is proved to have existed at and before the time at which their Representation was drawn up and submitted to the consideration of the Managers. In reference to the Clerks, however, I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without stating, that though I have not the pleasure to be particularly acquainted with any of these Gentlemen, yet, from all I have been able to learn upon inquiry, I am satisfied that they are regarded by their friends as young men of the utmost veracity, and, in every respect, of the most strict moral principles and conduct; and I doubt whether, in the situation which they held in the Infirmary, a stronger proof of their integrity could have been afforded than was given in their yielding as they did to the impulse of humanity, and in their being impelled, by a sense of duty, to make that Representation which has brought upon them the disapprobation and obloquy of the Managers of that Institution. A little

more experience of the world than these young men seem to have possessed, would have taught them the difficulty of the enterprise in which they were about to engage, and the truth of the observation, that "it is an undertaking of some degree of delicacy to examine into the cause of public disorders. If a man happens not to succeed in such an enquiry, he will be thought weak and visionary ; if he touches the true grievance, there is a danger that he may come near to persons of weight and consequence, who will rather be exasperated at this discovery of their errors, than thankful for the occasion of correcting them." I trust, however, that these young men will not allow the truth of this observation, discovering in its author so profound a knowledge of human nature, to influence their future conduct, and the more so, as they have already had their reward in the important improvements which have been made in the condition and comforts of the patients in the Royal Infirmary. The satisfaction they must have received from the knowledge of this, should more than compensate to them for any disappointment or chagrin they may have formerly felt from the censure, or, more recently, from the accusations, of

the Right Honourable Manager. I leave it to the Right Honourable Manager himself to consider, how far, upon reflection, he can approve of the use which he has made of the authority of his name, and of his great influence with the inhabitants of Edinburgh, to depreciate the characters, and to stigmatise with the epithets he is reported to have employed, the conduct of four young men, who, to every impartial person, must appear to have been actuated by the most upright principles, and purest motives, in the Representation which they felt it to be their duty to make to the Managers of the Royal Infirmary of the state of that House on the 7th July, 1817.

In my former Letter, page 6th and 7th, I had said, "Instead of summoning, as might have naturally been expected, the Clerks into their presence, and proceeding with them directly to inspect the Wards of the Infirmary, they (the Managers,) appoint a Committee," &c. In answer to this, I find the remark termed a mistake, and it stated by the Right Honourable Manager, that the Managers did not separate till they had examined the bedding of some of the Wards themselves. It is not said, however, that they

made any very particular inquiry into the state of the bedding of the Hospital during that visit, a visit, it deserves to be remarked, of which there is no mention made, either in the Minutes of Evidence, or in the Note of the Managers. That the Managers should have omitted to mention the result of their examination on that day, is the more singular, that they must have found, had they inquired into it, the state of the bedding, with regard to sheets in particular, to have been very much improved—better, indeed, than usual on that day. The truth is, that the Matron, having been aware that a complaint of the state of the bedding was about to be made to the Managers by the Clerks, in order to meet this complaint, had new linen put upon the beds on the day before the Monthly Meeting of the Managers, which was taken off again in the course of the evening after that Meeting, upon pretence of having it marked or hemmed.* That Mrs Montgomery was capable of such conduct, is, I am afraid, but too plain, from various circumstances well known to the Clerks, some of

* See Minutes of Evidence, p. 77, and Answers to Queries, by Mr Glover, in the former Letter to the Contributors, p. 25.

which are recorded in Evidence. The day of the Monthly Meetings of the Managers was known by the washing and scrubbing which took place at an early hour in every part of the House; by the clean coverlets that were put upon some of the beds for the occasion; by the comparatively good broth prepared for the Patients; and by the pudding extraordinary that was added to the dinner of the Clerks.* It will be seen, that when Sir William Forbes came to the Infirmary on the 5th July, in consequence of Mr Sims' request, to examine into the state of the linen, that 6 of the beds out of the list of 9 or 10 that had been given by him to Sir William Forbes, after his arrival in the Infirmary, were allowed by Sir William to be certainly defective, though the remainder did not appear to be particularly objectionable.† It is to be regretted, that this benevolent Manager, instead of waiting till he should have had it in his power to visit the Hospital, in company with Mr Jardine and Mr Wilson, had not gone instantly with Mr Sims; and that he had not accepted of Mr Sims' offer to point out to him the particu-

* Minutes of Evidence, p. 34.

† Id. p. 1.

lar beds which he considered as defective, because it is averred by Mr Sims, that those gentlemen did not visit the Hospital before several changes had been made in the beds, and a considerable amendment made on the dinner, as stated by the Patients.* The beds alluded to are stated to have been chiefly in the Surgical Wards, and it may be remarked, in corroboration of the assertion with regard to the general state of the bedding in these wards, that, when Mr Law, about a year and a half ago, made a survey of the beds, chiefly in the Men's Surgical Wards, along with Mr Wishart, it appeared to him that one-half of the sheets were not in the clean state they ought to be ; and this defect appeared to proceed in part from their having been too long on the beds, and in part from being ill washed.† Mr Law states, that in his intercourse with the Matron, she seemed to him to indicate a wish to be over civil to him ;‡ and Mr Gillespie also states, that when he was in use, about two years before the inquiry took place, to mention defects to the Matron, she seemed to wish that he should

* Mr Sims' Letter in Minutes of Evidence, p. 103.

† Minutes of Evidence, p. 11.

‡ Ibid. p. 15.

ask those things as a favour, which he preferred stating to her in the way of injunction.* We see also, from the evidence of Dr Hamilton, that when a Nurse was desired by him to be dismissed, on account of her unfitness for her situation, from dullness or stupidity, that the Matron, instead of complying with his injunction, contented herself with merely transferring this Nurse from a Medical into a Surgical Ward.† It appears also, from the evidence of Mr Gillespie, that on one occasion, a Nurse was removed from the Surgical Ward to one of the Medical ones, against the express wish of the Surgeons, and even though they made application in writing for her being restored, it was not attended to; and that on another occasion, when the Surgeons requested a Nurse to be dismissed for drunkenness, the Matron removed the Nurse down stairs to one of the Medical Wards.‡ In another instance, mentioned by Mr Welsh, a Nurse, who had taken up a poker, and threatened to strike a Patient in the Soldiers' Fever Ward, was put up to the Surgeons' Ward;§ and it will be seen, from Mr Tweedie's evidence, that a Nurse, turn-

* Minutes of Evidence, p. 17.

† Id. p. 5.

‡ Id. p. 19.

§ Id. p. 61.

ed off at Mr Law's desire, on account of prevarication, was readmitted three weeks afterwards by the Matron.* We have a proof of the same disposition in the fact, that the beef steaks and broth prepared for the visit of the Extraordinary Managers on the 3d January, 1818,† were excellent, while the broth the day after were such as appeared to more than one Medical Gentleman who tasted it, to afford an average specimen of the bad qualities of the broth of the Infirmary.‡ The method which the Matron took of revenging herself upon the Clerks for the complaints which they had ventured to make with regard to the food and bedding of the Patients, and the very extraordinary manner in which these complaints were judged and disposed of by Mr Wilson, may be seen by referring to the 55th page of the Minutes of Evidence. That Gentleman, Mr Jardine, and several of the Managers, know well, that these complaints did not originate with the four Clerks, who have been already so often alluded to ; but that they

* Minutes of Evidence, p. 32.

† See proceedings of the Court of Contributors, as reported in the Scotsman Newspaper of January, Speeches of Sir William Forbes, and Dr Stewart.

‡ Minutes of Evidence, p. 63.

had been sometimes expressed verbally, and sometimes in writing, in the course of the years 1814, 15, and 16, as may be still substantiated, were it necessary, by several of the gentlemen who lived in the Infirmary as Clerks during these years. It was quite consistent with the knowledge of the four Clerks, that their predecessors had often made, with the concurrence of the Medical Officers, under whom they acted, representations, both verbal and written, respecting the food and bedding of the patients; and that these representations had produced a slight, though, in general, but temporary improvement. But the liberty which Mrs Montgomery is proved to have taken, without the knowledge, it must be presumed at the time, either of the Managers or Medical Officers of the Infirmary, of diminishing the quantity of nutritious matter in the food of the Patients, is, with me, the head and front of her offending; and that she should have been allowed to practise this so long, or that, after it was discovered, attempts should have been made to palliate or defend it, are to me perfectly unaccountable.

I shall not stop to enquire, how far the Miller's suspicions, with regard to the presence of barley-

meal in his porridge, were well founded ; nor what the precise state of the oat-meal, or of the porridge, was in the Infirmary at the time that had given rise to this opinion in the mind of the Miller ; one thing, however, has been established, by evidence that is incontrovertible, that the quantity of meal allotted to five persons at the time this Miller was a patient in the Infirmary, is at present consumed by three.* But there is surely nothing in the Statement of the Clerks, with regard to this man's evidence, that could warrant, in the slightest degree, the insinuation that the Miller's assertion had " existed only in their imagination." Neither shall I enter into the inquiry, how far the tough parts of meat are rendered tender by putrescence ; nor how far tainted meat may be rendered tough by long boiling ; nor whether the complaints of toughness and putridity were made by the same persons about the same piece of meat ; because it is enough for me to find it recorded, " that of 104 Patients, 47 complained that the meat was tough, in small quantity, and occasionally old and putrid;" while others affirm,

* Minutes of Evidence, p. 46. and Tables, p. 128-9.

that "the steaks were hard, tough, and bad smelled;"* because I find it also in evidence, that the pieces of meat allotted for steaks to Patients were frequently observed by the Medical Officers to be very unfit for the purpose of being so used; and because I have myself seen, since this inquiry commenced, a portion of meat which had been allotted for a steak to a patient in the Infirmary, which consisted almost solely of skin and membrane. It was such a portion of meat, I am convinced, as never was served out for a steak in any other Hospital in Britain.

Of what consequence can it be to the poor admitted into the Infirmary, or to the public of Edinburgh, to be informed that the Diet of that Hospital had been fixed forty or fifty years ago by able Physicians? since it is certain that, even if any Diet Tables had been formed, they had long ceased to exist, and that their existence was completely unknown to a succession of Matrons and Medical Practitioners. It is not, I must remind the Right Honourable Manager, by the articles enumerated in the printed Statutes of the

* Statement of the Clerks in Minutes of Evidence, p. 100.

Infirmary, without their quantity being fixed, or by the quantity of some of these articles stated to have been fixed in the private Diet Tables of Dr Home, or of Dr Spens, that we can ever judge of the sufficiency of the food which has been actually supplied to Patients in the Infirmary. It would therefore have been highly gratifying to the public, if, instead of being informed of the inferiority of the food in St Anne Street, and of that of the farm-servants of a tenant on the estate of Granton, to the Full Diet of the Royal Infirmary, the Right Honourable Manager had been able to inform the Court of Contributors, that either he or any of the other Managers, had ever seen the victuals served out to the Patients in the Infirmary, and that this comparison had, in all its parts, been founded upon actual observation. It has been proved in evidence, that the quantity of food supplied to Patients in the Royal Infirmary, has had no fixed relation to the number of Patients in that House, and that this, as well as the quality, has been changed according to the discretion of the Matrons. The very extraordinary liberties which were taken in these matters by the late Mrs Montgomery, have ended in bringing to open

disclosure a variety of circumstances respecting the food of patients in the Infirmary, which were known to and regretted by most families in Edinburgh, who have ever had occasion to recommend poor persons, or to send their servants to that House. Until these families, therefore, can forget the frequent private demands that have been made upon them for provisions by those for whom they had procured admission into the Infirmary, it is in vain for the Right Honourable Manager to boast of the "fish, fowl, chicken, eggs, all kinds of fruits in their seasons, nay, even grapes from the hot-house, in addition to the usual allowance of the Infirmary," that are permitted by the Managers to be prescribed by their Medical Officers. The enumeration which the Right Honourable Manager has given of the luxuries of the table to be enjoyed in the Royal Infirmary, reminds us of the story of Schacabac; and it will be fortunate for the patients who may have heard of these delicacies, if, like Schacabac, they are ever feasted in reality with these very things which hitherto they have been entertained with only in imagination. I am quite aware that the articles which the Right Honourable Manager has alluded to may be, and

occasionally are prescribed by the Medical Officers of the Infirmary. But were this a general practice, as one might be led, by the Right Honourable Manager's speech, to imagine, I should not regard it either as a proof of good management, or of the sufficiency of the general diet of the House, but of the contrary. How far the ordinary diet of the Infirmary can even at present be considered as sufficient, notwithstanding the improvements that have been made in it, in consequence of the experiments of the learned Professor of Chemistry, may be estimated from the Table to be found at p. 129 of the Minutes of Evidence. From an average taken of the food consumed on the three last days of the month of January 1818, in the Royal Infirmary, it appears that the expense for the provisions for each individual, including Matrons, Apothecaries, Clerks, Nurses, and Servants, as well as Patients, amounted to the sum nearly of *five-pence* and *one farthing* daily ; that, of this sum, four-pence was for bread, meal, beer, and milk, and that *one penny farthing* was all that remained for the expense of beef steaks, and of the meat, barley, groats, and potatoes, used for making the broth, which, by so high an authority in these

matters as the Professor of Chemistry, had been declared to be "palatable," and "quite suitable" for the ordinary broth of the Infirmary.* How far it may be possible to detect by chemical agents the presence of animal matter in such broth, I leave it to the Professor of Chemistry to determine; but surely it need not now excite any astonishment, that, by the ordinary test of the tongue, various individuals should not have been able to detect the presence of animal matter in the broth of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

I agree with the Right Honourable Manager, in the opinion, that the food of the Patients should be regulated by the food which they had previously been in the habit of taking at their own homes; but I cannot permit myself to believe that the meal allotted for the porridge of each patient in the Royal Infirmary, ought to have been nearly one-half less in the year 1817, than that which we know is allotted in 1818, or that the quantity of meat used in making the broth of the Patients in that House, should be so much less than it is in other similar Hospitals. Nor can I suffer myself to believe that the practice which is proved

* Minutes of Evidence, p. 91.

to have existed in the Infirmary of Edinburgh, of allowing the diet to be regulated in so great a degree by the discretion of the Matron, is one which ought to have been permitted to exist, as it appears to have been; for a series of years, either by the Managers or the Medical Officers of that Institution. I should be happy to learn that this great defect was now remedied by the adoption of Diet Tables, similar to those that are employed in other Hospitals. That Tables of this kind should have been so long of being adopted and enforced, is another proof of the tardiness with which obvious improvements are introduced into the practice of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh; or, in other words, of the length of time which they must remain under the consideration of its Managers.

It will be seen from the Tables annexed to the Minutes of Evidence, that a most remarkable diminution in the expence of the maintenance of the Hospital took place the year after the appointment of the late Matron, and continued to the commencement of the present year.* This diminution is such as cannot be accounted for,

* See Minutes of Evidence, Tables, p. 116, 117.

without supposing that a great diminution had also been made in the food ; a circumstance which enables us to perceive readily why this food of late years should have been so very generally complained of by the patients. This diminution in the expenditure for the provisions of the House, could not fail to have attracted the notice of the Managers ; and it is singular, that they should not have been led to inquire into the circumstances which enabled Mrs Montgomery to maintain the patients at so much less expence than her predecessor. Can it be that the Managers' admiration of Mrs Montgomery's economy prevented them from discovering the *secret* of it, and operated, at the same time, as an encouragement to her to persevere in that mistaken parsimony which has given rise to the present inquiry ?

I am doubtful how far the public will admit, as sufficient or proper, the apology which the Right Honourable Gentleman has made for the Managers for the support which they conceived it to be necessary to give to the late Matron, in the various disagreements which had existed between her and a succession of Clerks, relative to the Food and Bedding of the Patients in the In-

firmary. Neither my acquaintance with human nature in general, nor with Charitable Institutions in particular, will allow me to believe in the necessity of investing any individual in the management of the Royal Infirmary with arbitrary and despotic power; but if such power must be lodged somewhere in that House, the Matron surely is not the person in whom it ought to be vested, nor the Clerks the persons over whom it ought to be exercised; for no one acquainted with the nature of the duties of the Clerks in the Infirmary, can suppose, for a moment, that it could be for the advantage of the Hospital, that, in the performance of these duties towards their patients, the Clerks should be in any degree under the superintendence and controul of the Matron. Are we to understand, that a belief in the necessity of supporting the Matron in the exercise of a despotic power, so distinctly avowed by the Right Honourable Manager, was the reason, why, in the disputes which occurred between that person and the Clerks, relative to the Food and Bedding of the Patients, the Managers should have deemed it their duty, on all occasions, to give the Matron their unqualified support; and that it was to this absurd and mis-

taken principle of government, in the management of the Royal Infirmary, that the welfare and comforts of the Patients in that Institution, were, in reality, sacrificed for a series of years?

I cannot regard the explanation which the Right Honourable Manager has given respecting the Lock Ward, as at all satisfactory. The great necessity which has ever existed for a Lock Hospital in Edinburgh, does not arise, I must inform the Right Honourable Manager, so much from the presence of a Lock Ward in the Infirmary, as from the prevalence of a practice in that House, of which he has not chosen to take any notice, but which, I conceive, I had sufficiently explained, by merely alluding to it in pages 39 and 40 of my former Letter. It is a practice most disgraceful to the Institution, and one which, so long as it is permitted to exist, renders it impossible, I affirm, to preserve cleanliness, or any thing like the appearance of common decency, in the Wards of the Infirmary. It must appear to every one quite unaccountable, that this practice, or the filthy and neglected state of the Lock Ward, should have been topics of anxiety with the Managers for 10 or 12 years, without some attempt having been made to remedy these

evils. Neither can I consider the excuse of the want of funds to fit up another house as satisfactory on this head ; because I am credibly informed, that the Managers, not only “ have often had their eyes on the house near the Infirmary,” but that, some years ago, this house was actually fitted up by the Managers, and that bedsteads were placed in it for the reception of Venereal Patients ; and that, after all this expense had been uselessly laid out, and the building had stood empty for some years, it was again converted into dwelling-houses. After being thus fitted up, but little additional expense could have been incurred by treating the Venereal Patients in a separate establishment ; and I must still suspect, that it was not the want of funds to dispose of, which prevented the intention of the Managers from being carried into execution, but the very circumstance to which I have alluded in my former Letter. Besides, I am not disposed to admit, nor do I conceive that the public will admit, the want of funds as a valid excuse for the existence of this or any other glaring defect in the Royal Infirmary, when it is considered that the Managers have not, of late years, made any representation of

the necessity of their being enabled to remedy such defects, to the Contributors, or to the Inhabitants of Edinburgh, nor have made any public call for their assistance—a call which the liberality of the public in former times, and particularly on the occasion of the late collection, sufficiently shows would not have been disregarded.

With respect to that part of the Right Honourable Manager's speech, in which he charges the Author of the Letter to the Court of Contributors, as having brought an accusation against the Treasurer, I have to remark, that I must have been very unfortunate in the expressions I used relating to Mr Jardine, if they can admit of such an interpretation ; because I know that I wished to be neither unjust, nor sparing of praise to that gentleman. What I have affirmed in my former Letter with regard to the delegation of duty, was not meant as an accusation against the Treasurer, but was the simple expression of a fact well known to every person connected with the Infirmary, and supported, I conceive, to the extent for which I wished the assertion to receive credit, by the evidence of Mr Wilson, his partner.* I can subscribe, with pleasure, to the eulogium

* Minutes of Evidence, p. 52.

which the Right Honourable Manager has made on the zeal and diligence with which the services of the Treasurer have been rendered to the Infirmary. That Mr Jardine has performed, for many years, the duties of a House-Governor in that Institution; that he has attended regularly the Monthly Meetings of the Managers; and that he has taken a most active part in all the concerns of the Infirmary, there can be no doubt. But with whatever benevolence and good intentions these services have been performed, they have been, I have reason to believe, one of the many causes which have operated in separating the Medical Officers of the Infirmary from a more immediate and direct intercourse with the Managers; an intercourse without which I am satisfied, from all I have been able to learn of the nature of such Institutions, and in particular of the affairs of that in question, the Managers of the Royal Infirmary can never be enabled to conduct the practical details of the Hospital committed to their charge, either to the full benefit of the Patients, or to the entire satisfaction of the Public. This separation, I may be permitted to add, has been greatly increased, instead of

being diminished, by the almost daily attendance of Mr Jardine's partner in the Infirmary, and by the adoption and operation of the 15th Regulation, which enacts, that " Upon observing any impropriety in the House, they (the Clerks), are immediately to communicate the same to the Treasurer, in order that he may either acquaint the Managers thereof, *or take such steps as he may think proper for correcting the same.*"

I forbear to say any thing of the epithets which the Right Honourable Manager has been pleased to bestow upon my former Letter, or of the motives which he has assigned for its publication. I have the satisfaction to feel they are not applicable, and am willing to believe that these insinuations and epithets must have escaped from him during the mingled feelings excited by the disagreeable truths which that Letter contains. The Vocabulary of the English language lies open to me, as well as to the Right Honourable Manager; and did I choose it, it certainly would not be difficult to select and to apply to the speech, reported to have been delivered by him to the Court of Contributors, terms which to some the occasion may seem to require, and to others, his

example to justify. But feeling, as I do, that I have no purpose to serve in any thing that relates to the concerns of the Royal Infirmary, but to contribute, as far as lies in my power, to the utility and permanent good of that Institution, I abstain willingly from every expression of re- crimination, that might tend to irritate farther the feelings of those who must have the same objects in view with myself with regard to the Infirmary, however much our opinions may be at variance as to the means by which these objects can be best obtained. Before concluding this Letter, however, I feel it due to myself, in relation to the Right Honourable Manager, upon whose reported speech I have animadverted so freely, to state, that no one could feel more disappointed than I did at the part which he took in the proceedings of the late Meeting of the Court of Contributors ; because, from the liberal views which he is known to have entertained with regard to the Infirmary, and the generous efforts which, I have been informed, he made on a former occasion to improve the Surgical department of that Institution, as well as from the known active benevolence of his character, I had expected, that, in opposition to all personal feelings which might arise from a

supposed imputation of neglect on the part of the Managers, he would have set an example worthy of imitation to the other Members of that Body, by entering heartily into the consideration and consequent adoption of every suggestion which could tend to improve the condition of the sick poor admitted into that Institution. That the Right Honourable Gentleman has not done so, must have arisen, I conceive, either from his suffering himself to believe that the late investigation into the state of the Royal Infirmary, bore in it something of the appearance of a political character, or from his allowing his judgment to be misled by information given to him by persons who entertain opinions with regard to the Infirmary, and other public Institutions in Edinburgh, far less liberal and enlightened than his own.

But the judgment in the case of the late Inquiry into the defective State of the Royal Infirmary, has now, by the printing of the Minutes of Evidence, and of the Report of your Committee, passed from you, Gentlemen, as a Court of Contributors, to the Tribunal of the Public; and in following it to that Tribunal, I have, with the

Right Honourable Manager, the satisfaction to feel, that my conscience approves of the efforts which I have now and formerly made, by the publication of my opinions, to secure for the Sick Poor, admitted into the Infirmary, all the benefits which the public intends, and has a right to expect, they shall receive in that Hospital. But in order to obtain and to secure the permanence of those benefits, material changes, I am persuaded, must be made in the management of that Institution—by correcting the error which has crept into the practice of the Royal Infirmary, in the perpetual re-election of the same persons to be Ordinary Managers—by the Court of Contributors exercising some control over the nomination of the Medical Officers, and rendering them more independent than they are at present of the favour of the Managers—by establishing a more free and frequent intercourse between the Medical Officers and Managers of the Infirmary—by following a different mode in choosing those who are to assist the Medical Officers, as Clerks and Dressers—and by improving the condition of the Nurses, and enforcing, by a vigilant inspection, the proper performance of their duties

to the Patients; an object which, it appears to me, could be best promoted by the appointment of Visitors, who should, at unstated hours, visit the Infirmary, and examine into the conduct of its subordinate agents. Were these changes effected, they could not fail to remedy many defects which still exist in the Institution, particularly to occasion the adoption and observance of a better system of Regulations with regard to Food and Bedding, than has hitherto prevailed in the Royal Infirmary—and to prevent the recurrence of many of those evils, the accumulation of which has given rise to the late Inquiry.

COMMITTEE

Appointed at the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of CONTRIBUTORS to the ROYAL INFIRMARY of Edinburgh, held on the 5th January, 1818, to Inquire into the State of that Hospital.

FRANCIS JEFFREY, Esq.	LORD BALGRAY
THOMAS THOMSON, Esq.	SIR WM. RAE
J. A. MURRAY, Esq.	Rev. Principal BAIRD
J. F. ERSKINE of Mar, Esq.	WM. ARBUTHNOT, Esq.
ALEXANDER MUNRO, Esq.	ALEX. DUNCAN, W. S.
Lieut.-General MAXWELL	ROBERT DUNDAS, W. S.
SIR WM. FETTES, Bart.	JAMES DUNDAS, W. S.
ADAM MAITLAND, Esq.	LEONARD HORNER, Esq.
JOHN CRAIG, Esq.	JOHN WIGHAM, Esq.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE OF CONTRIBUTORS,

READ AT THE ADJOURNED MEETING OF THE COURT OF
CONTRIBUTORS, HELD ON 30TH MARCH, 1818.

Extracted from Caledonian Mercury Newspaper, March 28, 1818.

IN reporting to the Court of Contributors the result of the inquiries which the Committee were instructed to make into "the state of the Hospital, and particularly into the matters which had been complained of in the domestic management of the House," the Committee beg leave, in the first place, to state what has been the general course and scope of their proceedings, and the limits within which they have judged it expedient to confine their investigations.

The subjects to which the Committee conceived it to be the intention of the Contributors that their inquiries should be directed, were principally three :—namely, the state of the Hospital as to cleanliness, and other circumstances in the domestic arrangements and economy of the House, immediately connected with the personal comfort of the patients ;—the state of the ordinary diet, as actually administered, both as to its quality and its quantity ;—and the general character and conduct of those subordinate attendants in the House, to whose personal care and attention, in the absence of the Medical Officers, the patients are principally entrusted.

In the view of obtaining the requisite information on these several heads, as well as on every collateral point affecting the actual state of the Infirmary, the Committee determined to resort to the best and most unsuspected testimony within their reach, and have accordingly obtained the declarations of the Medical Officers who are now connected with the Establishment, or who have been connected with it within the last few years, with the exception of such only as were either no longer resident in Edinburgh, or were prevented by indisposition from attending the Committee ; and in order that the examination of those gentlemen might be rendered as complete and useful as possible, the Managers were requested to depute some of their number to be present on all such occasions.

The examination of the Medical Gentlemen connected with the Infirmary, has proved much more laborious, and has extended to a much greater length, than the Committee could have anticipated ; and on deliberately considering the import and effect of the voluminous evidence which had thus been obtained, the Committee, for reasons which appeared to them invincible, and which are referred to in some of the minutes of their daily proceedings, determined to abstain from the examination of nurses, patients, and servants. In limiting their investigations to the testimony chiefly of the Medical Officers, and to certain written documents bearing upon the subject of inquiry, the Committee apprehend that enough has been done to enable the Court of Contributors to form a useful opinion on the main points of the case ; and in now laying the whole of the evidence before the Contributors, accompanied with such other documents as appeared to them of importance, the Committee shall confine their observations on the result of this inquiry within very narrow bounds.

The Committee conceive it to be almost unnecessary to offer their testimony to the excellence of the medical treatment of the patients

in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh ; for they believe it to be universally acknowledged, that from the arrangements which have been long established, the patients in this Hospital receive every aid from medical skill and experience which the most wealthy individuals could have it in their power to command ; and that there is probably no institution of the kind where the prime object of healing the sick and diseased has been prosecuted with more eminent ability or success.

In evidence of this general statement, the Committee are happy in being able to concur with the Managers in appealing to the very low average number of the deaths that have occurred in the Royal Infirmary ; and they have much satisfaction in directing the attention of the Contributors and of the Public to that fact, not only as it bears on the medical conduct of the Hospital, but as it may serve to demonstrate, that whatever defects may have existed at any time in the domestic economy or arrangements of the House, these never have been of a nature or extent that has perceptibly interfered with the great and primary purpose of the Institution, as a receptacle for the sick and diseased among the lower classes of the community.

At the same time, on a review of the evidence, both written and parole, which has come under their consideration, the Committee are of opinion, that there have existed some errors and defects in the ordinary domestic economy of the House ; and that the established arrangements have failed to prevent the occasional occurrence of circumstances injurious to the comfort of patients, and affecting the general character and repute of this most interesting and most useful adjunct to the great Medical School of Edinburgh.

In stating this as the result of their inquiries, the Committee are fully impressed with the conviction, that the evils which may have existed have arisen even in spite of great zeal, anxiety, and active benevolence, on the part of the Ordinary Managers, in the discharge of their official duty. Of the disposition of the Managers to rectify neglects and disorders, when aware of their existence, the Committee do not entertain the slightest doubt ; and it is with sincere satisfaction they have it in their power to state, that for a considerable time past the Managers appear to have been diligently employed in preparing and introducing various practical improvements in the state and conduct of the House. Whatever defects have formerly existed, or may yet exist, the Committee apprehend that these ought to be regarded as the almost insensible growth of a system, imperfect in some

of its subordinate checks and means of controul, rather than as the consequences of culpable oversight in any of the higher classes of Officers connected with the Establishment.

The particular defects to which the Committee would beg leave to direct the attention of the Contributors, as appearing in evidence, are the following :—

1st, It appears, that, at no very remote period, the state of the bedding in the House was faulty ; and that cleanliness and comfort in that article were not uniformly or effectually secured. To this object, however, the attention of the Managers has been directed ; and the Committee have much satisfaction in reporting, that in the course of the last year, such measures had been adopted and carried into execution, as appear to have left little or no ground for present complaint on this head.

2d, It appears, that the requisite degree of attention has not been paid to the cleanliness of the persons of the patients ; and the Committee beg leave to suggest to the Managers, that some more efficient regulation on that head ought to be adopted and enforced. They may further submit it as a subject for their consideration, how far it may be practicable to have a sufficient supply of body linen for those patients, the scantiness of whose provision in that respect seems at present to preclude the possibility of ensuring personal cleanliness. As connected with this branch of the economy of the House, the Committee may add, that in the several Wards of the Infirmary, the ordinary supply of furniture and utensils has of late been enlarged ; and that a set of baths for the use of patients are in progress.

3d, On the subject of diet, it appears in evidence, that although the regulations respecting it have not been reduced into tables, as in many other Hospitals, yet for many years back there has been a known system and routine for the ordinary diet of the several classes of patients, which appears to have been adopted and continued with the approbation of the Medical Advisers of the House. It farther appears, that in the general arrangement for procuring articles of food of the best quality, there does not exist any defect. At the same time, on a review of the evidence before them, the Committee are of opinion, that in the preparation of the food of the House, as well as in the quantities of it actually served out to the patients, the practice of late years has occasionally erred on the side of a too rigid economy ; the natural consequence of which has been to aggravate the extent and effect of those irregularities, which unavoidably attach to the

daily preparation and distribution of food for some hundreds of individuals. To this important subject, however, the attention of the Managers and of the Medical Officers has been directed for a considerable time past; and the Committee shall merely express their hope, that their deliberations will lead to the adoption of regular diet tables, such as seem to be generally in use in other Hospitals of this description; and that in the actual administration of their ordinary diet, there will be left to the patients and their friends no apology or pretence for introducing into the Wards supplies of additional food, in violation of positive rule, and of the injunctions imposed on the ordinary attendants of the House.

4th, On the subject of diet, the Committee beg leave further to offer it as their opinion, that in the mode of serving it out to the patients, a due degree of attention has not been paid to cleanliness and comfort. To the greater number of patients who resort to this establishment, it is not a great deal in this respect that can be required as essentially necessary for their comfort and accommodation; and the Committee feel assured, from recent observation, that to this subject the attention of the Managers is sufficiently awake.

5th, From the concurring testimony of all those connected with the Hospital, it evidently appears, that there has existed the utmost difficulty in procuring the service of Nurses, whose character and habits are such as to ensure regularity and fidelity in the discharge of their laborious and disagreeable duties. It is unquestionably to the low qualifications of a great proportion of this class of attendants, that the most offensive defects in the state of the Hospital have been chiefly owing; and it appears to the Committee to be a subject deserving and requiring the most serious consideration, how far it may be truly practicable to engage the services of a better description of Nurses than heretofore. The difficulties which may attend the attempt, the Committee have no inclination to diminish or disguise; and without meaning to prescribe the fittest course to be adopted by the Managers, they will merely beg leave to submit, that unless the rate of wages paid to Nurses shall exceed that of ordinary domestic servants, in the middle classes of society, it will be impossible to draw into this laborious and disagreeable line of service, any individuals but such as from character and habits are nearly unfit for every other.

6th, On the subject of cleanliness and comfort, the Committee have only further to observe, that defects in those respects appear to have existed in a greater degree in what is called the Lock Ward, than in

any other part of the House. For this it would not perhaps be difficult to assign a probable cause ; but the Committee feel more anxious to state it as their opinion, that it would redound to the general credit and repute of the Establishment, and perhaps to the advantage of this unhappy class of patients, that they should be removed into a house completely detached from the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

On a general review of the evidence, the Committee apprehend, that the Contributors will concur with them in thinking, that while there appear to have existed defects in the state and arrangements of the Royal Infirmary not undeserving of their notice, and of the serious consideration of those to whom the ordinary management of the Institution has been committed, yet that the complaints on those heads which had gone abroad have been in some instances exaggerated much beyond what the facts now in evidence appear to justify, while in some other instances they are unsupported or disproved. In matters of this kind, a great deal of mis-statement is but too common, and must be carefully guarded against in forming a fair and useful opinion on the subject of the present inquiry ; yet it cannot be either necessary or useful to disguise what appears to be the prevailing opinion of the Medical Gentlemen who have been examined, and who have recently visited other hospitals, that not many months ago the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh was, in point of cleanliness and general attention to the comforts of the patients, inferior to most other hospitals they had seen ; and that the improvements in its domestic economy and arrangements, by which it may now challenge a more favourable opinion, have not been dated beyond the middle of the last year. At the same time, it is fit to bear in mind, that in almost every other hospital of which the Committee have received any information, the rate of expense bestowed on the support of the Establishment exceeds that of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

While such appears to be the fact, and while at the same time the Committee feel the deepest conviction that the Ordinary Managers have been actuated by a degree of zeal for the welfare of the Institution which could not be exceeded by any other individuals in their situation, it has presented itself to the Committee, as an observation of the utmost importance, that the existing arrangements and course of proceeding in the management of this Institution cannot possibly have been such as to bring fairly, fully, and promptly, under the notice of the Managers the errors and defects which, from time to time, may be generated and suffered to spring up in the practical details of

the Establishment. And looking, as they have anxiously done, to the real evidence of the case, as well as to the opinions of the Medical Officers of the Hospital, the Committee feel no hesitation in offering it as their opinion, that there has not hitherto existed a sufficient facility of *official* intercourse between the Medical Attendants of the Hospital and the Ordinary Managers ; and though not prepared to propose any complete and regular plan, the Committee would beg leave to suggest, that the communication of the observations and sentiments of the Medical Officers ought not to be left to depend on casual intercourse, or to be thrown into indirect and circuitous channels ; but that at the stated meetings of the Managers, and certainly not less than once in every quarter, the Physicians and Surgeons of the House ought, *ex officio*, to be present, for the purpose of deliberation on the state of the Hospital ; and that the Clerks and inferior Medical Attendants should be required to record whatever may, from time to time, occur to them as calling for attention or correction, in order that the information thus afforded may be brought under the notice of the Managers with the utmost facility and certainty.

The Committee do not venture to predict, that the arrangements now suggested will, of themselves, be fully sufficient to prevent the recurrence of those grounds of complaint to which they have adverted ; and they are of opinion, that in the system of mutual control among the inferior officers and servants of the establishment some new and additional provisions will be required.

In speaking of the existing arrangements under which the Royal Infirmary has been governed, the Committee must be permitted to observe, that in the annual election of Managers, (when, according to the bye-laws of the Corporation, not less than four, and not more than six of their number should be changed,) the uniform practice has been to throw the whole of the change into the class of Extraordinary Managers ; a description of civil officers who, by other arrangements, and in actual practice, have been reduced nearly to absolute insignificance. While the Committee, the Contributors, and the Public, cannot fail to be aware, and to acknowledge, that the present Ordinary Managers cannot possibly be replaced by others, who, as individuals, are more amply entitled to their utmost confidence and gratitude for their generous and disinterested services ; the Committee are of opinion, that in the perpetual re-election of the same individuals, a great practical error has been committed ; and that in the present, as in every analogous case, the natural, though perhaps unforeseen

consequence of the system has been, to intercept and annihilate a great deal of individual activity and zeal which might have been brought to bear on the prosperity of the Institution, and to prevent or destroy, at numberless points, that immediate contact with the Public, without which no institution, dependant on public favour and support, can hope to maintain its ground.

To this conclusion the Committee have been drawn in part by attending to the present state of the ordinary funds of the Royal Infirmary, which, notwithstanding the prudence and economy employed in the management, have been found scarcely adequate to the increasing expenditure of the Establishment. On comparing the actual income and actual expenditure, it manifestly appears to have been the anxious and benevolent purpose of the Managers to extend the benefits of the Institution to the greatest number of individuals whom the House was capable of receiving; and during the last year of epidemical sickness, the demands upon the Charity have of course been more numerous and urgent than perhaps at any former period. On this account, it is not without anxiety that the Committee look forward to the possible adoption of the measures which they have ventured to suggest, and which, of course, could not be carried into execution without entailing on the House some increase of expenditure in proportion to the number of its patients. Perhaps, however, they might be warranted in supposing, that the actual adoption of those improvements, by attracting the increased confidence and favour of the Public, might in the end,—probably within a very short period, enable the Managers to extend the benefits of the Charity to a number as great, if not greater, than the most parsimonious employment of their present income could enable them to accomplish. But be that as it may, the Committee cannot conclude their Report without urging on the immediate attention of the Contributors the propriety of appealing to the Public to come forward in aid of an Institution so important to the health of the lower orders, and constituting so essential a part of that school of medicine for which this city has been so long and so justly celebrated.

All which is humbly reported.

We, the undersigned Members of the Committee of Inquiry, while we concur in many of the statements contained in the forego-

ing Report, feel ourselves called upon to record our sentiments on the following points :—

1st, That when the Report mentions that there have existed some errors and defects in the ordinary domestic economy of the House, it says nothing of the rules under which that domestic economy is conducted, so as to enable the Contributors to judge of their fitness for the object in view, and of the deviations from them which are alleged to have taken place in practice.

On this head, it appears to us necessary to bring to the recollection of the General Court, that this Institution was one of the earliest of the kind in the kingdom, erected under many disadvantages ; and indeed the difficulties were so great, that nothing but the unbounded patriotism of the Chief Magistrate of the City and of a few noble and wealthy individuals, could possibly have overcome them. The period at which the House was erected did not afford the opportunity of benefiting by experience. The mode of construction, and the proper manner of finishing such buildings, was not then so well understood as now, but every thing essential to the recovery of the sick was duly provided. Besides, the scantiness of funds necessarily prevented that scale of accommodation which might otherwise have been adopted, but which, if attempted, must at once have precluded the extensive benefit which has been derived from the Institution ; and the same cause has prevented the adoption of many improvements at subsequent periods.

The ordinary Managers are twelve in number ; of these the President of the College of Physicians, the Professor of Anatomy, one Professor of Medicine, and two Members of the College of Surgeons form a part. By the terms of the Charter, the Ordinary Managers are directed to meet on four stated days annually ; but it has been the practice for the Managers to meet regularly once a month ; and in the course of last year, in consequence of the influx of fever patients, it was resolved that these meetings should be held once a week. Besides this the Managers individually and in succession visit the Hospital at various intermediate periods.

From this summary it appears to us, that both the civil and medical administration of this Hospital is as complete as can well be devised ; and we perfectly agree in opinion with the Heads of the Medical Department, that if the Rules of the Institution are conscientiously observed by the different persons to whom they apply, the great objects of it must be attained.

2dly, That while the Report bears, that the complaints against the Hospital, " which had gone abroad, have been in some instances exaggerated much beyond what the facts now in evidence appear to justify, while in some other instances they are unsupported or disproved," it does not apply these observations to any of the statements, deliberately made at the last General Meeting, or to the charges afterwards given in to the Committee in writing ; neither does it draw the attention of the Contributors to those charges, so as to enable them to see how little they have been supported by the proof.

Those charges, it will be in the recollection of the General Court, were of the most serious nature, and justly exciting the attention of every humane person, and every well-wisher of the Institution. In the statements regarding these, as appearing in the Appendix, " the existence of several gross and extraordinary abuses" is asserted. The food for patients is said to be occasionally bad in quality, and in general altogether insufficient in quantity, insomuch that, in one case, the quantity was totally " inadequate to support nature ;" and that if the patient had not had supplies from other quarters " he would have died for want." The statement, that the mode of distributing beef-steaks was by throwing them on the beds of the patients when raw, was also of a nature that could not fail to excite feelings of great dissatisfaction, perhaps even of disgust, against the management of the Hospital.

The Treasurer (whose salary seems not sufficient to pay the Clerks employed by him in the Hospital's affairs) is in use, either personally, or by means of his partner, to attend the Hospital almost daily, and thus gratuitously to give his attention to the domestic economy of the Establishment.

The Chaplain of the Hospital, instead of confining his attention to his proper duties on Sunday, is in the laudable practice of visiting all the wards twice a-week.

The Matron is, by the rules of the Hospital, bound to visit the wards every day.

The Medical Attendants consist of two Physicians and two Surgeons ; and at a precise hour, they daily visit the patients in the Hospital, a certain number of whom are under the charge of each of those practitioners. These visits are made in presence of the House Clerks, and of such of the Students of the University as chuse to attend.

Besides these, there are four consulting Surgeons, who are occasionally employed, and who are in use, from time to time, to visit

the wards ; and there are four Clerks or House Surgeons, who constantly reside in the House ; to each of whom the inspection of a certain number of wards is especially allotted. It is the duty of these Clerks to visit the patients in the wards frequently every day, and specially to attend to every thing relative to their comfort or their cure, whether it may regard medicine, diet, or cleanliness. And by regulation, No. 15, it is enjoined, " That upon observing any impropriety in the House, they are immediately to communicate the same to the Treasurer, in order that he may either acquaint the Managers, or take such steps as he may think proper for correcting the same."

In addition to these, there are certain Physicians and Surgeons connected with the Clinical Wards, and Clerks are also attached to these.

The beds were said to be " filthy and insufficient in many instances," and the sheets " too disgusting to admit of an attempt to describe them ;" and that these were often not changed for " seven or eight weeks :"—That there are " no traces of the blankets being cleaned or scoured :"—That not only the bodies of the patients, but some of the beds, are " from neglect, swarming with lice ;" and that patients " have caught the itch in the Hospital." In short, that " the medical duties were the *only* ones well performed."

It appears to us that these, which were the most prominent charges, are all of them exaggerated—that most of them are unsupported by proof—while there are others, and those not the least important, which are clearly disproved.

3dly, It appears to us that the Report is calculated to convey the idea, that, previous to the complaints by the junior Medical Officers in July last, no steps whatever had been taken by the Managers, calculated in any respect to improve this Institution : Now we are of opinion, that the management has been all along in a gradual course of improvement, though the limited nature of the income, which, on an average of years, has been exceeded by the expenditure, prevented the adoption of expensive alterations. It is in evidence, that at various times improvements took place relative to the bed-steads and bedding ; that water-closets were introduced ; and an improved washing-house was fully resolved upon early in the year 1817. In the preceding year a revival of the rules of 1804 took place, and a complete set of rules and regulations for every department in the domestic economy of the House were prepared and promulgated by the Managers ;

and had the junior Medical Officers duly observed these rules, by communicating the first instances of occasional neglect or inattention as they occurred, we are convinced that such remedies would have been applied, as would in a great measure have prevented the recurrence of any such incidents.

4thly, It appears to us, that the statement in the Report is also calculated to convey the idea, that the ordinary diet of the Hospital is insufficient, and affords an apology for introducing into the Wards additional food, contrary to the rules of the House. It appears to us, that there is no ground for this idea. The ordinary diet is declared to be suitable by the four Physicians attending in the House; and they, as well as the Surgeons, have the unlimited power, which they are in the constant habit of exercising, of ordering either additions in quantity, or a variety in the kind of food, &c. as may suit the case of each individual patient. The alterations as to diet, now in contemplation, appear to relate, not to the quantity, but to the introduction of greater variety in the stated Hospital allowances.

5thly, While we do not object to the suggestion in the Report for obviating the want of a facility of communication betwixt the Medical Department and the Managers, which seems to be felt by a part of the Medical Officers, we cannot avoid expressing our hope, that a more beneficial co-operation may take place, than an official meeting held quarterly seems calculated to produce: on this head, we think that the Report ought to have noticed the resolution of the Managers in September last, as to "the appointment of a respectable and intelligent Medical Man to reside in the House, take charge of the Apothecary's department, and have a general superintendence of the House." This appointment appears to us to be precisely such as the Medical Gentlemen suggest, for the improvement of the communication betwixt them and the Managers, and seems well calculated to prevent the occurrence of those occasional instances of inattention, which have given cause to complaint against the internal economy of this Establishment.

6thly, It appears to us, that the Report does not point out with sufficient precision the state of the Hospital at the period when this inquiry was moved for. From the statements which were then given, it must have been inferred, that the grounds of complaint brought forward were at that moment existing. It is now however proved, not only that the whole of these matters had been taken under the deliberate consideration of the Managers, many months before, and

that the most expedient measures had then been resolved upon, but that the improvements required were in progress, and even in most instances carried into effect, long previous to this inquiry being moved for.

Lastly, However much we should have been disposed at the outset to have recommended a different mode of proceeding, we earnestly join in the hope, that the result of this inquiry may tend to attract the increased confidence and favour of the public towards this Institution, to which, upon a full review of the evidence, we conceive it in every way most justly entitled.

DAVID ROBERTSON WILLIAMSON.

WILLIAM RAE.

GEORGE H. BAIRD.

WILLIAM ARBUTHNOT.

ALEXANDER DUNCAN.

ROBERT DUNDAS.

JAMES DUNDAS.

RESOLUTIONS

OF THE

GENERAL COURT OF CONTRIBUTORS,

HELD ON THE 30TH MARCH, 1818.

Extracted from Caledonian Mercury Newspaper of 2d April, 1818.

Resolved—That the Meeting do return their thanks to the Committee for the great zeal and attention with which they have conducted this inquiry.

That the Meeting are happy to observe, that after so anxious and minute a scrutiny, the Committee have not discovered any abuse in the management of this Hospital; and that such instances of inattention as had accidentally crept in, had been discovered by the Managers themselves.

That some of these were actually rectified, and the rest in the course of being rectified, by the Managers, before the Committee was appointed or the inquiry thought of.

That the Meeting are therefore of opinion, that it is quite unnecessary to give any recommendations to the Managers on the subject, and resolve—That the Cordial thanks of the Meeting be offered to the Managers for their uniform and zealous attention to the interests of the Charity; assuring them at the same time, that the Meeting place the fullest reliance, both on their diligence to discover, and on their zeal to rectify, any occasional defects which may possibly, from time to time, occur in the management of so great an Establishment.

And further, this Meeting feel themselves called upon to declare, that this Hospital well deserves the confidence and support of the Public.

SPEECH OF THE LORD PRESIDENT.

Extracted from Caledonian Mercury Newspaper of April 2d, 1818.

THE Lord President observed, that on all subjects of this kind public discussion was much to be lamented, not, however, from the fear of any investigation leading to results which would occasion the slightest uneasiness to the Managers, but from the unfounded reports which it gave rise to. Was it not from discussions of this kind, and the grossly exaggerated reports which had already been so industriously circulated, that the present inquiry owed its origin?—reports which were calculated only to do injury to the Institution, by intercepting the benevolence of the Public. It is now twelve or fourteen years since he became connected with the management of this House, he ought, therefore, to be supposed to know something of its concerns; and in the whole progress of this investigation, nothing had hurt his feelings half so much as that a persuasion should actually have existed on the part of the Medical Attendants of the Hospital, that there was any difficulty in approaching the Managers, or that their complaints would at any time have been passed over unheeded. There was no foundation whatever for such an idea; on the contrary, their door was open to every individual who chose to knock at it, and surely they had no grounds on earth to expect an uncivil or an unkind reception. The salary or allowance to the Physicians was petty in the extreme, and could not even be mentioned as a remuneration for the pains, the trouble, and the anxiety they bestowed on the Hospital. To the Surgical Attendants there was no allowance whatever. How then could it be supposed that any thing like a reluctance on the part of the Managers to listen to their suggestions could ever have existed, while, at the same time, it was as naturally the wish of the Managers to give the Medical Officers as little additional trouble as

possible. But, if they had any complaint to make, or improvement to suggest, it is plain that it must be in writing, as it must enter into the record of the Hospital, and be regularly considered by the Managers.

In the enumeration of the different recommendations which he found in the Report, there were some which could not possibly as yet be overtaken, even if judged to be expedient, such in particular as the change in the election. But he would beg to assure the gentlemen present, that the office of Manager was neither so simple as might be suspected, or a sinecure, as some considered it. He was very willing to avow, however, that notwithstanding the utmost possible exertion on the part of any set of men—in spite of the best management that any human exertion could attain, perfection was not to be expected. When it was considered that the family consisted of 250 patients, who, from the very nature of the Institution, must be supposed, as they really do, to belong to the very lowest classes of society—when it was considered that these were left to the superintendence of thirty or forty nurses, selected from among the most miserable of their sex, how was it to be expected that no cause of complaint should ever creep into such an Institution? It had been asserted, that superior wages would procure superior attendance; this, however, was a proposition very dubious in itself; for, when we found among the lower classes that high wages were given for the price of labour, we generally found it followed by dissipation and wretchedness. The class of colliers presented a striking instance to this effect: they earned more wages than any other set of labourers, but it was only to enable them to spend two or three days in the week at the ale-house. It uniformly happened that the greater the wages the greater was the profligacy. There was another avocation very disgusting, but very necessary, which he might also mention, he meant that of the public executioner; did gentlemen believe that any increase of his salary would procure a more respectable character to undertake that painful duty? With respect to nurses, their business was of the most disagreeable, laborious, and disgusting nature; and therefore no woman will ever adopt that line of life who can possibly earn her bread in any other; and if gentlemen will only consider how difficult, nay, he would almost say how impossible, it was in private society to procure persons in that capacity to whom no fault could be found, they would cease to be surprised that the Managers of a public Hospital were not able to procure nurses of a better description.

He did not wish to indulge in any invidious comparison between this and any other establishment of the same kind ; and although he does not wish to arrogate to the Managers any merit for the very splendid talent with which the Medical department has uniformly been administered, still he considers the Managers entitled to the credit of the medical arrangements ; and it is only within a very few years that the same Managers had put an end to one of the most mischievous practices in the Surgical Department of the Institution ; nor is it many years since the whole bedsteads in the House were of wood and canvas. The same Managers had substituted bedsteads of iron, an improvement which was uniformly allowed to be of the most salutary nature. It was not two years ago that he visited the great Naval Hospital at Plymouth, where every thing might have been expected to be in the very best condition ; there, however, he found he had nothing to learn, though every thing to praise and admire in the conduct of the house : But the bedsteads were of wood, no cross lights to air the wards, and nothing but wooden floors. Tile floors had been objected to by some ; but for his part, having been educated in England, he never can forget the impression of cleanliness and comfort the brick or tiled floors of the cottages uniformly conveyed to his mind. In an hospital, however, they are peculiarly useful. Tile floors do not retain infection, they are easily cleaned of stains, and they dry almost immediately on being washed.

Great complaints have been made of the want of various utensils, particularly knives and forks. He was not aware that any establishment of the kind supplied them ; and, surely, when it is considered that even the poorest individual is possessed of a knife, the hardship was not so great. The fact, however, is, they were formerly supplied, but as it was found they quickly disappeared, the practice of supplying them was given up.

It had likewise been asserted, that none of the improvements which have lately been made on the Hospital originated prior to the date of the letter addressed by the Clerks to the Managers, in July last ; but with respect to one point, he could speak with the utmost precision ; that was the washing of the linen. That matter was under the consideration of the Managers as early as summer 1816 ; and, therefore, when he was at Plymouth in October of that year, he procured a model of the drying machine, which was sent down for the inspection and consideration of the Managers. These things, however, required arrangements, particularly when it is considered that the same plan

was formerly in use, and had been abandoned, because it was thought better to bleach the linen in the country ; and he had his doubts whether it was a prudent measure to alter this plan now, and whether the spots and specks upon the sheets were not more than compensated by the *caller* smell of a country bleachfield. The linen which was "bleached on the gowan brae, and beetled in the burn," would, to him at least, be preferable. One gentleman, from whom the Committee had got much valuable information, had stated, that the washing in the hospitals of London was infinitely superior, but with great candour admitted, that on examining the sheets, he had observed some small stains. Where such existed, there could be little doubt that larger also existed occasionally ; and as for the information he derived from matrons of the different hospitals, who asserted that their sheets were washed free from all stains by a common washerwoman at Somers' Town, he must be allowed to discredit it as a thing impossible, on chemical principles.

The bedding too of the Hospital had been much found fault with ; and how was it possible that some bedding in an establishment of the kind must not occasionally prove faulty—proper respect to economy would not allow them to throw things away : nay, such was their situation respecting funds, that they were compelled to wear every thing to the back bone. It had been asserted, that there was no trace of any of the blankets being scoured, but how did this fact turn out ? In 1817, no less than 1791 pairs were scoured, which, supposing there had been 250 beds made down in the House all the year round, would have supplied seven pairs of clean blankets to each. Again, with respect to sheets, no less than 3300 pairs had been washed last year, allowing thirteen pairs to 250 beds during the year.

And now, with respect to the period at which this business was agitated, he could not help saying a few words.—It was in the month of July, when, from the epidemic which then prevailed so extensively over the country, an extraordinary influx of patients poured into the Hospital—if, during this time, some little derangement in the regular supply of linen took place, it was not to be wondered at. It was at that time the Society for the Relief of the Destitute Sick waited on the Managers. A deputation from that truly philanthropic institution was received by the Managers in the most friendly manner ; and, in consequence of their statement of the prevalence of fever among the lower orders, Queensberry House was fitted up for the reception of seventy fever patients ;—could it be wondered at then, that some

Little delay might sometimes have occurred in changing sheets? But when he considered too, that the period at which these Clerks of the Hospital thought fit to bring forward their complaint was the moment when the much-respected Matron, Mrs Montgomery, now no more, had an only child stretched on the bed of sickness and of death, in a house at the head of Burntsfield Links, where maternal affection called upon her to attend—was it surprising, either that some little derangement of the domestic economy might have taken place, or that the Managers did not interpose their authority to prevent the Matron from occasionally visiting her dying child;—but yet this was the period they thought fit to bring it forward. Among other complaints, the Managers have been accused of discountenancing this statement, and they had indeed no small reason to be dissatisfied with it: Still, however, these Clerks were not found fault with for giving it in, but for not having given it in much earlier; for having allowed this account—current of accusations, too plainly intended to overwhelm the Matron at once, to accumulate to such an extent; because, if true, it reflected the highest degree of blame on the Clerks themselves, for not having checked each as it occurred. They had, moreover, too much reason to be dissatisfied with this catalogue of grievances, and to receive it with jealousy, from their personal knowledge that several of the accusations were altogether false and groundless, of which he thought it necessary to give only one or two instances. In page 105 of the Evidence, it was stated, that an individual, a miller too by trade, had complained of his porridge being too thin, and made of barley meal.—Now, unless barley meal had been specifically ordered him by his Medical Attendants, of which the Clerks ought to have been aware, the thing was totally impossible, and as direct a mis-statement as ever was palmed upon any individuals; for it was not within the nature of possibilities, unless it could be supposed that his mess of barley-meal porridge was taken out of the oatmeal pot, as no barley meal is used in the House, unless when used for a particular patient. Another assertion, (page 101) but of a far deeper dye, they also knew to be totally inconsistent with truth, namely, that the beds of the Fever Ward were allowed to circulate indiscriminately through the House; and what did this villainous assertion ground itself upon, but that one of the Surgeons having called for a bed to be brought to a patient who had been carried in with some bad accident in the night time, and that bed being produced so soon as to make him suspect it belonged to the adjoining Fever Ward, which he found to

be the case, he instantly dismissed it, without even allowing the patient to be laid upon it. On this simple story, so creditable to the vigilance and attention of the Medical Person on duty, has been reared this vile and infamous accusation ; and knowing as they did how totally groundless some of the charges were, was it wonderful the Managers should hesitate to adopt the statement of the Clerks, and to act upon it without further consideration—would they have been warranted in at once charging the Matron with all the delinquencies which the Clerks had laid to her charge ? It is well known, that on the respectability of this person every thing depends, in an establishment of this kind ; and few are able to command the respect which Mrs Rennie, who so long filled that situation, at all times did. Mrs Rennie was by birth a gentlewoman, and a lady in her manners, who was received in the best society in Edinburgh, and who was amply qualified to keep the numerous individuals, and particularly the young men who were under her charge, in order. The Matron in such a house required all the support the Managers could give her, to assume and to maintain the necessary authority over such a mass of heterogeneous elements as the inhabitants of the Royal Infirmary consisted of. The authority which it was necessary for her to assume put him in mind of Dr Bushby, the Master of Westminster School, who, when the King honoured the School with a visit, as he received his Majesty at the door, clapt his hat on his head, whispering to his Royal Visitor, that the boys in his school must not be allowed to believe that a greater man existed than himself.

Much fault had been found with the Lock Ward, and he was sorry to say, that it had, for not less than ten or twelve years, been a constant topic of anxiety to the Managers. In Edinburgh there was no other receptacle for the miserable individuals that were received into it : What were the Managers to do ? were they to shut their doors upon them entirely, or were they to grant them such accommodation as their funds would allow them ? They had often wished for the means of fitting up an additional house, but these were not at their disposal. From the nature of the case, it was impossible that the Lock Ward could be kept equally clean with the other departments of the House, nor was it in the power of the Managers to bestow an equal accommodation upon it ; from the great influx of their patients within these few years they had been obliged to alter the Ward from the upper part of the House to a lower, the former being required for the extension of the Surgical Wards. It was much to be desired that se-

parate establishment for the reception of these miserable creatures could be procured ; the Managers had often had their eyes on an adjoining house, formerly inhabited by the late Dr Hope, and belonging to the Infirmary, to be fitted up expressly for that purpose ; and if any means could be devised for accomplishing this desirable object, it would meet every support which the Managers could possibly contribute ; meantime, however, he was sure the Meeting would not wish them to shut their doors upon the miserable and the wretched.

One part of the Report he did not expect to originate in the quarter it did, namely, that part of it which seemed to convey a censure on the Managers for economy. It was seldom that men having the charge of public money were to be accused of this ; but if, in the present instance, it could be supposed an error, it was an error on the safe side ; as it was admitted, that for ten years, their expence exceeded their income. But in what are the Managers to blame ?—The diet which was allotted to the House was fixed more than half a century ago, by the first physicians of the age, and acted upon ever since ; and when it was considered by whom it was fixed, and by whom it was acted upon for such a length of time, were the Managers to blame for continuing it ?—His Lordship then stated how the fact stood with regard to the liberality and the quality of the victuals given out at the Infirmary, when compared with the usual diet of classes of the same description ; and in his avocation as elder of St Andrew's church, it had been his duty for many years, sometimes in company with Mr Harry Davidson, and sometimes alone, to visit one of the poorest quarters in the New Town ; he meant St Anne's Street—a street which (craving pardon of the Lord Provost), he could not help most sincerely to lament, no longer existed ; but here he found the diet of the inhabitants neither so good nor so plentiful as the usual full diet of the Hospital. Among another class of people he also made it his business to inquire—among the farm servants of a tenant on the estate of Granton, and even these he found not so well fed. It had been insinuated that his honourable friend Dr Hope, in the course of his evidence, had stated that the diet was good *enough*, as if he had intended to draw an invidious distinction between our own countrymen and those of the south. But what he had stated, and wisely stated, was, that the diet ordered for patients must be in some degree regulated by the food they have been previously in the habit of taking ; and when it is known that the Medical Attendants are empowered to order whatever they may judge proper, fish, fowl, chicken, eggs, all kinds of

fruit in their season ; nay, even grapes from the hot-house, in addition to the usual allowance of the House, surely the fault must lie with them, not with the Managers, if the patients want for any thing. In an infamous pamphlet, which had just made its appearance, for the purpose of influencing the minds of the Contributors, it had been asserted, that the wine and porter ordered was probably intercepted in its transit to the patients ; but when it was known that the Apothecary was in fact the butler of the House, and that wine was measured out as medicine, it not only became his duty to give it out, but the duty of the Clerks to see that it was regularly administered.

It had been attempted to palliate this inquisition by asserting that no possible blame was attributed, or attributable to the Managers ; for himself, and for his coadjutors, he disclaimed, in the most direct terms, the possibility of these charges existing without heavy responsibility, and their conduct would have been culpable in the extreme, had they been grounded in fact ; he scorned the pitiful attempt to hold them guiltless, could such gross and improper conduct have existed in the House.

Among other improvements, the establishment of a House Manager had been for some time under the view of the Managers, and upon this subject he could not sit down without noticing the incalculable obligations they lay under to their Treasurer, Mr Henry Jardine. According to the regulations of the Establishment, the duties of this officer were confined to the management of the public money, and the adjustment and discharge of all claims upon the House, and for this a very inadequate salary is assigned ; but how has the Treasurer conducted himself ? Instead of confining himself to the mere paying and receiving money, which might at all times be done in his own private chamber, Mr Jardine has actually done the duty of a House Manager ; he has visited the establishment almost daily, and as if actuated by the spirit of his grandfather, who may indeed be considered as the founder of this great institution, he has exerted the most unbounded zeal in attending to every department of the Hospital. In this same contemptible pamphlet he is forsooth accused of delegating his duties to his partner ; and why should he not have done so, if he found that his other avocations would not allow him to attend so constantly and so long as he wished to the affairs of the House ; what harm could be derived to it by his obtaining the assistance of his partner, Mr Wilson, in gratuitous services not required of him by the rules of his office ? To such a Treasurer the Establishment was under the deepest

obligations, and should they lose him, where could they find one, actuated by hereditary attachment, who would be inclined to bestow that patient, zealous, and constant attention to all the affairs of the House, and fulfil duties which no Manager, no House Steward, or scarcely any individual but himself, could be expected to perform?

Before sitting down, his Lordship stated that he would not have trespassed so long upon the time of the Meeting, had he not been anxious, for the sake of the Institution, to explain to the Contributors the result of this long and minute inquiry. It was to him only wonderful that so little was found on which to rear charges against the Managers. But with respect to their offering any vindication of their conduct in the management of the concerns of the House, they distinctly disclaimed all such intention; and he, for one at least, cared not what the voice of malignity might urge against him, so long as his own conscience left him unimpeached.

EDINBURGH :

Printed by James Ballantyne and Co.

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