

**HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT: BEING THE
AUTHORISED REPORT OF A CONFERENCE ON
THE ADMINISTRATION OF HOSPITALS. HELD
UNDER THE AUSPICES AND MANAGEMENT
OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION ON
THE 3RD AND 4TH JULY 1883**

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Hospital Management: Being the Authorised Report of a Conference on the Administration of Hospitals. Held Under the Auspices and Management of the Social Science Association on the 3rd and 4th July 1883 by J. L. Clifford-Smith

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J. L. CLIFFORD-SMITH

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*Held under the auspices and management of the Social Science Association
on the 3rd and 4th July 1883.*

EDITED BY

J. L. CLIFFORD-SMITH,

Secretary of the Association.

LONDON :

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1883.

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P R E F A C E.

THE attention of the Council of the Social Science Association has on several occasions been drawn to the subject of hospital management and administration. At the Dublin meeting, in 1881, they adopted as one of the questions for special discussion in the Health Department the following:—"Is it desirable that hospitals should be placed under State supervision?" and on this question, by invitation of the Council, a paper was contributed by Mr. Henry C. Burdett.* At the close of an interesting discussion a resolution was unanimously passed recommending the Council to petition the Crown in favour of the appointment of a Royal Commission of Inquiry. In pursuance of this resolution the Council subsequently appointed a special committee to inquire for themselves into the whole subject, those who served on that committee having included:—Sir T. Fowell Buxton, Bart.; Mr. J. H. Buxton; Mr. Henry C. Burdett; Dr. Alfred Carpenter; Mr. William Clode; Mr. H. H. Collins; Dr. Farquharson, M.P.; Dr. Grigg; Dr. Habershon; Mr. Rowland Hamilton; Mr. Timothy Holmes, F.R.C.S.; Colonel Keatinge, V.C.; Mr. C. Macnamara, F.R.C.S.; Mr. F. G. P. Neison; Mr. J. S. Phené, LL.D., F.S.A.; Mr. Francis S. Powell; Sir William Robinson; Sir (then Mr.) Edwin Saunders, F.R.C.S.; and Dr. Gilbert-Smith. The labours of this committee, under the

* See *Transactions*, 1881, p. 498.

presidency of Mr. Powell, extended over a period of some months, and in order, furthermore, to arrive at a more general expression of opinion, an afternoon meeting was held in the month of December, when the subject, ably introduced in a paper by Mr. Timothy Holmes, Surgeon to St. George's Hospital,* was thoroughly discussed in all its bearings. The following resolutions were also unanimously adopted by the meeting, which was largely and influentially attended:—

That the Council of the Social Science Association be recommended to present a memorial to Government praying that Her Majesty will issue a Royal Commission to inquire into the administration of all hospitals; and, further, that the Home Secretary be asked to receive a deputation from the Council of the Association to urge the prayer of such memorial.

That this meeting suggests to the Council the expediency of recommending that the various hospitals of London should combine to organise a common council of representatives of each institution for the purpose of considering the best means for managing their respective charities.

The committee, after mature deliberation, came to the conclusion that the recommendation conveyed in the first resolution would be more efficient if it were in the first place confined to metropolitan hospitals instead of being extended to "all hospitals," and on this basis they prepared for the consideration of the Council an elaborate memorial, accompanied by an "explanatory memorandum." These were unanimously adopted by the Council in March, 1882, and the Home Secretary was requested to receive a deputation to urge the prayer of the memorial, which set forth that, whilst anxious to disavow the

* See *Sessional Proceedings*, Vol. XV., p. 35.

intention of adopting any recommendation in favour of compulsory Government control or management of voluntary hospitals, the memorialists were not less desirous of expressing their opinion that a favourable time had come for the institution of a full and impartial inquiry into the accommodation afforded by, and into the present system of the management and administration of, the metropolitan hospitals and the other institutions for the medical treatment of the sick. The memorialists therefore prayed that Her Majesty might be pleased to issue a Royal Commission to ascertain the needs of the metropolis, with a view to obtain reliable data upon which to base such reforms as might be necessary, and to make such recommendations as might appear desirable.* In consequence of the state of public business the Home Secretary expressed a wish to have the views of the Association conveyed to him in writing instead of by deputation. Our papers were therefore, in the month of May, 1882, sent in to the Home Office, and the Council were in due time favoured with an official acknowledgment of their receipt.

The matter was not, however, allowed to rest at this point. The subject was again put down for discussion at the next Congress of the Association, which took place at Nottingham in September, 1882; and the question was on that occasion formulated for special discussion in these terms:—"What reforms are desirable in the administration of hospitals?" Dr. Gilbert-Smith, Assistant Physician to the London Hospital, was invited to prepare the

* The full text of the memorial and memorandum will be found in Appendix B.

paper, and he exhaustively and ably placed before the Association the various arguments brought forward by hospital reformers. The discussion which followed the reading of this paper resulted in the passing of the subjoined resolution :—

That this Department, deeply convinced of the necessity of reform in the administration of metropolitan hospitals and other institutions for the medical treatment of the sick, requests the Council to continue their exertions to obtain the appointment of a Royal Commission, with a view to obtain reliable data upon which reforms should be based, and to make such recommendations as may appear desirable.

The resolution was reported to the Council in November last, and the standing committee of the Health Department, with power to add to their number, were subsequently empowered to convene a Conference of hospital managers and others interested in the subject, with a view to obtain in a practical manner an indication of the views held by hospital managers themselves. For this purpose invitations were issued to nearly every hospital, dispensary, and convalescent institution in the Kingdom, and communications were specially made with the chairmen of several hospitals in regard to various parts of the programme. The Conference, which was held in the Hall of the Society of Arts, under the presidency of Sir T. Fowell Buxton, Bart., on the first day, and of Mr. Francis S. Powell on the second, took place on the 3rd and 4th July, and was a success in every way. The papers, of which there were fourteen on the various divisions of the subject as set forth in the programme, were all good; the discussions were well sustained; and the order of proceedings came appropriately to an end with a unanimous call for a Royal Commission