

Peaslee, E.R.

REPLY

TO

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DR. J. MARION SIMS' PAMPHLET,

ENTITLED

"THE WOMAN'S HOSPITAL IN 1874,"

BY HIS FORMER COLLEAGUES

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

Box 251

NEW YORK:

TROW'S PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY,

205-213 EAST 12TH STREET.

1877.

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REPLY
TO DR. J. MARION SIMS' PAMPHLET,
ENTITLED
"THE WOMAN'S HOSPITAL IN 1874,"
AND
ISSUED JUNE 1, 1877.

IN March, 1877, a biographical sketch of Dr. J. Marion Sims was published in this city, and widely distributed to members of the medical profession, in which distinct charges were made against us of unfairness to him while our colleague in the Woman's Hospital. In a statement made by us on May 5th, we gave a simple narration of the facts connected with Dr. Sims' separation from that hospital, and made an explicit denial of the allegations against us; our object being merely to vindicate ourselves without imputing wrong intentions to any one else. On the first of June a pamphlet in reply to our statement was published by Dr. Sims, and to this we now respond, lest our silence might seem to give consent to the groundless charges it contains. It sets forth his present feeling toward us, and assumes to describe our former sentiments toward him. But since we believe that the profession feels very little interest in our likes or dislikes, we shall not aim to produce a sentimental or sensational document. Either we have been guilty of grossly unworthy conduct toward Dr. Sims, or we have been outrageously maligned by him. We court the fullest and severest scrutiny of our conduct, and we shall make a dispassionate and just statement in regard to his; and perhaps Dr. Sims will better know how to gauge his sympathy for us—of which he is now so liberal (p. 2.)—after our task is completed. We do not accept his remark that in every medical quarrel there is wrong on both sides. We have done Dr. Sims no wrong whatsoever, in *any* respect.

This controversy does not originate at all with us, but in the

charges answered in our former statement; and we engage in it most reluctantly.

We are fully aware of the fact that there are those in our profession upon whom high-sounding phrases and plausible words will exert a powerful influence; but we are equally aware that the reflective and upright men, who constitute the large majority of our brethren, will lay a greater stress upon facts, however quietly they may be set forth, and to them do we appeal.

The pamphlet of Dr. Sims gives the impression that for some time before his speech at the Anniversary Meeting of the Woman's Hospital, which resulted in the acceptance of his resignation, a want of harmony existed in the Medical Board, the majority of its members being desirous of Dr. Sims' displacement from his position as attending surgeon. This is a flagrant misrepresentation of facts. No such feeling existed at any time, and all the members of the Board were practically in perfect harmony. Dr. Sims seemed adverse to the observance of rules and regulations in general; but every subject coming up for discussion was argued freely, fairly, and candidly. No feeling of jealousy ever existed in the Board, so far as we are aware, and we most solemnly affirm that, instead of striving to remove Dr. Sims from the Hospital, none of us ever thought that his connection with it would be severed except by death. For his own purposes, he now endeavors to make it appear that we entered into a conspiracy to remove him, while we were as loyal to him as we were, and still are, to each other. No circumstance occurred to disturb the harmony of the Medical Board until the Anniversary Meeting already alluded to, when, to quote his own words, "like a clap of thunder from a clear sky," the extraordinary speech of Dr. Sims, as unexpected as it was unwarrantable, produced a discord which has forced us into this disagreeable correspondence, and now compels us to challenge the validity of certain new and specific charges contained in his recent pamphlet.

We will consider these charges in order, and reply to each as concisely as possible.

We are not the assailants in this controversy.

1st. Dr. Sims' assumption that he has been attacked by us has already been contradicted. We were publicly assailed in a

biographical sketch of him, which was widely circulated among our friends as well as his, and the choice was left us of permitting the charges to pass unanswered, or of replying to them. We chose the latter course, at the same time sparing Dr. Sims as far as possible.

Dr Sims' suspicions respecting our former statement.

2d. Dr. Sims suspects us of intentionally issuing our reply just on the eve of his departure for Europe, of antedating it, of misspelling his name, etc. In reply to these suspicions, we merely state the exact circumstances: When our statement was signed on the 5th of May, we decided not to publish it until after Dr. Sims' return from Europe in the autumn, since we had learned from the newspapers that he would leave the city on the twelfth, and it was found impossible to get it published in a medical journal until the very day on which he was to sail. But it was soon afterwards announced that his departure was postponed until the nineteenth, when we decided to have it printed at once, and without waiting for a medical journal, since it could thus be got ready by the evening of the sixteenth, when a copy could be sent to him. Through delay on the part of the printer, it was not issued till nearly noon of the eighteenth, when the clerk who was employed to distribute it to the profession generally, was directed to mail one copy to Dr. Sims, and to take a second directly to his house. It is very likely that he directed both envelopes "by the same hand and with the same ink," and it is even possible that he may have misspelled Dr. Sims' name. Certain, however, are we, that this could not have been intentional. We would gladly have consulted Dr. Sims' convenience by preparing our statement several weeks earlier, but we saw the biographical sketch only in time to issue it when we did.

Dr. Sims "did not vote" for the adoption of the rules, Jan. 12, 1874.

3d. Dr. Sims declares that he did not vote for the adoption of the two rules passed by the Board of Governors; that he did not protest or vote negatively, but that he did not vote at all. In reference to these matters his memory has proved most treacherous, as a detail of the circumstances will show.

For several months the Board of Governors and Lady Supervisors had expressed great dissatisfaction at the contamination of

the wards and the inconvenience to patients, arising from the odors created by cases of uterine cancer; and at the very large number of spectators crowded into the small operating-room; on one occasion as many as seventy-three having been counted at an operation for ovariectomy. The majority of the Medical Board fully sympathized in these feelings, and a communication having been received concerning this matter from the Board of Governors, the prevailing disposition was to do all in its power to correct these abuses. Several meetings were held upon the subject, and on the twelfth of January, 1874, resolutions were passed by the Medical Board requesting the Board of Governors to exclude cancer cases from the Hospital, and to limit the number of spectators present at any operation to twenty-five. Upon these resolutions Dr. Sims *voted affirmatively*, withdrawing his previous opposition to them and seeming, as far as we could judge, to be fully in sympathy with us in the course which was decided upon. These resolutions were, by order of the Medical Board, on that very evening placed by its Secretary in the hands of the President of the Board of Governors, and were at once passed by that body, with the alteration of limiting the number of spectators to fifteen instead of twenty-five.

About a week subsequently an informal meeting was held for the purpose of arranging means for limiting the number of visitors, as directed by the Board of Governors. All the members of the Board were present, and after the business was finished, Dr. Sims, much to our astonishment, read a paper and a series of resolutions which he had prepared, and which he characterizes as "a dignified and manly protest against the action of the Board of Governors" (p. 10). These resolutions advocated resistance to the wishes of that Board, and entirely contradicted the resolutions which had been unanimously passed a week before. Dr. Sims was at once reminded that the resolutions of the past week had been put in the hands of the Board of Governors; but, with an inconsistency which is almost incredible, he still persisted in pressing them. Dr. Emmet asked, "Dr. Sims, do you wish to reconsider the subject?" "No," said Dr. Sims. Dr. Thomas then said, referring to the Board stultifying itself by then contesting what one week before it had unanimously recommended, "If we take the stand you suggest, we shall all be turned out," adding, "and we should all richly deserve such treatment."

The remark imputed to Dr. Emmet, "Dr. Sims, take care of that document, we may need it to fall back on," and Dr. Sims' reply to Dr. Thomas, are the offspring of a wonderfully prolific, but unfortunately distempered imagination. There had been no understanding at the previous meeting that written opinions should be presented at this meeting; for we considered the whole subject as then finally disposed of.

At that time this extraordinary conduct of Dr. Sims was an enigma to us; now we are forced to believe that his object was to put this high-sounding but harmless protest upon record, so that in the future he might, as he is now doing, take to himself the credit for a bold course which he did not in reality pursue.

It is true, as he vauntingly declares in his pamphlet, that he uniformly broke the rule in regard to the number of spectators at operations; but nothing can be argued from this, for from the moment of his connection with the Hospital he disregarded all the rules, whether passed by the Board of Governors, or the Medical Board, even with his own concurrence.

Such was Dr. Sims' defense of "the honor and interests of the medical profession" within the Medical Board; such the sum and substance of his "dignified and manly protest against the action of the Board of Governors." On no other occasion had he offered any resistance whatever, and this remarkable instance is faithfully and candidly reported.

Dr. Sims "did not read" the report which he approved.

4th. Dr. Sims says with regard to our Annual Report: "I approved it without reading it." This was literally so. The Secretary called upon him with the report after gas-light, and presented it for his perusal. Dr. Sims took it, looked at it, made some jesting remark about increasing age and failing eyesight, and asked the Secretary to read it to him. Sitting close beside him, the Secretary did so, and Dr. Sims having heard every word of it read, said, "All right. I wouldn't alter a word; it couldn't be better."

The reader will perceive how this accords with Dr. Sims' promise on the first page of his pamphlet: "I shall deal in no questionable innuendos, nor in constructive interpretations of facts which may lead to wrong conclusions"!!

The most malicious of Dr. Sims' charges.

5th. But we come now to the most malicious of the charges which Dr. Sims makes against us. It is that his treacherous brethren of the Medical Board, while ostensibly feeling for him a friendly sympathy, insidiously furnished a member of the Board of Governors (Col. Davis) with statistics of operations in the Hospital which misrepresented him, and thus privately used their influence with Col. Davis and other members of the Board of Governors to "put him out" of the Hospital. We can scarcely appreciate the mental state which could inspire Dr. Sims with such malevolence, and even induce him to repeat this accusation seven times in his pamphlet. We had no more agency in obtaining these statistics, and no more design respecting them, than Dr. Sims himself, as the following letter from Col. Davis will prove. It will also show that Dr. Sims had really been "put out" of the Hospital before Col. D. had thought of obtaining any statistics. We simply record our indignant denial of this foul aspersion, and leave it to Col. Davis himself to state the facts; he having, without any solicitation on our part, sent to us the following communication:

NEW YORK, June 2, 1877.

GENTLEMEN:—There was left at my house this afternoon the reply in pamphlet form of Dr. J. Marion Sims to your printed circular, previously addressed by you to the medical profession, under date of May 5, 1877. I find upon the perusal of it the following statement made by Dr. Sims on its twentieth page:

"Soon after this, Mr. Stuart ascertained that my pretended friends in the Medical Board had furnished Mr. Davis, one of the Governors, with some statistics of operations performed at the Woman's Hospital, and that Mr. Davis had used them in the Board of Governors to prove that I was the most reckless and unsuccessful of the surgeons of the Hospital, and should, therefore, be put out."

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

Dr. Sims has been most egregiously deceived by whoever gave either himself or Mr. Stuart the information that you either directly or indirectly exercised, or attempted to exercise, the slightest influence with me in whatever I may have done in connection with the acceptance of his resignation by the Board of

Governors. And as Dr. Sims, acting upon this misapprehension of the facts as derived from others, has done you great injustice, I feel constrained, as an act of justice to each of you, and that Dr. Sims' mind may be disabused of all the prejudice it may have imbibed, arising from the part you may have taken, so far as I am involved in the matter, to state the circumstances precisely as they transpired.

Dr. Sims at the Anniversary, in 1874, of the Woman's Hospital, made a most unprovoked and unjustifiable attack on the Board of Governors, charging them with "*acts of tyranny*" for having, among other complaints, adopted two resolutions. One of which was to the purport that but fifteen medical spectators should be present at any operation, in addition to those who were entitled to admission from their official connection with the Hospital. And the other, which thereafter excluded all cancer cases from admission to the institution, the hospital having been established and *chartered* for the treatment only of "*diseases peculiar to women.*"

Dr. Sims concluded his attack upon the Board of Governors with a vehement *threat* that unless the Board at its then next regular meeting *repealed* the two resolutions above referred to, his resignation was at their disposal.

The Board met in its regular course in December, during the proceedings of which I preferred charges of "*gross insubordination*" against Dr. Sims, and for which his removal was asked. His letter of resignation, together with his apology for his attack upon the Board, was also before us for its action, and after an animated and somewhat protracted discussion the resignation of Dr. Sims was *unanimously* accepted as a substitute for my resolution, which provided for his removal.

At the time of this action of the Board of Governors, the statistics of which Dr. Sims complains *had not been applied for by me*, nor had I any knowledge whatever of their details, other than that the records of the Hospital contained them, whatever they might be.

After the resignation of Dr. Sims had been accepted, the Medical Board, as required by the By-Laws of the Institution, convened, and nominated Dr. Fordyce Barker to fill the vacancy which the resignation of Dr. Sims had created. That nomination was generally known to have been made by those immediately connected with the administration of the affairs of the Hospital, soon after it had been consummated, and that at the next regular meeting of the Board, to be holden on the second Tuesday of January, 1875, it would be called upon to act upon the nomination of Dr. Barker as the successor of Dr. Sims.

In the meantime I had been informed from an undoubted source, *but in no way connected with any member of the medical*

profession, that Dr. Barker had been called upon by some personal friends of Dr. Sims, whose influence had been exerted in a concerted effort to prevail upon Dr. Barker to decline the nomination made by the Medical Board, in order that Dr. Sims might be re-elected to fill his own vacancy. I was further advised that strong opposition was to be made to the confirmation of Dr. Barker's nomination, by some of the members of the Board, who, from their personal relations and strong attachment to Dr. Sims, and not from any objections of a professional nature to Dr. Barker, would oppose the vacancy being filled by any medical gentleman other than Dr. Sims himself.

Although an entire stranger to Dr. Barker, not even knowing him by sight, but governed in my action by the exalted reputation he enjoyed as a representative man of his profession, and conscientiously believing his appointment would give very general satisfaction both within and without the medical profession, and consequently could not redound otherwise than to the greatest benefit of the Institution and advantage to its patients, I determined to stand by his nomination and to do all in my power to secure his confirmation by the Board.

With this end in view, and that I might make no representation before the Board not borne out by the official statistics of the Hospital, I applied in my official capacity as one of the Governors, to both Dr. Thomas as the Secretary, and to Dr. Emmet as the Chairman of the Medical Board, for the information I desired; propounding in writing such questions as I deemed essential to elicit the facts I was in quest of.

This information was of a nature which every member of the Board of Governors was entitled to upon application, and embraced *nothing* but a compilation of facts from the records of the Hospital, and which record was in the custody or under the control of the Medical Board, and which was alone responsible for the accuracy of its contents.

At the January meeting, 1875, of the Board of Governors, *a month after Dr. Sims had ceased to be a surgeon of the Woman's Hospital*, the statistics that he alleged were used "to put me (him) out," were for the *first time* brought to the notice or knowledge of the Board of Governors, and while the nomination of Dr. Barker was under consideration.

These are the simple facts, as fairly and impartially given as it is in my power to state them.

In conclusion, permit me to add that there is not the slightest foundation for the accusation of Dr. Sims, that either one of you, under any circumstances, or at any time or upon any occasion, attempted either directly or indirectly to influence or prejudice me against Dr. Sims, or indulged in any remarks that the most far-fetched construction could characterize as being of an

unfriendly nature towards him, or could be tortured into even an *impression* that you desired that his resignation should be accepted by the Board of Governors.

I was never approached in a single instance by either one of you upon the subject, nor was there even an interview held by me with either of you except upon my own voluntary motion, and only *then* in my official capacity, for such information as the Board of Governors had the unquestioned and unquestionable right to obtain from you as surgeons of the Hospital, and which in the judgment of any one of its members might be deemed essential to enable such member to act intelligently and in such direction as he believed would promote to the greatest extent the benefit and usefulness of the Hospital.

With great respect,
Yours truly,

GEO. T. M. DAVIS, one of the Governors, etc.

Doctors T. A. EMMET, }
T. G. THOMAS, } Surgeons.
E. R. PEASLEE, }

Dr. Sims introduces these statistics to the readers of his pamphlet in the following words :

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

NUMBER OF PATIENTS ADMITTED.	No. of Operations.	No. of Deaths.
By Dr. Sims.....237	215	14
“ Dr. Thomas.....207	93	11
“ Dr. Peaslee.....132	88	6
“ Dr. Emmet.....143	116	1

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

“Of all operations performed,

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

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

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

“I performed 99 more operations than Dr. Emmet, 122 more than Dr. Thomas, and 127 more than Dr. Peaslee. With a larger number of purely surgical cases than any of my associates had, it is reasonable to suppose that I would have had relatively a larger number of bad cases, and a larger relative mortality. But my per centum of mortality, as seen above, is less than Dr. Peaslee’s, and but little more than half that of Dr. Thomas.

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

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

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

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

When Dr. Sims wrote this he was fully aware that these statistics were neither prepared nor presented by the Medical Board, that they were entirely incorrect, and that another member of the Board (Dr. Thomas), who stated these facts to him, was infinitely more misrepresented by them than himself. Yet, know-

ing all this, and just after declaring that such statistics could not but mislead, he draws deductions from them to show that he was more successful as an operator than the other surgeons of the Hospital!

When Mr. Davis wrote to Dr. Thomas as Secretary, and Dr. Emmet as Chairman of the Medical Board, for the records of the Hospital, the former sent him a general statement without referring to the statistics of individuals; and the latter, after furnishing information collated from the published reports of the Hospital up to the time of the change in its organization, sent Col. Davis' communication to the House Surgeon, with instructions to examine the Hospital records and to give Col. Davis all the information since that period, as demanded by him.

The Medical Board neither collectively nor individually ever examined the reports obtained by Mr. Davis until some time after he had used them; then they found them to be incorrect. But the absence of any design of injuring Dr. Sims, on the part of those who prepared them, is fully shown by the fact that one of our number, and not Dr. Sims, is chiefly misrepresented by them. This gentleman preferred to bear in silence this misrepresentation, and the *true* records of the Hospital are even now made public only because Dr. Sims' statements render it necessary.

We shall not go into this subject in detail, but allude only to those points required as a reply to Dr. Sims.

Report of total number of operations, with the results of the same, performed in the Woman's Hospital, from April, 1872, to January, 1875.

	No. of Operations.	No. of Deaths.
By Dr. Sims.....	152	12
“ Dr. Thomas.....	119	10
“ Dr. Peaslee.....	91	6
“ Dr. Emmet.....	109	2

It appears upon the records that 64 of Dr. Sims' 152 operations consisted in *slitting the cervix uteri*, a procedure which was not practised one-third as often by any one of his colleagues as by him, and which was resorted to by Dr. Sims nearly twice as often as by the three other surgeons combined. With reference to

cervical section, Dr. Sims says in his work upon Uterine Surgery,* that "the operation is less painful than the use of the bougie, which must be repeated for months; that it is entirely devoid of danger from hemorrhage, provided we exercise ordinary prudence in the after-treatment; that it is less frequently followed by pelvic inflammation than either the bougie or the sponge-tent." Surely an operation which is attended by no more danger than the use of a sponge-tent should not be considered in the same category with ovariectomy. Subtracting, therefore, all cervical sections from the list of each operator, the matter is represented in figures thus:

	No. of Operations.	No. of Deaths.
By Dr. Sims.....	88	12
" Dr. Thomas.....	99	10
" Dr. Peaslee.....	73	6†
" Dr. Emmet.....	105	2

During this period thirty ovariectomy‡ operations were performed in the hospital; the results as given by the records are these:

	No of Operations.	No. of Deaths.
By Dr. Sims.....	11	7
" Dr. Thomas.....	11	4
" Dr. Peaslee.....	6	4
" Dr. Emmet.....	2	0

The statistics here recorded are given upon the authority of the three gentlemen whose names are appended.

"We certify that the above statistics are taken from the record

* English ed. p. 152.

† One of these 6 was a case of suicide—no operation having been performed.

‡ Under ovariectomy are also classed laparotomy for removal of entire uterus, normal ovariectomy, and removal of cysts of the broad ligament.

books of the Woman's Hospital, and are correct to the best of our knowledge and belief."

(Signed)

JAMES B. HUNTER, M.D., Asst. Surgeon, N. Y.
State Woman's Hospital.

A. S. CLARKE, M.D., House Surgeon, N. Y.
State Woman's Hospital.

E. C. DUDLEY, M.D., Senior Asst. House Sur-
geon, N. Y. State Woman's Hospital.

Let the reader calculate for himself the proportion of deaths, and he will be able to form an estimate as to the value of Dr. Sims' deductions from reports which he chooses to assume were made to the Board of Governors by us, and used to his detriment.

His colleagues reported as desiring Dr. Sims' resignation.

6th. Dr. Sims declares that one of the Board of Governors asserted to him that his associates in the Medical Board were opposed to him, and desired the Governors to accept his resignation. We never gave the least foundation for any such statement, and Dr. Sims should not have listened to it, if it really were made to him, knowing, as he did, that some of his colleagues were at that very time, to their own detriment, endeavoring as individuals to prevent the acceptance of his resignation.

Dr. Sims' apology was not read before the Medical Board.

7th. Dr. Sims declares in a letter to Col. Davis: "In a state of momentary excitement I verbally tendered my resignation, and thus honor compelled me to send it in. But I accompanied it with an apology as proper and complete as any gentleman ought to require of another. I read this apology to your Medical Board, and they each said that it was all that could be desired."

Strange as it must appear to those who read this, Dr. Sims never at any time, nor in any form, presented to us his letter of resignation or his note of apology. Never, either by verbal report or written communication, did we have either brought before us for the expression of our opinion, and two of our number (P.

and E.) were absolutely ignorant of the fact that any apology to the Governors had been written until after Dr. Sims' resignation had been accepted.

Why no protest against the acceptance of Dr. Sims' resignation.

8th. Dr. Sims arraigns us for not protesting as a Board against the acceptance of his resignation by the Board of Governors. But this matter was taken out of the hands of the Medical Board by Dr. Sims himself: For,

1. He distinctly stated, at the close of his anniversary speech, that he did not speak for the Medical Board, but for himself. Our readers already know that he spoke against the thoroughly considered views of the Board, as given in its annual report, and which he had himself endorsed on the preceding day.

2. He accompanied his proffered resignation by a threat to the Board of Governors, saying, "he would no longer remain in an institution where he could not be treated like a gentleman himself, nor treat his friends like gentlemen," unless the two rules were rescinded at their next meeting. But we could not, as a Board, request them to abolish rules which we, together with Dr. Sims, had requested them to enact, as both necessary and right.

3. Dr. Sims knew very well, from indications we had given him in our discussions in January, 1874—when he was at first opposed to the establishment of these rules—that we could not now, without stultifying ourselves, sustain him in his opposition to them.

4. Knowing all the antecedent facts, we believed, and still believe, that Dr. Sims' anniversary speech was, as a whole, prepared for the occasion, though some sentences were probably not premeditated. Knowing, as he did, that we could not defend him, he would not have made a direct personal issue with the Board of Governors without previously counting the possible cost. But he had no intention or expectation of leaving the Hospital. On the contrary, he considered himself so indispensable to that institution, that the Governors would be intimidated by his threat and abolish the rules. With him, opposition to his preferences was "oppression" and "tyranny," and he came to consider himself sufficient, unaided, to put an end to it in his own way. Surely this was "a great mistake;" but the Medical Board could not interfere in the "conflict" which Dr. Sims had

thus initiated. And when Dr. Thomas told Dr. Sims that "we had never thought" of sending a protest to the Governors, he merely meant, as Dr. Sims did not fail to know, that it had never occurred to us to do so foolish a thing. This is another instance of "constructive interpretation of facts, etc.," by Dr. Sims.

5. Dr. Sims had conditioned his longer stay in the Hospital upon the repeal of the rules. But the Medical Board could not repeal them; and to protest against the acceptance by the Governors of a resignation which Dr. Sims virtually said should be accepted if they did not repeal the rules—for he said he would not stay in the Hospital if they did not—would be, first, to discredit Dr. Sims' word, and then to protest against ourselves and Dr. Sims even, in protesting to the Governors. If Dr. Sims was to remain any longer in the Hospital, either he or the Governors must yield. It was not for the Medical Board to dictate or even advise which should do so.

6. Dr. Sims did not request nor desire the interference of the Medical Board in his "conflict." It was only after his resignation was accepted, and after his successor had been nominated by the Medical Board, and as an after-thought, that he put this "constructive interpretation" upon our non-interference. He had by no means proposed to share with the Medical Board the triumph he confidently expected over the Governors, and at the same time quite as much over us; but, having failed, he would now make us responsible for his defeat.

7. After we had nominated Dr. Sims' successor, we were of course committed to the latter.

Thus, as the Medical Board, we declined to act, though previously to our nomination of his successor, individual efforts were made to induce Dr. Sims to modify his position, and to soften the feelings of the Governors towards him.

Dr. Sims' speech not reported "verbatim."

The anniversary speech of Dr. Sims, *as reported* (pages 13-16), is not a discreditable performance. But he has used the term "*verbatim*" in a sense we do not comprehend; since not only words, but several sentences, including several essential points of the actual speech, are wanting in this report, while new sentences and new sentiments are added. Indeed, the entire pro-

duction is here so toned down, so respectful to the Board of Governors and the Lady Supervisors, and so thoughtful of the profession at large, that one gets from it but a faint idea of the style and effect of the original performance. When, therefore, Dr. Sims writes "and every word of it is *true*," he must mean to express his own estimate—but it is not ours—of the speech as reported, but certainly not of the report itself. This general statement is confirmed by the following letter from Col. Davis, who replied to Dr. Sims' speech immediately after its delivery:

NEW YORK, June 19, 1877.]

DOCTORS E. R. PEASLEE, T. A. EMMET, T. G. THOMAS:

Gentlemen:—In reply to your note of this date, in which you make the inquiry of me, "whether the report of the speech in a pamphlet recently published by Dr. J. M. Sims, entitled, 'The Woman's Hospital in 1874,' is a *verbatim report of the same*," I beg leave to say that, with the intention of replying to that speech, I paid particular attention to it as it was made by Dr. Sims. I have also several times carefully read the speech as it appears in the pamphlet to which you have called my attention, and I have no hesitation in saying that it is not a *verbatim report of the same*. On the contrary, the most offensive portions of it are entirely omitted; especially his accusation against the Lady Supervisors, while alluding to the exclusion of a cancer case, that the Ladies wanted to turn a dying woman into the streets. He has also omitted his defiant threat, that unless the Governors at their next meeting rescinded the resolutions of which he complained, his resignation was at their disposal.

Yours truly,

GEO. T. M. DAVIS.

In a letter to Col. Davis (Jan. 12, 1875), Dr. Sims himself says his speech was "most intemperate and unjustifiable" * * * "uncalled for and indefensible."

Synopsis of Dr. Sims' Actual Speech.

But we shall now give a brief synopsis of the speech as delivered, including its topics and also some characteristic passages not found in the report:

Dr. Sims commenced his speech with the remark that it had been customary on occasions like that for everybody to praise and compliment everybody *ad nauseam*, and that this was all very well. But certain little "unpleasantnesses" had also occurred of late, and he should like to say something of them, as they had disturbed the harmony of the Boards.

1. The first was in respect to the name of The Woman's Hospital—"in the State of New York," being insisted on by the Board of Governors, while it should be "of the State of New York." [This petty question had not disturbed the harmony of the Boards; and Dr. Sims' remarks upon it are pretty nearly given in his pamphlet.]

2. The second "subject of dispute between us"—*i. e.*, the Boards—was the rule forbidding the admission of cases of carcinoma uteri into the Hospital. His remarks on this topic are also pretty nearly reproduced in the pamphlet, but not the offensive style. [This subject had produced no dispute between the Boards, except so far as Dr. Sims had caused it; and the Medical Board "did not submit to the dictation" of the Governors, but requested them to pass the rules, as we have seen. It had been the rule to reject cases of carcinoma uteri while Dr. Emmet was Surgeon-in-Chief of the Hospital; but the other three members of the Board, not being aware of this fact on becoming connected with the Hospital, for a time treated such cases of this disease as they found assigned to them. The reasons for such a rule are entirely conclusive and have been generally stated on pp. 5 and 6; and on learning its existence, the Board, with the exception of Dr. Sims, rejected such cases. He, however, still admitted them when he chose to do so, and frequently announced in a boasting manner that he should continue to do so, until the discussion of January 12, 1874, when he voted in favor of the rule, and thus, as we supposed, finally accepted it in good faith. We should, however, add that it was this defiant attitude of Dr. Sims which induced the Governors to formally re-enact the rule.]

3. "The third cause of contention between us"—*i. e.*, the two Boards, was, Dr. Sims said, "the limitation of the number of spectators to fifteen on operating-days." [His remarks on this subject were in their tone and substance quite different from those in his pamphlet. He told the Board of Governors and the Lady Supervisors that the making of rules for the Medical Board was none of their business. He was also then far less zealous for the profession. Indeed, what he said for the profession was understood to be incidental and secondary, and added merely as a salvo to the rest of his speech. This must, however, have been the occasion, we suppose, when Dr. Sims "defended the honor and interests of the profession with such independent

zeal that he was forced unwillingly to resign his position as one of the surgeons" p. 24. The only other time when he alluded to the interests of the profession, so far as we know, was in his paper read at the informal meeting of the Medical Board, before mentioned, which fell dead as it was read, and which, we are quite sure, was never afterward resuscitated. We add that this subject "had *not* been a cause of contention between the two Boards," but after full discussion the Boards agreed perfectly on the adoption of the rule ten months before this (January, 1874). Dr. Sims alone was contending against the Board of Governors, and against us, as we now perceived, though he had professed to yield, and had voted with us on the 12th of January in favor of both the rules. Nor were "*we* (*i. e.*, the Medical Board) dissatisfied, but had been shut out from the privilege of complaining." The Medical Board was entirely satisfied—as expressed in the report read, with Dr. Sims' full sanction, half an hour before he began his speech—and had nothing whatever to complain of. Dr. Sims alone was dissatisfied, and he therefore complained. We find it difficult to characterize Dr. Sims' presumption, unless we call it insane, in thus assuming to utter in the name of the Medical Board what he knew the majority did not approve of, and thus attempting to commit the Board to his own inconsistency. But this madness was not quite without method. Months before he had, contrary to our known wishes, invited strangers to our operations, and had put an advanced cancer case into one of our beds, in order, we must believe, to make it appear to the Governors that we were united with him in setting at defiance rules of which he knew we approved as being necessary.

In the speech (as well as in the report of it) Dr. Sims unfairly represented the Board of Governors as "ostracizing the profession," and accused them of "illiberality in excluding our country friends" from the Woman's Hospital, as if such were the settled policy of that Board; while the latter has ever considered the Hospital as a school for the profession at large, so far as physicians are disposed to avail themselves of it as such. It was with them simply a question how to accomplish all that is possible in that direction, consistently with the welfare of the inmates of the Hospital; and the operating-room being small, the number of strangers at any operation was limited to 15, thus admitting 60 physicians every week, and 2,460 during the clinical year of

41 weeks. Is this "ostracizing the profession"? Certainly the operating room will accommodate a greater number than 15, but the operations are chiefly of such a character that a much greater number could not at the same time see all their minute details; and the Governors, in deciding the number, bore in mind the fact that all the Hospital staff could also be present at any operation, and thus might increase the whole number to more than 45. We have, however, no doubt that the Governors would now extend the limit to any number actually required, which does not essentially interfere with the welfare of the patients; nor that they would have left the whole matter to the discretion of the Medical Board, and not have made any limitation at all, had not Dr. Sims habitually overcrowded the operating-room, and habitually declared that he would have as many at his operations as he pleased. We have never heard of any complaint of ostracism or illiberality excepting this by Dr. Sims; and never, in a single instance, since our connection with the Hospital, has a physician been refused admission to the operating-room who had been invited there by us. The "ostracism" and "illiberality" complained of never had any existence; and that charge against the Board of Governors was merely the offspring of Dr. Sims' disappointed insatiable craving for professional *éclat*.

Dr. Sims, as the next topic, told the story of Dr. Peaslee's friend, who was excluded from the operating-room after fifteen strangers had been admitted; and essentially as reported in his pamphlet.

The case was, however, colored to befit the occasion. Dr. Peaslee had not seen his friend, and, of course, had not invited him to the Hospital, at all, and only learned that he had been there after the operations of that day were completed. Any one whom he had invited for that day, would have been admitted whenever he presented himself. It had not, of course, occurred to Dr. Peaslee himself to make any complaint respecting the case thus taken up by Dr. Sims.

Finally, in reaching the peroration of his speech, Dr. Sims ceased to misrepresent the Medical Board, and falling back entirely upon the "ego," he closed thus: "I do not wish to leave this hospital—I should be very sorry to do so; though, with such men remaining as" (here followed a compliment to us, which we modestly believed to be ironical)—"I should not be missed.

But I will no longer remain in an institution where I cannot be treated like a gentleman myself, and treat my friends as gentlemen. And if you [the Governors] do not rescind the rules at your next meeting, my resignation is at your disposal."

Thus Dr. Sims volunteered to condition his longer sojourn in the Hospital solely upon the rescinding or non-rescinding of the two rules so obnoxious to him, by the Board of Governors at their next meeting. It was certainly a very silly thing to do, but we were in no way responsible for his folly, nor for its effects, immediate or remote. He did not condition his sending his resignation upon their "wishing it," as represented in the pamphlet. Had it been so, he pretty certainly would not have sent it at all; certainly not, as he did not wish to leave the Hospital, till he had received official information from the Board of Governors that they "wished it." The reader will now understand why Dr. Sims afterwards writes Colonel Davis, "I verbally tendered my resignation, and thus honor compelled me to send it in;" *i. e.*, after the first meeting of the Board had passed without the repeal of the resolutions, Dr. Sims was bound by his word of promise to send in his resignation; and it was unanimously accepted.

Dr. Sims apparently overlooks the significance of the unanimity of that action, when he accuses the Medical Board of not doing its duty to him by requesting the Board of Governors not to accept his resignation. But he knew perfectly well that any such action by the Medical Board would not have secured a non-acceptance of his resignation, when every member of the Board of Governors was in favor of its acceptance. Then why not visit his vengeance on the Governors, instead of us? Dr. Sims alludes (p. 1) to his "almost expulsion," and here he states a literal fact. He had said in his speech, "I have never heeded your edict, and I never will," and when the question of accepting his resignation was before the Governors, Colonel Davis, as stated in his letter, moved that Dr. Sims be expelled "for gross insubordination;" and out of regard to his feelings the vote to accept the resignation was passed as the milder alternative. The fact was, as we thought, that the Board of Governors (and the Lady Supervisors) were quite tired of Dr. Sims' arrogance, and therefore decided to allow it to terminate by the method Dr. Sims himself had adopted. As to ourselves, Dr. Sims

was our colleague, and so long as he was so we were loyal to him, and would have so remained.

Dr. Sims propounds three Questions.

Dr. Sims closes his pamphlet with the three following questions, paraded in a way to indicate that the inevitable replies to them must convict us of misrepresentation. In doing this he presumes altogether too much, we think, upon the stupidity of his readers. We had stated that the charge of "urging Dr. Sims to take a certain course and then meanly deserting him," is unqualifiedly false, since we had never urged him to any course (as Dr. S. also admits in his pamphlet), and had not deserted him, for he well knew that we could not sustain him. Now Dr. Sims inquires :

1. Was it "unqualifiedly false" for Mr. Stuart to write: "Dr. Sims defended the honor and interests of the profession with such independence and zeal that he was forced unwillingly to resign his position as one of the surgeons"?

We have shown (p. 17), although it does not at all concern us, that Dr. Sims was *not* forced to resign because he defended the honor and interests of the profession, but because he said he would resign if the Governors, did not rescind the two rules; and rescind them they did not.

2. Did Mr. Stuart write what was "unqualifiedly false" when he said "Dr. Sims was obliged to leave his (the) Hospital without a word of protest from the Medical Board"? Certainly not. The Board as such made no protest, as we have explained on pp. 16 and 17. And what then?

3. Did Mr. Stuart write what was "unqualifiedly false" when he said that "they, to a man, proved invisible in the hour of conflict"? This isolated statement is not in itself false, and we admitted this in our statement of May 5th. But the implication it is intended to convey, of unworthy conduct on our part, is so, as Dr. Sims certainly by this time understands, if he did not when he put that question. Dr. Sims should not again "deal in constructive interpretations of facts which may lead to wrong conclusions."

We should, however, meet Dr. Sims' ingenious effort to cast the responsibilities of the future conduct of this quarrel upon the shoulders of Mr. Stuart, with the remark that we have nothing at issue with that gentleman. We take no exception to what he has done; for believing in Dr. Sims, he has stated what Dr. Sims told him were facts, sincerely regarding them as such. It is the author, and not the publisher merely, of such statements, whom we hold to account.

Conclusion.

Here ends our review of the manner in which Dr. Sims has done "his duty to himself, to justice, to truth, to honor, and to his profession," and has fulfilled his promise to "deal in no questionable inuendos, nor in constructive interpretations of facts which may lead to wrong conclusions."

In taking our leave of this most distasteful subject—and of Dr. Sims—we repeat that all the charges of unworthy conduct on our part towards him as our colleague in the Medical Board of the Woman's Hospital, which have been made by him in his pamphlet and elsewhere, are totally untrue; or, to adopt the phraseology which his self-alleged superior education and training suggest (p. 2), they are all "mistakes in policy and mistakes in facts." Dr. Sims is simply realizing the legitimate results of his own headstrong folly. We endeavored, but in vain, to avert from him the consequences of his course of action, by early dissuading him from his opposition to the rules which led to that course. We can now only suggest to him a manly resignation to these consequences, instead of attempting to make us the scapegoats for their atonement.

E. R. PEASLEE,
T. A. EMMET,
T. G. THOMAS.

NEW YORK, June 25, 1877.



