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THE TRUTH ADMITTED.

THE

COLUMBIA HOSPITAL

FOR WOMEN

AND

LYING-IN ASYLUM.

BY A CITIZEN OF WASHINGTON, D. C.

FROM JANUARY NO. RICHMOND AND LOUISVILLE MEDICAL JOURNAL.

LOUISVILLE, KY.:

RICHMOND AND LOUISVILLE MEDICAL JOURNAL BOOK AND JOB STEAM PRINT

104 Green Street, 2d door west of Post-office.

1878.

COLUMBIA HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN.

The management of this institution has at last given to the public an "Annual Report." It purports to be "for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1877," and bears the imprint of the Government Printing Office, thus sustaining the allegation heretofore made, that in addition to the other expenditures, the Government pays the cost of its paper and printing.

The document opens with the "annual report" of the "Surgeon in charge," dated October 15th, eighteen days after the annual meeting in September, 1877. Next comes the report of the Treasurer, "for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1877," of which more hereafter. Then follows the following remarkable "open letter" to Congress:

WASHINGTON, D. C., December 1, 1877.

Anonymous accusations of mismanagement on the part of the Board of Directors of the Columbia Hospital for Women and Lying-in Asylum having appeared in a letter from Washington to a Western medical journal of established reputation, which was republished in some of the papers of this city, it has been thought best, in the interest of the government under which this institution was established and has grown into its present great usefulness, as well as in the cause of humanity, to lay before Congress the following transcripts of records of inspection of the hospital from January, 1876, to January, 1877, by the then Advisory and Consulting Board of Physicians and Surgeons, consisting of Doctors Johnson Eliot, Flodoardo Howard, A. Y. P. Garnett, S. C. Busey, J. Ford Thompson, W. B. Drinkard, S. A. H. McKim, C. H. A. Kleinschmidt, as well as of their successors, Drs. J. O. Stanton, J. A. Ritchie, Z. T. Sowers, R. W. Reyburn, N. S. Lincoln, L. Mackall Jr., J. T. Young, and H. C. Yarrow, from February, 1877, (when they entered upon duty) to November 28, 1877.

"A complete refutation of the charge of extravagant and injudicious expenditure, included in the above-mentioned attack,

will be found in the annual report of the Treasurer of the Board to the Hon. Secretary of the Interior, appended to his report to the President.

J. K. BARNES, M. D.;

CHAS. H. CRAGIN, M. D., Secretary.;

JOHN T. MITCHELL, Treasurer.;

Committee on Expenditures."

Following this are eighteen pages of the transcripts from the records referred to. It would seem from this letter that the Board of Directors (General O. E. Babcock, President,) through this committee (of which by the way, the Treasurer is alleged to be the only salaried member,) assumes all responsibility for the "extravagant and injudicious expenditure," and seeks vindication from any charge of improper and lavish disbursement of government funds donated for the maintenance of indigent sick women, by reference to the Treasurer's report and "the inspection records of the advisory and consulting physicians and surgeons."

It is not surprising that a treasurer—a member of the committee having "supervision and control of all expenditures," whose interest is measured either by commissions paid out of a fund derived from charges made against a class of patients illegally admitted to the hospital, or by a fixed salary appropriated from the funds donated by Congress, and who keeps from his fellow-directors, from Congress, and from the public, all details of his disbursements—should tender as proof of economical financial management the weekly inspection records of a board of advisory and consulting physicians and surgeons,* whose connection with the finances of the institution will be discovered in the weekly records that the building was clean and the patients well attended. It is, however, extraordinary that two medical gentlemen, one of whom enjoys the honorable distinction of "General," should acquiesce in such a method of

* One-fourth of whom were on duty for three months in each year, and were required "during their term of service" to inspect "the institution in company with the Surgeon-in-Chief or Resident Physician (Section 3, Chapter IX of By-Laws) once during each week, and on each visit" to report "in writing, in a book kept for that purpose, the condition of the patients and building."

defence against alleged "anonymous accusations of mismanagement." One can only account for this approval of the "General" upon the theory that from long experience and continued success in getting from them what he wants, he has reached a very low estimate of the average congressman's capacity, and that a "sop to cerberus" in this instance will quiet his inquisitiveness. Or perhaps he has been taking lessons from the past experience of that other "General," who is likewise "President," and is chary of putting on paper matters that have a crooked look until their innocent purity is shown by plausible explanations from disinterested but lucky friends. Whatever motive may have inspired the course of these gentlemen, the late Advisory and Consulting Board can not complain, since the small service they were permitted to render the hospital comes now to the fore as the principal defence of its Board of Directors in their hour of peril.

If this "Committee on Expenditures" feels impelled by a sense of personal regard and commiseration for any individual member to vindicate the aggregate honor of the committee, by entrenching themselves behind ramparts constructed of weekly records of the sanitary condition of the building and clinical condition of patients, surely the late advisory and consulting physicians and surgeons should not be aggrieved, but should commiserate the condition of men who, in their extremity, are appealing for help to a body of men who in their letter of resignation declared that they severed their connection with the institution on issues which affected the standing of the hospital, and reserved to themselves "the right to strive for the attainment" of measures of reform "either with the public, for whose benefit the institution was created, the medical profession, with which it should be identified," or Congress, the almoner to whose munificence it owes its existence; or, if said committee, animated by a more selfish, though less honorable motive, seeks to discredit the standing of the members of the late Board of Advisory and Consulting Physicians and Surgeons (to one of whom it rightfully ascribes the authorship of the communication referred to) by publishing their names in connection with an institution which needs defence from "anonymous accusa-

tions of mismanagement," surely the Board can avail itself of the rejoinder, that during its term of service the hospital, in its sanitary condition and medical management, was in the main a creditable institution. It was the refusal of the Board of Directors to accept the Advisory Board's recommendations for a more economical management of the institution (which they were bound to make by the terms of the by-laws under which they acted), which led to their resignation. The late Board of Advisory and Consulting Physicians and Surgeons accepts the publication of the records of weekly inspection as the evidence of having fully, impartially and fearlessly discharged its duty. How unacceptable to the ring-management these recommendations in the interest of economy and reform were, may be inferred from the fact that not only did the Directors fail to approve them, but they hastened to prevent any future attempt in the same direction by repealing the by-law under which they were made.

In this attempt to utilize honest effort in support of audacious wrong, why withhold from the public the annual report of the advisory and consulting physicians and surgeons submitted at the annual meeting of the Directors in September, 1876, which proved so offensive to the controlling ring because of the recommendations in the interest of economy and efficiency? Can it be that these gentlemen have forgotten these suggestions, or are the recommendations no more acceptable now than when they were made?

Why suppress all the acts and suggestions of that Board looking to increased efficiency in the medical management of the institution and suggesting methods of economy and reform, and give to the public the weekly records of inspection, which only exhibit its careful and judicious supervision of the hygienic condition of the building and medical care of the sick? Is the hope entertained that the honor reflected upon their administration by the prudent superintendence of the matters committed to the inspection of the advisory and consulting physicians and surgeons would bridge them over the chasm, obliterate their mistakes and wrong-doing, and restore them to the confidence of the community, or was it to hold them up as exemplars to

those who came quickly to the places of honor vacated by their predecessors on issues affecting the standing of the hospital? One would imagine that these anxious guardians of the institution's future fear the effect of these documents upon the munificence of Congress, and hope by putting forth only part of the record to stifle inquiry and preserve their control.

Space is too limited to republish these records of inspection, which covered a period of nearly two years, but in the interest of impartial justice, and as proof that the successors have disregarded the lessons of prudence bequeathed by their exemplars, the following inspection record of May 1, 1877, may be introduced:

"May 1, 1877.—We met, at the request of the Surgeon-in-Chief, to assist in the removal of a supposed ovarian tumor which had been decided at previous consultations to be a fit subject for ovariectomy. The patient, H. J., had been tapped three times, and the fluid examined microscopically on each occasion; by Dr. Shaeffer twice, and once at the Army Medical Museum, and pronounced ovarian without doubt. The operation was performed by the Surgeon-in-Chief, in the presence of the Advisory Board and Drs. Reyburn, Young, Ashford, J. H. Thompson, Jr., and the Resident Physician. An incision three inches in length, commencing an inch below the umbilicus and extending downwards, was made; the vessels were carefully tied in the abdominal parietes until the peritoneum was reached. The peritoneal cavity was found to contain several pints of serous fluid, and the ovaries found to be a mass of colloid growths. The operation was then discontinued and the opening closed.

"J. O. STANTON, M. D.;

"Z. T. SOWERS, M. D."

How dare you, gentlemen of the succeeding advisory and consulting board of physicians and surgeons, arraign the Army Medical Museum on the charge of mistaken diagnosis, and thus attempt to shirk the responsibility of slitting open an indigent woman's abdomen in search of something you knew not of, and having found it, "discontinued" the lesson of instruction, and then, wiser by at least one jot or tittle, "closed" the wound. The

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records of your predecessors exhibit no such mistake. This is one of the items "in the cause of humanity" to which Surgeon-General Barnes invites the attention of Congress, and cites, with commendable exultation, as an illustration of the "present great usefulness" of this hospital, of the management of which he and another "general" are the most conspicuous members.

"But," says the committee, "a complete refutation of the charge of extravagant and injudicious expenditure included in the above-mentioned attack will be found in the annual report of the Treasurer," to which the attention of the reader is now invited.

On page 6 of the report the Treasurer says: "On the 1st of July, 1876, there was placed to the credit of the Columbia Hospital for Women and Lying-in Asylum in the United States Treasury the unexpended balance from the preceding year, \$2,898.15, with the appropriation of \$16,000 for the ensuing fiscal year." * * * * *

"The accompanying schedule, accurately compiled from the inventory furnished the Treasury Department, fully and, I trust, satisfactorily explains how this sum of money—\$18,898.15—has been expended."

On page 8 he says: "The amount of appropriation available for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1877, . . . is \$18,192.44," which shows a discrepancy of \$705.71 in favor of the sum previously stated as having been expended.

Immediately following the above statement occurs the following (see page 8):

Appropriation for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1877, \$18,192 44.	
Gen'l repairs, furniture, etc., per vouchers in Treas. Dep't	\$3,415 91
For support and of patients.....	14,776 53
	<hr/>
	18,192 44

Thus it appears that the expenditures are made to aggregate the smaller amount stated as available, leaving the \$705.71 unaccounted for. The report contains but two items of expenditure, leaving unexplained the disposition of the little sum of \$705.71. One can not help wondering how much of this money was spent in "general repairs," and of what kind, espe-

cially when one finds but a little further on a carefully itemized statement of the disposition of \$8,000 appropriated for Mansard roof *and repairs*, and if they have ever been in the hospital, how much and what kind of furniture was purchased, and whether there were any more sumptuous book-cases, arm-chairs, moquette carpets and the like, found necessary. And then in the matter of "for support and of patients," one must own that a little more elaboration of detail would have strengthened the paper as a "refutation of the charge of extravagant and injudicious expenditure." For instance, items indicating how much it cost for salaries of attendants, for fuel and lights, for subsistence, etc. And just here, attention is invited to another discrepancy. The Treasurer charges himself with an unexpended balance from the preceding year of \$2,898.15, whereas in the act of Congress (July 31, 1876, 19 Stat. 108,) the following clause is found:

"For the support of the Columbia Hospital for Women and Lying-in Asylum over and above the probable amount which will be received from pay-patients, \$16,000, in addition to \$3,500, being the unexpended balances of former appropriations which is hereby made available." Here is a discrepancy of \$601.85.

Following the above statement of the expenditures, occurs the following remarkable disclosure: "Estimating the number of patients as forty-four of a daily average, their maintenance and support cost the United States \$40.48½ per diem, or ninety-two cents for each individual." To which is appended a foot-note in these words: "Forty-four includes patients and employes." Thus it is shown in his own language that the Treasurer, who has united with the other two members of the committee in attesting the accuracy of his accounts and his care and economy in the management of the finances of the institution, has fixed the *estimated* daily average of patients at forty-four, but in a foot-note, where it was hoped the truth would escape observation, it is added that the "forty-four includes patients and employes," and continuing to evade a correct statement of the daily average cost of each patient, he proceeds with the words: "Their maintenance and support cost the United States \$40.48½ per diem, or ninety-two cents for each individual." Observe

that the words are "costs the United States," not the institution, and why thus expressed? Because this daily average expenditure is calculated upon the basis of a gross disbursement of \$14,776.53 instead of \$18,192.44, admitted to have been expended, and for a daily average of patients estimated at forty-four, which number it is admitted includes all the employes, and the "pay-patients," who are charged with the cost of maintenance and medical care. Thus to deceive the Secretary of the Interior, the President, and Congress, he excludes from his calculation the sum of \$3,415.91, which he admits was expended in general repairs, furniture, etc.; the sum of \$601.85 difference between the unexpended balance placed to the credit of the institution and that named in the act of Congress; the sum of \$705.71 not accounted for, and the sum of \$1,075, amount received from thirty-two "pay-patients" admitted to the hospital during the fiscal year. To deceive the almoner of the institution, to foster waste, to conceal lavish and unnecessary expenditures, to retain control of the charity, and to escape investigation, the average daily cost of each patient has been willfully and wantonly under-estimated, both by augmenting the daily average number of patients by the addition of the employes and by deducting from the gross amount of expenditures all sums not included in the item denominated "for support and of patients." No allusion is made to the salaries paid to the Treasurer and Surgeon in charge, though it is admitted that salaries are paid to "officers" and "employes." Such are the exhibits of this officer, which J. K. Barnes, M. D., and Charles H. Cragin, M. D., Secretary, together with John T. Mitchell, Treasurer, allege will constitute "a complete refutation of the charge of extravagant and injudicious expenditure." Such are the methods of estimating the daily average cost of patients maintained in a hospital established and supported by the government, accepted and approved by the Surgeon-General of the Army and the Secretary of the establishment, who, with the Treasurer, "have the supervision and control of all expenditures." If similar methods of estimating the daily average cost of maintaining sick soldiers are in use in the army, it is quite time that the Hon. H. B. Banning (who has so gener-

ously espoused the cause of a prominent purveyor for the succession, and who predicts that before the Ides of the coming March shall have passed, a first-class funeral cortége will move with imperial pomp from the Surgeon-General's office to the cemetery of official and senile retirement) should undertake the fulfillment of his prophecy, in the interest of economy and reform, even though his friend, the purveyor may not find his way to the succession so easy. To recur to the Treasurer's account, to divest it of its deceptive and evasive features, and giving him the benefit of his discrepancies, it may be stated as follows:

Balance from preceding year.....	\$ 2,898 15
Appropriation for year ending June 30, 1877.....	16,000 00
Amount received from pay-patients.....	1,075 00
Gross receipts.....	\$19,973 15
Deduct balance on hand, June 30, 1877.....	1,005 71
Amount expended.....	\$18,967 44

To this should be added interest on the value of the property occupied by the hospital which the Treasurer states as follows:

Grounds surrounding hospital.....	\$ 91,647 00
Building and improvements.....	50,000 00
Library, furniture, surgical instruments, hospital stores, etc.....	15,000 00
	\$156,647 00

This amount at four per cent. interest would add annually to the gross expenditures of the institution the sum of \$6,265.88. The Treasurer, as has been previously stated, estimates the daily average of patients and employes at forty-four. To ascertain a correct daily average of patients, the number of employes and officers, whose salaries and cost of maintenance are defrayed from the funds of the institution, should be deducted. From an official communication of the "Surgeon-in-charge," now before the writer, the number of employes is fixed at fourteen, at a total aggregate salary of \$221 per month. To this number must be added the matron and the surgeon-in-charge, whose salaries (omitted from the above communication) and subsistence are likewise defrayed from the common funds of the establishment. Deducting then sixteen, the number of employes maintained at the cost of the United States from the

number incorrectly stated by the Treasurer (forty-four), and the daily average of patients for the year ending June 30, 1877, is found to be but twenty-eight. From this number must also be deducted the daily average of pay-patients, for they are charged with the cost of maintenance, medicines, and medical and surgical attendance. The Treasurer states the amount received during the fiscal year from pay-patients to be \$1,075, which, at the highest charge of ten dollars per week for each patient, would give two as the daily average of pay-patients during the fiscal year. Thus the daily average of patients maintained in the institution at the cost of the United States is ascertained to be but twenty-six. Then to recapitulate: Expenditures for year ending June 30, 1877, \$18,898.15; daily average of patients, twenty-six; expenditure per diem, \$51.77; average daily cost per patient, \$1.99; average cost per annum per patient, \$726.35. If to this be added a moderate rental of the premises occupied, or four per cent. annual interest on the Treasurer's estimated value of the property, the average daily cost of each patient would be considerably increased; but, as it stands, the daily cost is \$1.07 in excess of the amount which the Treasurer, with evasive effrontery and culpable impudence, estimates at ninety-two cents.

But this is not all. On page 7 there is the following statement of the amount of appropriations for support of the Columbia Hospital for Women from the beginning of the fiscal year July 1, 1871, to the end of the fiscal year July 30, 1877:

	<i>Support.</i>	<i>Property.</i>
Appropriation for fiscal year June 30, 1872.....	\$ 15,000	
Rent of building.....		\$ 3,000
Purchase of surgical instruments.....		500
Appropriation for fiscal year June 30, 1873.....	18,300	
Purchase of building and 40,000 feet of ground.....		25,000
Alteration and repairs of building.....		7,000
Appropriation for fiscal year ending June 30, 1874.....	28,500	
Appropriation for fiscal year ending June 30, 1875.....	24,000	
Grading ground and building walls.....		8,500
Appropriation for fiscal year ending June 30, 1876.....	24,300	
To complete purchase of grounds.....		25,000
Appropriation for fiscal year ending June 30, 1877.....	16,000	
Mansard roof to building.....		8,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	126,100	77,000
	77,000	
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total amount (not including 1878).....	203,100	

Why are the annual appropriations for the six preceding years, which in the aggregate amount to \$73,000, and the amount annually received from pay-patients, which, except for the years 1876 and 1877, is an unknown quantity, and the amounts donated by the municipal government omitted from this statement? Why is the rental in 1872 carried to the property account? But take the figures as they are and estimate the daily cost of the patients on the basis of a daily average of twenty-six, which is probably in excess of any previous year, and the daily cost for each patient to the United States varies from \$1.99 to \$3; yet the Treasurer dares to assert that "the average daily number of patients and employes during that period is forty-four, making the entire cost \$1.30 for each individual per diem." Will the Treasurer and his committee colleagues, together with "O. E. Babcock, President," seek to conceal these gross misstatements of facts, these evasive misrepresentations of aggregate expenditures and average daily disbursements, and these manipulations of accounts in the interest of and in obedience to the behests of a controlling ring, under the hypocritical garb of inexperience in hospital management; or, in the cant phraseology of the Christian statesman, ascribe them to errors of judgment; or, even worse, seek to cover them under the inspection records of a body of innocent doctors?

To contrast the conduct of this institution with that of another, in the management of which there is no controlling ring, the following report of the Board of Hospital Administration of the Children's Hospital is subjoined:

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, December 1, 1877.

To the President of the Board of Directors:

In submitting the seventh annual report of the amount and character of the work accomplished by the attending physicians of the hospital, which are clearly set forth in the accompanying tabulated statements, the Board of Hospital Administration desires to call the attention of the members of the Board of Directors to the economical management of the institution.

To definitely determine the average daily cost of maintaining each patient admitted to the hospital, a system of daily reports,

authenticated by the house-physician, was established and put in operation in February last, by which the daily admissions, discharges, deaths, and number remaining were recorded every day, from which a monthly daily average of children occupying beds in the hospital for the past nine months has been accurately ascertained, as follows:

March.....	33.1	August	31.5
April.....	34.8	September.....	32.9
May.....	33.	October.....	31.
June.....	28.7	November.....	32.8
July.....	27.4		

Thus it is shown that the daily average of patients under treatment in the hospital was 31.72, which may be assumed to be an approximate estimate of the daily average for the entire year.

By reference to the Treasurer's books it appears that the gross expenditures, as per detailed statement below, for the year ending November 30, 1877, amounted to \$6,713.

DISBURSEMENTS.

Rent.....	\$1,300 00
Marketing and groceries.....	1,450 00
Printing and advertising.....	185 75
Fuel and gas.....	646 54
Matron and nurses.....	1,542 00
Bread and milk.....	796 71
Drugs and medicines, and surgical instruments and appliances.....	643 08
Furniture and repairs.....	54 69
Postage and stationery.....	12 50
Building fund.....	38 95
Sundries, detailed in journal.....	42 78

From these data it is shown that the daily average cost of each child occupying a bed in the hospital was 58 cents. In this estimate is included the entire cost of the medicines dispensed to 766 out-door patients, which, together with the item of \$38.95 transferred to the building fund, should not be included in the gross expenditures for the maintenance of the 157 children admitted to and treated in the hospital. Fully one-half of the amount disbursed for drugs (\$643.08) was expended in supplying medicines to the out-door sick children; but as it is a proper and legitimate expenditure, enabling the attending physicians to extend the benefits of the institution to a number of indigent children who could not be accommodated in the hospital building, and who would otherwise suffer for needed medical attendance and medicines, the Board of Hos-

pital Administration is quite willing that it should be included in the estimate of the daily average cost of maintaining each child admitted to and treated in the hospital.

In submitting this evidence of the economical management of the institution the Board of Hospital Administration can not refrain from commending the careful and judicious supervision of the domestic and purchasing departments of the institution, which the Board of Lady Visitors has so constantly and cheerfully exercised, and to whom the Board is mainly indebted for the strict economy thus made manifest in the disbursement of the funds contributed to the support of the institution.

In this connection it is proper to state that not one dollar of the funds contributed by a generous public or appropriated by the Congress of the United States is expended in the payment of salaries to any member of the Board of Directors, officers or physicians of the institution. The matron, nurses, and domestics are the only persons connected with the institution who receive any compensation for their services.

J. C. HALL, M. D.,

Chairman Board of Hospital Administration.

F. A. ASHFORD, M. D.,	} Attending Physicians.
SAMUEL C. BUSEY, M. D.,	
W. V. MARMION, M. D.,	
W. W. JOHNSTON, M. D.,	

And even now the story is untold. In the act of July 31, 1876 (19 Stat. 108) following the paragraph previously quoted from the same act are these words: "For a Mansard roof for the buiding, \$8,000." On page 9 of the Treasurer's report is to be found the following:

Appropriation for Mansard roof and repairs \$8,000.

Special appropriation for Mansard roof.....		\$8,000 00
Amount work by contract.....	\$5,950 00	
extra authorized.....	250 75	
Rebuilding porch and walls.....	292 53	
Extension, heating apparatus and gas fixtures.....	421 50	
Painting per contract.....	325 00	
extra in building.....	75 00	
Salary superintendent and architect.....	300 00	
New frames and sashes.....	364 00	
		<hr/> 7,978 78
Balance on hand.....		21 22

Section 3678 R. S., page 728, provides that "all sums appropriated for the various branches of expenditure in the public service shall be applied to the objects for which they are respectively made, and for no others."

Was not the appropriation of \$8,000 for a special purpose, and, if so, are the items of expenditure in accordance with the true intent and meaning of the law? Is it not manifest that the Treasurer has interpolated the words "and repairs" to cover disbursements not contemplated by the law?

As this is a government hospital and supported chiefly from the public treasury, and as all citizens are therefore desirous that errors or abuses should be exposed and corrected, these facts are respectfully submitted.