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CONTROVERSERY OVER MANAGEMENT OF SOLDIERS' ORPHANS'  
HOMESTEAD

TO THE PUBLIC

The community must have been no less surprised than myself by the communication in your issue of July 18th--a flagrant illustration of the gross injustice which a reckless use of the boasted freedom of the press, if unrestrained, may inflict upon the private citizen. Like a madman playing with fire, the writer indulges in wanton charges, aspersions of motives and detraction of character--and this in the sacred names of "charity and humanity," absorbed with professional engagements I had no connection whatever with the subject matter which furnishes the occasion to this writer for a most unjustifiable and inexcusable attack, for which he deserves to be pilloried in public contempt for his mendacity./ Busy with preparations for supreme court, and for a time absent at ending upon it, and on my return professionally engrossed while not in usual health, I know little or nothing of what was transpiring in the community and had not seen anyone connected with the Homestead for weeks before I learned at my table of the occurrence in regard to the two girls, and not until the day after the hearing. The next day further particulars were mentioned by some one in my office. This writer or some confrere was certainly upon a bootless search after "the adviser" when he put his impertinent inquiry, as he states, to the "matron of the Home." Like his illustrious progenitor--the redoubtable Don Quixote--he is not successful in his tilt with the windmill.

Neither for weeks before the event nor for the entire period since had I any communication either oral or written from Dr. Bourns the superintendent, or from the matron of the Home. I was neither adviser <sup>advised</sup> before or after the occurrence. I bore no official relation to the Homestead, and was never consulted nor did I ever advise in regard to its internal government. That was the province of its officers. I have been at times consulted professionally, but not within the period above stated. If the writer's statement as to my relation to the subject matter be a sample specimen of what he avers as "true as Gospel," certainly his Gospel truth must either antedate the Christian dispensation or be wholly apochryphal. Relying upon his imagination for his facts, he is wholly unreliable.

The whole extent of my offending is that as a citizen, who took an interest in its establishment and long a friend of the Homestead and

desiring its continued prosperity when struggling under adversity, wrote a private letter to its secretary and superintendent, Dr. Bourns, advising the removal of two refractory inmates after I had most reliable information upon which to rest the belief of the fact that the girls were disobedient and incorrigible. I did this prompted by right motives, and regarding it as for the best, all things considered. As this was what the writer himself appeared to be seeking to accomplish, if he was acting in "the interest of charity and humanity," and not from impulse and passion, why should he be so outraged in his feelings at my advising it? There were, however, considerations which influenced my judgment and which I submit justified the advice. The facts which I state can be sustained by proofs. These girls had continued in the Homestead from one to two years longer than they were entitled to remain, the period for which orphans are admitted expiring, by the terms of the charter, upon their arriving at the age of sixteen years. They had long been refractory and had set a bad example of indolence and disobedience and ~~disturbed~~ the order of the Home. The matron had so reported to the superintendent, a year or more before, and he had requested their friends to remove them and at least in one case to grant permission to put her out to service (there being no authority given by the charter to do so,) but such consent had not been given. The girls were remaining against the consent of the matrons and occasioning her much trouble. Under these circumstances, who would not have concluded that it was better that these girls should be removed--whether, whether friendly or unfriendly to the management of the Home? disturbed

The letter was a private one and written with no thought of publicity, and no request was made nor consent given to its publication--indeed no reply to it has been received. I have never seen it nor any portion of it in print. I have never seen the communication which the writer refers to, as having been published in the Valley Record, and therefore can say nothing about it. Certain I am that language which this writer imputes to me, was not used by me, and therefore his attempt at ridicule goes wide of its mark. It is another tilt at the windmill.

I had no desire to mingle in this clamor and controversy. I have not done so willingly, but simply in self vindication. In my judgment it is ill-advised, unseemly and unprofitable, and is certainly entirely out of the ordinary course in cases of supposed mismanagement of charities. There is a proper mode of investigation--and such I have always advised, as my letter to General Stewart a year since will show. I have a high respect for the gentlemen who constitute the President and Board of the Home, citizens of high standing, as I have also for the officers

in charge of it. But for Dr. Bourns this Homestead would never have existed, and have done its generous work "in the interest of charity and humanity"--notwithstanding this virtuous writer applies to him the elegant epithets of "notorious", "pious", and "scandalous". But that is a matter of taste in this illustrious and valorous "General". Of course in dealing with a lady he is equally happy. Would he have devoted three years' constant attention to the Orphans, as this "Matron of the Home" has done, without receiving a dollar of compensation? If so, let him cast the first stone.

The date of my letter is made the subject of criticism. It was written without any knowledge that the girls had been removed, but to bring about their removal. In itself it furnishes strong internal evidence that I was not consulting with nor even aware of the movements of the "Matron of the Home"--certainly not as well-informed as this omniscient writer, with the aid of his aide's field glass.

I have not obtruded my opinions upon this subject matter upon the public; have not proclaimed them upon the streets or in public places. But I claim the right of private judgment as the sacred privilege of an American Citizen. And I shall not be intimidated from entertaining and giving expression to it from any fear of reckless defamation, such as this, nor of any combination to control public opinion. The vindictive spirit which pervades the communication seems to be prompted by the fact that when retained by the Matron of the Home, a year since, as her counsel when prosecuted avowedly by a combination of men, I faithfully and fearlessly discharged my duty to my client. The writer greatly misconceives the office of an attorney, if he imagines that, after a practice of thirty-two years, I would falter in the discharge of my duty to my client from fear of any combination or from apprehension of popular excitement. Such has not been my character in my profession, and in my practice I have never witnessed an exhibition of greater bitterness. But I despise all such attempts to control the rights and duties of my profession, as all intelligent and fair-minded citizens will unite in doing after the passions of the hour have spent themselves. This blind vindictiveness culminates in the writer when he asserts of me, "he calls the Grand Army of the Republic an illiterate mob." I pronounce this as false as unmitigated falsehood can be.

I will not believe that the Grand Army of the Republic could so degrade itself from its high mission as to stoop to become the sponsor for the reckless defamation of the private citizen by a nameless writer eager to cover his own real nature with the lion's skin of the Grand Army of the Republic.

Respectfully

D. McCaughy

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