

Annotations.

AN INDEFENSIBLE RULE.

WE have received the rules for the Victoria Club for Nurses and Associated Workers, and find that the Committee of Trustees is composed of Mr. H. C. Burdett, Major-General G. Crease, C.B., and the Hon. Charles Napier Lawrence. We think this information should have been given in one of the two "puffs" which have already appeared in the nursing supplement of Mr. H. C. Burdett's paper. The rules, with one exception, appear to be ordinary, but to No. 12 we must take the most serious exception. It states: "The secretary is empowered to refuse the use of the club house to any member without explanation. Nurses will understand that this rule is framed entirely for their benefit and safety, and will not be enforced without grave cause and due consideration." So strongly do we disapprove of such a regulation, compelling as it does every member to resign her unalienable right to an explanation before she is deprived of the rights of membership—for which she has paid—that we advise all self-respecting nurses to withhold their support from the club until this indefensible rule is expunged. It is extraordinary that such a rule should be gravely proposed by a committee of men to govern gentlewomen whose money they do not scruple to accept; and that they should imagine it to be possible that British nurses will be content to be expelled from a public club "without an explanation," and without therefore the opportunity being afforded them of defence. Men would not submit to such injustice for a moment, and we warn nurses not to place themselves in such a false and defenceless position. If Mr. H. C. Burdett desires his club to succeed, he must at once expunge this objectionable rule—and the sooner the better.

A LEGAL CONTRACT.

At a recent meeting of the Board of Management of the Swansea Hospital, the chairman, the Rev. T. Pollock, stated that, for a long time past, nurses had been leaving the hospital before the end of the term of training which they had agreed upon, and consequently the hospital was largely nursed by probationers. This the Committee thought most undesirable, and asked the Board to agree to the principle of legal agreements with probationers, and suggested that the details of these agreements should be left to the medical staff.

Dr. Lancaster stated that there was only one nurse in the hospital with a standing of over three years. Nurses were constantly leaving at the

end of a year. This was unfair to the hospital, which was just beginning to reap some benefit for the trouble which it had expended upon teaching them. It was unfair to the public also, as these probationers, with training varying from six to fifteen months, went out and posed as fully-trained nurses. He thought that it would be well if the Committee would sanction some legal agreement being drawn up which would bind the nurses to stay for three years.

We are quite of opinion that the course suggested by these gentlemen is the right one. It is to be regretted that there are nurses to be found whose sense of duty, and of honour, is not sufficiently keen to ensure their carrying out a compact, made by them on entering the service of an institution, namely, that they receive a valuable training, and a small salary, with the understanding that they compensate the hospital by remaining a certain time in its service. This being the case, however, the remedy proposed by the Board of Management of the Swansea Hospital is an obvious one—namely, that probationers shall sign legal contracts, so that committees may be able to recover damages in a court of law should a contract be broken. It is from the ranks of the half-trained, irresponsible and dishonourable women, who do not scruple to break their agreements with their training schools if they believe that it is to their advantage to do so, that the nurse *à la mode*, who brings such discredit upon the nursing profession, is largely drawn. This is another reason, therefore, why we should be glad to see legal contracts for probationers instituted. We believe that the probationers of St. John's House, Norfolk Street, Strand, sign a contract of this description, and also that they pay a fee to the institution, as caution money, when they enter its service, and that this fee is returned after a certain period.

INFIRMARY FRICTION.

THE Skipton Board of Guardians seem to have been unable to retain the services of their nurses for any length of time, and recently, upon their receiving the resignation of a nurse, they inquired the cause. The nurse stated that "of late, life had become unbearable, and this, to a great extent, was due to the interference of the lady Guardians. As soon as she had contrived to obtain an influence over her patients, it was undermined by the action of the lady Guardians." It would be interesting to hear the point of view of the lady Guardians. It may be that they only fulfilled their duties with more zeal and sense of responsibility than their male colleagues, and that the fact that they did so was resented by the nurse; or it may

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)