

Association, and we have pleasure in placing on record in this issue that signed by 300 matrons and nurses. The value of protests, it has been well said, is seen in their after effects. At the time they are made it is more than possible that they appear futile—useless. This is not always so, for a chance sometimes occurs where it is least expected, and the value of a protest is immediately evident. In the majority of cases, however, protests are the means—often the only means—at the disposal of a minority for expressing their dissatisfaction with existing circumstances. It is very possible that when they are made they may be ignored, but they stand on record for all time, and their value is best appraised when the heat and contention, almost invariably associated with politics, have subsided, and it is possible calmly to review the situation. To the protestors themselves it is much that at least they have delivered their souls, and repudiated responsibility for proceedings of which they conscientiously disapprove. To the onlookers two things at least are evident—the fact that people do not protest unless there is something to protest about, and the sincerity of those who espouse a cause which is for the moment unpopular, discounted. It is Dean Butler who has said that he has implicit faith in those who fight losing causes, and it is an obvious fact that no one does so except as a matter of principle. When the history of the Royal British Nurses' Association comes to be written, it will be a matter for congratulation that some three hundred women were to be found strong enough to withstand pressure, intimidation, and cajolery, and to speak as their consciences dictated, although by so doing they subjected themselves to misrepresentation, obloquy and insult. Generations to come will thank those who were brave enough, in the face of overwhelming odds, to consider what was their duty to their profession, rather than what was expedient for themselves, and, defying results, to act accordingly. It is obvious that, whatever betide, those who are fighting for principles must fight on the lines of

"One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break;
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong
would triumph;
Held we fall to rise; are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."

And so fighting, their cause is sure of ultimate success.

Medical Matters.

ALCOHOLISM.



THE cases of alcoholism which occur in quite young children are certainly on the increase, and threaten to become a national scandal, necessitating immediate legislation. A case is recorded of a patient of eleven years of age who was admitted to a hospital suffering from alcoholism as well as secondary symptoms. The first occurrence of the disease took place at four years of age, when the child had persistent convulsions for three days, without return of consciousness, as well as paralysis of the whole of the left side. He was in the habit of drinking the dregs of the glasses of the people who drank at his grandfather's inn. On the day that he was taken ill he drank more than usual and was "dead-drunk." From this time, the paralysis gradually lessened, but epileptic seizures became established. When admitted to hospital, his intelligence was much below normal. The child, who was affectionate and gentle, could neither read, write or count. During the few months preceding death, rapid emaciation took place. He would sleep for many hours after an epileptic attack. Death supervened upon the development of pneumonia. It is not permissible to supply adults with poisons except under certain well-defined conditions. Is it too much to ask that like conditions shall be laid down to protect children from alcoholic poisoning?

In connection with this subject, the February number of the "Proceedings of the Society for the Study of Inebriety" gives an interesting account of the methods adopted for curing drunkenness amongst the ancients. From the days when various drugs were mixed with the wine in order to prevent the drunkard, either from taking too much, or in order to cause him so violent a distaste that he would feel compelled to become a total abstainer, down to the treatment by the ducking stool, in vogue even at the beginning of this century, the methods applied have literally been legion. But, one and all, they proceeded upon the belief that drunkenness was a habit and a crime, and not, as it is now believed to be, the result of a disease. The effects of alcohol are undoubtedly the

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