

Annotations.

"DIFFICULTIES ARE NOT REASONS."

The correspondence on Nursing in the *British Medical Journal*, which practically is a discussion of the Registration question, is in no wise abating in interest; indeed, in last week's issue the interest was considerably accentuated by the fact that someone—Mr. Sydney Holland—has at last written a signed letter from the anti-Registration point of view. It seemed almost as if no one, at the present stage of the movement, would have the courage to sign his name to a letter against legal Registration for nurses, and though the honours of the correspondence undoubtedly remain with its advocates, still it is well that the other side should have been voiced, even if we can find in Mr. Holland's letter no valid reasons for the position he takes up.

We are specially glad to read in the same issue the letter of Miss Forrest, at present Matron of the Victoria and Bournemouth Nursing Institute and a Lady Consul of the Royal British Nurses' Association, for she was one of the signatories to the petition for the Royal Charter, and it is good to find those who ten years ago were associated with the Registration movement still working for it and advocating it whole-heartedly. We find in this letter a phrase which seems peculiarly applicable in connection with that of Mr. Holland:—"Difficulties are urged—and difficulties there certainly are—but difficulties are not reasons."

No one who has watched Mr. Holland's work at the London Hospital can doubt his genuine care for the sick, and efficient care of the sick involves the efficiency of trained nurses. But he falls into the mistake of denying to nurses the right to exist apart from their training-schools. A medical man can, he says, "ascertain now by letter, telegram, or telephone all particulars about a nurse whom he wishes to employ when she has furnished him with the name of her training-school and other credentials." Therefore, he argues, there is no need for State Registration. But Matrons, being but human, resign their posts, go abroad, even die. There is then no one to speak with knowledge of the qualifications of a given nurse, and though the hospital may keep a roll of the nurses who have gained its certificate, how do the entries in it exceed in value those of a State Register? Again, Mr. Holland overlooks the fact that a State Register of nurses

is but a small part of a scheme which really involves the organisation of Nursing Education. When a General Nursing Council is appointed under an Act of Parliament, then for the first time a *minimum*, not a *uniform*, standard of nursing education will be laid down. The publication of a State Register containing the names of those who have attained this standard naturally follows.

It is not reasonable to argue, as Mr. Holland does, that "in some hospitals ten years would not give any proper training. But three years at such a hospital would entitle an untrained woman to be 'hall-marked' as trained." One of the first duties of the Nursing Council would be to hall-mark the hospitals, or groups of hospitals, which afford an efficient training-ground for nurses, and to define the curriculum which must be maintained.

The training-schools will be well-advised if they limit themselves to the advancement of nursing education and to the maintenance of discipline within their own walls, and leave the discipline of the nursing profession at large to a central professional authority. To attempt to exercise authority over nurses in no way under their control is to attempt the impossible. If this is questioned, it may usefully be asked: Have the training-schools been, so far, successful in maintaining discipline in our ranks? Manifestly, they can make no attempt even to control any nurses but their own graduates, and it is the women with a smattering of knowledge, the rejected probationers, and those whose only title to the name of nurse is gained from the uniform they wear, who chiefly bring discredit upon us, and who will be recognised for the amateurs they are when once legislation is enacted. Two excellent letters, in addition to Miss Forrest's, one from Miss E. S. Haldane and the other from Miss Kate Richmond, put the case for Registration forcibly and well. We commend this correspondence to the attention of all nurses.

THE INFECTION OF MILK.

Of recent years the danger incurred by the infection and contamination of milk has been increasingly realised, and with the realisation the need for hygienic control of milk stores and milk shops has forced itself upon public authorities. Some excellent regulations with this object have recently been adopted by the Public Health Department of the Corporation of London, and came into force on September 1st.

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