

Voluntary or Compulsory—has arisen from the fact that many people believe that a voluntary measure is one undertaken by private individuals, whilst a compulsory measure is one enforced by Act of Parliament. In many instances, of course, the distinction is correct; but, as we have now shown, in the case of the Registration of Nurses, Parliament will almost certainly make it a voluntary act on the part of a nurse to register, even although such registration would be under the control of a Central Nursing Council appointed for that purpose.

### Annotation.

#### THE LIABILITY OF CORPORATIONS FOR THE ACTS OF THEIR SERVANTS.

Mr. Justice Walton has recently delivered judgment in respect to the Liverpool case, in which the plaintiff claimed damages for alleged negligence in the premature discharge of his child after scarlet fever from the Infectious Diseases Hospital under the control of the Liverpool Co-operation, in consequence of which several of his other children contracted the disease and one died. The jury found want of reasonable skill and care on the part of the doctor. They also affirmed that there was an undertaking on the part of the Corporation to employ a competent physician, who would employ reasonable skill and care in and about the discharge of the boy from the hospital.

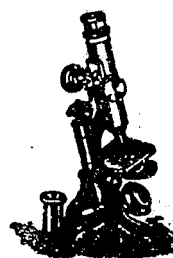
The issue upon which the Corporation fought was the question of liability.

In giving judgment the learned judge said that what the Corporation undertook was to carry on the hospital with reasonable skill and care. The doctor was a competent and duly qualified medical man, and, therefore, no blame could be attached to the Corporation for having employed him. If he made a negligent mistake the learned judge did not consider the Corporation responsible for the consequences. They could not control the opinion of the doctor in any way. It would be wrong for them to do so. It seemed to him there was no negligence at all, and his judgment must be for the defendants.

The effect of this judgment, if upheld, is to make doctors and nurses directly responsible for their own actions rather than the institutions which employ them, for it can scarcely be denied that someone is responsible.

### Medical Matters.

#### BLACK SICKNESS.



Major W. B. Leishman, M.B., Professor of Pathology at the Royal Army Medical College, recently delivered an address at the Royal Institute of Public Health, Russell Square, when he described a mysterious and deadly disease and its newly-discovered parasite known as Kala azar, which signifies "black sickness," a name given to it by natives because of the darkening of the skin associated with it.

When at its height in an epidemic the disease is more fatal than plague, the mortality being as much as 96 or 98 per cent. It has been known in India since 1869, but first occurred in an epidemic form in 1882. The parasite is also found in Northern Africa, Tunis, Algiers, and Arabia.

The symptoms are an enlargement of the liver and spleen, fever, a corpse-like appearance of the skin, an enormous reduction of the white corpuscles of the blood, dysentery of an intractable kind, and a shrivelling up of the legs.

The disease attacks both sexes at all ages. At one time it was thought that white men were immune, but as the parasite has been found in a soldier at Netley, that theory is now disproved.

It is believed that the use of quinine is indicated in the treatment of the disease, but, according to Major Leishman, nearly every drug in the pharmacopœia has been tried without result.

So far there is no light as to how the parasite gets into or out of the body. It is probable that it lives in the soil through the aid of an intermediate host of cold-blooded habit. What is certain is that infection clings to houses in which patients have suffered from the disease, and also runs along the trade routes. The whole subject is still obscure, and requires more light thrown upon it than has so far been gained.

#### THE HYGIENE OF BARBERS' SHOPS.

The danger of infection from the indiscriminate use of hairbrushes, and hairdressers and barbers' appliances is well known. It is interesting, therefore, to learn from the Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the City of London for the year 1904 that arrangements have now been made for the names and business addresses of proprietors of Hair-

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