

not unnatural disinclination to hold such an inquiry is exhibited on the part of the Government, it has been determined to hold public meetings, and otherwise ventilate the subject, during the autumn; while a number of members of Parliament have already promised that they will use all their influence next February to bring the matter before Parliament by means of a definite motion for an inquiry. Two facts must be quite clearly understood; two results may be safely anticipated. For three years, a very determined effort has been made to take all power and authority in the Nurses' Association away from the nurses, and to keep this in the hands of a small clique of medical men. The only results of the struggle have been to ruin, for the time being, the work and prestige of the Association, and to bring widespread discredit upon the officials.

The next fact is that the patient forbearance with which the members have treated the officials is exhausted, and that the former intend now to have their turn. It is palpable to everyone that the officials have hopelessly failed. We have some reason to believe that the members will be not only more successful, but that they will more rapidly attain their objects. The officials are actually, and of course vainly, striving to do what no English monarch has ever yet achieved.

The members are merely claiming those rights which are the inalienable privileges of British citizens—freedom to manage, and to express their opinions concerning, their own affairs. They therefore go into the coming struggle "thrice armed," for their quarrel is just.

We desire to make one point quite clear. Those who have made the assertions of mismanagement do not ask that those assertions shall be taken for granted, even though the officials will probably not attempt to dispute them. They are prepared with ample proofs, not only of every statement now made, but of even more serious charges. And having now been forced, greatly against their will, into this contest, they are firmly determined to carry the matter through, and to show to their fellow-countrymen the whole tyranny and injustice to which they have been subjected. It will immediately be asked what chances of success they can show? and for the answer we must turn to the results which some of them have already achieved in public matters, because these of course afford the best criterion of the probable result of their

present endeavours. Judged by this standard, it is common knowledge in the nursing world that some of these ladies were told that it was hopeless to expect to inaugurate a Nurses' Association. But they did it. They were told it was hopeless to fight against the opposition which grew up against the Association in 1890 and 1891. But they fought and won. They were told it was hopeless to expect to get a Royal Charter in the face of such powerful opponents. But they tried and won again. These are powerful arguments in favour of their probable success now. They are not, at present, contending against great public institutions, against immense vested interests, against the personal antagonism of Dukes and lesser notabilities. They are not contending against important and influential opponents who possess some show of reason for their opposition, but against some half-dozen, for the most part unknown, medical men, whose attempt to deprive nurses of their rightful influence in their own Association will be ridiculed and condemned by the public from end to end of the United Kingdom, and will be repudiated by the medical profession, as it has already been protested against by a powerful medical association. These ladies are fixedly set on publicly proving how their legal rights have been kept from them by a few medical gentlemen, and this does not represent nearly so difficult a contest as those in which they have previously been engaged.

The Members' Rights Defence Committee—who are only pleading for Right and Justice—we have good reason to believe, have already secured ample funds and the cordial assistance of a number of influential Members of Parliament, and of several most important women's Societies, and they have already shown their ability to organise a public movement successfully.

In our humble judgment, therefore, there is no uncertainty as to the ultimate issue of this contest—whether the end comes now or next February. The whole truth will be made public, and already there is no doubt as to the results which will be achieved.

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