

## Annotations.

### THE LEPROSY CONFERENCE.

THE conclusions of the conference of specialists, recently assembled in Berlin to discuss the question of the origin and treatment of leprosy, are of much public interest. The disease is stated to be communicated by a bacillus, to which mankind alone is susceptible, and whose means of entrance into the human organism are at present unknown, although it is considered probable that this is effected through the mouth or mucous membrane. Isolation of persons suffering from leprosy, and notification of the disease, were advocated, the disease being stated to be contagious, but not hereditary. This is but one more instance of the fact that nineteenth century science has endorsed the wisdom of the Mosaic laws, which, in the case of lepers, it is well known, enforced isolation, and, in cases of supposed cure, a declaration of soundness, by a competent judge, before the leper was allowed to come in contact with his fellow men once more. Resolutions were passed at the conference in accordance with the conclusions arrived at. It was decided that it was advisable that the Governments should, after consultation with the sanitary authorities, issue definite instructions in keeping with the special social conditions of each land.

### WOMEN AS DOCTORS AND NURSES.

A WRITER in the *Glasgow Evening Times* has some sensible things to say with regard to woman's place in society, more especially as to her position in the medical and nursing professions. After pointing out the objection which is often raised, to girls who will in all probability possess incomes sufficient to keep them, adopting a profession, on the ground that by so doing they make it more difficult for poorer girls to obtain employment, the article proceeds to point out that "as long as grief and misery exist in the world, so long will women doctors, who practise for the love of doing good, and not in order to amass a fortune, be required." Here then is a suitable employment for young women with means, and it will be hard, indeed, if such women are to be condemned to a life of useless frivolity and inaction, because they are not under the necessity of working for their daily bread. The article then proceeds to deal with

the vulgar idea that it is derogatory to a woman to adopt a profession, and says that "a girl who earns money is thought vulgar; a woman who follows a definite profession is not considered nearly so much a lady as she who is never guilty of doing anything more useful than bazaar fancy work." These false ideas are happily becoming more and more obsolete, but undoubtedly they are still held by a certain section of society. Dealing with the subject of nursing the sick, the writer of the article states that "the one drawback of the calling is that it is too respectable; all sorts and conditions of women—clever, frivolous, fussy, and talkative—insist upon becoming sick nurses, not realizing that nurses are born, not made." We fully admit that without a foundation of certain natural characteristics upon which to build, no amount of training will ever produce a good nurse, but the "born nurse" is a lady whom we have often heard of, but have never personally had the pleasure of meeting. The concluding words of the article should afford food for thought. "Strange to say, the nursing profession is almost the only one open to women not styled either mannish or vulgar, though why it should be more womanly for a girl to nurse a sick man than for a female doctor to treat one of her own sex, is one of the unrevealed mysteries of the universe."

### THE DUTIES OF A MATRON.

THE Guardians of the Poor at Hackney, last week, selected a matron for their infirmary, and the *Star* is of opinion that they "wanted enough for their money." It states that some of the questions asked the candidates for the appointment were: "Are you a total abstainer?" "Have you been successfully vaccinated?" "Are you engaged to be married?" and, "In the event of the laundry machinery breaking down, do you know sufficient of practical engineering to superintend the repairs?" More suitable questions to our mind would have been: "How much practical training have you had in the wards of a hospital?" "Do you hold a three years' certificate?" "Have you had any experience in the superintendence of nurses, and in domestic management?" "Have you been responsible for the care of linen, and can you conduct the quarterly stock taking?" "Can you instruct probationers in the practice and theory of nursing?"

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