

"Union is Strength," are opposed to all co-operation for professional purposes on the part of matrons. It is, therefore, a fact, and one which will not in the future redound to the credit of those who are at present superintendents of the large training schools, that the organization of the nursing profession is being accomplished, for the most part, not by those matrons whose high professional positions give them exceptional opportunities for accomplishing this work, but by those who direct leading provincial training schools, and who are possessed of a conscientious determination to fulfil those public duties which devolve upon them by reason of their positions. We desire now to point out that, although the highest line to adopt is "because right is right to follow right, were wisdom in the scorn of consequence," yet, it is fast becoming evident, that unless matrons are willing that nursing progress and reform should cease for the next decade, they will be forced to co-operate in self-defence. The present policy of the Royal British Nurses' Association to depreciate the authority of the matrons within the Association cannot fail to act prejudicially upon the position of matrons in all English hospitals. If—as will be possible, if the new bye-laws proposed by the honorary officers are carried—the medical men, and the nurses of an institution combine in the Executive Committee of the Royal British Nurses' Association, to carry measures of professional importance, in direct opposition to the opinions of the matron of the training school with which both are connected, it is easy to see that the authority of the matron over her own nursing staff will be seriously interfered with and undermined. Matrons, therefore, can no longer stand aside, but must, in self-defence, fulfil their public duties, and unless they are prepared to do so, it is obvious, as we have pointed out, that they themselves will be the first to suffer. Again, we frequently meet with the expression of opinion from young nurses: "But the matrons will look after our interests"; or, "Surely it is the duty of matrons to see that the interests of the nurses are guarded; they are able to judge so much better than we are." We sympathise with these nurses; we know—and it is only right that it should be so—that nurses are guided to a great extent by their superintendents, and form their opinions largely upon those held by their superior officers. It is incum-

bent upon matrons, therefore, to consider well their position, at the present crisis, and to act fearlessly, and according to their consciences, for the public good, and in the interests of those nurses over whom they are placed. If the matrons adopt this view, and rise to their responsibilities, all will be well, but if, from motives of expediency, or consideration for their own present personal interests, they adopt a lower line, we cannot doubt what will be the verdict of posterity, nor even what the consequences may be to the whole profession.

#### MISCHIEVOUS MEDDLING.

WE observe with satisfaction, that the *Lancet*, which being the mouth-piece of no association may be considered the independent organ of the medical profession, is speaking plainly as to the interfering attitude adopted by Sir Henry Burdett with regard to medical matters. We have brought down upon ourselves the animus and opposition of Sir Henry Burdett by our objections, founded upon principle, to his posing as an authority upon nursing matters, and to his dictation to nurses upon professional matters, in which his experience upon the Stock Exchange has certainly not been of a nature to qualify him to act as an expert. We shall continue to hold this view and to object to mischievous meddling in the affairs of the nursing profession from "a rank outsider," and we are very glad that the *Lancet* has had the courage to object to a like interference on behalf of the medical profession. We quote from the editorial in last week's *Lancet*, upon the conference on hospital reform recently held at St. Martin's Town Hall, to which we alluded in our last issue.

"The speech of Sir Henry Burdett is one to be noted by the medical profession. Sir Henry Burdett is not a medical man, but he poses so often as a semi-medical authority that his words become important on such questions. His remarks in explanation of the abuse of hospitals, and on the remedies for curing them, were alike noticeable. The common view of the profession as to the bloated proportions of the out-patient rooms is that the doors are opened too wide, that very indifferent inquiries as to fitness are made, that advice and medicines are given for nothing or next to nothing, and the crowding patients are led to believe that, sooner or later, actually or potentially, the gratuitous advice and assistance which they will get are given by the heads

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