

not resign directly they were insulted, our contemporary is convinced that they will now not do so.

It has frequently been our painful duty to point out the absurd mistakes into which our contemporary falls—chiefly from lack of knowledge; so it occasions us no surprise that it should now hastily commit itself to another and glaring misconception. The leading hospital matrons, with whom the officials of the Nurses' Association have so deliberately broken faith, are not women who will rashly adopt any grave professional measures. They are at present discussing the position with the necessary care and thought; and when they have arrived at their decision, they will probably take public and concerted action. They certainly will not, in order to please Sir Henry Burdett, commit themselves to any line of action without thoroughly considering both its nature and its effect. We have reason to believe, however, that their decision will soon be made; and it is, meanwhile, interesting to observe that, even if the officials of the Association have shown themselves reckless of consequences, in the dishonourable breach of faith which they have proposed and carried through, their supporters outside the Association are well aware that the trump cards in the game are held, and have always been held, by the matrons—a fact which we have always clearly realised.

The great body of thoroughly trained nurses may be divided roughly into two classes. The majority are engaged in the public services and in hospitals; the smaller number are engaged in private practice. The former may be described not unfairly as a compact and homogeneous body seeing that its members are almost entirely under the control and influence of a comparatively small number of matrons—their names and status being well known in their separate institutions. The latter are not only a widely scattered, but also an entirely heterogeneous, body; its members working either under an institution, or under one or two medical men, or being dependent upon personal recommendation amongst their patients for the work they obtain. In general terms, it may be assumed that these nurses are in some small measure under the influence of the matrons under whom they were individually trained; but beyond this they are under no control or influence whatever.

When this fact is realised, it becomes evident that if the Matrons secede from the Nurses'

Association, they will almost certainly take with them many of the nurses over whom they have any influence, while, if Matrons decline to support the Association in future, there is no probability of the best trained nurses being induced to do so. There is only left then the unattached private nurses. These may, by ones and twos, join the Association, as they do at present, but they can neither in numbers or in influence make up for the loss which the secession of the Matrons must directly and indirectly cause. In fact, the decision at which the Matrons arrive, after calm consideration and discussion, will have the most momentous consequences to the Royal British Nurses' Association, and, therefore, to the future of the whole nursing profession in this country.

Annotations.

MEDICAL ARRANGEMENTS IN THE SOUDAN.

FROM time to time, rumours reach this country that the arrangements for the care of the sick and wounded in the Soudan are far from effective, and such rumours must be the cause of much anxiety and distress to those who have relatives or friends amongst our troops. At the same time, reliable information as to Government arrangements is always most difficult to obtain, and it is, therefore, with satisfaction that we observe that General Russell has been making inquiries, in the House of Commons, of the Under-Secretary for War with regard to these arrangements.

General Russell inquired (1) Whether the medical department attached to the British Brigade at the Battle of Atbara were insufficiently provided with chloroform or anæsthetics for the performance of operations on the battle field, and, if so, whether a court of inquiry would be ordered to inquire into the circumstances.

(2) Whether it was not a fact that no light ambulances were attached to the cavalry in Egypt, and that the only way of carrying the wounded after the cavalry reconaissance before the battle of Atbara was by tying them on the gun-limbers.

(3) Whether the litters for the conveyance of the wounded were provided with sunshades, such as are always attached to litters in hot climates.

(4) Whether the hospital accommodation at Cairo was sufficient, and the nursing arrangements efficient.

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