

The Archbishops' Decision.

THE Archbishops have at last given their decision on the subject of the lawfulness of the practice of Reservation in the English Church, and the "opinion" is that the Church of England does not at present allow Reservation, but that those who think it ought to be allowed are perfectly justified in endeavouring to get the proper authorities to alter the law. Further, that the custom is a primitive one, and that there is nothing in it which is inconsistent with the Christian Faith. This being so, surely the pleadings of those who endeavour, for reasons which are weighty and urgent enough, to restore this primitive custom, should be given a patient and unprejudiced hearing.

We are, in this journal, concerned with the question as nurses, and from consideration for the welfare of the patients in our charge, and to us the question of Reservation assumes a very practical aspect. A patient is seriously—dangerously—ill. Is that patient to be advised to make an unfasting communion, or not? He is in the habit of communicating fasting; if he is advised to break this rule, it is a clear intimation to him that his condition is critical. Again, if he is not advised to make his communion, —his next opportunity in places where Reservation is not practised, unless the clergy celebrate unfasting—he may be dead before the next morning comes without having received, as before all things else he would wish to receive, the Blessed Sacrament shortly before death. Another consideration is that, when a person is seriously ill, the service for the Communion of the Sick may be more than he can follow, or listen to, without subsequent exhaustion. These are practical questions which must have presented themselves for consideration to every nurse who thinks about the question at all, and they present difficulties far from easy to solve. They are specially felt in the tropics, where illnesses are so acute, and deaths often appallingly sudden.

The remedy—which is Reservation—is such a simple solution of the difficulty that one can but wonder that any objection to the practice for the benefit of the sick, whatever may be said against it from other points of view, has been raised. To a nurse, to know that it is practised, and that if her patient becomes worse at any time in the twenty-four hours, the Blessed Sacrament can be brought to him, the comfort is extreme. There is no anxious questioning as to whether or not he should be advised to communicate unfasting. There is no fear that he will die uncommunicated. The Church, with that love for her children which characterises its

primitive custom, has thought of his possible need, and made provision for it. The simplicity, reverence, and utility of the practice of Reservation, is undoubted. Therefore, if it be so that the English Church does not at present authorize the custom, let us plead for its re-installment. When the Reformation took place in this country, we lost much that was both primitive and Catholic. Reform, no doubt, was needed, for the Church had sunk to a low spiritual level, and many abuses were rampant, and it is not altogether surprising that, in their zeal for purity, the Reformers did not discriminate always between legitimate use and abuse. Amongst the good things temporarily lost to the English Church, appears to be the practice of Reservation. Let us hope for its restoration, and not fail to recognize that this depends largely upon ourselves. We shall obtain it when we work for it, when, in our love and veneration for the Blessed Sacrament, we prove ourselves in some small degree to be worthy of it. Lastly, the question as it affects Church-people only, should be decided by them, and them alone, and by Church-people surely we mean communicating members of the Church. Self-government for the Church on this basis is greatly to be desired, and the regulation of a spiritual body by temporal powers has never, and will never, satisfy the most thoughtful members of our Church, of whatever school of thought.

M. B.

Appointments.

LADY SUPERINTENDENT.

MISS ALICE G. CRESSWELL has been appointed Lady Superintendent of the General Infirmary, Chester. She was trained for three years in this institution, and has, in addition, worked on the Private Nursing Staff for two and a half years, and as Sister for four and a half years. She has held her present position as Senior Sister for the past three years, so that she should be well acquainted with the details of work in all the departments of the institution.

MATRON.

MISS ELLEN E. WILSON has been appointed Nurse-Matron of the Cromarty Cottage Hospital. She was trained at the Marylebone Infirmary, and has held the position of Superintendent Nurse at Romford Infirmary, also that of Queen's Nurse, and of Matron of the Ellen Badger Memorial Hospital, Shipston-on-Stour.

MISS CECIL BELL has been appointed Nurse-Matron of the Thomas Knight Memorial Hospital, Blyth. She was trained at the Sunderland Infirmary, where she has since held the position of Charge Nurse.

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