

Annotations.

A CENTRAL HOSPITAL BOARD.

The discussion of the question of a Central Hospital Board for London goes briskly on in the columns of the *Times*. The need for its establishment remains, and it is certain either that such a Board must eventually be organised or that the hospitals must come on the rates. But the Board must be an efficient, not a perfunctory one, and in our view this can only be the case if its members include women, for the inspection of the domestic and nursing departments of hospitals, upon which their good management so largely depends, cannot be expertly performed by men. Yet in all the correspondence which has taken place on the subject we have not once seen this most important point advanced.

HOSPITAL SISTERS' SALARIES.

The question of the underpayment of hospital Matrons has recently been ventilated in the columns of a contemporary, but we do not think that as a rule Matrons have much to complain of in this respect. Their salaries, in all the more important institutions, range from £100 per annum upwards, a scale which our contemporary compares with the earnings of clerks and typists. But this comparison cannot be made with any degree of justice, for, while the clerk who earns this sum spends a large proportion of it in lodging, service, board, washing, lights, and, if ill, medical attendance, all these things, and on a most comfortable scale, are assured to the hospital Matron, so that her salary represents an allowance for dress and personal expenditure. Considered on this basis, the remuneration of hospital Matrons compares favourably with that of any class of women workers, more especially when we remember that they incur no expense in fitting themselves for these positions, but from the day they enter a hospital training-school receive maintenance and board, with a small salary in addition.

Further, the life of a hospital Matron, although undoubtedly onerous if its duties are conscientiously performed, is yet admittedly pleasant, interesting, and satisfying. The authority, dignity, and independence of the position are considerable, and from all these points of view it is desirable. Indeed, we know no other branch of work which is so pleasant.

When, however, we come to the salaries of subordinate workers the case is different. The rank and file of nurses, all things considered,

though their salaries are small, do not do so badly. But, when we consider the responsible duties and hard work which devolve upon Ward Sisters, involving powers of organisation and domestic management, practical nursing skill, the capacity to instruct and train probationers, to attend to the various duties connected with the patients, and to maintain an even balance between all the diverse interests in the ward, so that its complicated wheels may work smoothly, then we must own that a salary of £30 a year (a very usual one in connection with a Sister's post), even taking other assets into consideration, does seem to us meagre and insufficient. We should like to see all Ward Sisters paid at the rate of not less than £50 per annum.

INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION.

In his wonderful forecast of the future in "Locksley Hall" the late Poet-Laureate described the coming time when "the war drum throbbed no longer, and the battle flags were furled, in the Parliament of man the Federation of the World." The latest effort towards the attainment of this desirable consummation has been made by forty members of the Senate and House of Representatives in the United States who have organised an Inter-Parliamentary Union Group for the promotion of international arbitration. This Union is already receiving support, and the Secretary of the Commercial Committee of the House of Commons in this country, with the concurrence of the Chairman, has cabled to the President of the Union:—

"Commercial Committee of the House of Commons send heartiest congratulations on formation, and will gladly co-operate."

From Russia comes the news that the Czar is using all the weight of his influence in relation to the crisis in the Far East in the interests of peace, and that his pacific words have had a tranquillising effect upon the Russian public mind.

It is surely time that nations settled their differences by some other method than brute force. Whether we consider the question from the point of view of national economy, in the matter of maintenance of costly armaments, or of the wastage of lives which are of great value to the community in time of war, or from the higher ethical standard, the determination of quarrels by brute force is to be deplored. It, moreover, at once writes down those who resort to it as in an elementary stage of development.

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