

part in forcing anything of the kind on the great nurse-training schools of this country. It is to these schools that we owe the marvellous development of nursing, and the great improvement in the position and quality of nurses, which the last twenty or thirty years have witnessed; it is to these mainly that we must look in the immediate future for still further advances in the same direction; and it is they who are most qualified to say whether a general scheme of registration would be beneficial or not, and to act, if need be, as pioneers in such a movement.

I have not referred to the later proceedings of those ladies who seceded from The Hospitals Association, and under high auspices have started a registration scheme for nurses on their own account, for they do not immediately concern us. My object has been to explain the relation of The Hospitals Association to the registration scheme, and to show that from first to last it has not been influenced by temper or any unworthy motive.

[The conclusion of Dr. Bristowe's address will be found in "The Nursing Mirror."]

THE EDITOR'S LETTER-BOX.

[Our Correspondents are reminded that prolixity is a great bar to publication, and that brevity of style and conciseness of statement greatly facilitate early insertion.]

THE LEICESTER PROVIDENT DISPENSARY.— A REJOINDER.

SIR,—I have just received a copy of your journal of this date, which contains a letter from Mr. M. Maxfield, of this town, purporting to be a rejoinder to some comments which I presume you had made on a former occasion concerning the management of the Leicester Provident Dispensary. At the annual meeting on March 14th, the Board, supported by the majority of subscribers present, refused to sanction a fair and full inquiry into the grave charges made against the management. With delightful complaisance they expressed their willingness to hear and consider these charges themselves, and to adjudicate on the matters in which they are themselves the accused. Twenty-six of the leading medical men of the town had signed a declaration that "essential changes" are necessary in the management of the institution, of whom three are on the present staff of the Dispensary, and three have formerly been so. Of the other members of the existing medical staff, I am told that they could find but one who would venture to exonerate the management. Collectors are employed in tout-ing for members, and because the medical profession generally protest against the large number of persons (adding to the percentage of the manager) who are thus led to enter the Dispensary, whose ample means should disqualify them for membership, Mr. Maxfield denounces them as enemies of the institution. We feel that in a *bona fide* inquiry the medical profession should be represented, but be that as it may, we are determined that this shall be done in such a form as to command the confidence of the members and the public. The guilty alone have need to dread a full and exhaustive investigation. At the annual meeting I pointed out that the institution began the year with a debt of nearly £500, and that although legacies and donations had been received to the amount of £435, the debt had only been reduced by £76. The state of inexcusable and unaccountable indebtedness is chronic. Is it not simply infamous that, having, as Mr. Maxfield says, "over thirty-five thousand members" (by whom it ought to be more than self-supporting), such a state of things should exist? It is this (mis) management which is paraded before the public as successful and inimitable!

Christchurch Vicarage, Leicester.

A. A. ISAACS.

THE CONNEXION BETWEEN OUT-PATIENTS AND ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS.

The principal reasons for a decrease in the annual subscription to the metropolitan, are not altogether owing to a want of appreciation in the public. In this philanthropic age, when feelings and sympathies are more readily convinced than formerly, there must be some lack of trust to cause a decrease in subscriptions to such charities as our hospitals—charities which appeal constantly not only to the eye but to the imagination of any well-disposed person. The true causes of financial failure The Hospitals Association frequently drew attention to, especially in the earlier days of its work. Surely while the out-patients' department—that great blot on the 'scutcheon of the principal hospitals—remains unreformed, there are other causes besides a lack of money to account for the depression in hospital resources. Miss Octavia Hill, in her late evidence before the Lords Committee on out-door relief, stated that she wished the hospitals of London would reform their system, and we cannot wonder that while they remain practically unreformed, and yet ever increase their appeals for funds, the deficit will continue. There is a feeling of distrust and doubt amongst the many subscribers to hospitals, and it will not disappear till the hospitals themselves show some desire to adopt the many suggestions made for their reform, and to set their affairs in order, as other charities are obliged to do in order to meet the spirit of the

day. I trust that The Hospitals Association will continue to point out resolutely that, till a spirit of self-help and reform appears, the hospitals will continue to suffer. This seems to me far more needful a subject than the mere vague sympathy which is constantly found.

AN HONORARY SECRETARY.

[We hope An Honorary Secretary and many others will attend the meeting for the discussion of the Pay-System on the 20th June, at the Board-room of St. Thomas's Hospital, at 8 p.m.—Ed.]

CHILDREN'S COUNTRY HOSPITALS.

IN a recent article on the "Poor in Towns," you invite those engaged in the work of sending children into the country to give their experience, and I, as Secretary of the Children's Country Holiday Fund, avail myself of the opportunity of laying before your readers our scheme of work. The fund was started in 1884 as a bond of union between various isolated workers, and has grown so rapidly that nearly twelve thousand children were sent away during the summer of 1886. The plan of work is very simple: Children are selected by various local committees scattered all over London, and are despatched in parties to the care of responsible people in the country, who have found respectable cottagers willing to receive little guests between the ages of five and fourteen at the rate of 5s. a-week each. How greatly the holiday is appreciated is shown by the fact that parents' payments steadily increase, the average in 1886 being over 30 per cent., and the total amount received amounting to no less than £1,972 13s. 8½d., a sum in itself sufficient to send away 3,500 children. The general management of the fund is in the hands of a central council, consisting of representatives of local committees and six co-opted members. All subscriptions are paid into one common fund, money so obtained being granted by the central council according to the specific needs of local committees. By this plan poorer neighbourhoods are not overlooked in favour of wealthy parts, where the obtaining of funds is no difficulty; and in keeping one purse for the needs of the metropolis, the Country Holidays Fund is able to give every little Londoner an equal chance of the coveted holiday. I shall be most happy to give further information to anyone who may wish for it, and am always to be found at the address given below between eleven a.m. and three p.m.

A. R. NEWMAN, Secretary.

10, Buckingham Street, Strand.

BEDRESTS—A SAD THOUGH SIMPLE STORY.

MIGHT I, through the medium of your paper, beg some kind friends to give me a helping hand towards getting a couple of "bedrests" for my poor patients? The only rest I can boast of is a chair, which I cover with pillows, not always too comfortable; and not having too many chairs or pillows, cannot manage always to give "rests" to as many as really need them. We have a sad case at present in hospital, a woman suffering from paralysis of the left side. We admitted her in March. When she had been with us about four weeks, her husband (the only bread-winner of the family) got cold, and continued his work till forced by rheumatism to give in. He then applied to our doctor and was sent in to us. Rheumatic fever followed, and he is still unable to even dress or feed himself, let alone work for his family. The children are now applying to the parish for relief. Our hospital is not a free one; the patients are supposed to pay 5s. and upwards, but such cases as I have just mentioned cannot be turned away from our doors, therefore our voluntary contributions get used up taking in patients, leaving little or none towards getting such articles as I am now begging for.

W. S.

Axminster Hospital, Devon.