

Infirmery, with no intermediate official between. It is for her to reprimand, reprove, and, in severe cases, suspend; it is for her to report to the Committee upon her charges; it is to her the Medical Staff should bring their complaints with regard to Nursing arrangements and Nurses; and it is for her to rectify them if necessary. If a Superintendent or Matron prove incompetent, she must be discharged by the Committee; but to attempt to deprive the Matron's office of its legitimate authority is a proceeding as unprincipled as it is foolish.

If it could be urged in its favour that the system of a Medical Superintendent invested with such enormous personal powers tended to improve the class of Nurses, the discipline, good order and general efficiency of an Infirmery to a standard above that of other Institutions where a natural division of departments under responsible heads is the rule, there would be nothing further to be said. But will any one allow that the efficiency of the Nursing and domestic arrangements in our large Hospital Training Schools, and in those Infirmaries where the Matron practically, though not legally, takes her proper place, is below those where the Medical Superintendent still revises the passes and the scrubbers' lists?

Is the authority of the surgeon or physician ever called into question in the wards of the Middlesex or St. Bartholomew's Hospitals?

I ask any one present whether the Sisters, Nurses, or Probationers, at his or her training school, were less zealous in carrying out the orders of the medical staff, because that staff exercised no further authority over them except in connection with the treatment of the patients? Are the Nursing staff of St. Thomas's less respectful and obedient to their visiting surgeons and physicians because in disciplinary and training matters they owe allegiance to their Lady Superintendent. Five years ago I stated, and I have seen no reason to alter my opinion, that I think the personal supervision of women by individual men is a great mistake. It blunts all chivalry in their relations to one another, and tends largely to promote deceitful and underhand behaviour on the part of the women. It is concealed under the name of "tact," but might often be called by a much harsher one.

I ask any one whether the subordination in work which is the usual bond between Doctor and Nurse is not also the most natural one? What has the man to do with the woman beyond giving his directions as to the patients' treatment? What has the woman to do with the man beyond carrying them out?

The arrangement by which the Nurse is subordinate to the medical man as regards her medical work in the wards, and to the Matron in all disciplinary matters, is so simple and obvious that it should recommend itself to every unbiassed

mind. Not one iota of *medical* superintendence would be removed from the medical man's hand, but the Matron being directly responsible for her own staff to the Board, would relieve him of an immense amount of unnecessary worry, whilst a continual and inevitable source of friction would be removed. I place the whole question so much on the simple point as to whether a man or a woman should have the direct personal control of the women of an Institution, because I firmly believe that there lies the whole root and gist of the matter. A good well-trained Nurse will always strain every nerve and do her utmost to carry out the proper legitimate medical orders of the medical man; but there is no refined woman who will not revolt at the idea of standing under his despotic personal control; it is unnatural and unwise. There is a sphere, and a wide sphere, in which the doctor should be paramount; and there is another, a more restricted sphere, in which he should be powerless; and the proper authority of the Medical Superintendent will not be lessened when he takes his proper place.

Royal British Nurses' Association.

(Incorporated by Royal Charter.)



A meeting of the Registration Board was held on Friday, January 25th, at 5 p.m., of which further particulars will be published next week.

Several Sub-Committees have met during the week and transacted business.

A most interesting Paper was read at the Sessional Meeting on January 18th, by Mrs. Gray, late Matron of the Chalmers Hospital, Edinburgh, entitled "Private Nursing," which aroused much interest, and an animated discussion.

It is hoped that the many members who have not yet remitted their Annual Subscription to the office will do so with the least possible delay.

The Secretary would be glad to hear from the Matron of any poor Hospital or Nursing Institution who would care to pay the carriage from the office of copies of the *Lancet* for the past six months. By the courtesy of the editor, two copies are supplied weekly to the Nurses' Club Room at 17, Old Cavendish Street. Only one copy is required for binding purposes, and the duplicates are available for any public or private Institution, comprising Members of the R.B.N.A.

Miss Annie L. Bird has resigned her appointment as Matron of the Royal Hospital for Sick Children at Edinburgh.

ALICE RAVENHILL, *Secretary of the Corporation.*

A very valuable Paper on "Private Nursing" was read on Friday, the 18th inst., at the rooms of the Royal British Nurses' Association, by Mrs. Gray, formerly Matron of Chalmer's Hospital, Edinburgh. The chair was taken by Mr. Fardon; and among the

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