

In 1867 the Government of the day brought in a Bill which eventually passed into law, and is commonly known as Gathorne Hardy's Act, for the establishment in the metropolis of asylums for the sick, insane, and other classes of the poor.

The scheme of the Act was that to provide asylums, the Poor Law Board might from time to time combine into districts, unions and parishes in the metropolis, and that for each district there should be an asylum or asylums; and that where an asylum was provided for the reception of the sick, it might be used for the training of Nurses.

One result of this Act has been that the majority of unions in the metropolis have now their own Asylum or Infirmary. The Strand, Westminster, and St. George's and St. Giles' have one jointly, known as the Central London Sick Asylum; and Poplar and Stepney are united in a similar manner.

The Infirmarys of Islington, Bethnal Green and Hampstead (although the latter is comparatively a new building) are more or less attached to the workhouses of those parishes.

All the other Infirmarys, twenty-four in number, would appear to be quite separate establishments, under the control of a resident medical superintendent.

In these establishments the system of Nursing by trained women is universally adopted, and if in some Infirmarys pauper help is made use of, it is the exception and not the rule.

On the other hand, in very many London Infirmarys, possibly in about one-third of the whole number, the Matrons are not trained Nurses. Dr. Downes gives it as his opinion that in workhouse Infirmarys, under separate administrations, the Matron should herself be a trained Nurse, and have charge of the Nursing Staff.

There is high authority for saying that—

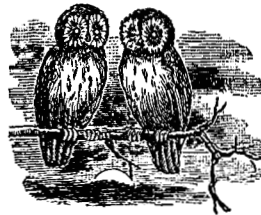
"A trained Nursing staff should be placed both in the wards of the Hospitals, and, when off duty, under the superintendence of a highly qualified officer of their own sex;"

and, in the case of the Hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, the Local Government Board have ordered and directed that, subject to the control of the medical superintendent, it shall be the duty of the Matron to exercise a general supervision and control over the Nurses, as well when on duty in the wards, as when off duty.

Looking to the present number of highly-trained Matrons of Poor Law Infirmarys, it is respectfully submitted that the latter order is better suited to the circumstances of the present day, than that under which Poor Law Infirmarys are at present governed.

Matrons in Council.

THE DANGER OF UNPROFESSIONAL CONTROL.



MADAM,—I waited for the opinion I felt sure would be expressed in the current NURSING RECORD concerning Mr. H. C. Burdett's circular already received, offering to compile and publish a Nursing Directory, before sending you a letter for publication

on the subject. Your paragraph in last week's Echoes is a timely warning to the unwary, but I hope for the sake of the honour and future welfare of the Nursing profession that you will deal with the matter at even greater length; and a short *résumé* of Mr. Burdett's tactics in attempting to carry out the registration of trained Nurses, which took place in 1887, would, I feel sure, be of benefit to the Nurses who have become certificated since that date, and who have probably never heard of the danger which caused the Royal British Nurses' Association to spring into life, and with which it has so successfully grappled.

As the statement in the circular received and signed by Henry C. Burdett distinctly states that there is no recognised standard of training to be exacted (and indeed I question altogether the ability of any official of the Stock Exchange to form an opinion concerning the professional qualifications of a trained Nurse) from those women who permit their names to appear in this Directory, I foresee the gravest danger to the uninitiated public from the publication of this unprofessional list. Mr. Burdett alludes to the Medical Directory, but he fails to state that this list of medical men is compiled only from duly qualified and registered medical practitioners, recognised by the General Medical Council, and that therefore there can be no analogy between the publication he proposes to issue and the Medical Directory. Yet none the less the general public may be deluded into believing that Mr. Burdett's *protégés* have passed some professional test; and his attempt to hamper and depreciate the years of arduous labour, and the very satisfactory and material result from the work of the Royal British Nurses' Association, (a purely professional body) may at last have some effect. It is to be presumed that the issue of this so-called Official Directory is merely a commercial speculation, and that the fact of depreciating the three years' standard of training and higher education of Nurses, which we members of the Royal British Nurses' Association have worked so hard to procure, will have no weight with Mr. Burdett and Co.; but I hope, for the sake of the honour of our profession, that the names of the Matrons who have consented to work *under* Mr. Burdett, and place their colleagues in such a false position, may soon be made public. We can hardly believe that such women exist, or should not, if we did not know, to our shame, that there are still those in our ranks (of whom the late defaulting Matron of a well-known Country Hospital, is one) who increase their incomes by an unscrupulous system of nurse-sweating, who are, therefore, bitterly antagonistic to the registration of trained Nurses. Hoping my colleagues will do all in their power to minimise the danger which besets the unwary,

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