

of her position, in this world as it at present exists, more absolute, that is to say, than the "Czar of all the Russias," or than the Emperor of China! Does Dr. Bell consider that the officers of the British Army are "absolute despots" because they possess the power of enforcing discipline, and would he like his wards nursed by women whose time was "free as air to work or waste as they choose?" Evidently there are medical men who do not recognize the deep debt of gratitude they owe to the matrons of training schools, or the fact that without the efficient superintendence of the nursing staff by these hard-worked ladies their own work would not be half as successful as it now is. I know, at all events, which nurses prefer—a matron who is a strict disciplinarian, or one who is easy-going—and I know which *régime* turns out the best nurses. The strict disciplinarian, so my personal observation leads me to believe, is *not* the despot. It is the woman whose easy-going nature leads her to be swayed by the strong-willed members of her staff, and by the voice of popular opinion, who is most often unjust and despotic, for the reason that she is influenced by lower motives than her just and strict colleague.

It will be wisdom on the part of medical men to support the enforcement of discipline in every possible way if they desire their own reputation and that of the institutions with which they are connected to be maintained.

Yours faithfully,
"AN OLD NURSE."

WHAT CONSTITUTES AN OFFICIAL DIRECTORY?

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—Will you inform me what constitutes an "Official Directory"? as, after reading the RECORD last week, I found my name in Sir Henry Burdett's book, without my consent; and, as I never corrected the slip or empowered another to do so for me, I want to know where the guarantee to the public that the entry is correct comes in.

— Yours truly,
A REGISTERED NURSE.

[An Official Directory is a list issued by competent authorities who guarantee that the information therein given is derived from official sources. For Sir Henry Burdett to issue a list of women's names—many of whom are not trained nurses at all—and to call such a list a Nursing Directory is, therefore, extremely misleading; but when he adds that it is "Official"—when no official guarantee is possible—it becomes ridiculous as well as misleading. Certainly a very grave injustice is done to those trained nurses whose names appear—mostly without their consent—side by side with masseuses and other persons, all perhaps excellent in their own way, but not *trained nurses*. More excellent proof of the urgent need for some legal definition of a trained nurse it would be impossible to afford. Such a misleading, and, therefore, dangerous, book as this Directory would have been impossible if the Royal British Nurses' Association had been properly managed. The Matrons pointed out the danger of this proposed Directory three years ago, but the medical-Honorary Officers have actually encouraged its production by

their own proposal to place asylum attendants on the Register of Trained Nurses.—ED.]

THE NEW BYE-LAWS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—Many members of the Royal British Nurses' Association will, I think, be grateful to you for your remarks in your last issue upon the proposed new Bye-Laws. It appears to me that the Bye-Laws, as issued to us in the *Nurses' Journal*, are so ingeniously worded as to make it appear that the Matrons will have increased powers given them in the Association, that all the *ex-officio* Matrons who were deprived of their seats in 1895 will be put back on to the Council, and many more added to their number. As a matter of fact, there are only three *ex-officio* Matrons, so far as I am able to discover, viz.: the heads of the Army, Navy, and Indian Army Nursing Departments. The Lady Superintendents of Netley and Haslar can scarcely be expected to attend often, and the head of the Indian Army Nursing Department is very safe in India. The other "*ex-officio*" Matrons are those who are Matrons of the hospitals on a list approved by the General Council and revised annually by that amenable body. It would be interesting to know how many Matrons are willing to accept these "*ex-officio*" seats, of which they may be deprived any year at the will of their subordinate nurses who may be on the Council.

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,
A MEMBER.

OUR DUTY.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I have no doubt the majority of the Matron Members of the Royal British Nurses' Association, will be quite unable, like myself, to go to the Meeting of the Association, fixed, no doubt, intentionally just a week before Christmas—the very busiest time in the whole year for hospital matrons and nurses. There is little doubt, therefore, that the Meeting having been fixed at this inconvenient time by the Honorary Officers, independent country members are considered *safer* at home. But although by this arrangement we shall be deprived of our vote, which in my case would certainly be recorded against the new Bye-Laws, as they undoubtedly deprive the nurses of privileges already granted by the Privy Council, and leave absolute power in the hands of the Honorary Officers and their elected permanent little Executive, it will not prevent us meeting together early in the new year to take counsel together in relation to our professional affairs. Our duty to each other and to our profession still remains—and if the Constitution of the Royal British Nurses' Association becomes an open tyranny and in consequence a danger to nurses, there are other means by which we can accomplish organization and co-operation, and do our duty both to our nurses and the public. Let us meet and devise these means.

Yours,
A NORTH COUNTRY MATRON.

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[previous page](#)

[next page](#)