

answered in the negative, except that Orange added two months to the course. The associations of both schools, therefore, reported to the secretary of the Associated Alumnæ that as there was no near prospect of conforming, they would not now enter, but when the future made it possible, they would do so."

It is this independence of thought and action upon the part of nurses which the official policy of the Royal British Nurses' Association is attempting to stifle—a policy which we are sure public opinion will condemn, both from a sense of justice and because it is contrary to their own interests.

Address and Presentation to Sister Murtagh.

THE Royal Irish Constabulary stationed at the Phoenix Park have presented a handsome gold watch and chain, accompanied by a magnificently illuminated address, to Sister Murtagh, of Steevens' Hospital, Dublin, who has been in charge of the R.I.C. fever ward for many years, and whose zealous labours and unremitting attention to duty have earned for her the most profound respect and esteem of every member of the Constabulary by whom she is known. The address is as follows:—

To SISTER MURTAGH,

Fever Ward, Steevens' Hospital.

MADAM,—On behalf of some members of the Royal Irish Constabulary, many of whom during the past fourteen years have, from time to time, been patients under your care in Dr. Steevens' Hospital, we beg to ask your acceptance of the accompanying gold watch and chain, as a slight recognition of the manner in which you have performed your duties as nurse towards those who have been under your charge, prostrated very often with the most dangerous fevers.

We beg to assure you that we are deeply grateful for the unwearied attention, the unselfish devotion, the professional skill, the womanly sympathy which have been characteristic of your nursing of R.I.C. patients, and that we fully appreciate the self-denial you have practised and the sacrifices you have made in their behalf.

We regard your presence in the sick chamber amongst our comrades as the best guarantee that their sufferings will be alleviated in a manner that can only be done by the sympathetic words and tender acts of a true woman.

Wishing you every happiness, long life, and health to continue your noble work of relieving suffering humanity,—We are, Madam, your obedient servants,

THOMAS MOORE (Hon. Secretary),

C. DOWLING (Assistant Secretary),

R. TAYLOR (Treasurer),

P. O'BRIEN,

S. DOUTHER,

J. DEVEREUX,

R. COWE,

J. J. M'CARTHY,

} Committee.

Professional Prerogatives.

THE following questions have been addressed to us, with a request that an answer may be given in the columns of the NURSING RECORD. We consider the matters with which they deal so important, that we refer to them at some length. The first question is:—

"Is it the prerogative of the Matron of a nursing institution to open the telegrams that are sent to night nurses?"

We cannot consider that this is justifiable. The arrival of telegrams for night nurses during the time when they are in bed is not a frequent occurrence, and presumably telegrams are not sent except upon matters of urgency. A telegram should, therefore, in our opinion, be delivered, to the nurse to whom it is addressed. Nurses are not children, or schoolgirls, but responsible women, of from twenty-three to thirty-five years of age. They should, therefore, undoubtedly be allowed to decide for themselves what shall be done with their own property—such as their telegrams and letters are. Moreover, we are advised that no person has, legally, any right or authority to open or interfere with letters or telegrams addressed to another person, and that a complaint from an aggrieved person, if addressed to the Postmaster-General, might entail very awkward consequences for the individual who had caused the grievance.

The second question which is referred to us is:—

"Granted you consider the Matron has such a prerogative, should she use it to make a nurse's private affairs common property, and prejudice her career by altering her examination marks?"

We are surprised that the second question should be put to us at all, because if any matron should adopt such a line of action it would prove conclusively that she is unfit for the position of responsibility which she holds, and if such conduct as that assumed were made public, it would receive the most severe condemnation.

It is only right that a proportion of the examination marks should be awarded by the matron; for the practical efficiency of a nurse, her devotion to her patients, and her general conduct, cannot possibly be tested by members of the medical staff in a theoretical examination. But, we assume that any matron who is entrusted with this responsible duty, conscientiously keeps a record of the marks given by her, and the reason for which these marks are bestowed or withheld. This record should undoubtedly be open for the inspection of her co-examiners, when the total marks are awarded. That marks could be withheld for the reason assigned, appears to us to be almost incredible.

The question as to whether a matron should make her knowledge of a nurse's private affairs, so acquired, "common property," scarcely requires an answer from us, as all honourable persons would unhesitatingly condemn such a course of action

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